

Thesis  
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**UNIVERSITY OF  
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# **The Wolf And Literature**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores how wolves, and other animals, are represented in a variety of literary texts. At stake in these explorations is the shifting and problematic border between the human and the animal, culture and nature, civilisation and the wild. Because of its biological proximity to the domestic dog, as well as the ways in which it has been figured as both the ultimate expression of wild savagery and of maternal love, the wolf is an exemplary guide to this border. The wolf traces the ways in which the human/animal border has been constructed, sustained and transgressed.

These border crossings take on a special resonance given the widespread sense of a contemporary environmental crisis. In this respect this thesis amounts to a contribution to the field of ecocriticism and pays special attention to the claim that the environmental crisis is also a 'crisis of the imagination', of our ideational and aesthetic relationship to the nonhuman world. With this in mind I look closely at some of the main currents of ecocriticism with a view to showing how certain psychoanalytic and poststructuralist approaches can enhance an overall ecocritical stance. It is an analysis which will also show how the sense of environmental emergency cannot be divorced from other critical and political concerns, including those concerns highlighted by feminist and postcolonial critics. In the words of a much favoured environmentalist slogan, 'everything connects to everything else'. Ultimately this thesis shows that how we *imagine* the wolf, and nature in general, in literary texts, is inextricably bound up with our relationship to, and treatment of, the natural world and the animals, including human beings, for whom that world is home.

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An early version of the final chapter, 'Witnessing The Wolf', appeared in *Postgraduate English* 1 (March 2000). Chapter Three, 'A Wolf Sublime', has been published more or less intact in *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 6/1 2002.

## Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by Christopher Powici, is the result of my own work, and has not been included in any other thesis.



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## Introduction

What is it we imagine when we imagine a wolf?

On the face of it the question seems simple enough, but the answers it engenders are many and diverse. Is it the evil werewolf of myth and legend that springs to mind, Jack London's peerless hunter of the frozen North, or Rudyard Kipling's sober and responsible upholder of jungle law? To imagine the wolf is to imagine not one but a variety of beasts. That this effort of the imagination should also be bound up with the experience of reading is for many people, including the writer of this thesis, no accident. For readers from a certain cultural background the wolf announces itself in the pages of the first stories they encounter: fairy tales, stories of lost young girls lured astray by a cunning killer, of a ravenous brute who will stop at nothing to satisfy its hunger. On a personal note, the wolf is intimately bound up in images of Northern landscapes, of lonely crags and snowbound forests, of a wilderness without limit that may have once existed a few steps from the back door of my childhood home thirty miles south-west of London, and that still existed in boyhood dreams of faraway places such as Canada, Finland and Russia. Although I cannot say precisely when this dreamscape began to take shape, nor identify which particular books were involved, this vision of the wolf and the lands it roamed is inseparable from the stories that, as a child, held me spellbound. As far back as I can remember, the wolf and literature go hand in hand.

Of course the question of the literary wolf is just one aspect of a far wider cultural engagement with the question of the animal, and with nature in general. The earliest examples of human art, such as the cave paintings at Lascaux in France record a fascination with animals which, in a different form, thrives today in, for example, the animal installations of Damien Hirst. The first chapter of Genesis records God's creation of the 'great creatures of the sea' and 'every winged bird', as well as 'wild animals', 'livestock' and 'creatures that move along the ground'.<sup>1</sup> Composers, including Beethoven, Vaughan Williams and more recently Messian and Ratuvarra have sought to connect the abstractions of music with the harmonies, and dissonances, of the natural world. Throughout the arts animals are everywhere.

The question of how and why this fascination with 'things animal' manifests in literary texts forms the core of my thesis. Indeed, insofar as the figure of the wolf opens up the question of the animal, the borders of my thesis are themselves permeable, allowing the infiltration of other animal presences including those of monkey, coyote and fish. In this way I hope not to deter readers for whom animals other than the wolf are culturally significant, for there can hardly be a human society immune to some notion of animal presence, and the to the various discourses – scientific, religious, literary, philosophical, political – which arise from our interrelationship with other living forms. Yet the wolf remains central. Setting aside for a moment my own preoccupation with wolves, and without dismissing this preoccupation as of itself irrelevant, it is not difficult to see why wolves should feature so prominently in literature. We have only to note the prevalence of dogs, and their varied but intimate connections to geographically and culturally

disparate human societies, to realise that wolves and people share a common history. But it is a history at odds with itself. The genetic difference between a wolf and a dog is so small as to scarcely amount to a difference at all. Indeed the fact that wolves and dogs are able to interbreed successfully means that, as the ethologist Roberta Hall has remarked, they may be considered as comprising, along with coyotes, a single species.<sup>2</sup> But the difference in terms of how human cultures have treated and, as importantly, *imagined* these animals is vast. If the dog has assumed the role of man's best friend, then the wolf has long been regarded, in certain quarters at least, as his worst enemy, the living embodiment of the wilderness which, from a western perspective, 'man;' is considered not only to have outgrown but also to have conquered. The wolf, then, is an inescapably uncanny figure, a walking contradiction, a border phenomenon, and while this thesis will necessarily take into account how the dog is culturally situated, it is its wild other, the wolf, which claims by far the greater part of my attention.

To explore a notion of the wolf not just as a creature of a geographically, or historically, remote wilderness, but also as a denizen of the border, is not, however, just to contemplate the difference between a wolf and a dog. It is also to engage with the question of what constitutes the difference between a human being and an animal. As the anthropologist Tim Ingold argues, to consider the question 'what is an animal?' is not only to demonstrate that 'there is a strong emotional undercurrent to our ideas about animality' but is also to 'expose highly sensitive and largely unexplored aspects of our own humanity'.<sup>3</sup> This thesis, then, aims to discuss the question of how human/animal

difference is represented and reflected upon in literary texts. In short, I want to explore how both wolf and human are brought into being in the imagination.

The question of the difference between human beings and (other) animals has long been the subject of philosophical and scientific enquiry. It is a difference which, to varying extents, has formed the cornerstone of the investigations of, among others, Aristotle, Descartes, Rousseau, Darwin and Freud. But to address this question at the beginning of the twenty-first century means taking into account the historical exigencies of the present time. Of course, this does not mean that one should ignore the insights of previous eras, or merely treat them as interesting but largely irrelevant historical remnants. On the contrary, I intend to explore how some of the religious and metaphysical assumptions that have become embedded in our attitudes towards animals, and towards nature as a whole, influence our interaction with the 'natural world'. But I intend to do so in the light of a contemporary sense of environmental emergency or crisis which is manifest in concerns about human population levels, the depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, habitat loss and the potential, and actual, extinction of many species of flora and fauna. For this reason this thesis is meant as a contribution to the discipline of what has become known as 'ecocriticism'. In her introduction to an anthology of essays devoted to this discipline, Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as 'the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment'.<sup>4</sup> Insofar as wolves and human beings are actors and participants in the environment, and literature is a way of imagining and *re*-imagining the ways of wolves and human beings, it is a definition which I am happy to sign up to. But it is a definition whose very broadness encompasses

a range of approaches which have their roots in ecological thought as well as the various strands of literary criticism. To try to unpick these strands, or make albeit tentative generalisations about ecocriticism, or any other critical approach, is an enterprise fraught with hazards, but I do want to engage with what seems to me a discernible suspicion within ecocriticism of certain, mainly poststructuralist, perspectives. Up to a point this 'suspicion' represents a healthy attitude to the study of literary texts. In as much as environmental degradation is a real and pressing problem, the pace and intensity of which may be unique to our time, a degree of scepticism is called for. If the insights of ecology, together with the increasingly palpable effects of the environmental crisis, demand a reorientation and even decentering of the human subject, then prevailing wisdom needs to be questioned and not blindly accepted. What matters, in this respect, is not just the study of literature but *how* literature is studied, the stances and outlooks that govern the kinds of meaning that literary study produces. However, I am concerned that an entirely understandable, and in some respects, perfectly laudable emphasis on the materiality and sheer physicality of the environment can result in a critical practice which, by valorising mimesis and referentiality, overlooks other ways of employing an ecocritical perspective. An introduction is no place to go into these matters in detail but, at this point, it needs to be stated that a principal objective of this thesis will be to pay heed to the potential value of theoretical approaches, such as psychoanalysis and deconstruction, which have received relatively short shrift in some ecocritical circles.

It goes without saying that this has a bearing on the kind of thesis that eventually results. In this respect it is perhaps helpful to say what I am *not* trying to achieve. For example, it

is not my intention to produce an exhaustive, encyclopaedic overview or history of the literary representation of wolves. Hence the title of this thesis is 'The Wolf *and* Literature', not 'The Wolf *in* Literature'. Nor am I trying to outline a canon of wolf writings according to some notional hierarchy of literary value. Instead I draw upon a range of texts to illustrate some of the ways that literature deals with questions of humanness and animality, civilisation and wilderness, culture and nature. This approach does mean that some remarkable and otherwise highly significant texts have been omitted, although not overlooked. These include Herman Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, as well as complex and involving novels by David Malouf and Brian Castro. There is of course a great deal that could be said, and indeed has been said, about these and other wolf-oriented narratives, but while an overarching inclusiveness might be desirable it is not practical. In the end lines have to be drawn somewhere, and I have attempted to draw the lines of this thesis in such a way as to encompass a variety of genres. My discussion, therefore, ranges across fiction in the shape of the 'literary' novel, crime thrillers, short stories and children's fiction, and includes within its remit poetry, biography, nature and travel writing, as well as some polemical and critical writings that might otherwise be relegated to the status of secondary texts. This approach has one overriding advantage. It touches upon a greater number of instances of *how* the literary engagement with the wolf takes place than a more restricted author-based or genre-based approach could achieve. By casting my net wide I hope to shed light on the key role played by animals in literature, as well as contribute to the freeing up of new pathways for an ecocritical practice. In so doing, I am treading in the footsteps of others and at the outset the debt that this thesis owes to Barry Holstun Lopez's *Of Wolves and Men* (1978) should be

acknowledged.<sup>5</sup> Although a discussion of literature forms only a small, though significant, part of Lopez's history of the human-lupine relationship, it is the ground opened up by his text that I intend to explore in depth.

The first two chapters, 'Reflections In a Lupine Eye' I and II, are companion pieces which, by looking at the opposing poles of wolf representation, the werewolf and the wolf-child, set out in broad terms a theme which will recur throughout the thesis: the question of how the 'human' may be defined in relation to, and subverted by, the figure of the wolf.

Chapter One focuses on the figure of the werewolf, both in its traditional guise and in, as I shall argue, less obvious but nonetheless related forms. I shall begin by showing how the familiar, contemporary image of the werewolf and, until recently, the 'natural' wolf, as a demonic, bestial killer, derives from the medieval church's obsession with the Devil and witchcraft. In this context the writings of the twentieth century Gothicist and bibliographer Montague Summers form not only a historical guide but also, in effect, a case study. This approach necessarily involves making the effort of distinguishing between Summers the scholar and Summers the eccentric polemicist. It is, however, an effort worth making. The very force of Summers' own perverse fascination with the subject of witchcraft generally, and the werewolf in particular, as they are articulated in his graphic and exorbitant prose, illuminates in revealing ways certain received beliefs concerning the lupine and the lycanthropic. I shall then contrast Summer's own recapitulation of the theological insistence maintaining an absolute distinction between



the human and the animal with H.G Wells' exploration of human-animal liminality in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, a text which, in terms of a Darwinian epistemology, articulates a radical re-envisaging of this liminal ground, and consequently of the threat to a discrete, unitary human identity. Finally in this chapter, I shall discuss Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, and the D.H Lawrence poems 'The Red Wolf' and 'Fish'. Although neither London's nor Lawrence's wolf texts are concerned with the conventional figure of the werewolf, they are, as I shall argue, exercises in 'literary lycanthropy'. For London and Lawrence the very wildness of the wolf, which is vilified in the tradition represented by Summers, is reformulated as a positive attribute, and the wolf itself becomes symbolic of the writer's claims to the status of instinctual artist sanctioned by nature, rather than society or tradition. My reading of Lawrence's 'Fish' serves as an implicit critique of 'The Red Wolf' insofar as the latter poem demonstrates, or fails to demonstrate, what the critic Margot Norris has termed the 'biocentricity' of Lawrence's animal writing.

'Reflections in a Lupine Eye II' discusses feral children, particularly the wolf-child, a figure which appears to stand in complete contradistinction to that of the werewolf. Whereas the werewolf, and traditionally the wolf itself, has been constructed as the embodiment of evil or, in the case of the 'natural' wolf, of unbridled cunning, ferocity and greed, the wolf-child has been represented as the embodiment of innocence, of a naturalness unsullied by the ambiguous influences of human society. My aim in this chapter is to show how the apparent gulf which divides these different representations of the lupine conceals the ways in which both serve to delineate the ontological boundaries

of the human by formulating an inhuman animal otherness. On the one hand the human is distinguished from the werewolf in terms of the possession of a 'soul'. In the case of the wolf-child, 'culture' replaces 'soul' as the distinguishing trait of the human, while 'nature' replaces the devil as the reified 'other' to man. My discussion of Jean Itard's account of the 'Wild Boy of Aveyron' which heads this chapter will examine how the apparent fixity of these categories is subject to an intrinsic destabilisation which opens out a liminal ground as potentially threatening, or liberating, to the human subject as that opened out by the werewolf. I shall then trace how different aspects this liminal terrain are mapped and explored in three recent works of fiction. Jane Yolen's *Children of the Wolf* probes the implications for the individual human subject of an identification with the inhuman other of the 'wild child' in terms of a fragmentation of identity which is arrested only at the cost of a profound, and all but unspeakable, sense of loss. Jill Payton Walsh's *Knowledge of Angels* allegorises the tension between religious and secular ways of 'knowing' the human subject in order to show how both epistemologies are confounded by a kind of blindness to the self-identity of the animal. Finally, I shall discuss Angela Carter's 'Wolf-Alice', a short story or 'tale', to employ her preferred description, which combines the genres of werewolf and wolf-child to demonstrate how the two kinds of lupine figure reinforce the human through an elucidation of its inhuman other. It is also, however, a tale which acknowledges and affirms the permeability of the human/animal border, returning to the human a vital and cathartic animality, and to the animal integrity of presence.

Chapters Three and Four look at the potential advantages as well as the limitations and drawbacks of a psychoanalytic reading of animality. In Chapter Three, 'A Wolf Sublime: Psychoanalysis and The Animal', I enlarge on the issues discussed in the first two chapters by examining how the human/animal opposition is subject to an unstable reconfiguration in psychoanalysis. I begin by discussing how Freud explores this tangled ontological terrain, especially as this is related in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, and *The History of an Infantile Neurosis*, a text which merits special prominence, in terms of the subject of my thesis, given that Freud's interpretation of his patient's dream-wolves is a fundamental aspect of his intellectual legacy. Put simply, the animal, and the wolf in particular, goes to the heart of Freud's thinking. Its presence there is, however, contingent and uncertain, perpetually under threat of erasure from the pressure – one might almost say the *imperative* – to interpret it in other terms. I want to expose some of the forces behind this imperative by, in a sense reading *through* Freud, analysing his analysis, to identify what his writing is at pains to withhold but, at the same time, is unable to do without. The result, as the wolves of the *Wolf Man's* dream demonstrate, is a sense of the animal as a kind of glaring absence which is inseparable from a troubled ambivalence about human and animal presence. In Freud's worldview this absence permeates how humans imagine their themselves, as well as their relationship to a concept of nature which, in its imagined and material, inner and outer, forms, can come to seem all too inhuman.

Chapter Four, 'Who Are The Bandar-log?', examines whether developments in psychoanalytic criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century offer a way of reading

literary texts that negotiates the already unstable human/animal boundary that runs through much of Freud's writing. In particular, I concentrate on Julia Kristeva's notion of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' modalities to see whether these succeed better than the more familiar categories of the 'unconscious', 'ego' and 'super-ego' in opening up the question of human/animal difference. However, I also try to be aware of the limitations theory, or at least try to maintain a proper regard for the relationship between text and critical methodology. In applying the precepts of Kristeva's post-Freudian style of analysis to Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli stories and Ursula Le Guin's short story 'Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight', I also demonstrate the seriousness with which these authors treat the question of the animal, and the extent to which, implicitly or explicitly, they recognise that our perception of animals, as well as ourselves as human beings, is bound up with the stories we tell. In other words, although the question of the animal may be helpfully elucidated with a careful application of theory, it is something that, for both Kipling and Le Guin, is already present as an important aesthetic and ethical issue in its own right. For Kipling, questions of law and authority, as well as the problem of what constitutes the human subject, are presented in opposition to a notion of animality as subversive and anarchic which recalls Freud's distinction between civilisation and the 'wild'. Importantly, however, in Kipling's writing, this animality becomes something that is necessary both to let loose and to suppress, and it is in this respect that Kristeva's insights into human subjectivity can shed some helpful illumination. Le Guin's short story amounts, in effect, to a development of themes inherent in Kipling's texts, and while it remains faithful to the text's role of giving narrative pleasure, is a more self-conscious elaboration of the question 'what is an animal?', or as Le Guin has phrased it,

'who are the Bandar-log?' In reading Le Guin in the light of Kristeva it is not my intention simply to reduce Le Guin's story to a vehicle for the exposition of Kristeva's theories. Rather, I want to show that Le Guin probes and clarifies the human/animal problematic present in the Mowgli stories in ways that do not so much replicate Kristeva's ideas as, in certain respects, run parallel to them.

Chapter Five, 'The World, The Wolf, and The Text', situates my discussion of the wolf in the context of the environment, and in particular, the contemporary sense of an environmental crisis. For this reason my discussion needs to be at its most worldly *and* at its most theoretical. I shall need to consider how literature takes cognisance of, and responds to the 'realness' of nature, and to the ways in which human actions may have tangible and detrimental impacts on the living world. But I shall also have to take into account how a consideration of these issues necessarily involves entering upon the domain of literary theory. Put simply, asking questions about the status and role of representation, and the ethical responsibility, if any, of the text to external reality, also means probing the nature of the text itself. In its exploration, then, of the relationship between the wolf and its literary representation, between the world and the text, this chapter attempts to put into practice the discipline of ecocriticism. But it also asks questions about ecocriticism itself, about the kind of ecocriticism that is capable of responding to the crisis of the environment. Specifically, I have in mind the 'backlash' on the part of some ecocritics against the allegedly nihilistic and world-denying approach of poststructuralist and deconstructive thinking. In this respect my aim is not to 'take sides', merely for the sake of proving a particular intellectual allegiance, but I do hope that my

arguments will generate a needful degree of light in what is in danger of becoming an increasingly smoke-filled critical arena. I do not, however, intend that either the 'natural' or the 'textual' wolf should be lost sight of in this debate, and my discussion will, therefore, focus on how a diverse variety of texts, by writers such as Ted Hughes, John Muir, Barry Lopez and Rick Bass, and thereby enable an engagement with issues that are crucial to an ecocritical approach: the inseparability of the environmental crisis from a crisis of the imagination, the 'meaning' of wilderness, and, finally, questions of authorship and intertextuality.

In Chapter Six, 'Writing With The Wolf', I enlarge on the issues discussed in Chapter Five by exploring the contested terrain where the 'politics of nature' overlaps with the that of other contemporary political debates. Specifically, I concentrate on what may be termed 'identity politics' and, while bearing in mind that identity cannot be treated as an unproblematic 'given' and that umbrella terms mask an inescapable diversity, I focus on two 'group' in particular: women and Native Americans. Such a discussion seems to me necessary if, for no other reason, than to highlight the fact that ecocriticism cannot, as many of its practitioners correctly realise, make its mark within literary studies by confining itself to a self-contained niche within the discipline. Naval-gazing is not an option. Therefore my discussion explores the kinds of issue that are thrown up when ecocriticism engages with two other highly charged critical approaches: feminism and post-colonial theory. I am especially keen to examine the ways in which ideas about nature are employed ideologically, in the service of claims for an innate 'natural' identity, and how such claims also involve questions of authority such as the authority to speak on

behalf of, or even *as* nature. These issues spring up in various sorts of text and to give some small indication of this pervasiveness I discuss Clarissa Pinkola Estés' wide-ranging and hugely popular account of 'female nature', *Women Who Run With The Wolves*, an autobiographical memoir by Theresa Tsimmu Martino, *The Wolf, The Woman, The Wilderness*, as well as two crime thrillers, Peter Bowen's *Wolf, No Wolf* and Louis Owens' *Wolfsong*. In examining how nature is put to use ideologically I also try to remain true to an ecocritical perspective, and to the subject of this thesis, and ask what are the consequences of this debate on 'the nature of nature' for the planet's nonhuman inhabitants, especially the wolf.

The final chapter, 'Homeless, Hunted, Weary', offers a reading of Cormac McCarthy's 1994 novel *The Crossing* as a way of recapitulating many of the themes that have been explored in other chapters, and of suggesting new ways forward for a contemporary ecocritical practice that engages with how questions of animality, and especially the wolf, are relevant today. Strictly speaking this discussion does not, however, represent a conclusion. If rumours of the end of history have proved exaggerated then the ends of either natural or literary history strike me as equally unlikely propositions. Therefore I try to leave the question of the wolf 'open'. The discourse of ecology may have many insights to offer literary study but surely chief among these is the lesson that, as far as the environment is concerned, the dynamics of change are as important as the notion of balance. Nature abhors stasis as much as it does a vacuum, and with this 'truth' in mind my objective is *coherence* rather than *synthesis*, and I have sought to avoid the temptation of concluding with anything that might seem like the 'last say' or the final word. In

adopting this approach I am also keen to keep faith with the tenor and tone of McCarthy's novel, with its insistence on provisionality and its refusal to countenance any sense of absolute truth outwith our experience of the world as an experience of story. In this respect I employ certain aspects of Jacques Derrida's thinking to bring increased illumination to the ground covered by *The Crossing*. In particular I want to show that Derrida's attention to the 'parasite' or 'foreign body' is of a piece with McCarthy's concern for the interaction of the human with the nonhuman, of history with nature, which is articulated through the relationship of Billy Parham, the novel's protagonist, to the human and natural world, and especially through his relationship with the wolf he attempts to save. My aim, in this respect, is not to use Derrida as a kind of critical scalpel, but rather to show how McCarthy and Derrida alight upon similar themes, especially the interaction and interplay of the human and the nonhuman, and of how this is a determinant of identity, or, in extremis, a lack of identity. Bound up with this question of identity, and of the role of the foreign body, are notions of borders and their transgression which go to the heart of my analysis. Therefore my discussion of *The Crossing* will reprise many of the themes that permeate the thesis as a whole, including lycanthropy, the nature of human subjectivity and the human/animal border, as well as the wider question of how the study of literature can respond to contemporary concerns about the human impact on those other lives with which we share the Earth. In this way I also hope my discussion will, by shedding some new light on the question 'what is it we imagine when we imagine a wolf?', give pride of place to that animal which, in all its guises and disguises, has been the moving force behind this thesis.



## Chapter One

### Reflections in a Lupine Eye (I)

#### *Pacts and Possessions*

‘Not without reason did the werewolf in past centuries appear as one of the most terrible and depraved bond-slaves of Satan. He was even whilst in human form a creature within whom the beast – and not without prevailing – struggled with the man. Masqued and clad in the shape of the most dreaded and fiercest denizen of the forest the witch came forth under cover of darkness, prowling in lonely places to seek his prey...save by his demoniac ferocity and superhuman strength none could distinguish him from the natural wolf. The werewolf loved to tear raw human flesh.’<sup>1</sup>

First published in 1933, Montague Summers’ portrait of the werewolf is instantly recognisable to the modern reader familiar with the horror genre in fiction and film. Here is a being that oscillates uncertainly and dangerously between the human and the animal as it hunts down its victims. It is not, however, the alleged danger to ‘raw human flesh’ on which I intend to concentrate. Rather I want to explore the potent ontological liminality of the werewolf, the paradox by which it simultaneously threatens the integrity of the human/animal boundary *and* serves to delineate that very boundary. The linking theme, then, of all the texts discussed in this and the following chapter, is that of crossing borders, borders which are at once physical, ontological and textual, and which serve to constitute how certain notions of being human are both derived from and subverted by the notion of an inhuman, lupine other.

As a literary figure the werewolf has long and distinguished antecedents. For example Ovid's Lycaon presents a gleamy-eyed 'picture of ferocity' in his lust for killing, but these are seen as distinctly human characteristics that are innate to the pre-lupine Lycaon.<sup>2</sup> The familiar image of the werewolf – a human being who, through a demonic animalization, assimilates the 'natural' ferocity of 'his' lupine counterpart – is not nearly so antique. In his insightful history of the human/lupine relationship, *Of Wolves and Men*, the American nature writer and essayist Barry Lopez argues that the emergence of both the wolf and the werewolf as wickedness made flesh arose from the church's need to establish its identity in terms of a diametrically opposed enemy. Previously this could be postulated as the state, paganism, or the infidel but with the medieval church's 'rediscovery' of the Devil, heretics in the perceived form of witches and sorcerers were identified as the supreme threat. According to Lopez:

The supposition was, first, that sorcerers went about disguised as wolves because the wolf was the animal most hateful to good men; Church doctrine proclaimed that no sorcerer could harm men unless he were in contractual league with the Devil; the wolf, as the Devil's dog, became the form to do his work in.<sup>3</sup>

The hysteria engendered by this alleged alliance between Satan, witch and wolf meant that allegations of witchcraft and werewolf transformations were rife, and that 'fundamental nonsense was taken for irrefutable evidence' with the result that 'thousands died at the stake'.<sup>4</sup> Lopez's emphasis on the church's insistence on the *reality* of werewolves is not shared in all quarters. Jane Davidson, for example, argues that 'werewolves had never entirely achieved the type of acceptance by learned circles that witches held', and describes the popular belief in werewolves as 'a means of explaining such irrational behaviour as mass murder'.<sup>5</sup> Davidson's and Lopez's positions do not,

however, necessarily exclude one another. After all the church could point to cases of 'irrational behaviour', such as the alleged child murders committed near Lyon by the 'werewolf' Giles Garnier in the 1570s as evidence of the reality of the threat posed by the Devil in the shape of his human and animal allies.<sup>6</sup> Thus the human and the lupine coalesce into the image of the werewolf, a Satan-possessed witch in bestial form, in whom animality and evil are all but indistinguishable. Moreover, it is this 'twisted view from the Middle Ages' argues Lopez 'that still feeds the human imagination'.<sup>7</sup>

But what exactly does this 'twisted view' amount to? Of what fears and, for that matter, what desires is it comprised, and what literary forms does it take? If Lopez is correct about the medieval image of the werewolf, and of the wolf itself, still exerting its force on the modern imagination then we may begin to answer these questions by showing how the werewolf is depicted in the work of a modern writer, and moreover one whose own conception of the werewolf derives from that medieval vision rather than from its dissemination in twentieth century popular culture. Such a writer presents himself in the figure of the Reverend Montague Summers (1880-1948) whom Lopez cites as an inheritor of this 'twisted view'. Any discussion of Montague Summers is, however, fraught with an unavoidable, though potentially enlightening, difficulty which lies in whether one considers Summers as a critical and scholarly authority or as, in effect, a case study himself.<sup>8</sup> While remaining aware of the need to make this distinction, I intend to employ Summers in both contexts. His credentials as a scholar, not only in the fields of the Restoration Stage and Gothic novel but also in that of 'hagiography and devil lore' are acknowledged by Frederick S. Frank in *Montague Summers: A Bibliographical*

*Portrait*.<sup>9</sup> It is in this role that I incorporate Summers as an ‘authority’, especially with regard to his translation of the *Malleus Malificarum*, and other yet more obscure theological treatises which inform the early part of my discussion. However, Summers combines a revealing and seemingly inexhaustible zest for detail with a credulity and partisanship which recognises few if any limits, and it is in this respect that he represents a ‘case study’. In other words, the extremeness, even obsessiveness of his own views on the werewolf illustrate the very questions he is claiming to answer. It is, however, only fair to add that Summers himself did not make, nor would he have approved of, a distinction between the scholar and polemicist in terms of his own work.

A flavour of Summers’ approach to the werewolf question, and to witchcraft generally, can be gleaned from his and Lopez’s contrasting responses to the *Malleus Malificarum* (*Hammer of Witches*), first published in 1486 or 1487. This ‘definitive’ treatise on witchcraft was the work of the Dominicans Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, who were charged in a Papal Bull of Innocent VIII to act as inquisitors of the ‘heretical depravities’ currently afflicting what is now Germany and Austria.<sup>10</sup> As far as Lopez is concerned the intellectual and moral validation that Kramer’s and Sprenger’s work lent to the prosecution and punishment of witches, including werewolves, resulted in countless unwarranted prosecutions and deaths and, therefore, makes their treatise ‘one of the most odious documents in all human history’.<sup>11</sup> Summers adopts a distinctly different stance. In the introduction to his own translation of the *Malleus Malificarum* he describes Kramer and Sprenger’s work as ‘among the most important, wisest, and weightiest books of the world’.<sup>12</sup> Nor does Summers’ approval of Kramer and Sprenger result merely from

his acceptance of a widespread *belief* in witchcraft. For Summers such beliefs were based on the palpable *reality* of witchcraft, including ‘werewolfery’, and hence the church was entirely justified in its promotion of inquisitions and witch trials as essential weapons in its struggles with the forces of the Devil. Thus at the outset of *The Werewolf* Summers insists on the imperative to ‘recognise and...acknowledge the dark and terrible mysteries, both psychic and physical...which alone can adequately explain...the survival of these cruel narratives...the facts of which are being repeated today in the evil-haunted depths of African jungles, and even in remoter hamlets of Europe.’<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the temptation to dismiss Summers as a credulous, even fanatical, eccentric should be resisted. Despite, even *because*, of the apparent perversity of his approach, Summers arrives at a distinct and uncompromising image of the wolf, and, indeed, one that, in Lopez’s terms, is familiar to the modern imagination. Moreover, Summers’ familiarity with his subject matter, as well as his impassioned devotion to his cause, illuminate, albeit at times inadvertently, a certain notion of the human/lupine boundary in important ways. It is a boundary that can begin to be traced by exploring what, for Sprenger, Kramer, and Summers, was actually happening when a man, or less frequently a woman, became a wolf, and, equally importantly, the limits of such transformations.

In the first place Summers insists that all werewolf transformations are ‘affected by diabolical power’.<sup>14</sup> In other words the Devil is at the heart of the matter and no other explanations may be countenanced. He does, however, distinguish between ‘voluntary and ‘involuntary’ werewolves. The ‘involuntary’ werewolf is the victim of ‘some spell cast over them through the malignant power of a witch’.<sup>15</sup> This does not, of course,

engender any sympathy for the figure of the wolf as such. Rather the victim is to be pitied for having their intrinsic humanity violated by the condition of 'wolfhood'. No such pity should be wasted on the 'voluntary werewolf' who consciously enters into a pact with the Devil, placing himself in Satan's thrall, and, as a witch, gives to Satan 'that honour and glory which belong to the Majesty of God alone'.<sup>16</sup> Summers even suggests that werewolf transformations of this type amount to a kind of long service bonus since the 'voluntary' werewolf 'is a sorcerer well versed and of long continuance in the Devil's service, no mere journeyman of evil'.<sup>17</sup>

However, for all of Summers' credulity on the subject of the werewolf the need to explain 'how is the phenomenon accomplished' remains a vital and vexing theological question.<sup>18</sup> In essence, his insistence that 'werewolfism which involves some change of form from man to animal is a very real and a very terrible thing' seems at odds with Catholic teaching.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, it seems to run counter to the doctrine that 'formal and actual transmutation, in which one substance is transmuted into another' is of the sort 'only God can effect, Who is the Creator of such actual substances'.<sup>20</sup> Summers cites three ways of squaring this rather troublesome theological circle. In the first place the shape-shifting is accomplished 'by a glamour caused by the demon, so that the man changed will seem both to himself and to all who behold him to be metamorphosed into the shape of a certain animal'.<sup>21</sup> In other words werewolves are illusions produced by the Devil. Though having the appearance of a wolf, and assimilating its 'bestial savagery', the werewolf retains its human form. Thus the werewolf assumes something of the quality of a dream, a quality which manifests itself still more strongly in the second

method of transformation. Here Summers quotes Henri Bourget who contends that ‘Satan sometimes leaves the witch asleep behind a bush, and himself goes and performs that which the witch has a mind to do, giving himself the appearance of a wolf; but he so confuses the [were]wolf’s imagination that he really believes he has been a wolf and has run about and killed men and beasts’.<sup>22</sup> However, according to Summers, ‘the consenting witch is none the less guilty of the murders and ravages wrought by the demon in lupine form’.<sup>23</sup> This emphasis on trance and dreaming lends the werewolf, and implicitly wolves themselves, a double reality: that of the palpable, ravening beast out there ‘in the world’, and that of the beast within. It is a conception of the lupine that, as I shall discuss in Chapter Three, Freud deals with in terms of *absence* rather than *presence*, but for now it is important to realise how, for Summers, if only in terms of a medieval belief system, the wolf straddles both the conscious and the unconscious.

The third mode of transformation, which Summers declares to be the most common, in effect reverses the trope of the ‘beast within’. Summers relies on the authority of Francesco Maria Guazzo who describes how ‘in accordance with his pact, the demon surrounds a witch with an aerial effigy of a beast, each part of which fits on to the corresponding part of the witch’s body’.<sup>24</sup> Guazzo adds, ‘it is no matter for wonder if they are afterwards found with an actual wound in those parts of their body where they were wounded when in the appearance of a beast; for the enveloping air easily yields, and the true body receives the wound’.<sup>25</sup> Summers characterises such transformations as ‘instances when the human figure was hideously breaking through the animal envelope’.<sup>26</sup> Thus instead of the ‘beast within’, we have the ‘man within’. No doubt Summers intends this as a literal, if rather garish, description of a physical event, but

through this reversal in alterity of the human and the lupine he does touch, albeit fleetingly, upon a crucial question. Is being human a matter of keeping the inner animal at bay, or is the notion of humanity itself nothing more than an assumption, a metaphysical foreign body that contaminates the 'natural' animality of men, women and children? That these questions inform, if inchoately, Summers' discussion is evident from his efforts to delineate the border between 'man' and 'wolf', and thereby establish what is *essentially* and immutably human.

On the face of it the metamorphosis from human to animal seems absolute, since when in the form of a wolf, the witch loses the distinctly human power of speech. He becomes *brutally* dumb, capable only of a lupine howling. The human, however, is merely silenced, not altogether extinguished, for, according to Summers 'he retains his human reason'.<sup>27</sup> This distinction between 'man' and 'wolf' is reinforced by the fact that 'a man cannot be said absolutely to be a wolf unless his soul change into the spirit of a wolf and that is not possible'.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the unchangeably human soul requires an outward token which, as far as Summers is concerned, is the eye 'which is the mirror of the soul' and remains 'also unchanged'.<sup>29</sup> The eye, however, as the instrument of sight, is an especially problematic organ for Summers. Citing St. Thomas and the *Malleus Malificarum* as authorities, he claims that 'the eye is able to work evil on an external object' and that 'there are witches who can bewitch by a mere look or glance from their eyes'.<sup>30</sup> To be looked at, then, by a witch is to be beheld from the depths of what is utterly, even *purely*, human but which, at the same time, threatens the sanctity of the human soul. This uncanny quality of the gaze is something I shall return to in Chapter Three. For the



moment, however, it is worth noting that the look, or the gaze, renders that which is deemed *essentially* human vulnerable to a strange and troubling fissuring.

There is yet another human/wolf distinction that pervades Summers' analysis of 'werewolfism'. It is, however, so 'naturalised' an assumption, so fundamentally a *given* of the differential status of the human and the animal, that it goes not only unquestioned but also unstated. Put briefly, a human being may become a wolf but a wolf may *not* become a human being. It is a difference that marks out the human from the wolf both in terms of a hierarchical ontology and in terms of the power afforded by their separate niches in the scheme of things. This border may not be intentionally made visible in Summers' discussion, but it is no less an absolute border for all that, and one that, for Summers at least, the wolf may not cross.

If, for Summers, the human condition may be described in terms of 'reason', 'soul' and implicitly, some notion of a transformational agency, what is the status of the wolf itself, and what makes the wolf an appropriate host for the bedevilled human being? Taking this latter question at face value, Summers argues that the historical prevalence of wolves in Europe made the wolf the natural, though not the only, choice of the Satanic shape-shifter. There is, of course, a certain logic to this. Indeed, when Summers claims that the rarity of the werewolf in modern Europe is linked to the rarity of wolves, because the witch only transforms himself 'into the shape of some ravaging beast...commonly met with in the district the varlet inhabits', one can only conclude that, in terms of biodiversity, the werewolf is as much a victim of our ecological crisis as its wholly lupine

counterpart.<sup>31</sup> More specifically, however, the wolf is perceived as the exemplary animal form for the Devil and his servants because of its supposedly innate characteristics. According to Summers, ‘the distinctive features of the wolf are unbridled cruelty, bestial ferocity, and ravening hunger’.<sup>32</sup> ‘What better disguise’ he declares ‘what better shape of fear and ferocity could the shape-shifting sorcerer in Europe assume?’, since in effecting such a transformation the sorcerer would be ‘possessed of all the characteristics, the foul appetites, ferocity, cunning, the brute strength, and swiftness of that animal’.<sup>33</sup> Thus Summers makes an implicit distinction – without going into the terms of the distinction – between ‘characteristics’ on the one hand, and ‘reason’ and ‘soul’ on the other, for, as we have seen, no transformation may affect these core elements of the human being. An even more blatant elision must be made in so determining the wolf as the epitome of all things inherently abhorrent to the civilised, Christian mind. Not only, in Summers’ view, is the wolf innately savage but it also ‘typifies the heretic, the murderer of the soul’, and furthermore, ‘the Devil often possesses the bodies of wolves and drives them to madness, urging...this furious host against men’.<sup>34</sup>

This portrait of the wolf raises something of a theological dilemma. If wolves are innately evil what would be the point of Satanic possession? Conversely, if ‘real’ evil may be wrought only through the influence of the Devil, then that behaviour which Summers attributes to the ‘natural’ wolf, even if true, is implicitly an operation of nature, and the wolf metonymic of God’s creation, rather than emblematic of ‘treachery, savagery, and bloodthirstiness’.<sup>35</sup> This readiness to imbue the ‘natural’ wolf with the quality of evil, despite Summers’ insistence on the necessity of satanic agency, is redolent of a distinctly

Medieval worldview, a view which the art historian Francis Klingender argues ‘sprang from the conception of human fate as determined by a cosmic struggle between gods and demons’.<sup>36</sup> Nature is thus seen as the field of this struggle, and animals not as neutral agents but as intrinsically partisan. They are not merely *symbolic* of either the goodness of God or the perfidy of the Devil, but, in effect, *embody* these qualities. In art the depiction of monstrous beasts demonstrated that ‘mankind is everywhere pursued by the devil and must fly from him to the protection of the church’.<sup>37</sup> Summers’ account of werewolves *and* wolves fulfils the same purpose, and any explanations of werewolfism that reject a supernatural cause are ‘in themselves unworthy of record’.<sup>38</sup> It is according to this worldview, then, that both the werewolf and the wolf are demonised, and the latter imbued with ‘so many gloomy superstitions that are horribly real and true’.<sup>39</sup> But if there is a ‘horribly real truth’ to be gleaned from Summers’ demonisation of the wolf it fits the shoulders of ‘man’ rather more snugly than the haunches of a wolf. Mary Midgley’s contention that ‘man’s view of man has been built up on a supposed contrast between man and animals which was formed by seeing animals not as they were, but as projections of our own fears and desires’ seems amply born out in Summers’ description of wolves.<sup>40</sup>

But if Summers does displace on to the wolf those ‘fears and desires’ he is unwilling to acknowledge in ‘man’, they are perhaps returned to their putative human source, if not in the content as such, then in the ardour and intensity of his prose. Consider the following passage:

‘nearer yet, what time the red glare of his eyes across a darkened plain of unflecked snow has paralyzed some lonely leash of travellers, and

the plunging horses mad with terror break into a frenzied gallop, their unchecked career whirling the heavy sleigh as a mere straw-weight jerry-jingle behind, whilst the gaunt shadowy forms muster in a greater company and advance with fearful rapidity towards their human prey: all down the vistas of dateless centuries the wolf has ever been the inevitable, remorseless enemy of man.<sup>41</sup>

Here it would seem that in the imagined 'red glare' of the eyes of a wolf Summers finds himself caught up in a kind of possession, a frenzied *animation*. In this context 'ferocity and ravening hunger' are as much the 'distinctive features' of Summers' writing as they are of its ostensible subject; a 'ravening hunger' to summon up and confront what may be otherwise unconfrontable, and for which the imagined wolf serves as an exemplary host.

Summers presents the modern reader, then, with that demonised version of the wolf, that 'twisted' sense of the lupine, which Lopez sees as originating in the Middle Ages. However, the very fervour of Summers' demonisation of the wolf articulates a more universal fascination with the wolf. It is both the site of our projected 'fears and desires', and an actual animal, out there, in the wild, just beyond our ken. This is not to overlook the fact that in his defence of the church's position on witchcraft and werewolves, Summers may be construed as little more than an apologist for a regime that verged on the genocidal in its pursuit of a calculated religious cleansing. But for all his credulity, and notwithstanding that this may be attributed to a particular individual psychopathology, Summers remains relevant. Through his exhaustive recapitulation of the church's analysis of the werewolf question, or more accurately perhaps in the fissures and cracks of that analysis, Summers points to some of the ways that we imagine the human as both *contiguous with*, and *separate from*, the animal. And it is these same

questions of contiguity and separation, similarity and strangeness, that inform, both philosophically and viscerally, a markedly different text, H.G Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

Published in 1896, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, touched an acutely sensitive nerve among many of its earliest reviewers. According to an unsigned review in *Speaker* the 'thrill of horror' which the novel 'sent through the mind of the reader' was no excuse for the 'absolutely degrading' content of the story, while another unsigned review in *Guardian* (an Anglican weekly) found it 'unpleasant and painful' despite, or perhaps even because, of its cleverness and originality.<sup>42</sup> The tone of this initial critical reception echoes, if rather less vehemently, that which, some five years earlier, greeted the first performance of Ibsen's *Ghosts* on the London stage. Among the notices which George Bernard Shaw records are: 'This disgusting representation', 'Unutterably offensive', 'Revoltingly suggestive and blasphemous', and 'morbid, unhealthy, unwholesome'.<sup>43</sup> In the case of both novel and play something held dear had been violated, a boundary crossed for which the marker of 'good taste' became a convenient critical peg on which to attach a more deeply felt sense of transgression. But, on the face of it at least, Wells' novel lacks the potential for outrage of Ibsen's drama. *Ghosts* is about incest, venereal disease and the hypocrisies of bourgeois marriage. It doesn't just strike close to home, it strikes *in* the home. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, on the other hand, is about a distant island of 'Beast People' far removed from the metropolitan heartlands of empire. Where then does its capacity to affront and horrify lie? What boundaries does it transgress?

In the 'frame' introduction by the protagonist's nephew the reader is advised that what follows is a manuscript of the late Edward Prendick, discovered after his death. This manuscript purports to fill in the gap between the uncle's being lost in tropical seas and his eventual rescue almost a year later, when the account he gave of himself seemed so strange that he was 'supposed demented'.<sup>44</sup> Thereafter Edward Prendick remained silent on the matter, claiming loss of memory. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, then, is a tale whose veracity the reader is invited to doubt, a narrative from the frontiers of the known, and it is this expectation of the fantastic, and especially the narrative's exploration of the borders of the human, that situates it in ontological territory resembling that of Summers' account of 'werewolfism'. In short, Prendick finds himself marooned on a remote island whose strange population of 'bestial-looking creatures', he gradually learns, are abominable amalgams of animals and human beings under thrall to the eponymous Doctor Moreau and his dissipated and somewhat reluctant assistant, Montgomery.<sup>45</sup> Slowly it dawns on Prendick that the Beast People are the creations of Moreau himself. At one point Prendick exclaims 'could it be possible...that such a thing as the vivisection of men was possible?'<sup>46</sup> Fearing for his own fate, Prendick describes this animalisation of the human 'as the most hideous degradation it was possible to conceive'.<sup>47</sup>

Here Prendick's horror of animalisation recalls Summers' characterisation of 'werewolfism' as 'a very real and terrible thing', and, along with the gruesome depictions of Moreau's methods, seems to go some way to explain the critical repugnance that Wells' novel attracted. However, although, for Prendick, the transformation of men into animals amounts to 'the most hideous degradation' conceivable, the truth of what is

happening on Moreau's island lies beyond the reach of the conceivable, that is until Moreau convinces him that 'the Creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals – humanised animals – triumphs of vivisection'.<sup>48</sup> Thus the possibility which Summers, like Prendick, does not so much dismiss as fail even to acknowledge, is made manifest in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. The human/animal border is crossed not by the human agent, but by the animal.

This crisis in human identity forms the subject of a perceptive analysis in Kelly Hurley's study of fin-de-siècle British Gothic fiction *The Gothic Body*. Hurley borrows the term 'abhuman' from the supernaturalist novelist William Hope Hodgson, to describe the post-Darwinian anxiety regarding the ontological stability and surety of the human subject: 'The abhuman subject is a not-quite-human subject characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other'.<sup>49</sup> Hurley's concept of the 'abhuman' is valuable in illustrating how a latent threat to human identity assumes particular forms according to particular socio-historical conditions; 'In a secular, Darwinian age, neither God nor Providence remain as agents of design: nor is their logical substitute, "Man" available any longer as a transcendental signified in relation to which the world takes meaning'.<sup>50</sup> For Hurley, this crisis in the human subjectivity manifests itself in works by Wells, and others, as an anxious fascination with the possibility of human/animal transformation which shows that 'humanness' is 'merely a discursive construct, a provisional category under erasure at the moment its delineations are marked out.'<sup>51</sup>

The ambiguous status of the human, which results from the dissolution of ontological parameters, is mirrored by the moral ambiguity of Moreau himself. Although the possessor of 'an extraordinary imagination', Moreau has been hounded from England for the 'horrors' of his vivisectionist experiments.<sup>52</sup> In being admired for his brilliance and damned for his methods, or what these methods might reveal, the figure of Moreau embodies a modern unease with the potential of science to shape the future which is reflected in his 'dark figure and awful white face'.<sup>53</sup> Indeed the very sound of his name (Moreau/Morrow) hints at a future whose time may have already come. This ambiguous status of Moreau as both the promise and the curse of science, recalls and conflates the medieval roles of inquisitor and sorcerer. On the one hand Moreau sees his own task as one of purification, of "burn[ing] out all the animal", but his power is also comprised of a quasi-scientific version of the witch's power to effect a form of 'glamour'.<sup>54</sup> The transformation of animal to man does not "stop at a mere physical metamorphosis...In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of replacing old inherent instincts by new suggestions".<sup>55</sup> Seen in this light, Moreau's Beast People are the equivalent of Summers' involuntary werewolves, the pitiable victims of 'some spell cast over them through the malignant power of a witch', or, in the case of Moreau's 'creations', the hypnotic power of the scientist. However, there is, of course, a profound difference between Summers and Wells, and one which Hurley does not wholly acknowledge when she argues that 'the idea of human devolution is the ultimate horror within the novel'.<sup>56</sup> For the involuntary werewolf the curse consists in becoming *animal*, but for the beast-people the curse consists in becoming *human*.



The phrase 'becoming human' in itself suggests something of how Wells' novel displaces the centrality of the human in the universal scheme of things. Although Moreau intends that his humanising process will be achieved by 'burn[ing] out the animal', as if to reveal some proto-human core on which to hypnotically graft the fully-fledged human psyche, he also confesses that even as his vivisected progeny regress to their former animal condition they display "a kind of upward striving...part vanity, part waste sexual emotion, part curiosity".<sup>57</sup> It is an astonishing image that both *renders* and *rends* the human within the terms of a particularly telling paradox. On the face of it, and in keeping with a pseudo-scientific progressive formulation of evolution, the human is still conceived as being 'higher' than the animal, as being the destination of an 'upward striving', but, at the same time, the human is seen as nothing more than *waste matter*, as neither the origin of meaning nor the culminating embodiment of a meaningful universe, but merely a by-product of impersonal, inhuman forces. "It only mocks me" declares Moreau, but for Prendick the uncanny *realisation* of the human in the same moment of the *dissolution* of the human is acutely, if disturbingly, moving.<sup>58</sup> Only when he tracks down an errant Beast Man and sees 'the creature...in a perfectly animal attitude...its imperfectly human face distorted with terror', does he register 'the fact of its humanity'.<sup>59</sup> The logic of this insight, this moment of identification (if indeed such an aporia still permits us to talk in terms of logic) means that Prendick has to acknowledge that what seems to him most familiar in the hunted Beast Man, what seems most to reflect his own humanity, is, in effect, the absolute *animality* of the other in its de-humanised, or (since the Beast man has regressed) 'unmanned' state. Thus the 'abhuman' is evinced as a profoundly ambivalent category which may not be thought of as entirely negative.

Drawing on Julia Kristeva's notion of 'abjection', Hurley argues that the 'abhuman' involves not only 'a movement away' from the human, but also 'a movement towards – towards a site or condition as yet unspecified'.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, 'to be thus "outcast" is to suffer an anxiety often nauseating in its intensity, but to embrace abjection is to experience *jouissance*.'<sup>61</sup> This admixture of repulsion and attraction recalls how Montague Summers' demonisation of wolves and werewolves is marked by a hyperbolic and frenzied prose style, an almost wanton delight in syntactical contortions and profuse, lurid imagery.

For Prendick this rift in the human condition means that in acknowledging the human in the animal Prendick acknowledges and valorises the animal in himself. In effect each term effaces the other. For Prendick this is an epiphany that is both liberating and, in the end, unbearable. In Moreau's *Beast People* he sees 'the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and fate', but it is not an epiphany that he can reconcile with living a life among 'human' subjects.<sup>62</sup> Having returned to London he turns to astronomy where 'in the vast and eternal laws of matter, and not in the daily cares and sins and troubles of men, that which is more than animal within us must find its solace and its hope'.<sup>63</sup> Only by becoming a metaphysical abstraction can the concept of a purely human identity be safeguarded against that transformation from 'beast' to 'man' which threatens so absolutely because it implies that the ontological space of 'man' can be riven from the *outside*; better that men become beasts and vacate the ontological sanctuary of the human, than *others* lay claim to the title 'human'. However, Prendick's attempt to place the human off-limits by translocating it into the metaphysical ether,

beyond flesh, beyond indeed the very notion of the physical, is underlined by a note of tragic loss. The 'hope and solitude in which my story ends' also evinces a profound sense of alienation and disconnection which elides his epiphanic moment of identification on the island.<sup>64</sup> Only by severing earthly ties can he escape the impression that other people 'seemed no more my fellow creatures than dead bodies would be', and release himself from the sense of being 'only an animal tormented with some strange disorder in its brain, that sent it to wander alone, like a sheep stricken with the gid'.<sup>65</sup> In the end, then, 'stricken' by animality, Prendick chooses existential death. The palpable, messy reality of the animal is not entitled to 'host' the presence of the human. Instead Prendick looks toward another kind of host, the impalpable, far-flung 'glittering hosts of heaven'. Yet ironically, the very etymology of 'hosts' (from the Latin *hostis*, meaning stranger, enemy) implies a deadening estrangement.

### *Writers in Wolves' Clothing*

The 'abhuman' and indeed *abject* vision of H.G Wells was not, however, the only literary response to the after-shock of the Darwinian revolution in terms of its impact on the sanctity of human identity. Darwin's insight that if human beings are evolved from animals, then the animal stage may yet remain an intrinsic part of our humanity, opened up other ways of re-imagining the human which actively embraced, or *seemed* to embrace, animality as a vital and potentially liberating force. It is precisely with this theme in mind that I now want to focus on texts by two writers whose animal writing

continues to fascinate – Jack London and D.H Lawrence. In this respect I want to take up, albeit not uncritically, the notion of the ‘biocentric’ writer which Margot Norris discusses in her analysis of literature in the wake of Darwin and Nietzsche, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*. For Norris, the ‘biocentric spirit’ reveals itself in writers and artists who ‘create *as* the animal – not like the animal, in imitation of the animal – but with their animality speaking’.<sup>66</sup> To explore this question in relation to London’s and Lawrence’s texts is to provoke some salient questions. To what extent do London and Lawrence de-centre the human subject in their texts, eschewing orthodox notions of representation and communication, in favour of an animality that according to Norris produces ‘autotelic activity in the form of performances or exercises analogous to the instinctive activity of animal life’?<sup>67</sup> Alternatively, do these exercises in ‘literary lycanthropy’ conform to an ultimately androcentric agenda? Ultimately we need to ask what kind of wolf is it that emerges from London’s and Lawrence’s texts, and, in terms of their own self-image as writers, what exactly do these wolves mean?

The critic John Yoder notes that when Jack London asked his wife, Charmian, to call him not ‘Jack’ but ‘Wolf’, she had her reservations.<sup>68</sup> It was not *her* name for him but George Sterling’s. As a term of endearment it lacked intimacy; it was neither intimate nor precious enough. But what would it have *meant* for Charmian to call her husband ‘Wolf’? As Yoder points out the term ‘wolf’ connotes not only a ‘ferocious, dramatic, sensational’ animal, but also masculine sexual predatoriness and voraciousness of appetite.<sup>69</sup> What kind of wolf, then, did Jack London imagine himself, or want Charmian to imagine him, to be? For a writer whose popular reputation rests principally on his

depiction of wolves, or more accurately on the problematic ontological borderland between wolf and dog it is a good question. Although neither of London's principal 'wolf' texts – *The Call of The Wild* and *White Fang* – involve first person narrators, the complex ways in which the perspective of their canine heroes is inhabited forms a major factor of their appeal. Consider the opening sentence of *The Call of the Wild*: 'Buck did not read the newspapers, or he would have known that trouble was brewing, not alone for himself, but for every tidewater dog'.<sup>70</sup> According to Gerd Hurm this 'aesthetic dislocation' results in an initial uncertainty whether Buck is man or animal [which] disrupts conventionalised forms of perception.'<sup>71</sup> As a narrative 'ploy' this identifies 'readers more closely with the perspective of his [London's] dog figure', and provides an 'underlying link with human capacities [which] heightens the readers' interest in Buck's subsequent re-education.'<sup>72</sup> Whether Buck's capture by dog thieves, escape, and acceptance into and leadership of a pack of wild wolves is a *re*-education or a *dis*-education is a moot point. After all Buck's rite of passage is, ostensibly at least, one from domestication and culture to wildness and nature which entails, as London puts it, 'the decay...of his moral nature'.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless Hurm's point that Buck is an amalgam of the human and the canine is valid, and raises important questions. In what ways is the reader supposed to identify with Buck, and is London, as a writer, letting his own animality speak through the text, or, alternatively, employing his 'dog figure' as a reductive metaphor, simply a token in a medium of symbolic exchange that seeks to establish meaning from a markedly androcentric perspective? In other words, is London's text the performance of the writer/animal or the didactic word of the author/God? In this respect it

is worth considering that Buck is not so much the singer of the song, as that which is sung:

When he moaned and sobbed, it was with the pain of living that was of old the pain of his wild fathers, and the fear and mystery of the cold and dark that was to them fear and mystery. And that he should be stirred by it marked the completeness with which he harked back through the ages of fire and roof to the raw beginnings of life in the howling ages.<sup>74</sup>

Insofar as this 'articulate travail of existence' amounts not to an act of communication, but rather an *enactment* of being, an instancing of Buck's 'completeness' as animal, the text appears to exhibit that notion of an 'autotelic' performance which Norris argues is both the motive and expression of the 'biocentric' writer.<sup>75</sup> A few pages later the correlation between animal instinct and artistic motivation is made even more explicit:

There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life beyond which life cannot rise, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive. This ecstasy, this forgetfulness of living, comes to the artist, caught up in and out of himself in a sheet of flame...and it came to Buck, leading the pack, sounding the old wolf-cry.<sup>76</sup>

For London, then, the artist, subject to this form of animal forgetfulness, is in effect subject, rather than author, of a creative act whose meaning coheres solely in the exhilarant voicing of unmediated animal drives, rather than in any conscious communicative intent or subsequent cultural value that is bestowed on 'his' act. In terms of Norris' 'biocentric' criteria such an act stems from modes of thinking that attempt to 'frustrate communication...that negate their authority, that rupture representation and rebuff interpretation.'<sup>77</sup>

There are, however, other ways of contextualising London's evocation of the animal-as-artist/artist-as-animal. For example, is Buck, as London's surrogate artist, not so much a

manifestation of some primary, pre-volitional will to be, but rather a metaphor employed consciously to situate the artist in relation to society, and so valorise the status of the former? To put the matter rather more prosaically, in *The Call of the Wild*, and for that matter *White Fang*, is it 'Jack the Man' or 'Jack the Wolf' that writes? Seen in this light London's depiction of Buck as 'sounding the deeps of his nature...mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being...flying exultantly under the stars' amounts to a rhetorical strategy.<sup>78</sup> The artist portrays himself not as owing a debt to culture but, instead, as subsumed by the 'grace' of nature and freed from the culture-bound mass, or pack, of humanity; to the artist his song, to the rest their chains.

To describe London's text in this way, as a calculated manoeuvre, is to deny it any full measure of biocentric, autotelic purity, which then effectively becomes a claim the artist makes on behalf of the text, rather than something intrinsic to it. This disjunction between the rhetorical and the autotelic is recognised by Norris when she concludes that 'the paradox of producing an art *within* culture that is not *of* culture is only imperfectly resolvable in practice.'<sup>79</sup> However, for Norris, biocentric art may still distinguish itself from a 'philosophical model of culture...which delineates its distinctive features as mediation and enthrallment to "the other"'.<sup>80</sup> To achieve this it must be 'produced unselfconsciously, without the motive, overt or covert, of aggrandising the artist's ego, reputation, or social condition', and 'its aim must be neither to impress nor persuade...it must rely on techniques that circumvent reason but that speak to blood and bowels in those whose instincts are not yet atrophied'.<sup>81</sup> Whether or not London's wolf narratives are a means of aggrandising or sublimating the 'artist's ego', and even conceding that

they may excite the 'blood' and, rather more alarmingly the 'bowels' of their readers, there is a sense in which they remain inescapably in thrall to 'the other'. It is an 'other' which assumes various forms but predominantly that of the wolf. Moreover, if for Norris 'art is...implicated in complex ways in the subject's exchanges with the "other" ...by functioning as a putative repository of meaning, by distributing status and prestige to authors, audiences and representations', then London's wolf is very much a creature of the anthropocentric and essentialising discourse of art.<sup>82</sup> In other words it is there to represent certain meanings and not others. Consider the following passage:

He [Buck] must master or be mastered; while to show mercy was weakness. Mercy did not exist in the primordial life. It was misunderstood for fear, and such misunderstanding made for death. Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten was the law; and this mandate, down out of the depths of Time, he obeyed.'<sup>83</sup>

Here London presents the reader with an image of the wolf, inflected in particular ways that is intended to be taken as 'truth'. Indeed the principal difference between Jack London's and Montague Summers' portrayal of wolves lies not in the imagery as such, but rather in the values that that these images are intended to connote. That London elides, and may well have been ignorant of, the complex patterns of submission and reconciliation that govern the social relations of wolves is not precisely my point here. The question of the relationship between how the world is 'imagined' in literature and 'known' through other discourses, will be discussed later in this thesis. What is important to recognise in terms of my present discussion is that the text's claims to 'know' the wolf, or come to that, to apprehend the meaning of 'the wild', of 'nature', rest on culturally dependent constructions of these terms. Seen in this light Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin's claim that Jack London 'captured the essence of the North' cannot help but engender the



riposte 'whose essence?'<sup>84</sup> Is Jack London's 'essence of the North' the same as that of a Koyukun Indian? The same (il)logic through which London attempts to fix landscape to mindscape applies to his canine protagonists. Is London's wolf the same wolf that the indigenous inhabitant sees, or the field biologist, or the wildlife tourist? The complexity of what it might mean to be 'animal' is reduced to an unproblematic given. The foregrounding of aggression, competition and individuality in *The Call of The Wild* elides nurture and co-operation as equally valid aspects of the animal. In this respect the way in which, according to Norris, other writers (including Nietzsche and Lawrence) conceive of the animal, and of the 'artist-as-animal', is prone to a similar bias. Consider Norris' contention that 'in biocentric thought, animal violence is restored to its amoral Dionysian innocence', and that 'it functions as a discharge of power for its own sake, as an expenditure of superfluous, opulent energy and strength'.<sup>85</sup> This valorisation of 'violence' and 'power' for their own sake may be an effective way for the biocentric writer to challenge normative, instrumentalist models of literature but it does so only by marginalising, if not altogether excluding, other notions of animality, such as care for the young and social bonding. In other words biocentric thinking runs the risk of problematising 'man' and 'culture', but only at the cost of simplifying the 'animal' and 'nature'.

However, London's celebration of Buck as the supreme individual, in whom the artistic flame burns more strongly through being freed from culture, is ultimately tempered by the very demands of the social world. The song that Buck sings at the end of the novella, 'his great throat a-bellow', signals not a break *from* culture, but a return *to* culture, in a

problematic resolution that tries to dissolve the opposition of home(culture)/wild(nature) upon which the narrative tension of the novel has hitherto rested.<sup>86</sup> Ultimately, Buck's song is 'the song of the pack'.<sup>87</sup> For Hurm this is a moment that marks the limits of London's acceptance of Nietzsche, and especially notions of the 'superman' and 'will to power'. Buck's 'return' to the wild from the complacent comforts of domestic life may embody an essentially Nietzschean critique of 'life-denying and hypocritical bourgeois morals', but in the end 'Buck's true nobility...finds its congenial expression in and through the collective'.<sup>88</sup> The lone wolf becomes the pack wolf.

A similar ambivalence concerning the ontological status of 'civilisation' and 'nature' also structures *White Fang*, although in this later work London's eponymous lupine protagonist undertakes Buck's journey in reverse; from the 'wild' North to the 'civilised' South, thereby undergoing an existential metamorphosis from wolf to dog. For Earle Labor this process, which might tentatively be described as 'Lassie-fication', renders *White Fang* a 'sociological fable' rather than a 'mythic romance' like *The Call of The Wild*.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, when it is claimed that 'had White Fang never come into the fires of man, the Wild would have moulded him into a true wolf', London's Social Darwinist view of evolution and environment is clearly evoked, although this should not blind us to the acuteness of his insight that the difference between a wolf and a dog is as much cultural as it is biological.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the fable structure of *White Fang* throws into even sharper relief both London's valorisation of a civilisation/wild dichotomy, and the intrinsic instability of this, and related oppositions. Indeed in this respect *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* form distorted mirror images of one another. Buck sheds that 'vain thing'

which is his 'moral nature' as 'the ancient song surged through him and he came into his own once again'.<sup>91</sup> Conversely White Fang's very 'wildness' is figured as a form of lack which only the civilising intervention of 'man', the voice of the refined and cultivated Weedon Scott, can make good:

Within him [White Fang] it aroused feelings which he had likewise never experienced before. He was aware of a certain strange satisfaction, as though some need were being gratified, as though some void in his being were being filled.<sup>92</sup>

This equivocal sense of ontological orientation pervades the novel. In evoking the 'Wild' as 'A vast silence', the 'masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity' silently mocking human endeavour, London's text echoes Conrad's characterisation of the African jungle in *Heart of Darkness* as an inscrutable, inhuman malevolence.<sup>93</sup> White Fang himself, however, may be wild but he is not *of* the 'Wild'. He may be, to begin with at least, wild, in the sense that he is 'wolf', not 'dog', but that which animates him is precisely that which the life-hating 'Wild' reviles and mocks: life itself, 'the life that was the very substance of his body, and that was apart from his own personal life'.<sup>94</sup> What counts as wild, then, is something that for London, is always riven by apparently incompatible polarities: the 'Wild' as, in effect, Death, and the 'Wild' as the spontaneous, unconscious outpouring of life as yet undiluted by culture. Accordingly White Fang's mother must be figured as both wild and not-wild. She is wild enough to unhesitatingly obey the law of 'EAT OR BE EATEN', but at the same time the text resolutely asserts that 'the Wild is the Wild, and motherhood is motherhood'.<sup>95</sup>

The ambivalent status of the wolf governs what is perhaps the novel's most telling scene, but it is a scene that also serves as a disturbing metaphor for the status of 'man' himself. Two men, Henry and Bill, traverse the 'frozen-hearted Northland Wild' by dog-sledge, their cargo the encoffined body of a third.<sup>96</sup> All the while their movements are tracked by a pack of ravenous wolves. Gradually the sledge dogs are picked off, one by one. Then Bill falls prey to the lupine foe, leaving Henry alone against the wild, his only defence a slowly diminishing circle of fire he has built between him and the wolves:

Inside this circle he crouched...When he had thus disappeared within his shelter of flame, the whole pack came curiously to the rim of the fire to see what had become of him...and they now settled down in a close-drawn circle, like so many dogs<sup>97</sup>

What is remarkable about this passage is not so much its evocation of wolves as patient, determined killers, but rather the way in which the normative Cartesian model of man/animal ontologies is subject to an uncanny inversion. Instead of the animal, 'man' becomes the object of study. Surrounded by the embers of what is meant to distinguish him from the animal – the ability to make fire – the human subject becomes the focus of a brooding, non-human sentience, potentially fatal both to flesh and the very notion of a discrete and privileged human subjectivity. That proud declaration of human superiority 'I think therefore I am' is threatened by its own mutant echo, '*It* thinks therefore *I* am not.'

The remainder of *White Fang* never quite achieves the insight of this scene from its opening pages, being rather more concerned with a didactic exposition of the influences of heredity and environment. Indeed it is this rubric that allows London to isolate 'man' in terms of a hierarchizing, and racially inflected, Social Darwinist teleology in which

'white men' are as 'a race of superior gods' compared to the 'Indians that White Fang has known'.<sup>98</sup> In this context the very whiteness of White Fang emphasises his potential for development and acculturation. Nonetheless the scene of the circle of fire, or just as accurately, *circle of wolves*, problematises London's schematic categorising of human and animal subjectivities. Civilisation can no more escape the shadow of the 'Wild' than the dog can escape the shadow of the wolf. In terms of Norris' definition of the biocentric writer, Jack London may write not as the animal but as a human, or more precisely a *man*, but he writes with a troubling sense of how the boundaries of the human remain susceptible to a disturbing animal infiltration.

'I'm the red wolf, says the dark old father./All right, the red dawn wolf I am.'<sup>99</sup> Like Jack London, the speaker of D.H Lawrence's poem 'The Red Wolf' needs to have his own identity as wolf confirmed by another party, although in Lawrence's case it is not the writer's spouse, or 'mate', that is assigned the task of confirming wolfhood, but an American Indian 'demon'. But is Lawrence any more of a wolf than London? To put the question in terms of Norris' concept of the biocentric writer, does Lawrence slough his humanity in order to 'create *as* the animal', with his 'animality speaking'? According to Norris, Lawrence's credentials as a biocentric writer are demonstrated triumphantly in his novella *St Mawr*, where Lawrence's equine hero encapsulates 'the authority to dissolve the self-conscious subject, to insist that life and power exist external to the thinking self'.<sup>100</sup> At first sight 'The Red Wolf' appears to offer a similar critique of a metaphysical system whose values emphasise a valorised notion of the human self as the repository of all claims to meaning and authority. The waning of the day is likened to 'a white Christ

fallen to dust from a cross', while a little later the poet declares that his God 'fell to dust as the twilight fell,/Was fume as I trod/The last step out of the east.'<sup>101</sup> Does, however, this rejection of Christ, as the supreme *man*, the nature-transcending embodiment of meaning, necessarily imply a return to the animal? Lawrence's description of the poet as the 'Thin red wolf' seems to support a biocentric reading of the poem. 'The Red-dawn-wolf' arrives on the scene as the 'christus' crumbles.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, the poem's opening and closing lines announce the centrality of the animal to the physical universe and to individual identity. 'The Red Wolf' begins with the image of an eagle circling 'Over the heart of the west, the Taos desert', and ends with poet naming himself as 'the red dawn wolf'.<sup>103</sup> The main body of the poem, however, sees the speaker entering into a dialogue with the Indian demon who is also glossed as the Christian devil, as 'Old Nick'. The demon tells the 'Thin red wolf of a paleface' to 'go home', only to be met with the reply 'I have no home, old father./That's why I come.'<sup>104</sup> At this point Lawrence's poem lends itself to a biocentric reading in terms of the critique of European humanist values that the poet's rejection of his Old World 'home' implies. In what follows however, the poet's encounter with his racial 'other' enacts a colonialist disparagement and negation of indigenous discourse:

Father, you are not asked.  
I am come. I am here. The red-dawn-wolf  
Sniffs round your place.  
Lifts up his voice and howls to the walls of the pueblo,  
Announcing he's here.<sup>105</sup>

Seen in this light the poet's abandonment of his cultural heritage is, at best, partial the result of which is not the embrace of a New World paganism. Indeed, the animal-centred

values and images that such a culture might present have been all but dismissed as merely redundant Christ-substitutes:

And a black crucifix like a dead tree spreading wings;  
Maybe a black eagle with its wings out  
Left lonely in the night  
In a sort of worship.<sup>106</sup>

If this is a 'sort of worship' it is a ritual without attendant devotees. The 'new story' that the poet waits for the demon to provide never arrives. Instead it is the poet's task to provide meaning and value, to exert spiritual and aesthetic authority. What is at stake, then, is not just a moribund Christian worldview, but also the alternative of New World paganism. Neither is capable of telling viable stories. If anyone is to provide these stories it will have to be 'the red dawn wolf', the poet himself, who despite his 'guise' as a wolf, does not so much 'animalise' himself but, in a Nietzschean turn, 'superhumanise' himself as the radically 'new' wellspring of meaning. No less than at the hands of earlier 'Christian' invaders must the Indian submit to a new 'European' presence insinuating its own cultural and aesthetic 'superiority'. The Lawrence of *St Mawr* may, in Norris' terms, offer a critique of the artist as a 'social entity, a figure of anthropocentric vanity...a self-conscious pose', but the Lawrence of 'The Red Wolf' falls foul of these very charges by re-instating an ontological hierarchy in which the artist is paramount as the herald of a new dawn.<sup>107</sup>

Are there, then, two Lawrences - Lawrence the man, and Lawrence the animal? My reading of 'the Red Wolf' evinces a Lawrence who seems mainly concerned with a re-stating, though on different terms, of a eurocentric ontological hierarchy, a kind of

psychic imperialism in the name, ultimately, not of the animal but of 'man'. In other poems, however, rather than arrogating the animal as a vehicle for an intrinsically androcentric agenda, Lawrence allows the animal to inform his art. In, for example 'Fish', the poet does not directly identify himself as animal, but rather opens himself, and his poem, to the animal so that the biocentric spirit is the more intensely felt for being figured as an aspiration rather than a claim. The anthropocentric artist may, for Norris, be required to produce 'representations whose function is to serve as tokens of cultural exchange, and as media of social communication, that is, mediated objects in the intersubjective relations between artist and public', but the fish, as the poem's opening lines suggest, becomes meaningful because it is free of the burden of *having* to mean:<sup>108</sup>

Fish, oh Fish  
So little matters!

Whether the waters rise and cover the earth  
Or whether the waters wilt in hollow places  
All one to you.

Aqueous, subaqueous,  
Submerged  
And wave-thrilled.<sup>109</sup>

The fish, then, is the locus of a pure performativity. Concerned only with the display of its own animality, or 'fishness', it has nothing to communicate beyond the enactment of its own being. Unlike the 'red dawn wolf' it has no stories to tell. In contrast to the anthropocentric artist's dependence on 'mediation', which Norris (p5), argues 'functions to insert a lack or absence into the play of natural power', the fish's 'oneness' with its environment means that there is no lack for art or knowledge to compensate for.<sup>110</sup> As the poem succinctly puts it, 'Never know,/Never grasp.'<sup>111</sup> In comparison to the poet of 'The Red Wolf' who needs must *penetrate* another environment in order to lay claim to it on



an aesthetic, spiritual and physical level, the fish 'swims enwombed'.<sup>112</sup> Thus the notion of agency itself is located as much with the environment as with the ostensible actor in that environment. It is a relationship with the world, a mode of being, that leaves the poet, fish-like, gasping 'To be a fish!'<sup>113</sup> What the poet aspires to, the fish already is. Moreover, it is a dream of becoming which involves not so much a reconfiguration of the self as its effacement. When the poet attests 'Fish are beyond me', the 'me' that the fish elude is not simply the individual's ability to 'know', to 'grasp', but the very concept of 'me'.<sup>114</sup> This granting of an aesthetically-sensed but intellectually-unknowable 'otherness' to the fish reverses orthodox hierarchies of being. The sacred is located not in heaven, nor even on earth, but underwater. It is a turning of the existential tables that is encapsulated in the poem's closing lines, 'In the beginning/Jesus was called The Fish.../And in the end.'<sup>115</sup>

The fish, however, presents itself not just as a model for an alternative ontology, but for an alternative aesthetics. The poem's portrayal of the fish as a lived aesthetic performance effectively epitomises Lawrence's ambitions for his own art which Norris describes as one of making 'his writing constitute an act, a verb rather than a noun, a gesture rather than an object.'<sup>116</sup> In speaking 'endless inaudible wavelets into the wave', the fish contributes not meaning, but rather helps to ensure the continuation of a performance of which its own, and other lives, unfettered by the need to mean, are integral parts.<sup>117</sup> It does not care whether its performance is 'heard' or not, only that the performance takes place. In this context the poem's very title, 'Fish', may be seen as referring self-reflexively to the poem itself, to its language performance, or at least to

Lawrence's vision of what a language performance motivated only by instinctual necessity might look like. As the fish 'swarm in companies', and 'drive in shoals' but 'out of contact...many suspended together, forever apart,/Each one alone with the waters, upon one wave with the rest', so the words of a poem swim into view on the page, in 'stanza-shoals', separated and connected by the spaces of blank paper between them in the same way that the fish in a shoal are separated by 'A magnetism in the water.'<sup>118</sup> This valorisation of display may not be possible in a literary medium where what matters is not simply outward visible form but syntactic and semantic relationship, but it does suggest how, for Lawrence, the concept of aesthetics itself may not be solely, or even primarily, human. Before the animal the artist can only 'stand at the pale of my being/And look beyond and see.'<sup>119</sup>

The poems 'Fish' and 'The Red Wolf' offer, then, not only different readings of the animal, but in a sense different readings of Lawrence himself; the Lawrence that opens himself to the otherness of the animal, and the Lawrence who seeks to subsume the animal and thereby denude that animal otherness of its power. Paradoxically, Lawrence succeeds in evincing a more convincing animal aesthetics in 'Fish', where a distance between self and other is maintained, than in 'The Red Wolf' where he dons the mantle of the animal himself. There is, from an early twenty-first century perspective, something rather poignant about Lawrence selecting the wolf as his symbol for a re-invigorated conception of the human, given the wolf's extermination from most of Europe and much of North America. But what really matters for Lawrence is not the *wolfness* of the wolf, but its dawn-lit *newness*. For Lawrence, then, no more than for London, does the wolf

escape those 'values' of cunning, stealth, aggression and violence which it has been culturally designated to embody. Although, in other texts, Lawrence may evince the aesthetic potential of an animal performativity, he, like London, does not, in the end, allow the wolf to speak in the place of the human. Rather both writers *disguise* themselves as wolves. In terms of their wolf narratives, the status of the human may be critiqued, challenged and reconfigured but not, ultimately, at the cost of granting the animal fullness of presence, not even the wolf.

## Chapter Two

### Reflections in a Lupine Eye (II)

*'Do you think that...thing is one of us?'*

Wolf children, and feral children in general, are those children who have allegedly been reared by wild animals or who have survived and developed by their own lights, largely apart from human society and without the benefit of human parenting. Such children are a source of fascination for several reasons. As inhabitants of the border between biology and culture they shed a revealing light on questions such as the origins of language, and, more profoundly, exactly what it is to 'be human'. But they also seem to throw into doubt the very notion of an *essential* human identity. The questionable status of the wolf child is foregrounded in an extract from Jane Yolen's novel *Children of the Wolf*, a text which I shall discuss in detail later in this chapter. Mohandas, the male, adolescent, first person narrator, describes the moment when he first encounters the 'wolf-girls' with whom his life is soon to become entwined:

Inside the hollow we saw the strangest sight. The two cubs and two hideous creatures – the *manush-bhagas* – were huddled together in a monkey ball. Their arms and legs were clutched around each other, and it was hard to tell where one began and the other ended.<sup>1</sup>

This uncertainty as to where the human 'ends' and the animal 'begins' recalls, to borrow Kelly Hurley's phrase, that 'abhuman' ground between the human and the animal that, in differing ways, is explored and mapped by Summers and Wells. It suggests a similar anxiety about human distinctiveness, about the limits and boundaries of the human

subject. Indeed at this early stage in the novel the two girls have yet to be recognised as human, but even the realisation that they are not *manush-bhagas* (ghosts), but children raised by wolves, only serves to complicate rather than resolve the question of their putative humanity. However, this issue of their status and the terms of human/animal opposition, poses rather different questions than those raised by the writers I have discussed so far, for Yolen's wolf-girls are neither demonic werewolves, nor the hybridised victims of scientific nightmare. They are, as the novel's title proclaims, *Children of the Wolf*, human infants reared by a wolf *mother*, an altogether different kind of animal to the 'ravening killer' with which we have, so far, been largely concerned. Barry Lopez argues that, taken together, these contrasting versions of the wolf form a 'twin image' symbolising the 'central conflict between man's good and evil natures'.<sup>2</sup> However, as overarching categories, 'good' and 'evil' conceal rather more than they reveal, overshadowing other ways of conceptualising difference and otherness. In this chapter I want to elucidate some of these latent meanings by showing how representations of the wolf mother, and especially the 'wolf child', stand in more or less direct contrast to the 'ravening killer' version of the wolf but nonetheless exhibit a similarly problematic human/lupine demarcation. In this respect it is perhaps significant that as a rhetorical, and historical figure, the 'wolf child' enjoys an ancestry which rivals that of the werewolf. Romulus and Remus, for example, are hardly less famous than Lycaon. Indeed, so potent is the image of the 'wolf child' that it has become an umbrella term for 'wild' or 'feral' children of all kinds, and it is with perhaps the most celebrated of these 'cases', the education of Victor of Aveyron by the psychologist and philosopher of pedagogics Jean Itard, that I shall begin my discussion, focusing on how the 'wild' or

'wolf' child has come to be regarded as the litmus test for certain notions of 'being human'. I shall then explore how the ontological border represented by the 'wolf child' is delineated, crossed and re-crossed, in Jane Yolen's *Children of the Wolf*, and in another recent novel, Jill Payton Walsh's *Knowledge of Angels*, before concluding with a discussion of Angela Carter's lupine tale, 'Wolf Alice'.

According to Jean Itard, when a young boy of 'about eleven or twelve years of age', who had been living wild in and around the woods of Caune in France, was captured in 1798 by a party of hunters, the question of how exactly he had survived in the forests and fields, and to what extent, if any, he had been aided by the animals of the region, could not easily be answered.<sup>3</sup> That, however, he was 'wild' there was no doubt. In the words of his mentor and teacher, Jean Itard 'his whole existence was a life purely animal'.<sup>4</sup> Itard's subsequent and remarkable efforts to educate Victor of Aveyron, as the boy became known, affected not only the course of educational thinking, but also became a touchstone for how to establish what is essentially human about the human being.

The intellectual and ethical impetus of Itard's work with Victor lay in disproving the initial diagnosis that the current medical orthodoxy had arrived at, namely, that Victor was afflicted by 'idiotism' and that, in all probability, he had been abandoned by his parents for this very reason. For Itard, however, another possibility needed to be considered; could Victor:

'resolve the following metaphysical problem, viz 'to determine what would be the degree of understanding, and the nature of the ideas of a youth, who, deprived from his infancy, of all education, should have

*lived entirely separated from individuals of his species' (Itard's emphasis)*<sup>5</sup>

In essence, if Victor were a wild or feral child, abandoned as an infant by his parents for unknown reasons, rather than a simpleton cast out from the family because his 'idiotism' proved too onerous a burden, then he should respond positively to any efforts to educate him. Itard's successes in this enterprise are a matter of record. Although the speechless, 'savage' boy, who at the time of his capture, exhibited 'an unconquerable aversion from society and its customs', including cooked food and other 'objects of our pleasures', gained only the rudiments of speech, and whose sexual appetites, to Itard's chagrin, remained pubertal, his emotional and intellectual development, though limited, seemed sufficient to demonstrate the proof of Itard's case.<sup>6</sup>

Of more direct relevance to my own discussion, however, is how the case of Victor of Aveyron was cited then, and has been since, to assert an absolute distinction between what is human and what is animal, and thereby to establish a tightly drawn border between the two realms. For Lucien Malson, writing in the Structuralist heyday of the early 1960s, Jean Itard's success with Victor amounts to nothing less than vindication of the 'idea that man has no nature'.<sup>7</sup> According to Malson, Victor only *became* human, and showed the distinctive traits of humanness ('his ability to understand signs...growing self control...moral scruples...a sense of guilt') through a process of acculturation, of, in effect, *humanisation*.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, in this view, the human being is not so much born *into* culture as born *out of* culture. Thus, as far as Malson is concerned, 'the idea that men have psychological 'natures' is so riddled with objections that it must necessarily collapse'.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the existential malleability and compass of the human subject,

the animal is nothing but a 'prefabricated system', the material expression of innate and immutable biological drives.<sup>10</sup> That there may be something innate to 'man' that makes 'him', rather than other animals, susceptible to acculturation or, alternatively, whether an animal nurtured entirely by humans would act out to the letter its destiny as a 'prefabricated system', are not issues which trouble Malson's emphatic, even triumphant, proclamation of a distinct human identity which derives its uniqueness from being wholly culturally constructed. According to Malson, had Victor continued to live an existence 'purely animal' he would not have enjoyed so much as a toehold on the title 'human'. Moreover, this animal otherness of the wild child consists not, like Summers' wolves and werewolves, in its devil-induced savagery. Nor, like London's and Lawrence's animals, is the wild child seen as the locus of an unmediated, instinctive artistry. From this point of view, the wild child is as innocent of art and culture as it is of good and evil, and in this sense of being *wholly* other to that which constitutes the human, does not occupy even that liminal space of the 'human abject' which is the ontological habitat of Wells' beast people in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

The conclusions that Malson draws from the case of Victor, and other wild children, are in essence developments of and elaborations of the conclusions reached by Itard some one-hundred-and-fifty years earlier. For Itard, his albeit limited success in educating Victor proved that 'moral superiority which has been said to be natural to man, is merely the result of civilization'.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, despite the assurance with which Itard distinguishes the civilized from the inborn, the human from the animal, his writing is marked by a seemingly endemic uncertainty as to the terms of such distinctions and,



moreover, discloses an underlying ambivalence about what it means to be human. Malson remarks that Itard considered 'that the education of the senses was of primary importance', and it is in terms of one of these senses –the sense of smell – that Itard encounters a niggling difficulty in discriminating between the human and the animal.<sup>12</sup> As far as Itard is concerned 'the small degree of sensibility in the sensorial organs, which was observable in the case of the Savage of Aveyron' amounts to living proof of the presumption that 'sensibility is in exact proportion to the degree of civilization'.<sup>13</sup> Victor's 'small degree of sensibility', at the time of his capture, evinced itself in a general sensorial deficiency, including his sense of smell which was 'so little cultivated, that he seemed to be equally indifferent to the odour of the finest perfumes and the most fetid exhalations'.<sup>14</sup> Lack of 'cultivation', then, is conceived of as weakness, as an inability to discriminate between objects and to appreciate the diversity of the physical universe. However, when Itard comments on Victor's 'obstinate habit of smelling at everything which came in his way, even bodies which appeared to us inodorous', he suggests that Victor's sense of smell is *more* developed than his 'civilized' companions.<sup>15</sup> By the time that Itard comes to write his second progress report on Victor in 1806, some seven years after these comments, he is able to report significant developments in Victor's powers of hearing, sight and touch, but his sense of smell remained 'so delicate that it defied improvement', observing that 'civilization could add nothing' to what nature had already provided.<sup>16</sup> Although Itard attributes his failure to improve on this stubborn animal trait to the idea that smell is linked more 'to the exercise of digestive functions than to the development of the intellectual faculties' (p150), he nevertheless hints that the animal is,

quite literally, in *some senses* superior to the human, or to put the matter differently, in becoming human and shedding the animal, there is a price to pay.<sup>17</sup> Something is lost.

That the transformation from animal to man, from nature to culture, goes against a certain grain is also evident in how Itard reports his progress in 'awakening' Victor's sense of taste. For Itard, the capacity of this sense to exceed 'the limited function assigned to it by nature' in that it relates to pleasures as 'varied as they are numerous' amounts to a 'gift of civilization'.<sup>18</sup> However, he also makes the startling confession, given his faith in the civilizing process, that as far as Victor's sense of taste is concerned, 'it seemed to me advantageous to develop, or rather *pervert* it' (my emphasis).<sup>19</sup> Here, then, a different image of 'man' is hinted at than that suggested by the orthodox notion of culture *overcoming* nature. In this respect Itard's notion of 'civilized' man' as a 'perverted' animal echoes the kinds of argument made by Rousseau some thirty years previously in *Emile* (1762). Rousseau argues that the use of the senses becomes 'corrupted by our opinions', by the habits induced in man by education.<sup>20</sup> For Rousseau, the sensual aspect of humanity, prior to this corruption, is 'what I call in us *nature*'.<sup>21</sup> Thus the transition from 'natural' to 'civil' man amounts to a sort of ontological fragmentation:

Natural man is entirely for himself. He is numerical unity, the absolute whole which is relative only to itself or its kind. Civil man is only a fractional unity dependent on the denominator; his value is determined by his relation to the whole, which is the social body'.<sup>22</sup>

Seen in this light, 'Good social institutions are those that best know how to denature man', with the ambivalent consequence that 'his absolute existence' is taken from him 'in order to give him a relative one and transport the *I* into the common unity'.<sup>23</sup> In short, the birth of 'social man' entails the death of 'natural man', of man as animal. Rousseau's

notion of 'natural' and 'social', or 'civil', man thus looks forward to Itard's conception of 'civilized' man as a kind of perversion, which in turn anticipates Wells' characterisation of the human as 'waste matter'. For Rousseau, Itard and Wells, 'man' is, from a certain point of view, an, albeit impressive, anomaly.

What Victor gains then, in becoming civilized, is at the cost of something animal, a repression or perversion that is more than the quelling of the biological. Even more telling is Itard's suggestion that, through his sense of smell, Victor, as an animal, knows more than we as humans know, and that, accordingly, becoming human necessarily forecloses other ways of being, of knowing the world. Humanity, in this respect, is as much an ontological prison as it is a liberation from the shackles of animality. Indeed, Itard himself describes one of the primary characteristics of the pre-civilized Victor as 'an impassioned taste for the liberty of the fields'.<sup>24</sup> Even several years after his capture Itard rather poignantly portrays Victor's pleasure in water and sunlight as a remnant of his 'lost freedom'.<sup>25</sup> However perhaps the most remarkable sign of Itard's underlying doubt concerning the value and status of the human occurs, paradoxically, when he is at his most confident in asserting the fact of Victor's achieved, rather than intrinsic, humanity. On the same day as the death of the husband of his 'gouvernante', Madame Guérin, Victor lays out the dead man's place at the table, to the evident distress of his widow. For Itard, Victor's subsequent show of remorse is a 'moment of sadness, an emotion belonging entirely to civilized man'.<sup>26</sup> The ramifications of this apparently simple observation are considerable. Setting aside the entirely debatable question of whether animals can experience sadness, to claim that sadness, or the capacity to

experience sadness, is unique to 'civilized man' is also to imply that sadness is intrinsic to civilization, that underlying the immediate causes for being sad is an originary sadness produced by the civilizing process itself, by, in effect, the superseding and letting go of the animal. In short, the inevitable sadness of 'man', which in a Judaeo-Christian context is nothing less than his 'fall', is, in Itard's schemata, the breaching of the animal. I shall discuss in the next chapter how Freud was to arrive, by a somewhat different path, at much the same conclusion more than a century later, but for now I want to concentrate on the corollary of this idea of sadness as a sign of intrinsic 'lack' in the human, and show how the animal, the 'unperverted' animal, becomes a repository of an *imagined* sense of ontological completeness before the saddening breach of civilization. To explore how this is imagined I shall turn to works of the imagination and the 'wolf-child' novels of Jane Yolen and Jill Payton Walsh.

Jane Yolen's *Children of the Wolf* engages with the same dilemmas that the 'wild boy' of Aveyron presented for Jean Itard. Based on the authentic case of Kamala and Amala, the wolf-girls of Midnapore in Northeast India, the plot hinges on the efforts of an expatriate British clergyman, and head of an orphanage, the Reverend Welles, to tame and educate two young girls who have been 'rescued' from life with a wolf pack. Regarding the girls as a 'miracle sent to test *me*', and therefore an opportunity to demonstrate to the heathen natives that 'Christ is the one God', Welles' mission, like Itard's, is one of *humanising* his feral charges, of overcoming the animal.<sup>27</sup> From Welles' perspective the human and the animal are differentiated by a precise and palpable border, and not commingled in some

‘abhuman’ intermediate territory, or how else would his efforts to relocate the girls on the human side of the border amount to a miracle?

The thematic tension of the novel, however, consists in how this insistence on the separateness of human and animal identity, and consequently of the identity of the ‘wolf-girls’ themselves, becomes, in the eyes of Mohandas, the novel’s adolescent male narrator, *almost* fatally compromised. For Welles the evident inhumanity of the wolf-girls is guaranteed by the binary oppositions that concretise sites of masculine authority (the ‘Home’, with Welles at its head, and the village, under the sway of the ‘elders’) as normative. The forest, however, in its very ‘wildness’, is the un-homely province of the she-wolf, of the animal. It is, in effect, *abnormal*. Indeed as a representative of white colonial rule, Welles embodies the assumed superiority of European Christian values over the Oriental and pagan, and especially ‘the wild’. He is, in short, a civilised man, a Reverend *Father*, whereas the girls are neither good nor evil, but the ‘home-less’ progeny of an irreverent *Mother Nature*.

Mohandas, however, becomes aware that neither he nor the girls can be wholly contained within the subject positions assigned to them by a civilised/nature, human/animal dichotomy. When, after the she-wolf has been shot, he first encounters the girls curled up with the cubs in their jungle den, his initial fear gives way to ‘a profound sadness, like an empty space, in my chest’.<sup>28</sup> Thus at the sight/site of the wolf-girls Mohandas senses his own humanity as a void or an absence. It is not the animal that is lacking but the man, and in assuming the form of ‘sadness’ this *lack* both constitutes, in Itard’s terms,

Modandas' identity as a human while simultaneously revealing to him that this human identity has been achieved at the cost of a traumatic sundering from the animal. This implicit realisation of the contingency of his own status motivates Mohandas to question the idea that 'civilization...was an effective barrier against beasts', and instead to identify with the 'animality' of the girls.<sup>29</sup> Asked to play his part in their humanisation, he begins to appreciate how his own identity, as an orphan himself and pupil/inmate at the Reverend Welles' 'Home', depends upon certain assumptions which the two girls, especially the elder, Kamala, throw into doubt. When his friend Rama dismisses the girls as 'neither beast nor human', but as 'things' Mohandas glimpses underneath Rama's invective, a vestigial truth.<sup>30</sup> To characterise the girls as 'things' brings to mind the beast people of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, but where Rama, like Prendick, sees only the ugliness of the 'thing', Mohandas sees a 'perverse beauty, a look that hovered somewhere between the human and the beast'.<sup>31</sup> Although this 'somewhere' may not have its own ontological grid reference it may nonetheless be given a name if we recall Kelly Hurley's notion of the 'abhuman', and especially her argument that the 'abhuman' implies not simply a diminution of, or movement away from, the human but also 'a movement towards – towards a site or condition as yet unspecified – and thus [entails] both a threat and a promise'.<sup>32</sup> Seen in this light Kamala and Amala represent not only something 'other' in themselves, but also suggest that Mohandas may become something 'other' than himself.

Although Amala soon dies, Mohandas comes to recognise that what he sees, and seeks, in Kamala is not what 'the others had tried to make of her...a miracle, an enemy, a

woman'.<sup>33</sup> Instead Mohandas wants her 'for what she was – my other self, different, full of unspoken words, and alone'.<sup>34</sup> But to be drawn to that 'gulf between animal and human', to the vertiginous possibility of becoming 'other', is also to experience the irreconcilable.<sup>35</sup> In order to express what Kamala *is*, and, following Mohandas' departure for England and the wolf-girl's subsequent death, to commemorate her, Mohandas needs language, and language is precisely that 'achievement' which the Reverend Welles deems as exemplifying the human, and whose lack exemplifies the animal:

*Words, Mohandas, Words. See how the lack of words keeps her in an animal state? When she has attained the miracle of speech, which more than the opposable thumb separates man and beast, she will be free of her animal spirit entirely. Words will free you as well.*<sup>36</sup>

Language, then, is not neutral. It coheres, along with 'father', 'village', 'civilised', 'home', in that cluster of meanings and concepts which oppose, through exclusion, 'mother', 'nature', 'forest', 'wolf'. Mohandas himself realises that although Kamala has learned some of the words of the 'Home' – '*cat and ball and dress*' – she has no words for her life in the jungle, for her life as a wolf.<sup>37</sup> Thus Mohandas is faced with the paradox that in order to write the animal, he must write on the *other* side of the animal, on the side of the human. This raises a crucial and overarching question which will need to be addressed at various points in this thesis, and which can be formulated not only as *how to write the animal?* but also *can the animal be written?* If, as Mohandas senses, animal words are 'unspoken' must they also remain 'unwritten'? *Children of the Wolf* postulates an answer of sorts to this dilemma. The diary Mohandas keeps as a record of his life at the 'Home', and of Amala and Kamala, is written in code, 'part English, part Bengali, and part made-up words with which to hide my innermost thoughts'.<sup>38</sup> It is, in effect, an *in-between* writing, a hybrid discourse, which in its very inscription abolishes

any claims to discursive authority. It is, in other words, *other words*, a language that simultaneously resembles and subverts dominant discourses(s), and, in this sense, may qualify as an 'abhuman writing', a writing *of* and *for* the abhuman subject caught between the polarities of coloniser and colonised, on the one hand, and 'man' and 'animal' on the other. However, insofar as this represents a means of giving voice to the animal it must remain putative, phantasmal, out of bounds. For what the reader is presented with is not (how could it be?) Mohandas' hidden and encrypted thoughts, but (what else?) 'this book'.<sup>39</sup> It is a book which ends with Mohandas stating that 'I became a writer, a lover of words', and that although others may not remember the wolf-girl, 'because I had the words to tell of it I – at least – have never forgotten'.<sup>40</sup> Thus the wolf-girl may be re-membered in language but the dis-membering of Mohandas from the fold of the human is both enabled and thwarted by language itself. Instead of Kamala, Mohandas has writing, or, more accurately perhaps, instead of becoming Kamala, he becomes a writer. Kamala is replaced by words, by language: Mohandas' substitute love.

For the adolescent Jaime of Jill Payton Walsh's *Knowledge of Angels*, the sight of a wolf-girl provokes a similar sensation of existential anxiety to that experienced by Mohandas in *Children of the Wolf*. To gaze upon the wolf-girl is to confront the 'blackness' in your own heart.<sup>41</sup> It is to enter upon the realm of the 'abhuman', to experience the human, not as the plenitude of self presence, but in terms of an agonising lack, "You are cast down, you cannot bear it. It is the worst thing you could ever know".<sup>42</sup> However, although *Knowledge of Angels* tells the story of a wolf-girl, and although adolescent boys play, to a



differing extent, significant roles in both narratives, Payton Walsh's novel explores its abhuman terrain from a different perspective than that adopted by *Children of the Wolf*. Set, according to the author's preface, 'on an island somewhat like Mallorca, but not Mallorca, at a time somewhat like 1450, but not 1450', the plot hinges on the coincidence of two 'alien' presences: the wolf-girl, Amara, and a castaway, Palinor, who faces trial and death at the hands of the church because of his unswerving refusal to renounce his atheism.<sup>43</sup> His position might however be ameliorated because of a curious conjunction between his circumstances and those of the wolf-girl. In order to evince whether or not there is 'innate' knowledge of God the girl has been kept in seclusion and shielded from all religious teaching. If, when she has learned to communicate, she is able, however haltingly, to speak of God then knowledge of God can be proved to be innate, and confirm the scholar-priest Bénédict's hypothesis that 'knowledge of God is the precise difference between a human being and an animal'.<sup>44</sup> However, this abstruse theological experiment takes on an added, critical dimension with the arrival of an inquisitor to the island. Only Amara's *failure* to demonstrate an innate knowledge of God can save Palinor's life since this would mean his atheism amounted to an intellectual error rather than the heresy of deliberate rejection of God. Two issues, then, are held in the balance: the life of a man, and the concept of the human as a God-knowing being. If the girl demonstrates her humanity, the man dies. But underlying these issues is another, subtly different question: the status and limits of human knowledge itself. In effect it is not simply the wolf-girl's humanity which is at stake but *how* this can be known. Whereas Itard's and Yolen's narratives involve a testing *for* the human, Payton Walsh's involves a

testing *of* the human, in the sense that human identity is constructed precisely in terms of a capacity for knowledge.

Seen in this light the novel amounts to an allegorical treatment of the crisis in belief initiated by the threat posed to God-centred knowledge by nascent humanism. In this respect the island's leading clerics and the atheist Palinor represent the two sides of this epistemological breach. For Severo, the Cardinal Prince of the island, the human is differentiated from the animal by a knowledge of God 'innate in every human soul. So powerful, so clear that in nations far from the mercy of God men are driven to worship idols'.<sup>45</sup> Thus the human, unlike the animal, partakes of the wholeness of God. Put simply, we know we are human by knowing God. Indeed when one of the labourers who first discovers Amara asks "Do you think that...*thing* is one of us?", it is only the assumption of an innate and God-given humanity that spares her life.<sup>46</sup> To kill a wolf is mere slaughter, but to kill a human being is murder.

Benedix and Severo, however, must rely on reasoned argument, rather than blind faith or divine revelation, to convince Palinor of the reality of God. But Palinor counters their 'proofs' of God's existence – the arguments from causality, degree and design – by arguing that "material things have material causes, and things contrived...have causes in human ingenuity and human will".<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, knowledge of a transcendent God, as far as man is concerned, in his immersion in time and space, must remain "always...out of reach".<sup>48</sup> In the face of Palinor's articulate and implacable insistence that God is non-existent or, at best, unknowable, Benedix and Severo's faith begins to crumble. One

form of reason gives way to another. Towards the end of the novel Severo asks Beditix “Have you convinced him [Palinor]?”, to which the theologian replies, “No...He has convinced me”.<sup>49</sup> Even Amara’s eventual claim that “The mountains where I lived had a maker. I had a protector, though I know not a name for him” serves only as a further, ironic undermining of deistic belief.<sup>50</sup> Unknown to Beditix and Severo, this demonstration of an apparently inborn knowledge of God is merely the consequence of secret tutoring from one of the wolf-girl’s guardian nuns. As a result the inquisitor wins the day and Palinor is burned as a heretic, but the ultimate victory of the new, secular knowledge is signalled by the vast fleet of ships from Palinor’s homeland which approaches the island in search of their native son.

However, the novel’s treatment of the tension between dogma and individual conscience, religion and secularism, represents only what might be called the *surface* allegory of the narrative, for Amara herself confutes both the deistic belief system of Severo and Beditix, and, implicitly, the rational-empiricist approach of Palinor. Amara is, in a word, unplaceable in either epistemology, since the ‘wild’ from which she has emerged is the island’s mountainous heights, its ‘towering summits’, and she is therefore called not simply the ‘wolf-child’ but also the ‘snow-child’.<sup>51</sup> She is simultaneously both ‘savage’ and ‘pure’, both animal and angel, and this purity, this animal sheen, is, like snow, a reflective surface. It resists *in-sight*. Accordingly there can be no access to what Amara *is*, to some interior essence, because the gaze of the knowing, self conscious subject is thrown back on itself in an apparent validation of St Augustine’s contention that ‘angels are very bright mirrors’.<sup>52</sup> But what remains similarly inaccessible is what Amara *knows*,

for hers is the 'knowledge of angels', which, Beditx speculates, may not admit of any difference between 'knowledge of the world as it was created in the mind of God, and knowledge of the world in reality'.<sup>53</sup> That the knowledge of angels might correspond to the knowledge possessed by animals, as it coheres in the person of Amara, and wherein there is no 'break' between the transcendent and the immanent, between God and self, self and world, is not a possibility that occurs to the, by now, God-weary Beditx. His tragedy is not simply that he cannot experience this knowledge 'without shadows', but that, following his dialogues with Palinor, he comes to believe that such a knowledge is, finally, impossible.<sup>54</sup> However, this knowledge is also unavailable to the philosophy that Palinor represents. Moreover, it is unimaginable. At the end of the novel Amara returns to the 'towering summits' and from this inhuman perspective calmly watches the hostile armada from Palinor's homeland approaching the island. But Amara herself will remain *unseen* by this new episteme; she will have evaded the imminent partition of the moral universe into knowing subject and unknowing object. Thus what the novel ultimately allegorises is not the triumph of humanism but the very limit of a humanist, rationalist metaphysics. Amara may be a 'wolf-angel', rather than a 'wolf-demon', but in climbing higher 'into the unbroken solitude of the inviolate snow', and following, not the track of the mind of man, but the spoor of a wolf, she nonetheless represents that aspect of the human which is absent to itself.<sup>55</sup>

## *Collapsing the Border*

So far this thesis has mainly concerned itself with two principal species of literary wolf. At one extreme lies Montague Summers' demonic werewolf, and its no less horrific ally, the 'natural' wolf, the ravenous and menacing denizen of forest and mountain whose alleged innate savagery stands in brutal contrast to the notion of a humane, reverent and godly humanity. Although Jack London and D.H. Lawrence effect a kind of transvaluation of this wolf, investing it with an untainted, wild nobility, their images of the wolf also rely on a form of lupine essentialism which sees the wolf in terms of an unfettered, instinctual, natural violence. At the other extreme lies the nurturing she-wolf and the wolf-child, images that call to mind a view of nature, of the wild, as intrinsically life-giving and pure. Moreover the wolf-child is seen as standing at an oblique distance from the human in being entirely without culture and impervious to custom and morality. Both versions of the wolf, however, perform a common function. Whether conceived as evil incarnate or innocence incarnate the wolf traces the borders of the human, and so marks out the liminal territory of the abhuman, an ontological netherland which at the same time as it threatens to engulf the human as a primary and autonomous realm of being, also engenders a potent, illicit fascination with the possibility of otherness, of transgression and becoming. This is the void that, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Prendick peers into and cannot, ultimately, escape, except through a metaphysical displacement of the human into the inhuman distances of the sidereal. It is also the space which Mohandas, in *Children of the Wolf*, is drawn towards but halts before, eventually allowing writing to serve as a surrogate animality. And it is this space whose psychic

topography Angela Carter maps in 'Wolf-Alice', a tale that, as I shall try to show, delineates the border between human and wolf, only, finally, to erase it.

The character of the Duke nicely illustrates Carter's designation of 'Wolf-Alice' as a 'tale' rather than a 'story', a narrative which rather than pretend to 'the imitation of life', or 'log everyday experience', concerns itself with interpreting 'experience through a system of imagery derived from the subterranean areas behind everyday experience'.<sup>56</sup> In other words, Carter's 'tales' deal with the fantastic and phantasmic, that niche of the imagination wherein dwell monsters. And the Duke is nothing if not monstrous. Not only is he 'cast in the role of the corpse-eater, the body-snatcher who invades the last privacies of the dead', but his cadaverous form casts no reflection in mirrors.<sup>57</sup> Of even more significance, for the purposes of this discussion, than his vampiric aspect, is the fact that the Duke is also cast in the role of the werewolf, leaving 'paw-prints in the hoar-frost when he runs howling round the graves at night in his lupine fiestas'.<sup>58</sup> However, the humanity of Wolf-Alice herself seems even more questionable. 'Nothing about her is human except that she is *not* a wolf'.<sup>59</sup> So speaks Angela Carter's anonymous, though not, as we shall see, altogether obscure narrator, of the girl that has been found 'in the wolf's den beside the bullet-riddled corpse of her foster mother'.<sup>60</sup> It is a striking definition of the human in that it suggests that humanity is to be seen not as some form of unique, a priori self-presence, but, instead, in terms of what it is not; the human as anti-matter to wolf-matter. However, even the starkness of this distinction is insufficient to lend the girl anything more than a notional humanity. She is human only by an accident of biology. In all other respects she is wolf: 'Her panting tongue hangs out...Her legs are

long, lean and muscular...She never walks; she trots or gallops. Her pace is not our pace'.<sup>61</sup> This failure of synchronicity between wolf and human means that, apart from 'a few, simple tricks', the efforts of the nuns of the local convent to persuade the girl into humanity prove futile, and she is 'delivered over to the bereft and unsanctified household of the Duke'.<sup>62</sup> Both girl and Duke, then, may be wolves but in contrast to the innocence of the *wolf-child* stands the evil of the Duke as *werewolf*. Thus Carter opens up the domain of the abhuman, not simply through an admixture of the human and the animal, but through a hybridisation of the narrative itself in which the two poles of wolf representation, that of wolf-child and werewolf, are commingled in a scandalous *mésalliance*.

This 'trance of being' in which they cohabit, and wherein Wolf-Alice acts as unwitting maidservant to the cannibal aristo, is, however, not so much an autonomous, intermediate realm, a buffer state between the human and the animal, but rather the shared territory of both.<sup>63</sup> Put differently, the abhuman, as elucidated by Carter, is not *of itself* distinct from the human, but a dimension of the human which has been subjected to a kind of existential disincorporation. As Carter puts it, the 'gloomy mansion' in which the Duke and Alice live out their 'separate solitudes' is not a place of exile but an 'exiled place', a kind of animal ghetto within the human.<sup>64</sup> Thus the border that Carter draws between human and wolf is, in effect, scarcely a border at all. Instead of being conceived as the separate terms in a straightforward binary opposition, the relationship between figures of interiority (the animal within) and exteriority (the marginalised or excluded animal) is marked by a profound indeterminacy. Accordingly, neither term in the human/wolf

opposition remains stable. In as much as the Duke and Wolf-Alice represent grotesque out-growths of humanity and demonstrate the mutability of the category 'human', they also problematise the lupine. In the same way that Wolf-Alice is an 'imperfect wolf', so the Duke is a 'parody' of a wolf.<sup>65</sup>

But if the notion of the border, in the familiar sense of distinguishing between different spaces, or different orders of things, is inappropriate to Carter's epistemology of the fantastic, how then to conceptualise difference and similarity? The answer is 'mirrors'. The world of 'Wolf-Alice', as the reference to Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* suggests, is a world of reflections where the abhuman is constituted not on the basis of the horror of difference, but on the overwhelming strangeness of the familiar. That the Duke casts no reflection, passing over the surface of mirrors 'like a wind on ice', might seem to disqualify his relationship to the human as being one of familiarity.<sup>66</sup> However, his abhumanity manifests itself not just in this traditional trait of the vampire, but also in the implied sense in which the Duke is himself a mirror; he *takes in* the world:

His eyes see only appetite. These eyes open to devour the world in which he sees, nowhere, a reflection of himself; he passed through the mirror and now, henceforward, lives as if upon the other side of things.<sup>67</sup>

Thus the Duke's is a cannibalism of body *and* soul, of flesh *and* being, a profane Eucharist where the human is the subject of an outrageous transubstantiation into its inhuman other.

In contrast to the Duke, the face of Wolf-Alice is susceptible to the reflective glass of the mirror. But the resultant image is one that, initially at least, Wolf-Alice is unable to



recognise as her own. Instead she sees only another 'creature', like herself but not herself, mimicking 'every gesture'.<sup>68</sup> The Duke and Wolf-Alice, then, as their different relationships to mirrors show, inhabit the world differently. But they have one characteristic in common. Both lack a capacity for self-reflection, an 'I' able to meditate on its own consciousness. This does not, however, imply an inability to reflect. As manifestations of the abhuman, the Duke and Wolf-Alice present distorted and ostensibly incompatible reflections of the human in the form of the countervailing images of werewolf and wolf-child. Indeed, the qualification 'distorted' is itself perhaps redundant, given that the very etymology of 'reflection' (from the Latin *Re-*, *flectere flex* – 'bend') implies that all reflections are inherently unfaithful, 'bent', and that the self is thus inescapably 'out of true' with itself, at a loss for any external confirmation, or more precisely *resolution*, of its own identity. Thus, according to Carter's narrator, Wolf-Alice stands for the human, and the wolf, but in a different, and threatening, light:

The wolves had tended her because they knew she was an imperfect wolf; we secluded her in animal privacy out of fear of her imperfection because it showed us what we might have been.<sup>69</sup>

That neither werewolf, wolf-child, nor even the human itself, represent fundamental categories of being can be elucidated in more detail by focusing on the narrator of Carter's tale. Although unnamed, the use of 'we' in the above quotation implies the narratorial perspective of a detached, though not impartial, onlooker, a member of that human community to whose margins the Duke and Wolf-Alice have been consigned. Moreover, from the tale's opening sentence, the reader also is situated as a member of that community: 'Could this ragged girl have spoken like *we do* she would have called herself a wolf' (my emphasis).<sup>70</sup> Reader and narrator belong, apparently, on the same

side, the Duke and Wolf-Alice on the other. However, the narrator, who, like the reader, is supposedly neither wolf-child nor werewolf, but 'typically' human, and therefore capable of reporting only what he or she has heard or seen, does not stay put within the confines of their limited human perspective. Instead the narrator eavesdrops on his subjects' privacy, and the consciousness, or lack of it, of both the Duke and Wolf-Alice is related with all the freedom and licence of omniscience. The narrator 'knows', for example, Alice's response to the onset of puberty, describing how her 'new breasts...reminded her of nothing so much as the white night-sprung puffballs she found, sometimes, on her evening rambles'.<sup>71</sup> In like fashion the veil is lifted on the mind of the Duke: 'he believed himself to be both less and more than a man, as if his obscene difference were a sign of grace'.<sup>72</sup> The effect of this mutability of perspective, of this dispersion of consciousness, is to render omniscience as a form of omnipresence. In other words the abhuman is not simply described from the outside, or still less articulated in the form of some inhuman voicing by either Wolf-Alice or the Duke. Rather the abhuman is described from the point of view of a third party, and at the same time *enacted* in the shifts of perspective that narrator and reader, situated as a plural third party, undergo as the consciousness of the tale's protagonists is inhabited, or shadowed, in the reading experience itself. Thus the identity of narrator and reader, so clearly invoked as generically human at the beginning of the tale, is itself subject to an abhuman dislocation.

However, if there is an implicit, self-dissipating movement towards the abhuman on the part of narrator and reader, there is an equal movement toward the human on the part of Wolf-Alice herself. As wolf whatever is outside her, 'the trees and grass of the meadows'

is nothing but ‘the emanation of her questing nose and erect ears’.<sup>73</sup> But the commencement of her menstrual cycle not only initiates Alice to ‘the circumambulatory principle of the clock’, but also heralds the dawning awareness that the world may be construed in terms of ‘self’ and ‘other’, a revelation which, paradoxically, stems from her realisation that the image she apprehends in the mirror is her own.<sup>74</sup> It is an awakening from the abhuman that causes Wolf-Alice to wear a dress and venture out of the Duke’s mansion where she sings to the distant wolves ‘with a kind of wistful triumph, because now she had put on a visible sign of her difference from them’.<sup>75</sup> At one level, Wolf-Alice’s becoming-human acts as an apparent recapitulation of the self as an authoritative centre of consciousness, which is able to designate experience in terms of ‘I’ and ‘other’, subject and object. Indeed Carter’s own professed fascination with the ability of ‘tales’, rather than ‘stories’, to explore the ‘externalised self’ might be seen, in this context, as a way of expanding the domain of the human to encompass any dimension or mode of being; what appears other than me is just me in a different guise.<sup>76</sup> In this sense the human self is not only privileged and authorised, it *authorises*. However, such a valorisation of the human self depends upon the self being deemed *essentially* human in the first place, and it is the very notion of an essentialised human self, occupying the *first place*, which, ultimately, is subverted and dethroned in ‘Wolf-Alice’. The tale ends with the Duke, having been shot by the vengeful widowed husband of one of his graveyard feasts, ‘writhing on his black bed in the room like a Mycean tomb’.<sup>77</sup> However, with the wounded Duke’s cries of pain Wolf-Alice’s becoming-human is stopped in its tracks and her lupine nature revives:

she was as pitiful as her gaunt grey mother; she leapt upon his bed to lick, without hesitation, without disgust, with a quick, tender gravity, the blood and dirt from his cheek and forehead.<sup>78</sup>

And as Wolf-Alice tends to the stricken Duke, the mirror 'propped against the red wall' begins, belatedly, to discover its own reflective power:

Little by little there appeared within it...a formless web of tracery...then a firmer yet still shadowed outline until at last as vivid as real life itself, as if brought into being by her soft, moist, gentle tongue, finally, the face of the Duke.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, at the end, the abhuman, the shared border country of the human and the animal, is evoked not simply as the site of a potentially fatal ontological contamination, but as a wellspring for a liberating becoming. The Duke realises his own humanity, but only because the human has been licked into shape by the wolf.

Ultimately, then, the border between wolf and human is only ever loosely fixed. The liminal status of the werewolf and wolf child reveals its cracks and fissures, the gaps in the wire. Transgressing this border serves as both a threat and a promise. Transgression threatens the very idea of the human with dissolution, but that dissolution also promises a kind of freedom, a loosening of bonds. If Summers, like Wells, Itard, and rather more equivocally, London and Lawrence stands guard at the human/animal border, then Yolen and Payton Walsh act as collaborators to the would-be émigré by pointing out the way through. More potently still, the peculiar power of Angela Carter's wolf narratives, her tales of transformation and illusion, lies in how these tales reveal that the border between wolf and human may itself be another kind of illusion.

## Chapter Three

### A Wolf Sublime: Psychoanalysis and the Animal

*I dreamt last night that I was lying down in my bed. (my bed stood with its foot towards the window; in front of the window there was a row of old walnut trees. I know it was winter when I had the dream, and night-time.) Suddenly the window opened of its own accord and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white, and looked more like foxes or sheep-dogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked like dogs when they pay attention to something. In great terror, evidently of being eaten by the wolves I screamed and woke up.'*<sup>1</sup>

Thus Sigmund Freud recalls the infant dream of his most famous patient, recounted to the 'father' of psychoanalysis some twenty years after the original dreaming. Much depends upon Freud's interpretation of this dream: the *Wolf Man's* psychic health, the future status of psychoanalysis, Freud's own reputation, and, not least, the meaning and survival of the *Wolf Man's* dream-wolves. As far as Freud is concerned these wolves must *not* be allowed to remain wolves. Even as inhabitants of the *Wolf Man's* psychic menagerie they are chimerical, the dream's manifest content concealing the far more meaningful figure of the father, a figure about whom feelings of dread and fear are entirely justified; 'We were indeed, obliged to translate this [the fear of being eaten by wolves] into a fear of being copulated with by his father'.<sup>2</sup> For the wolves of the *Wolf Man's* dream, interpretation is the equivalent of extermination.

In this chapter I want to argue that this hermeneutic erasure of the wolf results in an absence which continues to haunt. It haunts both psychoanalysis itself and the wider project of modernity in which it is implicated. At stake are the claims of an absolute

man/animal opposition upon which the claims of human reason to know the human subject are predicated. The role of psychoanalysis in delineating the human subject is, however, both complex and contradictory. On the one hand I want to show how psychoanalysis is symptomatic of a wider conjunction of ideological practices which seek to deny or repress animal presence. On the other, I also want to explore how the very framework of a man/animal opposition may be exposed and undermined from a Freudian perspective. The need for such an exploration seems, to me, apparent. To describe the treatment of the environment, and especially its nonhuman inhabitants, in terms of innate human greed, or the exigencies of consumer capitalism, or even as an attempted putting-on of God-like power, may pack a certain polemical appeal but hardly scratches the surface of more complex motivations that may be at work. Our relationship to 'nature' is rather more ambiguous. As the philosopher Kate Soper argues, 'However accurate it may be to portray our engagement with nature as 'anthropocentric', 'arrogant', and 'instrumental', it is the work of a culture that has constantly professed its esteem for nature'.<sup>3</sup>

In trying to understand our interaction with animals we need, then, to take account of the underlying, and often unacknowledged, fears *and* desires that give rise to both 'arrogance' and 'esteem' for nature. As far as the wolf itself is concerned, an animal whose reputation has been, to say the least, somewhat equivocal, it is worth bearing in mind the question that the nature writer Barry Lopez raises in the context of obsessive intensity of wolf 'control' in the United States: 'when a man cocked a rifle and aimed it at a wolf's head, what was he trying to kill?'<sup>4</sup> It is a hard, perhaps impossible, question to

answer fully, but the need to understand both our vilification and our veneration of the animal demands that we make the effort.

To begin to engage with these issues it will be helpful to turn to Freud's 1930 diagnosis of the human condition, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, and his argument that although man has every reason to be happy, he is unhappy. Despite having protected himself against 'the tyranny of natural forces', man remains discontented. For Freud, the key to understanding this seemingly intractable conundrum lies in 'the conflict between civilization and sexuality'.<sup>5</sup> The demands of the unconscious are antithetical to the demands society places on its members in order to regulate 'the relations of human beings among themselves'.<sup>6</sup> Civilisation is thus achieved only at the cost of inhibiting potentially overwhelming unconscious drives. Through the agencies of sublimation and displacement the unconscious, or id, is subdued, kept at bay, but from this repression arises, in Bruno Bettelheim's preferred translation of Freud's title, 'The Uneasiness Inherent in Culture'.<sup>7</sup>

The uneasiness, the discontent, the sadness that accompanies the civilising process arises, then, because something has been lost or renounced, denied, cast off, repressed. And this lack hurts. For Freud, this repressed 'instinctive factor' which, with entry into adulthood, is 'dethroned and overlaid by human reason', links the substrata of the human mind to the 'far-reaching *instinctive* knowledge of animals' (Freud's emphasis).<sup>8</sup> In other words what the maturing ego, as it comes to terms with societal demands, must overpower and restrain is the animal in the human. Seen in this light, the human unconscious, that 'piece

of unconquerable nature' is, in its unmediated animality, no less a part of the 'tyranny of natural forces' against which civilisation must guard itself than floods, pestilence and plague.<sup>9</sup>

Need we, however, look only to the subjugation of the inner animal as the source of the sadness that inescapably shadows civilisation? According to Freud one of the criteria for recognising a country which 'has attained a high degree of civilisation' is the absence of an animal threat: 'Wild and dangerous animals will have been exterminated, the breeding of tamed and domesticated ones prospers'.<sup>10</sup> A prime target, then, of the defence mechanisms of both the individual conscious or ego, and society at large amounts to one and the same thing: the animal. For Freud, however, civilisation's extermination and mastery of the material animal is seen as an achievement, a cause for pride. The sadness, which he posits as the defining characteristic of civilisation, is deemed to flow solely from the repression of the animal unconscious of the human. That sadness might stem from a parallel repression of animal presence in the material, phenomenal world is a question that goes not only unanswered but, more importantly, *unasked* by Freud, and in this sense might be seen as a governing repression of his humanist approach. That such a repression is, however, a constituent element in how civilisation seeks to found itself is evident in a certain ambivalence in the very phrase 'wild and dangerous animals'. Precisely which animals are thought to pose a threat to civilisation? Are the terms 'wild' and 'dangerous' virtual synonyms of one another, or does 'wildness' in itself constitute a category of animal which civilisation may legitimately eradicate as an obstacle in its path? The threat posed by such animals would not inhere in any immediate physical



threat, but rather in how they are situated as host bodies for a residue of the displaced animality of the human unconscious, which the procedures of psychoanalysis seek to expose, restrain and divert. Having been designated in this way, the host animal, whose tangible physicality is in stark contrast to the elusive immateriality of the unconscious, becomes a legitimate target. That an animal might be deemed 'wild and dangerous' because it serves as a simulacrum for a subversive human animality must, however, remain unconscious to civilisation itself. Accordingly, the idea that the extermination of these 'wild and dangerous animals' might help to engender the discontent to which civilisation is prone would remain unacknowledged by civilisation, and by Freud.

What exactly will have been lost through the extermination of the 'flesh and blood' wild 'other', and how, like the 'other' of the human unconscious, may it make its presence, or rather its *absence*, felt? In this context the *Wolf Man's* dream is directly relevant, for Freud's analysis of it can be seen as an attempt to deal with two distinct threats to the well-ordered psyche. On the one hand Freud seeks to unearth 'the phylogenetically inherited schemata', especially the re-staging of the Oedipal drama when the tyrannical father of the original human family 'was killed by the association of the brothers'.<sup>11</sup> By exposing this archaic trace in the psyche of his patient, Freud may then try to seek a cure by talking through the Oedipus Complex, enabling the patient to come to terms with the ambivalent admixture of love, fear, envy and jealousy he feels towards his father. That Freud's patient should, however, dream of *wolves* necessitates invoking the same imperative to eradicate the animal as that which governs the relationship of civilisation to its alleged enemies in the animal kingdom. In other words, it is not just that wolves are

symbolic of something else, of the power of the father. Even as dreamed wolves they remain 'wild' and/or 'dangerous' animals, and thus represent in themselves a threat to a stable human identity. But this threat cannot be acknowledged directly for to do so would be to invest the non-human with a surfeit of power. The threat of the animal must, therefore, only be given credence as a threat to the material human body, and thus the threat to the psyche posed by the *Wolf Man's* wolves must be reconfigured in terms of the purely human animality of the Oedipus Complex.

To read, as it were, *through* Freud and conceive of the wolf at the door (or 'window', in the case of the *Wolf Man*) of the ego in terms of its subversive irrationality is, however, merely to repeat the terms of a human (rational)/animal (irrational) binary. Are there other ways of envisaging animal presence which resist this kind of objectification? In *The Animalizing Imagination*, Alan Bleakley describes Freud as being caught up in the teleology of Enlightenment, humanist discourse, necessarily seeing any heightened emotional identification with animals in terms of an irrational, primitive quasi-religious discourse superseded by the rise of science. Accordingly a more sophisticated explanation of this phenomenon is required and Freud commits, in Bleakley's terms, the error of oedipalizing 'what was previously animalized'.<sup>12</sup> In an attempt to recuperate a totemic, phenomenological relationship to the animal, and to avoid reducing the *Wolf Man's* wolves to 'split-off parts of the...psyche', Bleakley asks the question, 'What do the imaginary wolves want?'<sup>13</sup> For Bleakley, what the *Wolf Man's* wolves want is 'recognition of their sacrality', of their role in 'staring down the fragile ego, stripping it of its humanity, animalizing it as they sacralize it'.<sup>14</sup> Seen in this light the *Wolf Man's*

dream is the experience of the animal as sublime presence, an encounter with the animal, which, in the form of a dream, realises the animal in the fullness of its presence. In its sublime aspect the animal thus testifies to Bleakley's claim that 'what frightens us about animals – just as it simultaneously intrigues us – is not their irrationality, their bestiality, their primitiveness, but the depth, the sublimity, the sheer range and unpredictability of their aesthetic self-display'.<sup>15</sup> Given the cursoriness with which Freud dismisses the animal in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the notion of the animal as sublime presence would seem out of place in his worldview. Indeed, insofar as Freud acknowledges something approaching the sublime, it flows from the Oedipus Complex and takes the form of the super-ego, which according to Freud in *Economic Problems of Masochism*, 'came into being through the introjection into the ego of the first objects of the id's libidinal impulses – namely, the two parents'.<sup>16</sup> Thus the 'oedipalised' super-ego recapitulates the characteristics of the primal father and may become 'harsh, cruel and inexorable against the ego'.<sup>17</sup> This notion of the super-ego as a sublime, but *humanised*, presence is implicit in Freud's claim that 'Kant's Categorical Imperative is...the direct heir of the Oedipus complex'.<sup>18</sup> Some notion of an animalized sublime is, however, an essential, if unacknowledged, feature of Freud's approach. Consider how Freud contextualises his claims for the heuristic value of the *Wolf Man's* analysis in terms of a dramatic encounter between the self (of the analyst) and the 'other' of the unconscious: 'by *submitting* on a single occasion to the timelessness of the unconscious he [the analyst] will be brought nearer to *vanquishing* it in the end' (my emphasis).<sup>19</sup> This seems an uncanny echo of the Kantian sublime which the critic Christopher Hitt summarises in the following way:

According to the *Critique [of Pure Reason]*, the sublime experience begins with the apprehension of a natural object, which the imagination is unable to grasp. The result is a kind of cognitive dissonance, a rift between perception and conception. This rift is then overcome by the triumphant emergence of reason, revealing to us, finally, our “pre-eminence over nature.”<sup>20</sup>

Thus Freud’s approach to the unconscious, and Kant’s to the sublime, follow virtually identical trajectories. The human mind becomes humbled in the presence of the ‘natural object’, before gaining eventual mastery over it through the transcendent power of human reason. For Freud the ‘natural object’ is of course the unconscious, and the unconscious is ‘natural’ only insofar as it is ‘animal’. However, the ‘vanquishing’ of human animality requires a different procedure to the process of extermination which civilisation reserves for the visible, wild animal of the material world. For Freud, the sublime of the human unconscious may be permitted to survive but only in its tamed and attenuated form, as that ‘useless thing we require of civilisation’, *beauty*.<sup>21</sup> Freud is prepared to admit that we may ‘revere’ this beauty ‘where it is found in nature’, but not, it is to be supposed from his view of civilisation, if nature takes on a ‘wild and dangerous’ aspect. It is this unthreatening beauty, resulting from a sublimation of instinctual demands, which enables ‘the higher mental operations’.<sup>22</sup> Thus domesticated, beauty ceases to threaten, producing only ‘a particular, mildly intoxicating kind of sensation’.<sup>23</sup> That Bleakley should want, in effect, to arrest Freud’s insight prior to the moment of ‘domestication’ or ‘vanquishing’, does not negate, but rather serves to emphasise that, implicitly at least, Freud requires some variety of the sublime, if only as a kind of test by which the reasoning mind can demonstrate its claims to authority. In this respect the case of the *Wolf Man* serves as an exemplary model, precisely illustrating how the work of the analyst involves an experience of awed capitulation and eventual mastery. Commenting on the particular

problems that this case presented ('the severity of the illness and the duration of the treatment'), Freud remarks:

Something new can only be gained from analyses that present special difficulties...Only in such cases do we succeed in descending into the deepest and most primitive strata of mental development and in gaining from there solutions for the problems of the later formations. And we feel afterwards that, strictly speaking, only an analysis which has penetrated so far deserves the name.<sup>24</sup>

However, whether it takes the form of the individual unconscious, subject to the regulation of the conscious mind, or of the 'wild' beast under assault from the forces of civilisation, the 'vanquished' animal never quite lies down and dies for Freud. The animal unconscious returns through the hidden pathways of displacement and sublimation, while its material counterpart refuses the straightjacket of taxonomy. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* a utilitarian turn of mind organises the diversity of animal life under the umbrella terms 'wild and dangerous' and 'domesticated', but elsewhere Freud resists and even criticises the objectification of the animal, especially in relation to the supposed uniqueness of the human. In *Moses and Monotheism* Freud explicitly links his argument for the human inheritance of memory traces to the acquisition of instincts in animals, concluding that 'by this assumption we are effecting something else. We are diminishing the gulf which earlier periods of human arrogance had torn too wide apart between mankind and the animals'.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, as far as Freud is concerned, psychoanalysis engenders controversy precisely because it queries the privileged status of the human subject. This claim for the radical insights of psychoanalysis finds Freud seeking common ground with Darwin when he claims, in

'Resistances to Psychoanalysis', that the popular resistances to his and Darwin's theories arise for much the same reasons:

The majority of them are due to the fact that powerful human feelings are hurt by the subject-matter of the theory. Darwin's theory of descent met with the same fate, since it tore down the barrier that had been arrogantly set up between man and beasts.<sup>26</sup>

This 'barrier of arrogance' between 'men and beasts' remains, however, a problem for Freud. His efforts to link the principles of psychoanalysis to the tenets of Darwinian theory require that the barrier be torn down, but his privileging of human consciousness and the capacity for culture require that it be re-erected. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud asks 'Why do the animals, kin to ourselves, not manifest any such cultural struggle?', and then goes on to confess a disabling lack of knowledge, 'There are a great many questions in all this to which as yet we have no answer'.<sup>27</sup> Despite, then, the arrogant divide that man has established between himself and other animals the question for Freud is *why* animals do not exhibit, even in the slightest degree, signs of culture. The question of *whether* non-human animals are capable of culture seems so redundant as to be not worth the asking.<sup>28</sup> In *Totem and Taboo* Freud finds himself engaged in a similar balancing act, remarking:

There is a great deal of resemblance between the relations of children and primitive men towards animals. Children show no trace of the arrogance which urges adult civilized men to draw a hard-and-fast line between their own nature and that of all other animals.<sup>29</sup>

Thus Freud the scientist, the civilised man, who claims to stand in the same relation to primitive man as an adult to a child, concedes that children and primitive men have 'got right' what civilised men, in their arrogance, have 'got wrong'. But matters cannot be left to remain like this. The relation of a child or primitive man to an animal demands a

purely *human* explanation. Commenting on the horse phobia of 'Little Hans', Freud concludes:

The hatred of his father that arises in a boy from rivalry for his mother is not able to achieve uninhibited sway over his mind; it has to contend against his old-established affection and admiration for the very same person. The child finds relief from the conflict arising out this double-sided, this ambivalent emotional attitude towards his father by displacing his hostile and fearful feelings on to a *substitute* for his father.<sup>30</sup>

For Freud, the feelings of 'primitive men' toward the totem animal are not, at root, any different. Having 'killed and devoured' the hated primal father, the 'tumultuous mob of brothers were filled with the same contradictory feelings which we can see at work in the ambivalent father-complexes of our children and our neurotic patients'.<sup>31</sup> It is a deed whose symbolic revocation consists in 'forbidding the killing of the totem, the substitute for their father'.<sup>32</sup> For Freud, only this set of circumstances can explain the curious phenomenon of the totem meal, and answer the question, 'If the clansmen rejoice over the killing of the totem [animal] – a normally forbidden act – why do they mourn over it as well?'.<sup>33</sup>

It is an explanation that allows Freud to put primitive men and children back in their place. The totem animal, in the case of the former, and the feared animal in the case of the latter, turn out to be nothing more nor less than *the* father, the original father-tyrant of human prehistory, in animal's clothing. Moreover, that both groups should manifest this relationship to the father in the form of an ambiguously reverent relationship to the figure of an animal demonstrates, for Freud, their inferior position on the ladder of cultural and intellectual development, their lack of civilisation. Freud's post-Darwinian

conceptualisation of human/animal kinship is intellectual and therefore civilised; that of primitive men and children is emotional and therefore in itself *animal*. In other words, because these 'lesser humans' cannot, unlike Freud, see the *real* reason why humans and animals are closely linked, they are closer to animals. This animalisation of so-called primitive peoples places them in the same relation to civilisation as the rest of nature, as something to be contended with, mastered, controlled and even exterminated. That this 'othering' serves not only as an excuse, but also as a motive for the colonial exploitation of indigenous peoples *and* of the environment, will be discussed in chapter 5, but for the moment, I want to concentrate on the 'terrible' animals of Little Hans and the *Wolf Man*. In the case of Little Hans the sublime admixture of fear and admiration which the child invests in the horse is considered as nothing more than a disguised relationship to his father, or, given Freud's claims for a phylogenetic rather than an ontogenetic explanation, of any son to any father. The animal is thus only ever a signifier, never the signified. For Freud it must always mean something else, and so the *Wolf Man*'s wolves, like Little Hans' horse, have no *rights* to their *rites*.

There is, however, a postscript to the story of the *Wolf Man* and his wolves. In his memoirs, written more than forty years after he first met Freud, the *Wolf Man* recalls his boyhood visits to some lands his father owned in rural western Russia, where 'primeval forests, ponds, lakes large and small, and many bogs impressed one as a remnant of nature still untouched by man'.<sup>34</sup> For the *Wolf Man* 'This was the perfect place to recover from what Freud called "civilization and its discontents"'.<sup>35</sup> But it was also a land where wolves roamed the forests:



Several times every summer a wolf-hunt was organised by the peasants of the adjacent villages. These hunts always ended with a festive evening for which my father paid the bill. The village musicians appeared, and the boys and girls danced their native dances.<sup>36</sup>

For what reasons and on whose behalf were these wolves hunted and killed? The elaborate celebrations would seem to rule out predator control as the sole answer. Were they, like the *Wolf Man's* dream-wolves, the price which must be paid, the animal presence which must be negated, if civilisation is to found itself, or was their ritual killing an ambivalent tribute to the primal father in the form of a totem animal? Alternatively does the fact that their killing was honoured with dancing and song suggest an albeit deadly act of homage to a part of that last 'remnant of nature still untouched by man'? These questions remain vital today. The work of determining, and indeed redeeming, our relationship with the 'wild and dangerous animals', with whom our lives intersect, begins in the imagination, in *imagining* how such animals may lend meaning to human life. But this work cannot be accomplished without exploring the ways in which our imagining of the animal is bound up with our desires and fears, with the forces of projection, sublimation, and repression. The ultimate irony, then, of the *Wolf Man's* dream is that, in coming to terms with our ambivalent attitude toward the animal, that old wolf-killer Freud may yet help to light the way, and it is to one of his 'successors', Julia Kristeva, that, in the next chapter, I shall turn to provide further illumination.

## Chapter Four

### “Who are the Bandar-log?”

‘But then, who are the Bandar-log?’<sup>1</sup>

Pleasure-loving, anarchic and scandalously irreverent, yet strangely familiar, the monkey people, or Bandar-log, of Rudyard Kipling’s Mowgli stories can leave the reader at something of a loss. This at least is the implication behind the question Ursula Le Guin raises, but does not answer, in the introduction to her own collection of animal stories, *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences*. By leaving the question open Le Guin invites the reader to think about the meaning(s) of ‘the animal’ for themselves. The following discussion represents one reader’s attempt to do just that – to ‘think’ the animal, to come to terms with its ‘familiar otherness’. I want, especially, to look at Kipling’s Mowgli stories<sup>2</sup> and the title story from Le Guin’s collection, ‘Buffalo Gals Won’t You Come Out Tonight’<sup>3</sup>, for the ways in which their sense of the animal informs their sense of the human. In short, I will explore how the human/animal border is not simply *represented* but also *constructed* in narrative by these two authors.

My starting point is Le Guin’s claim that

women, children and animals are the obscure matter upon which civilization erects itself phallogically. That they are other is (*vide Lacan et al.*) the foundation of language, the Father Tongue. If Man vs. Nature is the name of the game, no wonder the team players kick out all these non-men who won’t learn the rules and run around the cricket pitch squeaking and barking and chattering!<sup>4</sup>

This critique of civilisation as intrinsically oppressive, reinforcing its claims to authority by simultaneously exploiting and excluding what is deemed 'other' to the patriarchal ideal, recalls Freud's definition of a civilised society as one that has exterminated its 'wild and dangerous animals'. This does not, however, prevent Le Guin from praising the animal stories of Rudyard Kipling, a writer whose name has become inextricably linked, rightly or wrongly, with the project of civilisation in its most conspicuously imperialist guise. For Le Guin, 'the *Jungle Books*' are among Kipling's 'finest work', offering a counter-narrative to the myth of civilisation 'which all talking-animal stories mock, or simply subvert'.<sup>5</sup> That Le Guin does not draw attention to this seemingly atypical view of Kipling suggests that, beneath the rhetoric of empire, she identifies a mutual fascination in the human/animal border, and especially that blurred dividing line between the child and the animal. Both writers explore the ways in which this border is established and sustained, as well as crossed, permeated, and, from a certain perspective, violated. At stake in these traversals and transgressions is what counts as animal and what counts as human, together with the array of meanings, qualities and attributes that cluster around these discursive formations. In the Mowgli stories issues of humanness and animality intersect not only in metaphors and rhetorical figures such as 'The Law of the Jungle' and Mowgli's 'mastering' gaze, but also in how these figures are themselves subverted by the paradoxical mixture of anarchy and mimicry which characterize the Bandar-log or Monkey People. Le Guin's treatment of the child and the animal develops themes which are implicit in Kipling by opening up the human/animal boundary through a radical and liberating de-centering of the human subject; in the place of jungle law, desert semiotics; instead of ontological hierarchies, the web of life.

Any discussion of Kipling's and Le Guin's texts requires not only a coherent critical approach but also an ethical analysis, and with this in mind I want to take up a call that Karla Armbruster makes in the prelude to her own discussion of Le Guin's story, 'Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight: A Poststructuralist Approach to Ecofeminist Criticism'. Armbruster argues that two major pitfalls lie in wait for the intellectually rigorous and ethically engaged critic in attempting to address the relationship of human and nonhuman life. On the one hand she warns that 'an unproblematized focus on women's connection with nature can actually reinforce dualism and hierarchy by constructing yet another dualism: an uncomplicated opposition between women's perceived unity with nature and male-associated culture's alienation with it.'<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, an emphasis on 'differences based on aspects of identity such as gender, race, or species' may result in isolating 'people from each other and from nonhuman nature'.<sup>7</sup> For Armbruster, avoiding these extremes requires 'crossing the boundaries of ecofeminist theory and engaging with the ideas of other theorists.'<sup>8</sup> This widening of the ecofeminist approach engenders the possibility of 'proposing new solutions to the problems of how to negotiate connection and difference, while simultaneously contributing to literary criticism and theory by showing how complex questions about the relationship of human subjects and nonhuman nature can result in new and exciting ways to read literary texts.'<sup>9</sup>

With Armbruster's call in mind, I shall turn to psychoanalytic theory and employ Julia Kristeva's rubric of the *semiotic* and *symbolic* modalities as a theoretical framework to

test the extent to which Kipling's and Le Guin's narratives reinforce or disrupt phallogocentric notions of civilisation, and to explore how both 'animality' and 'humanness' are figured in their respective investigations of the human/animal border. In so doing I am conscious of the relatively limited part that psychoanalytic approaches have (so far) played in the diverse field of ecocriticism. Glance at the index of any of the principal critical anthologies and the names of Freud, Lacan and Kristeva are usually conspicuous by their absence. Up to a point this reluctance to employ psychoanalytic theory is understandable. Freud's claim, in *Civilization And Its Discontents*, that the extermination of 'wild and dangerous animals', and the extensive breeding of 'tamed and domesticated ones', is a defining characteristic of a highly civilized society, indicates how psychoanalysis may be seen as complicit with the very ideologies and practices that ecocriticism challenges.<sup>10</sup> But if, as Armbruster argues, ecofeminist theory and ecocriticism in general need to open their own borders if they are to achieve the kind of academic and political impact they seek, then a willingness to engage with critical approaches from previously neglected quarters must be a part of this strategy. Although Kristeva does not specifically address the human/animal boundary, her analysis of human subjectivity exposes precisely the valorized notion of an *essential* human identity which many critics view as integral to the ways in which human beings not only represent, but also construct and subjugate, nonhuman nature.

At the heart of Kristeva's thinking is her concept of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' modalities. The term 'semiotic' is used to describe the child's relationship with the maternal body, and other objects, at a pre-cognitive and pre-verbal stage of development:

‘Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the [child] subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body – by family and social structures’.<sup>11</sup> At this stage, then, the child does not possess a unique ‘personal’ identity distinct from its environment. The child is not yet an ‘I’.

The ‘symbolic’ refers to the child’s acquisition of language and entry into the social order. By learning the ‘laws’ of the social and linguistic system the child learns to take up his or her own place within that system, and as a result becomes aware that he or she possesses a differentiated identity; that he or she is an ‘I’. The sense, then, of a unitary *essential* ‘I’ prior to language and socialization does not exist because it is an effect of that very process.

However, for Kristeva, the semiotic and symbolic are not completely separate realms. The latter does not overturn the former. Rather the two modalities are involved in a continual and complex interaction. Kristeva adopts from Plato the idea of the ‘chora’ to describe how the energy of the semiotic is preserved, and it is precisely this energy which the symbolic arrests and resolves into ‘stases’ in order to establish itself as the site of meaning and authority. In turn, however, the meanings and significations imposed by the symbolic remain vulnerable to an excess of semiotic energy. The semiotic is thus ‘a precondition of the symbolic’, and it also ‘functions within signifying practices as a transgression of the symbolic’.<sup>12</sup> These ‘transgressions of the symbolic’ include the

breaching of ideologies and socio-political practices - patriarchy and capitalism among them – which constitute the symbolic at a familial and societal level.

Two key implications flow from this claim. Firstly, that because self-identity cannot be assumed beyond the particular, historically determined, configuration of the symbolic, any sense of 'self' is itself subject to destabilization. Hence, for Kristeva, the subject is always a 'subject in process/on trial',<sup>13</sup> as are the socio-political practices according to which the 'self' is constituted. Secondly, both the semiotic and the symbolic are essential to any signifying process, and the energies of the former, and the ways in which they are controlled by and subvert the symbolic, may be realized in language and, especially, in literary texts, such as those by avant-garde writers, including Lautréamont, Mallarmé, Joyce, and Artaud. In the 'performance' of these practices 'the dynamic of drive charges bursts, pierces, deforms, reforms and transforms the boundaries the subject and society set for themselves.'<sup>14</sup> In analysing this kind of textual practice Kristeva concentrates on non-denotative aspects of text such as musicality, rhythm, and transgressions of grammar.

Although it is arguable whether either Kipling's or Le Guin's narratives could be accommodated within a strict Kristevan notion of 'text', Kristeva also points out that 'Because the subject is always *both* semiotic *and* symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both'.<sup>15</sup> With this in mind I want to show how the interaction of the semiotic and the symbolic, manifest in the "signifying systems" of Kipling's and Le Guin's narratives, profoundly affects their respective figurations of the

human/animal border. In their different ways both writers show this border to be at continual risk of a destabilization which undermines and exceeds the ontological sanctity of the human subject.

If there is one thing that any self-respecting member of Kipling's jungle community has to learn it is 'The Law of the Jungle', that all-pervasive body of customs, rules, injunctions and restrictions that, as Baloo the bear tells Mowgli, "was like the Giant Creeper because it dropped across everyone's back and no one could escape."<sup>16</sup> This is a revealing remark, for as much as Mowgli will need to learn the 'Law of the Jungle' in order to survive, the Law also seems, in its creeping inescapability, to menace as much as it protects. "When thou hast lived as long as I have," Baloo instructs Mowgli, "thou wilt see how all the Jungle obeys at least one Law. And that will be no pleasant sight".<sup>17</sup> The Law, then, appears to have a strange status. Obedience to the Law may be necessary, but obedience, as Baloo suggests, may trail in its wake the threat of some dread but nameless horror. This essential, but scarcely definable concept has also trailed in its wake its fair share of critical attention. For Shamsul Islam the Jungle law is not a 'utopian dream that can be realized', but a 'practical code' whose 'five essential elements' are 'Reason...The Common Good...Ethical Values...Law-making Authority and Promulgation...and Custom and Tradition.'<sup>18</sup> For John Murray, however, any association of Kipling's Law with either an idealistic quest, or ethical values, is mistaken. As 'a child of his time in his imperialism, in his trust in practical science...and his mistrust of metaphysics' Kipling is more concerned with 'practicality' than 'idealism'.<sup>19</sup> In Murray's view Kipling eschews notions of 'natural law' – inviolable human rights – in favor of an 'analytical positivist'



position which emphasizes that 'law and ethics are separate realms', and that law 'assumes the form of command from sovereign to individual'.<sup>20</sup>

There is, however, a way of looking at the 'Law of the Jungle' which need not entangle the reader in the finer points of jurisprudence. Instead we may consider what, in Kipling's view, amounts to *lawlessness*. According to Islam, Kipling 'heroically' opposes the Law to 'the nameless, shapeless Powers of Darkness, Disorder and Chaos'.<sup>21</sup> Islam is here perhaps a little modest in describing such powers as 'nameless' since he, in effect, proceeds to name them by capitalizing 'Darkness, Disorder and Chaos'. Kipling, however, is even more explicit when it comes to putting names to such fearful and nightmarish forces. Their names, at least as far as the Mowgli stories are concerned, are monkeys, jackals and tigers, or lame tigers at any rate. The character of Tabaqui the jackal, 'the little shadow with the bushy tail', is introduced as being despised by 'the wolves of India' for his 'mischief' and tale telling.<sup>22</sup> Worse still, 'they are afraid of him too, because Tabaqui more than anyone else in the jungle is apt to go mad' and 'madness is the most disgraceful thing that can overtake a wild creature'.<sup>23</sup>

Such opprobrium, however, seems muted when contrasted with the scorn that Bagheera the panther and Baloo reserve for the Bandar-log, the monkey people. According to Bagheera, the Bandar-log are not only "without law" but also "the eaters of everything", and therefore the embodiment of "great shame".<sup>24</sup> Baloo is no less forthcoming in detailing the sinfulness of these disgracefully omnivorous simians. Not only do they possess neither "Law" nor "leaders", they "have no remembrance" and, furthermore, "are

very many, evil, dirty, shameless” and lacking in “any fixed desire”.<sup>25</sup> The chaotic multiplicity of the Bandar-log, then, represents an explicit threat to the normative structures of society insofar as the austere and unadulterated voice of the law may be overwhelmed by, in effect, the babble of the rabble. Put bluntly, “The Monkey-People are forbidden”.<sup>26</sup>

This division of the jungle into the lawful and the lawless may appear to have the virtue of producing a world that, on the surface at least, is coherent and comprehensible, but it also reinforces a status quo which, as Le Guin laments, can have the effect of excluding anything, or anyone, deemed ‘non-man’. It is, however, possible to aggregate the sins of jackal and monkey under rather different headings than ‘Darkness, Disorder and Chaos’ if, instead of Kipling’s ‘heroic’ opposition of Law to lawlessness, we adopt as a frame of reference Kristeva’s concepts of the symbolic and the semiotic. In ‘From One Identity to An Other’ Kristeva describes the semiotic as ‘a presymbolic and trans-symbolic relationship to the mother’, which is heterogeneous ‘to meaning and signification’ and cannot therefore be attributed to the ‘operating consciousness of a transcendental ego’.<sup>27</sup> The symbolic, on the other hand, is described as the ‘inevitable attribute of meaning, sign and the signified object for the consciousness of [the]...ego’ which constitutes itself only at the cost of ‘repressing instinctual drive and continuous relation to the mother’.<sup>28</sup> The semiotic, however, ‘maintains itself at the cost of reactivating this repressed instinctual element’.<sup>29</sup> Seen in this light, Kipling’s ‘Law of the Jungle’ is the symbolic at work under another name, as patriarchal authority, as ‘the transcendent ego’, defending itself against, and imposing its will in opposition to, the semiotic which, in Kristeva’s terms always

threatens to expose 'the constraints of a civilization dominated by transcendental rationality'.<sup>30</sup> To put some flesh on the bones of these abstractions, consider how the semiotic makes its presence felt not only in the Bandar-log's contempt for paternal authority, for leadership and laws of any kind, but also in their lack of both 'remembrance' and 'fixity of desire'. This ambivalence to differentiation, whether diachronic or synchronic, which recalls Kristeva's characterization of the semiotic as a 'continuous relation to the mother'.<sup>31</sup>

This conception of the Bandar-log takes on a special resonance in the context of Kipling's otherwise highly masculinized jungle. Mowgli may have 'brothers' but sisters there are none. Indeed the only two significant females, Mowgli's foster mothers, are themselves appropriately hierarchized into the masculine structures of wolf pack and village respectively. In this context the Bandar-log and jackal may be figured as representing a kind of surrogate femininity insofar as they operate as an ever-present counterpoint and threat to the masculine structures of the Law. Baloo may claim that as far as the Bandar-log are concerned, "We do *not* notice them",<sup>32</sup> but the Bandar-log themselves are continually kicking up a rumpus, throwing 'sticks and nuts at any beast for fun and in the hope of being noticed'.<sup>33</sup> And Mowgli does take notice, but not because he sees them as a threat. Mowgli is attracted to the Bandar-log because they give him "pleasant things to eat" and "play all day".<sup>34</sup> Even more strikingly he feels a guilty enjoyment at being taken possession of by the Monkey-People, thrilling to the 'wild rush'<sup>35</sup> of his treetop abduction. Thus lawlessness emerges not only as 'Darkness, Disorder and Chaos' but also as desire, pleasure, and play.

In Kristevan terms, the lawlessness of the Bandar-log can be seen as enacting the irruption of the semiotic into the 'thetic', the 'phase' between the semiotic and the symbolic which 'produces the positing of signification', of 'enunciation', and of a 'subject' who is constituted as subject by virtue of their capacity for enunciation.<sup>36</sup> It is the security of the subject thus constituted, which the semiotic undermines, cutting through and exceeding the subject's self-consciousness. However, Kristeva also argues that because of its very transgression of the thetic, the semiotic 'brings about all the various transformations of the signifying practice that are called 'creation''.<sup>37</sup> In this sense the anarchic, irreverent game-playing of the Bandar-log is exactly a kind of 'creation' as, oblivious to the authority of the law, they 'monkey about' not only with meaning, but also with the subject who *means*, abducting him from his designated niche in the social order, and, in Mowgli's case, sweeping him off his feet.

But what of the role of Shere Khan the tiger, "the Big One",<sup>38</sup> whom Shamsul Islam includes, along with the jackal and monkeys, as the third member of that animal triumvirate that stands 'for the dark powers that reside within one's heart'.<sup>39</sup> Islam describes Shere Khan as 'representing the brute animal power which defies all restraints', a characterization which would appear to place Shere Khan at several removes from those fun-loving criminals, the jackals and monkeys.<sup>40</sup> Indeed even Tabaqui the jackal is moved to acknowledge Shere Khan as "My Lord".<sup>41</sup> And yet Shere Khan may also be figured in terms of the semiotic/symbolic tension that Kipling, though his concept of the Law and through the agency of Mowgli, attempts to resolve, but not because Shere Khan

represents, like the Bandar-log, the play-without-end of the semiotic. Rather Shere Khan stands for the symbolic, but in its *negative* aspect. Although Shere Khan, in his determination to impose his authority at whatever bloody cost, seems to encapsulate the figure of the father writ large, of a self-determining apotheosis of authority in its most *brutal* and therefore most *transparent* form, Shere Khan is also a tiger who has been lame “from his birth”.<sup>42</sup> In other words – specifically in Freud’s other words – Shere Khan is an emasculated father, a father who reveals the deep ambivalence at the heart of the symbolic. The very transparency of Shere Khan thus exposes the symbolic, leaving it vulnerable to an influx of the semiotic. And by killing Shere Khan, the bad father, the limping king, claiming the dead tiger’s skin, and succeeding him as ‘Master of the Jungle’, Mowgli is himself the subject of the imperative of the symbolic. In terms of the social order, and its signifying practices, the signifier ‘man’ replaces the signifier ‘tiger’. The ideology of mastery is transfigured but not transformed.

If Kipling’s animals, from Baloo the wise uncle to the brutal father, Shere Khan, from the criminally insane Bandar-log, to the sane and responsible wolves can be interpreted as manifestations of the semiotic and symbolic functions, of, in effect, Madness and Law, what of the site where these forces contend with one another? What of Mowgli himself? In his role of ‘child of the jungle’, the intimate of bird and beast, Mowgli seems to exemplify the notion of the ‘natural child’. In her discussion of the relationship between children and the natural environment, Karin Lesnik-Oberstein argues that this notion draws its strength from eighteenth century thought, and particularly Rousseau’s emphasis on the child as free from the ‘contaminating knowledge of civilization’, leading to ‘the

unquestioned - indeed, almost unquestionable - assumption that there is an inevitable and mythical...contact and communication between children and the natural environment and, again, especially between children and animals'.<sup>43</sup>

In Mowgli's case this rapport seems especially strong, raising the question of whether he is human or animal. For example, he surpasses his mentor Baloo in his fluency in the 'Master Words' of the jungle animals to the extent that 'neither snake, nor bird, nor beast would hurt him'.<sup>44</sup> Mowgli's rapport, however, has limits. His relationship to the jungle and its animal denizens is never one of complete concordance between 'child' and 'nature', as Bagheera realizes. Exempting Mowgli from the fear that the panther arouses among other members of the jungle community, Bagheera tells Mowgli "*thou art a man's cub...and even as I returned to my jungle, so thou must go back to men at last - to the men who are thy brothers.*"<sup>45</sup> In this sense the Mowgli stories amount to an articulation of their hero's rites of passage from boy to man, from nature to culture, an existential journey whose end is pre-determined, inescapable. 'Man goes to Man' runs the refrain that heads the last of the Mowgli stories, a formulation which concretizes the 'truth' that 'man-ness' is innate; the essential core of the Mowgli's being.<sup>46</sup> The truth of the injunction of 'Man goes to Man' is stressed by Baloo who also, as if to forestall any possible objections, claims 'It is the law'.<sup>47</sup>

But what are the specific ways in which Mowgli's difference, his 'man-ness', is figured in the text? Daniel Karlin makes the point that Kipling destabilizes 'the distinction between human and animal environment', so that Mowgli's journeys between jungle and

village represent not so much 'an encounter...between nature and culture', but, rather, 'between two forms of culture'.<sup>48</sup> Karlin also sets out the scope of this destabilization. Mowgli, as a human being 'may become a wolf...but a wolf may not become human'.<sup>49</sup> In other words, the transformational agency is firmly located within the human, and not the animal, echoing the theological principle that while God may become man, man may not become God. Insofar as the Mowgli stories are concerned, this distinction is rendered as a matter of language. Mowgli may 'master' the words of the jungle, of bear, wolf, panther and snake, but the jungle may not 'master' the speech of man. Kipling's bridge between nature and culture is, it seems, restricted to one-way traffic. Before man the animal remains speechless.

Language, however, is not the principal sign of Mowgli's mastery of the jungle. Mowgli, after all, must *learn* to speak, but ultimate mastery is innate and delivers itself in the form of his gaze. "Not even I can look thee between the eyes" Bagheera tells Mowgli, "The others hate thee because their eyes cannot meet thine...because thou art a man".<sup>50</sup> That Mowgli has hitherto been unaware of this authority only serves to demonstrate that Mowgli must learn not *how* to become 'Master of the Jungle', but that he already *is* 'Master of the Jungle'. But, since all that passes in Kipling's jungle is supposed to be regulated by the 'Giant Creeper' of the Law, what exactly is the legal status of Mowgli's gaze? Seemingly so lacking in those practical and socially cohesive aspects that Shamsul Islam contends are constitutive of Kipling's concept of 'the Law', Mowgli's gaze is best understood in terms of a pure authority, in terms of its power to delineate subject positions within a context of law-giver and law-receiver. Put simply Mowgli's gaze is the

gaze of the master, the gaze not of the body of the law as such, but, rather, of that which bodies forth the law, the law in its transcendent aspect. If the Bandar-log's abduction of Mowgli can be seen as the irruption of the semiotic into the thetic, then Mowgli's gaze is its symbolic corollary; the attempt by the symbolic to arrest, or repress, that irruption and disavow the heterogeneity of the thetic in favor of an originary sovereign authority. For Kristeva, such a repression of the semiotic 'is what sets up metalanguage and the "pure signifier"'.<sup>51</sup> In this sense Mowgli's gaze is an emanation of 'metalanguage'. It is the gaze of 'an unshakable consciousness [which] rests its position on transcendental laws'.<sup>52</sup>

Paradoxically, however, by staring down the brute, animal other, which it 'transcends', Mowgli's gaze evinces what it seeks to deny; that the 'other' is the very precondition of identity, of an 'I' that is capable of enunciating its own presence. Kristeva describes the crucial importance of the 'other' in relation to the process initiated at the 'Mirror Stage' of the development of the infant and completed with 'the discovery of castration' when the subject 'must separate from and through his image, from and through his objects'.<sup>53</sup> As a result, 'dependence on the mother is severed and transformed into a symbolic relation to an other; the constitution of the Other is indispensable for communication with another', conferring on this other 'the possibility of signification'.<sup>54</sup> In effect, it is this debt to the other which Mowgli's gaze attempts to cancel. In other words, the symbolic seeks to disavow its own foundation and wholly enclose *all* signifying practice within its own borders, that of the unitary 'I', the transcendent ego. And it is this gaze of man, of the transcendent ego, which, as Hathi the elephant remarks, puts even tigers to flight.<sup>55</sup>



Although Mowgli's gaze helps to maintain distinctions between man and animal, between culture and nature, which otherwise are in danger of destabilization, his seemingly unreturnable gaze is itself at continual risk of destabilization. But the animals that return Mowgli's gaze are not Kipling's law-abiding wolves, bears and panthers, but the monkey and the jackal. Put briefly, that transcendent gaze of human, masculine authority is returned in the form of mimicry. The Bandar-log, for example, gather together in the ruined city where they would 'sit in circles on the hall of the king's council chamber and scratch for fleas and pretend to be men'.<sup>56</sup> Thus the forms and structures of the 'Law' become the subject of mimetic critique amid the very ruins of the 'Law'. This is not to say that mimicry is the same as mockery. Rather the implicit threat of the Bandar-log, from the point of view of authority, is that they *seem* to want to be men. In terms of colonial discourse Homi Bhabha describes this perceived desire to resemble as 'the inappropriate... a difference or recalcitration which...poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers', and which 'rearticulates presence in terms of its otherness, that which it disavows'.<sup>57</sup> Thus the threat of the 'other' is transformed into its opposite; the threat of the 'same'. The cry of the jackal may be 'half-sobbing and half-chuckling, just as though it had soft human lips'<sup>58</sup>, but it remains an animal whose presence disturbs precisely *because*, not *despite*, of its 'inappropriate' resemblance to those authorized subjects of the Law, wolves and men.

Thus, through the mimesis of monkey and jackal, the gaze is returned to the gazer in its most mad and maddening forms, as the self-conscious, unitary 'I' is taken aback by the self-shattering realization of its own heterogeneity. It is a realization that, as Mowgli

discovers when he is abducted by the Bandar-log, can be thrilling in its intensity. But insofar as this is personal, it is also political. For Kristeva, the social is a necessary dimension of the symbolic, in that the concept of a self-conscious unitary subject, which the symbolic posits and seeks to establish, is the ultimate foundation of 'certain social relations – the family, civil society, and the state'.<sup>59</sup> However, 'jouissance', the heterogeneous 'play' of the semiotic which manifests itself in the mimicry of the Bandar-log, is potentially catastrophic for these 'social relations' insofar as these assume the authority of the self-conscious subject and his or her 'judicial corollary, the State'.<sup>60</sup> Bhabha argues that this does not imply the return of 'the repressed', preferring instead to figure 'the displacing gaze of the disciplined' in terms of a 'metonymy of presence' which represents the 'nonrepressive production of contradictory and multiple belief'.<sup>61</sup> However, his very emphasis on 'contradiction' and 'multiplicity' allow for the return of the gaze to be figured within Kristeva's semiotic/symbolic rubric. Thus, for the Bandar-log, something is true not because of the singular authority of the law but because 'we all say so', a proposition that Mowgli concludes can only have been inspired by jackal-induced insanity.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the Bandar-log contradict the 'Master Words' of the Law, not with an unambiguous 'no', but with 'foolish songs' in the hope that 'the Jungle-People' will 'notice them'.<sup>63</sup>

But then what else are apes supposed to do but *ape*, and thus hold up to a mirror the symbolic gaze of the Law which, having designated the ape as no more than ape, now senses itself under threat from a mimetic recapitulation of its own authority as nothing more than a song and dance. It is a 'song and dance' from which Mowgli must be

rescued by Baloo, Bagheera and Kaa, and for which the Bandar-log must be put in their place. In terms of Kaa's hypnosis of them, their 'place' is not so much out of sight as out of mind, recalling Baloo's injunction, spoken more in hope than conviction, that, as far as the Monkey-People are concerned "We do *not* notice them."

In Kipling's jungle the Law must ultimately triumph over lawlessness, but its dominance is never absolute, and the battle-lines between the two are never straightforwardly set out. Rather the distinctions between the human and the animal, between nature and culture, and even between the law itself and its outlaw other, are vulnerable to an ontological zigzagging which can leave the subject, especially the human subject, stranded outside the structures that determine him. Kipling's narrative, in accordance with the imperatives of imperialist ideology to establish the 'civilised' norm, must attempt to quell the threat of the semiotic, in the form of the Bandar-log. Otherness must be contained and constrained by the sovereign authority of the Law, which simultaneously is the foundation, and the expression of the authority of 'man'. The semiotic, however, does not simply threaten existing structures of identity and signification; it engenders potentially new ways of being. For Baloo, the 'Giant Creeper' of the Law may drop inescapably "across everyone's back", but the Bandar-log know different. They know that the 'Giant Creeper' is there for swinging from and, in Kristeva's words, taking 'from the flank', those very subjects of its phallic entanglement.<sup>64</sup>

At first glance Ursula Le Guin's 'Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight' and Kipling's Mowgli stories share much in common, at least as far as plot is concerned. In

Le Guin's short story a young American girl is blinded in one eye when the small plane she is traveling in crashes in the desert. She is rescued by Coyote who, along with the other desert animals, looks after her, heals her wounded eye and prepares her to return to the familiar world of human beings, of houses and shops, roads and cars. Thus described, it seems a naive, even cute kind of tale, until one recalls that Le Guin, drawing on Native American narratives, depicts a coyote who is apt to drop talking turds from whom she seeks advice, and who is also inclined to screw any passing male coyote within sniffing distance, including her own son. Such a heady blend of coprophilia and sexual licentiousness would seem to put a certain distance between Kipling's rather strict and sober wolves and Le Guin's coyote. But in both cases a child enters into the society of animals who educate her/him into the ways of the world.

The rites of passage of their child protagonists lead, however, to very different visions of the human/animal border. In the Mowgli stories Kipling attempts to shore up the breaches in this border that his narrative opens up. Though tempted by the dangerous promise of the Bandar-log, Mowgli is 'rescued' by the Law. In an albeit reluctant obedience to the imperatives of the symbolic, he quits the jungle and moves to that other country, off-limits to the animal, known as 'Man'. Le Guin's emphasis is different. Like Kipling, she does not abolish the human/animal border. To do so would be abolish difference itself – a move that would effectively deny nonhuman presence. But in 'Buffalo Gals...' gaps in the human/animal border are allowed to remain open. Le Guin's aim is not to erect fences but to establish crossing places, points of connection, between the human and the animal. In other words, Le Guin tells the same story differently. By alighting on the same themes

as Kipling – the metaphors of seeing and gazing, as well as the role of the Law – but from a different perspective, Le Guin’s text illustrates in complex and significant telling ways the crucial importance of the human/animal border.

Although both Kipling’s and Le Guin’s narratives are based on the difference between animal communities and ‘normative’ human communities, the problematic nature/culture binary (rendered as the opposition between ‘jungle’ and ‘village’) which provides the thematic tension in the Mowgli stories is subject to an even greater destabilization in ‘Buffalo Gals...’ Le Guin presents the difference between the nonhuman and the human in terms of “first people” and “new people”.<sup>65</sup> This difference is not, however, represented as *essential*, as Le Guin’s description of “first people”, the desert animals, shows. When Myra, or Gal as she comes to be known, first encounters her rescuing Coyote, only its power of speech marks it out as exceptional. In other respects it, or rather she, appears to be typically Coyote: ‘It was a big one...its coat silvery and thick; The slender, grey-yellow animal was hard to keep in sight’.<sup>66</sup> The key word here is ‘appears’, for Le Guin employs Gal’s damaged sight as a metaphor for calling into question ‘civilized’ ways of envisaging other life, and also to suggest how the world might be seen differently. Coyote herself is the subject of such a moment of ‘re-seeing’, becoming, in effect, a person. At the same time that Gal sees Coyote as Coyote, she also sees her as ‘a tawny-skinned woman...The woman’s hair was yellow and grey, bound back with a string. Her feet were bare’.<sup>67</sup>

Gal's perception of the other animals that inhabit the 'little town'<sup>68</sup> in the desert is similarly transfigured. Owl, for example, is described as 'broad and tall, with powerful hands, a big head, a short neck', while Doe has 'a severely elegant walk, small steps like a woman in high heels, quick, precise, very light'.<sup>69</sup> Le Guin, however, balances this humanization of her animal subjects with an 'animalization' of Gal, which means that the animal is not rendered as mere mimic. When Gal asks why all the animals "look like people", Coyote replies that "Resemblance is in the eyes", and goes on to explain that "to me you're basically greyish yellow and run on four legs", but to the Jackrabbits "you hop around twitching your nose all the time".<sup>70</sup>

This emphasis on the perception of the other as being conditioned by the predilections of the observer subverts any sense of absolute observer authority. In effect Gal discovers that neither her own identity, nor those of the "first people" she encounters, can be encompassed within received systems of meaning. In terms of Kristeva's semiotic/symbolic rubric, the symbolic – in the sense both of a unitary consciousness and as the social system which is its corollary – is, in this way, not so much erased as *demonumentalised*. There is no transcendent 'I' that 'sees' the world exactly as it is, and that exists independently of the world, but only an 'I' in relation to the other(s). For Gal this means facing the dilemma of who she is:

The child thought of herself as Gal, but also sometimes as Myra. So far as she knew, she was the only person in town who had two names. She had to think about that, and about what Coyote had said about the two kinds of people; she had to think about where she belonged.<sup>71</sup>

In other words, Le Guin suggests how the animal other and the human 'I' do not confront one another in a static, hierarchalized binary relation, as 'phallogocentric civilisation' would

have us believe. Instead they interact in what might be called an 'ecology of the subject' where identity is not a fixed point but is itself a process. This emphasis on process means that Gal's journey, unlike Mowgli's, is not precisely that of a quest. Although she must eventually return to the world of "first people", this is not represented as a journey to some 'higher place'. There are no commanding ontological heights from which the world may be objectified. In this sense 'Buffalo Gals...' puts the process of signification, and of the subject who signifies, 'on trial'. Language, especially the language of story, is no longer perceived as a precision instrument by means of which a sovereign consciousness uncovers and names 'truth', or arrives at a goal, an end-point. Le Guin makes much the same point in her essay 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction'. Instead of seeing narrative purely in terms of orthodox, 'masculine' notions of the 'hero' and 'conflict', Le Guin makes the case for the story as 'receptacle':

Conflict, competition, stress, struggle, etc., within the narrative conceived as carrier bag/belly/box/house/medicine bundle, may be seen as necessary elements of a whole which itself cannot be characterized as either conflict or as harmony, since its purpose is neither resolution nor stasis but continuing process.<sup>72</sup>

This refusal of stasis means that a valorized notion of (masculine) human identity, perceived as the fulfillment of being, and which Kipling invests in Mowgli, is, in 'Buffalo Gals...' both *defused* and *diffused* - defused from the apogee of the androcentric subject, and diffused along lines, not of authority, or even mimicry, but instead along lines of relationship and resemblance. The animal other is not so other after all.

The transformation of Gal's sight also means that the power relationship between the human and the animal is radically altered. Mowgli deflects and shuts out the animal gaze

but Gal must learn to take it in and absorb it as part of her own reorientation. Mowgli, commanding, gazes *at* Bagheera, but Gal, ‘yearning’, gazes *after* Coyote.<sup>73</sup> It is this reorientation that marks the crucial difference between Kipling’s and Le Guin’s notions of the human and animal subjectivity, a difference which consists not in the simple inversion of hierarchalized identities, but, rather, as a critique of hierarchy itself. In obedience to the law of ‘Man goes to Man’ Mowgli must learn to let go of the jungle, transcending the jungle in order to master it. By contrast, Gal’s ‘task’ is not to transcend the desert, but to incorporate it, to take it with her.

If the animals, or “first people”, in ‘Buffalo Gals...’ are subject to a subtle and telling anthropomorphizing, how are humans or “new people” conceived? Chickadee describes them as “the others...they live apart. And their places are so heavy. They weigh down on our place, they press on it, draw it, suck it, eat it, eat holes in it, crowd it out...Maybe after a while there’ll only be one place again, their place. And none of us here”.<sup>74</sup> The “new people”, then, are miners and consumers, colonizers and usurpers, and as such representatives of that phallogocentric notion of civilisation that Le Guin, in her introduction, rejects. However, when Gal refers to the “new people” as “illegal immigrants”, Coyote immediately rebuts her by declaring “Illegal is a sick bird. What the fuck’s illegal mean?”, and goes on to make the not unreasonable point that it is somewhat foolish to expect a code of justice from a coyote.<sup>75</sup> This explicit rejection of a legalistic paradigm is in itself striking, given that the “new people”, “the others”, are, as Chickadee laments, responsible for the disappearance of Bison, Antelope, Grizzly and Gray Wolf.<sup>76</sup>



This rejection of 'law' and 'lawlessness', along with the sibling concepts of legislator, judge and criminal, also demonstrates how Le Guin's perspective on the interrelationship of the human and the nonhuman differs in significant ways from Kipling's. For Kipling the law is of fundamental importance in guaranteeing identity, insofar as identity is determined in terms of occupying a designated place and role in the social order. Kipling, however, also hints that in its 'creeping inescapability' the law assumes a profoundly oppressive aspect. In effect, Le Guin brings Kipling's misgivings to their logical conclusion. The "new people", in their exploitation of the desert, of nonhuman life, are not simply agents of the law, but the embodiment of that very ideological perspective which determines the oppositions of human and animal, male and female, law and lawlessness, and thereby licenses the destruction of Chickadee and Coyote's desert home. Seen in this light, Coyote's mocking dismissal of all things legal or illegal amounts to a destabilization of the very oppositions by which civilisation seeks to found itself. For Le Guin, it is not enough to switch subject positions around within the same ideological framework and hope for a kind of emancipatory epiphany. It is the framework itself that needs re-envisaging. For Gal, this is achieved through the transformation of her sight. Using her human eye and her 'animal eye', she sees the world from the perspective of both "first people" and the "new people": 'If she shut the hurting [animal] eye and looked with the other, everything was clear and flat; if she used them both, things were blurry and yellowish, but deep'.<sup>77</sup> Her hybrid vision means that for Gal the world is no longer subject to an originary and irrevocable taxonomy. The established names for things, which assimilate what is other into received systems of meaning, not only fail to *mean*

but also cause pain. When Horse takes her to the margins of her former world, Gal is forced to confront the deadening power of names:

“It’s a ranch,” the child said. “That’s a fence. There’s a lot of Herefords.” The words tasted like iron, like salt in her mouth. The things she named wavered in her sight and faded, leaving nothing – a hole in the world, a burned place like a cigarette burn.<sup>78</sup>

This questioning, or de-monumentalising, of symbolic, patriarchal authority, does not, however, imply a headlong rush to embrace the semiotic, as if one position might simply be exchanged for another. Le Guin’s construction of *animality*, when defined in opposition to a patriarchal, civilized notion of *humanity*, does not entail rejoicing in the boundless free-play and hedonistic amnesia which characterize Kipling’s Bandar-log. Such a complete dissolution of identity in the semiotic would mean that the subject risks, in Kristeva’s words, ‘becoming the very mechanism of the *chora*’s operation...with no signifying substance of its own’.<sup>79</sup> By contrast, Le Guin’s animal community has ‘signifying substance’. It is both rooted and coherent. The Bandar-log may lack ‘remembrance’ and ‘fixity of desire’, but Chickadee remembers Bison, Antelope, Grizzly and Gray Wolf. Although desire may not be exactly ‘fixed’ in the desert, it has direction. As Chickadee puts it, “it all goes together”, but it “goes together” not because it is forced into compliance by the dictates of a sovereign authority.<sup>80</sup> Instead of the ‘Master of the Jungle’, Le Guin presents the reader with a spidery ‘Grandmother’ of the desert, a Grandmother Weaver who, as Gal discovers, ‘was there at the center, at her loom...making a rug or blanket of the hills and the black rain and the white rain, weaving in the lightning’.<sup>81</sup> In place of a vertical hierarchy and strictly delineated subject positions, ‘Buffalo Gals...’ posits the lateral, overlapping warp and weft of the weave.

There is, however, one animal in the desert who does not follow established directions, whose desire cannot be 'fixed', Coyote herself. As the principal agent of Gal's reorientation, Coyote, as Grandmother explains, is Gal's guide between the worlds of the "first" and the "new" people.<sup>82</sup> By crossing this border Coyote transgresses it, opening up ruptures and fissures, new and multiple ways of seeing the world, of making visible the 'obscure matter upon which Civilization erects itself'. Here Le Guin draws on Native American narratives which depict Coyote as the supreme trickster whose very comic unruliness opens up the possibility for transformations and becomings.<sup>83</sup> Tricky, evasive, shocking, pleasure-loving, unpredictable, and law-denying, Coyote is Le Guin's 'Bandarlog', the semiotic made flesh, the heterogeneous other, apt to 'destroy accepted beliefs and significations'.<sup>84</sup> The edifices of law and civilisation tremble at her un-edifying approach. She pees in public, screws her own children, and sees the fatal bait of poisoned salmon, which the "new people" have laid out to kill her, as an "offering".<sup>85</sup> Even more significantly, shit doesn't just happen for Coyote, it talks, and an animal crazy enough to listen to its own shit is crazy enough to go between 'the two kinds of people', to cross over, heedless of the authority of either.<sup>86</sup> If these traversals result in her own death then, as Grandmother points out, "She gets killed all the time".<sup>87</sup> And to be killed "all the time", to die without *finally* dying, is not an event or a goal but a *process*, mirroring the process of signification where, through the irruption of the semiotic into the symbolic, meaning is made, disrupted and re-made.

In effect the ambiguous and contradictory figure of Coyote performs what Kristeva describes, in terms of the avant garde textual practice of Mallarmé, Joyce and others, as

“*significance*”. For Kristeva this concept is crucial. *Significance* registers the impact of the semiotic in ‘a transformation of natural and social resistances, limitations, and stagnations’.<sup>88</sup> As a ‘structuring and destructuring *practice*, a passage to the outer *boundaries* of the subject and society’ *significance* makes change possible.<sup>89</sup> In this way Coyote does not make the world meaningless but *meaningful*, remodeling the ‘symbolic order’ through ‘the influx of the semiotic’.<sup>90</sup> It is Coyote’s ‘tuneless song’ of the ‘outer boundaries’, her border howl, that weaves the ‘web’ that ‘held the stream in the streambed and the rock in the rock’s place and the earth together’.<sup>91</sup> By substituting the intricate, blurry textuality of the ‘web’ for the transparent but deadening grid of the ‘law’, Le Guin allows for ‘difference’ to be integrated without being abolished. In other words, if the ‘human’ can no longer be enclosed within the symbolic then neither can the ‘animal’ be enclosed within the semiotic.<sup>92</sup>

Thus the animal is no longer merely the animated shadow of the human unconscious, embodying the ‘unreason’ of nature in contradistinction to the ‘reason’ of civilisation. Indeed, in this sense Coyote’s shit-listening craziness might be a form of sanity after all. If we, as “new people”, perhaps listened to our own shit, that for which civilisation has no place, we might be less inclined to visit it on those other lives which are so deeply interwoven with our own, and thereby still find room in the world ‘out there’ as well as in story, for Bison, Antelope, Grizzly and Gray Wolf. It might also mean that we could follow in the footsteps of both Mowgli and Gal, and make a journey not to ‘Man’, but somewhere else, somewhere where, by learning the manifold ways of ‘connecting with difference’, the names of things do not taste “like iron, like salt” in the mouth. Such a

place might also serve as home to the wolves of the *Wolf Man's* dream, and of his father's forests, although whether we should call that place 'civilisation' may have to remain a moot point.

## Chapter Five

### The Wolf, the World, and the Text

#### *Green Fire*

'A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends to do otherwise.'<sup>1</sup>

For a chapter that will have as its prime focus contemporary concerns regarding the environment, and the sense of 'environmental crisis', Aldo Leopold's 'land ethic, formulated in his 1949 book *A Sand County Almanac*, makes an appropriate beginning. It has since become something of a watchword for the environmental or 'green' movement, echoing through that other favoured slogan of the contemporary environmentalist, 'everything is connected to everything else'<sup>2</sup>. When, more than fifty years ago, Leopold warned that intensive ranching practices would lead to 'dustbowls' and 'rivers washing the future into the sea'<sup>3</sup>, his insights into the interrelatedness and interdependence of different forms of life anticipated the environmental 'crisis' we are living today. Moreover, he articulated the shift in perspective required to redress the balance in favour of the land:

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts...The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land.<sup>4</sup>

That we are indeed living in an age of 'environmental crisis' is, I hope, so palpably apparent that I do not intend to go to any great lengths to demonstrate the case. Coal-burning power stations in the UK can cause acid rain in Scandinavia; intensive car use in the northern hemisphere has helped to create the ozone hole in the southern; the demand for cheap hamburgers in industrialised countries means another swathe of rainforest felled to make way for cattle, which, in turn, leads to the 'dustbowls' predicted by Leopold. Even those for whom the language of crisis may have worn rather thin through repetition will be able to think of their own examples of environmental degradation to add to those that I have touched upon. Moreover this sense of crisis, because of its extrahuman dimension, is imbued with an apocalyptic tone. It goes beyond the usual concerns of economics – unemployment figures and inflation rates - to encompass the state of the planet itself. In crude terms, nature is paying a heavy price for the 'crimes' of culture.

One of the ways that nature is paying this price is through the extinction, or threatened extinction, of diverse species of plant and animal. Whether through pollution, loss of habitat, or various forms of economic exploitation, the parlous condition of many species is now recognised and, albeit erratically, policed by means of international protocols and treaties such as CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Among the animals struggling to survive is that animal to which this thesis awards pride of place: the wolf. It may not head the world's 'most endangered' list, though in some of the countries where it still survives its situation is vulnerable enough, but the story of the wolf's treatment at the hands of 'man', or western 'man' at

any rate, seems to bear out Freud's view of the relationship of civilisation to 'wild and dangerous animals', and has a powerful resonance for the contemporary environmental debate. Indeed Aldo Leopold's own ecological epiphany, his realisation of the need to re-think human behaviour from the point of view of the eco-system, came about precisely because of an encounter with a wolf. In the section of *A Sand County Almanac* entitled 'Thinking Like A Mountain', he recalls his part in the killing of a wolf while out on a hunting trip with friends, remarking that 'in those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack'.<sup>5</sup> However the sight of the dying wolf effected a sea change in Leopold's views:

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes...I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter's paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.<sup>6</sup>

Ecologically speaking, Leopold's point is that without natural predators, namely wolves, to cull the deer population, over-grazing will have dire consequences for the plant and forest ecology which the mountain hosts. By the same token, 'The cowman who clears his range of wolves does not realize that he is taking over the wolf's job of trimming the herd to fit the range. He has not learnt to think like a mountain. Hence we have dustbowls and rivers washing the future into the sea'.<sup>7</sup> From an ecological perspective the value of Leopold's insight is that it describes how the environment operates through the balanced interplay of its various constituent parts, while also recognising the fragility of the natural systems which have thereby evolved. Tamper with one small part of the system and the consequences for the whole may be devastating. In its articulation of how the world works, this passage from *A Sand County Almanac*, like the quotation that heads this



chapter, is a realistic description of environmental dynamics which calls for a crucial pragmatism about how human beings, individually and collectively, manage their interaction with the natural world. But that is not all it is. Leopold asks us to take into account not just the 'integrity' and 'stability' of the land, but also its 'beauty'. Integrity and stability may, up to a point at least, be quantifiable, but beauty is not. It may be the case that all human societies, and quite possibly some nonhuman ones as well, possess some idea of beauty, or at least have a concept central to their culture which is akin to beauty, but exactly what form beauty takes will vary across time and space, across history and geography. In asking us to conceive of the environment in terms of its stability *and* beauty, Leopold, then, is asking us to bring into play two different ways of relating to the world: the *objective* and the *subjective*. Similarly his call to 'think like a mountain' may make a valid point about the need for human beings to relinquish a position of dominance over the environment, but as far as we know mountains do not 'think'. Indeed when Leopold claims that 'Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf'<sup>8</sup>, the only way, as readers, that we can think this *objectivity* of the mountain is through the *subjective* pathways of the imagination. The same point holds true for his description of the dying wolf. The incident may have occurred 'out there' in the real world, at a real place and at a specific moment in history, but Leopold convinces us of the pathos of this moment not because of a value-free cataloguing of the 'facts', but through the power of trope and metaphor; the marvellous and arresting image of the 'fierce green fire' dying in the wolf's eyes. But although something may have been dying in the wolf's eyes, it was not, literally speaking, 'green fire'.

I do not raise these issues to criticise Leopold, to accuse him of straying from the path of environmental correctness, as if such a path, even if it were desirable, depended on an unflinching literalism. On the contrary, Leopold's implicit recognition of the need to respond *imaginatively* to both the rich diversity of the natural world, not simply in terms of our human capacity to inflict massive harm upon it, but also in terms of its aesthetic and spiritual value, anticipates the critic Lawrence Buell's claim that 'the environmental crisis also involves a crisis of the imagination'.<sup>9</sup> But to invoke the question of the imagination, in terms of how the imagination operates in and through literary discourse – in poetry and fiction, as well as in non-fiction genres such as the essay – is necessarily to probe the relationship between text and world, and to delve into the problematics of representation. In other words, what is at stake in the interface between literature and the environment is not just the 'nature' which the text describes, but the 'nature' of the text itself. To engage in the exploration of this interface is to perform what has become known as 'ecocriticism', a critical practice which, according to Buell's definition of the term, is the 'study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of environmental praxis'.<sup>10</sup> It is also a study which cannot help but engage with the question of literary theory, or more precisely, *theories*. Moreover, the question of theory is not merely an adjunct to questions about the state of the environment or the status of the text. It is not, in other words, simply an esoteric matter, an opportunity for scholastic game-playing. Rather it is of direct relevance to the issue of how literary texts, and other cultural productions, mediate, or even construct, the relationship between the human and the nonhuman.

In the discussion of texts by John Muir, Barry Lopez and Rick Bass which follows, it is, then, this relationship between text and world, and the complex role of theory in elucidating this relationship which forms my prime focus. As a way of initiating this discussion I want to offer a reading of Ted Hughes's poem 'Wolfwatching', as a text which may be taken as evidence in support of Buell's claim that the environmental crisis points also to a crisis of the imagination.

### *Wolfwatching*

That nature, in the broadest sense of the term, has been a central concern of the poetry of Ted Hughes has become something of a critical commonplace to the extent that his designation as a 'nature poet' seems all but indisputable. The critic Keith Sagar articulates this view emphatically: 'From the beginning Hughes is searching for a way of reconciling human vision with the energies, powers, presences of the nonhuman cosmos. At first his main concern is to identify these energies and describe them'.<sup>11</sup> The titles of Hughes's collections over the years, including *The Hawk in the Rain*, *Crow*, *Cave Birds*, and *River* bear out this view, while separate editions of his animal poems testify to the characterisation of Hughes's poetry as both drawing its inspiration from, and in turn, offering the reader re-creations of the natural world. But of itself, the term 'nature poet' does not tell us very much about the relationship of Hughes's poetics to wider, environmental concerns. The larger question is whether Hughes should be regarded as 'simply' a nature poet – notwithstanding the immediate objection that no poetry is 'simply' anything – or whether Hughes's poetry is inflected with a sense of nature being under threat, in terms both of the direct threat posed by human impacts on the

environment, and in terms of how nature, as a wellspring for the ethical, spiritual and aesthetic life of human beings, is threatened with effacement by a determinedly anthropocentric culture. Although he does not use the term 'environmental crisis', for Sagar, writing in the mid seventies, the sense that something has gone critically awry in the relationship between nature and culture is a defining concern of Hughes's poetry: 'Hughes is also concerned to discover whether negotiations are possible between man and Nature...and if so why they have so completely collapsed in our time and what the consequences of this collapse have been and may yet be'.<sup>12</sup> More recently Leonard Scigaj has argued in favour of seeing Hughes's work as an explicit response to a sense of contemporary environmental emergency, claiming:

With 1990s hindsight one can survey the achievement of thirty-five years and remark at how completely Hughes's work meshed with the vanguard of this fusion of ecology with environmental ethics. Hughes's poetry shares a basic premise with ecologists and environmentalists: the only way to save this planet is to change the perceptions of its human inhabitants about nature.<sup>13</sup>

It is in the context of Hughes's poetics, as one which draws its authority as much from the natural world as it does from culture and tradition, and which, furthermore is informed by a sense of contemporary, although not necessarily inevitable conflict between nature and culture, that I want to discuss his poem 'Wolfwatching'.

As a collection, *Wolfwatching* (1989) overtly demonstrates its author's preoccupation with the state of nature. The collection's longest poem, 'The Black Rhino', addresses the situation of an animal threatened to the point of extinction by commercial poaching. It is, in effect, a love poem which is painfully aware of how quickly it may become an elegy, 'The Black Rhino is vanishing/Horribly sick without knowing//She is vanishing.'<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, a note at the end of the book explains that the poem 'was written to help raise funds for the campaign to save the Black Rhinoceros'.<sup>15</sup> On the face of it, 'Wolfwatching' lacks this explicit eco-political dimension. The poem addresses the situation of an old and a young wolf, in an enclosure in 'the middle of London', presumably Regents Park Zoo.<sup>16</sup> For the older wolf the 'anaesthetic' of confinement 'has already taken his strength, his beauty/And his life', while the vitality of the younger wolf is nothing but a prelude to the same deracinated fate, 'His every yawn/Is another dose of poison. His every frolic/Releases a whole flood/Of new hopelessness which he then/Has to burn up in sleep.'<sup>17</sup> Although, then, 'Wolfwatching' does not directly deal with the plight of wolves in the wild, it is a poem that engages implicitly with the notion of environmental crisis, or to be more precise, with the crisis of a particular environment, that of the zoo enclosure, and of the wider enclosure beyond the 'criss-cross embargo' of wires, the city which denies the wolves a 'wolfish' space. As the poem puts it, the old wolf's yawn 'goes/Right back to Kensington.'<sup>18</sup> In other words the wolves of 'Wolfwatching' are *out of place*, in the dual sense which that term implies of being misplaced, and of no longer having a place, of having, in effect, run out of place. The poem represents an attempt to imagine the effects of this sense of placelessness from the perspective of the wolf.

What remains of the power of the old wolf is merely 'a tangle of old ends/A jumble of leftover scraps and bits of energy/And bitten-off impulses and dismantled intuitions.'<sup>19</sup> The younger wolf's situation is little better, 'His eyes/Keep telling him all this is real/And that he's a wolf – of all things/To be in the middle of London, of all/Futile, hopeless

things.’<sup>20</sup> This sense of deadening confinement invites comparison with an earlier poem of Hughes, ‘The Howling of Wolves’ from *Wodwo* (1967). What distinguishes the wolves of this poem, however, is the impossibility of *penning* them, either in the sense of caging them, or of ‘capturing’ the wolf in writing, within the confines of a poem. Their howling is ‘without world’, and, yet, for a wolf, ‘The earth is under its tongue.’<sup>21</sup> The wolf, in other words, is both wordly and out of this world, intrinsic to the earth but not limited to or by the world that the poet perceives through the refracting lens of culture. Rather than try to contain the wolf within his art, to pin down the essence of the wolf, the poet can only acknowledge the limitations of his own human perspective and admit to a sense of questioning wonderment, ‘What are they dragging up and out on their long leashes of sound/That dissolve in mid-air silence?’<sup>22</sup> If the wolf of this poem ‘goes to and fro, trailing its haunches, and whimpering horribly’, it is at least no zoo exhibit, but instead is ‘living for the earth’.<sup>23</sup> It eludes the meanings we might impose on it, ‘It howls you cannot say whether out of agony or joy’.<sup>24</sup> From a narrowly ecocritical perspective it might be argued that Hughes’s othering of the wolf in this poem goes too far. In seeing the wolf in such a mysterious, even mystical, light, the lived reality of the flesh-and-blood live animal is in danger of effacement. But as the poem negotiates, or rather *produces*, the tension between the real and the unreal, it does at least acknowledge the animal in terms of a sublime presence. It cannot be mastered, it cannot be penned.

The wolves of ‘Wolfwatching’, however, exert no such power. The old wolf has been ‘worn away’ by eyes, ‘Children’s gazings/Have tattered him to a lumpish/Comfort of woolly play-wolf.’<sup>25</sup> Compared to the wolves of the *Wolf Man*’s dream these are

devitalised wolves, denuded of presence. The *Wolf Man*'s wolves gaze at the human, demonstrating their sublime presence. 'Wolfwatching' inverts this scenario. By being gazed at by humans they are dethroned from their sublime role, as human transcendence of the 'natural object' is accomplished not simply through an assertion of the animality of the other, but through a dismantling of the threat inherent in that animality. Human beings gazing at zoo wolves do not bear witness to what a wolf *is*, to the subversive, and potentially liberating, plenitude of its animal being, but instead transform the wolf into a domesticated, and hence culturally acceptable object. Hughes's zoo wolves have become toys, 'play-wolves'. If some notion of a natural sublime does persist in the poem it inheres in what Jonathan Bordo has called the 'Postmodern Sublime', and which Christopher Hitt describes as being 'evoked not by natural objects but by their devastation'.<sup>26</sup> Hughes's poem sets out the parameters of this transition from plenitude to waste, of the reduction of the wolf from sublime animal to 'a trembling of wolf pelt he no longer/Knows how to live up to'.<sup>27</sup> The commodification of the wolf into a zoo exhibit represents the annihilation of a way of being, 'A million miles/Knotted in his paws. Ten million years/Broken between his teeth. A world/Stinking on the bone, pecked by sparrows.'<sup>28</sup> That which *is* a wolf, 'the iron inheritance/The incredibly rich will', is consumed in a paltry apocalypse of being reduced to a static token in an exclusively, and aridly, human game of meaning:

He's a tarot-card, and he knows it.  
He can howl all night  
And dawn will pick up the same card  
And see him painted on it, with eyes  
Like doorframes in a desert  
Between nothing and nothing.<sup>29</sup>

In the end, then, 'Wolfwatching' is a poem which is profoundly about the devastation of nature, in its material and ideational aspects, especially when read in the light of the earlier 'The Howling of Wolves', where the wolf is valorised as 'living for the earth'. In effect, Hughes suggests that our (mis)treatment of wolves encapsulates the crisis in the modern, human relationship to the earth itself. In putting up a cage we may well be cutting a cord. Moreover this severance is not just a matter of environmental pragmatics, nor is it a purely ethical issue. It has implications for ourselves as, in effect, story-telling animals. As the wolf may *live* 'for the earth', so human beings may *speak* 'for the earth', but if the only animals we are prepared to tolerate are caged ones what does this say about the kinds of stories we are prepared, or able, to tell? In this sense 'Wolfwatching' is a poem which addresses the crisis of the wolf not just as a crisis of the environment but also of narrative. When the speaker asks, regarding the young wolf, 'Is he hearing the deer? Is he listening/To gossip of non-existent forests',<sup>30</sup> the reader is not only compelled to consider whether nature has a voice, or rather *voices*, but is also prompted to reflect that, for the metropolitan zoo visitor, the forest of voices has already become 'non-existent'. Hughes makes clear the dependence of narrative on its connections to a 'wild space' a few lines later: 'The fairy tales/Grow stale all around him/And go back into pebbles'.<sup>31</sup> Nature *and* narrative whither in the cage.

But there is also a sense in which 'Wolfwatching', as a poem, as a cultural artefact, does not simply describe and critique a 'crisis of the imagination', but is itself caught up in this very crisis. It too does not escape the cage. Hughes's poem dramatises the tragedy of its subjects by showing how confinement de-vitalises an otherwise powerful and exuberant



animality. This is evoked in images and tropes such as 'The scorched ancestries/Grizzled into his back',<sup>32</sup> but it also finds expression in different kinds of tropes and metaphor. When the eyes of the younger, and, for a while at least, still vibrant wolf, are described as 'gunsights', Hughes incorporates a distinctively human paradigm. Similarly the wolf's head is a 'huge engine'; his feet are 'power-tools'.<sup>33</sup> Of course, deployment of metaphor and shifts in register are the very stuff of poetry, what poetry relies on if it is to perform its task of transforming our vision of the world. Moreover, seeing nature in terms of culture may be a distinctive feature, and even an objective, of Hughes's poetry but it is far from unique to his work. The issue I want to raise is one of how this re-seeing is handled. What is it which dictates the particular images, tropes and metaphors that come into play? In this context a comparison with Elizabeth Bishop's 'The Bight' helps to clarify the point. The speaker in Bishop's poem, like that of 'Wolfwatching', envisages the nonhuman in terms of the human: 'Pelicans crash' into 'the peculiar gas' of the sea 'like pickaxes'; 'man-of-war birds...open their tails like scissors'.<sup>34</sup> For Bishop the marginal space of the shoreline, between land and sea, is analogous to that other margin between culture and nature, where an imaginative interchange between the two realms can occur. As her poem puts it 'The bight is littered with old correspondences.'<sup>35</sup> That there should be, as it were, 'traffic' between the two realms does not, however, mean, as far as Bishop is concerned, that nature is subsumed by culture. Her precise use of simile (pelicans are only *like* pickaxes) defamiliarises the natural world in a way that heightens the reader's sense of difference and at the same time guards against the subsumption of nature within culture. The effect of this is not, however, to assert an absolute otherness, which would imply that nature and culture are binary opposites. Rather, in 'The Bight',

Bishop recognises that the claims of culture to 'know' nature are, at best, provisional. Moreover, by employing self-reflexive techniques such as puns (correspondences/letters) and literary allusions ('if one were Baudelaire/one could probably hear it [the water] turning to marimba music)<sup>36</sup>, Bishop acknowledges her poem's status as cultural artefact. Nature and culture are co-located (within *corresponding* distance) but not conflated. Indeed any movement towards conflation would have the counter-productive effect of militating against the very notion of 'correspondence' since in being seen as occupying the same ground, neither nature nor culture would have anything to say to one another. But Hughes is not pointing to correspondences, or rather, in key moments of 'Wolfwatching', the correspondences between the cultural and the natural are not rendered *as* correspondences, as imaginative mediations between overlapping but distinct fields. Hughes's tenor is assertive rather than associative. The wolf's head *is* an 'engine', its feet *are* 'power-tools'.

For Terry Gifford, Hughes's use of similar 'mechanical' imagery, in *Cave Birds*, 'prevents sentimentality or idealisation'.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, such imagery shows Hughes's poetry to be working against the grain of traditional pastoral insofar as this genre implies 'a false construction of reality, usually idealised, often nostalgic and distorting the historical, economic and organic tensions at work in human relationships with Nature'.<sup>38</sup> Instead, Hughes's vision of nature poetry is one that has moved from the anti-pastoral of the early works to a fully-fledged 'post-pastoral' poetics which because it is based on 'an awareness of both nature as culture and culture as nature' recognises that the environmental crisis encompasses both paradigms.<sup>39</sup> As I have argued, 'Wolfwatching'

is, at heart, a poem that demonstrates precisely such a consciousness. Indeed when Hughes *likens* the pitiable and incurable restlessness of the old wolf to ‘a sleepless half-sleep of growing agonies/In a freezing car’,<sup>40</sup> the ‘correspondence’ between cage and car as instances of how a modern, industrialised culture can de-nature both its human and nonhuman subjects is tellingly evoked. But elsewhere in ‘Wolfwatching’, the tenor of the poem does not emphasise a nature/culture continuum, but rather shows how nature is overwritten by culture as the organic is pressed into the paradigm of the manufactured. That Hughes ‘reads’ his wolves as machines is, in this sense, another way of enclosing, or closing-off the animal. Biology, in other words, is subsumed by technology. Hughes’s poem may represent a forceful exposure of anthropocentric values but a part of its power derives from the fact that, as a cultural artefact, it does not escape the ‘crisis of the imagination’ which it seeks to critique, but is, in its very mode of expression, both an indictment and a symptom of that crisis.

### *What is Wilderness?*

Thinking through the relationship of a text to a sense of environmental crisis, as well as its relation to the natural world as a whole, demands exploring some fundamental and complex questions. Can a cultural artefact, such as a poem, speak *about*, let alone *for*, nature in the language of culture? Do, for example, the wolves in ‘Wolfwatching’ have actual counterparts in the ‘real’ world, and even if the poem does not dramatise the situation of identifiable, individual animals, can Hughes’s wolves stand in for the wolves

we might ourselves encounter in a zoo or wildlife park, or as the exotic predators in a TV nature documentary? Alternatively, are they purely textual creations whose meanings we garner through the miasmatic intermingling of other texts? It is the task of criticism, and of theory, to provide some kind of answer to these questions, but for a number of contemporary ecocritics, ecocriticism and modern literary theory make reluctant, even hostile bedfellows. A review of an American Ecocriticism reader, in *The Ecologist*, applauded many of the contributions for 'rebellious against playful deconstructive approaches'. In his introduction to *The Green Studies Reader* Laurence Coupe expresses an almost evangelical zeal in trying to save literary criticism, and by extension the planet, from the alleged excesses of modern theory as he rails against the 'self-serving inference that nature is nothing more than a linguistic construct'.<sup>41</sup> Lawrence Buell, though with rather more circumspection, also identifies much poststructuralist thinking as the villain of the piece, and it is Buell's critique of theory that I want to outline at some length, before putting it to the test in terms of how it enables, or disables, an ecocritical reading of texts.

In making the case for a critical practice, in keeping with the ecological dictum that 'everything is connected to everything else', Buell claims that 'the environmental crisis involves a crisis of the imagination the amelioration of which depends on finding better ways of imaging nature and humanity's relationship to it'.<sup>42</sup> The trouble with literary theory, for Buell, is that it posits a 'disjunction between text and world...that tends to efface the world'.<sup>43</sup> This alleged effacement of the world runs counter to the ethical responsibility of ecocriticism by accentuating a *homocentric* rather than a *biocentric*

approach. In other words, theory, according to Buell, identifies the human subject as the principal locus of meaning and value, and thus tends to marginalise the natural world and the dependence of human beings on the dynamics of ecological processes. Put crudely, other forms of life, as well as habitats and natural systems, should be treated as legitimate subjects in their own right. According to Buell, theory makes this kind of validation all but impossible:

Literary theory has been making the idea of a literature devoted to recuperating the facticial environment seem quaintly untheoretical. All major strains of contemporary theory have marginalised literature's referential dimension by privileging structure, text(uality), ideology, or some other conceptual matrix that defines the space discourse occupies apart from facticial "reality"...New Critical formalism did so by insisting that the artefact was its own world, a heterocosm. Structuralism and poststructuralism broke down the barriers between literary and nonliterary not however to rejoin literary discourse to the world but to conflate all verbal artefacts within a more spacious domain of textuality...new historicism set text within context. But it did so in terms of the text's status as a species of cultural production or ideological work. In this type of formulation literature's appropriation of the world in the service of some social allegiance or commitment seemed to render merely epiphenomenal the responsiveness of literature to the natural world either in its self-existence as an assemblage or plenum or in the form of a gestalt that can impress upon the mind or text in [a] fundamental and binding way...It seems that literature is not thought to have the power to do this, that such power it might have is thought to have been overridden by the power of imagination, textuality, and culture over the malleable, plastic world it bends to its will.<sup>44</sup>

Intrinsic to Buell's argument for a reaffirmation of the 'malleable, plastic world' is what might be described as the 'return of the referent', and a renewed emphasis on mimesis and realism which will recognise and affirm the text's 'dual accountability to matter and to discursive mentation'.<sup>45</sup>

For Buell the value of referentiality and mimesis is that they demonstrate 'the ethos...of basing an art on disciplined extrospection [which] is in the first instance an affirmation of environment over self'.<sup>46</sup> Buell does not pretend that the sort of criticism he proposes is unproblematic, acknowledging that 'mimesis itself' can 'threaten nature' by 'tempting us to accept cozening copies for the real thing'.<sup>47</sup> He also argues that a 'decidedly referential project' can also encompass the capacity to 'invent, stylize and dislocate' insofar as these strategies may themselves help to reorient how we read both texts, and the physical environment.<sup>48</sup> Ultimately it is this reorientation that matters; '*Eco-centrism* replaces *ego-centrism*'.<sup>49</sup> To put the issue polemically, art need not collaborate with industry in effacing the natural world. The textual mediation of the referent should not imply the extinguishing of the referent. In Buell's words, 'From an ecocentric standpoint a criterion built on a theoretic distinction between human constructedness and nonhuman reality...is far more productive than a criterion based on the presupposition of the inevitable dominance of constructedness alone'.<sup>50</sup>

Buell's emphasis on the referent packs a strong rhetorical appeal. If the role of the environmentally oriented text, as well as an environmentally oriented criticism, is to (re)direct our attention to the physical world, to what is actually *out there*, then we need to see the referent not as a free-floating discursive construct, but as being intrinsically connected to the physical world and imbued with ethical and aesthetic worth. But if we probe beneath the surface of this rhetoric these connections are, as Buell himself at times concedes, far from straightforward and may even thwart the sort of aesthetic and ethical reorientation that Buell advocates. To come to terms with the kinds of issue involved, I

want to critically consider Buell's claims on behalf of the referent, especially in the context of what has become a pivotal environmental motif: wilderness.

In *Deep Ecology*, Bill Devall and George Sessions identify wilderness as fundamental to a new ecological consciousness. Moreover, they offer a definition of wilderness as 'a landscape or ecosystem that has been minimally disrupted by the intervention of humans, especially the destructive technology of modern societies'.<sup>51</sup> The wilderness is thus seen as a particular physical space, as something that can be seen, heard, smelt and touched. In other words wildernesses are real places where a radical ecological ethic, or aesthetic, can be grounded. This involves 'developing a sense of place'; recognising that the human being is a part of the land, not its conqueror or master; the cultivation of 'modesty and humility'; the recognition that the 'actualizing processes' of different aspects of an ecosystem, such as rivers, rocks and plants as well as nonhuman animals, are analogous to the ontological validation we award ourselves as human beings.<sup>52</sup>

For Devall and Sessions the writing of John Muir is exemplary in its articulation of a wilderness aesthetic. His records of his journeys to the high Sierra of the western United States in the 1870s reveal that 'Nature is one living, pulsing organism', and demonstrate that 'the purpose of science is not just to classify and manipulate bits and pieces of the planet, but to explain while fully experiencing'.<sup>53</sup> As far as Devall and Sessions are concerned, Muir, as a prophet *in* the wilderness, became a prophet *of* the wilderness. In Muir's writing, then, we should expect to see the realisation of the claims that Buell makes for the capacity of literature's referential dimension to recuperate the 'factual

environment'. Put crudely, the wilderness is *there*, Muir writes about it, and thereby puts the reader in touch with a reality which may engender the kind of ecological orientation so essential to our time. But how successfully does a reading of Muir bear out this faith in the 'fact' of wilderness, in the integrity of wilderness as a sure and certain referent? Consider the following passage from *My First Summer in the Sierra*, the journal of his trip to Yosemite in 1868:

In open spots many of the lowland compositae are still to be found and some of the Mariposa tulips and other conspicuous members of the lily family; but the characteristic blue oak of the foothills is left below and its place is taken by a fine large species (*Quercus Californica*) with deeply lobed deciduous leaves, picturesquely divided trunk, and broad, massy, finely lobed and modelled head. Here also at a height of about twenty five hundred feet we come to the edge of the great conifer forest, made up mostly of yellow pine with just a few sugar pines.<sup>54</sup>

Muir's prose here is that of the natural historian. There is a scrupulous attention to detail in his description of the colour, size and shape of the flowers and trees he encounters, and this specificity is enhanced through the use of technical, botanical terms such as 'compositae', and the taxonomical '*Quercus Californica*'. Muir leavens his account with the occasional 'subjective' adjective and adverb ('fine', 'picturesquely') but his main objective here is precision. The personal narratorial 'I' is absent as the writing seeks to achieve the condition of transparency in order that the 'real world' referent shines through. Now consider the passage which immediately follows, taken from the same journal entry of June 6<sup>th</sup>:

We are now in the mountains and they are in us, kindling enthusiasm, making every nerve quiver, filling every pore and cell of us. Our flesh and bone tabernacle seems transparent as glass to the beauty about us, as if truly an inseparable part of it, thrilling with the airs and trees,



streams and rocks, in the waves of the sun – a part of all nature, neither old nor young, sick nor well, but immortal.<sup>55</sup>

This seems to be the kind of writing Devall and Sessions have in mind when they claim that Muir's strength is his ability to 'explain while fully experiencing', and that the experience of wilderness, the mountains, is a spiritual realignment of self with nature which anticipates the call to recognise that 'everything is connected to everything else'.<sup>56</sup> But what, precisely, is the referent, or referents, at the heart of Muir's rhapsodising? To be more precise, what *is* wilderness? The reader learns that Muir and his companions have entered the mountain wilderness of Yosemite, but this wilderness is not rendered as something external to consciousness, like the flowers and trees of the first passage. Rather the wilderness is seen as an aspect of consciousness. In other words Muir does not so much describe wilderness itself, as an objective reality, but instead a subjective experience for which the term 'wilderness' seems a suitable descriptor. Indeed the juxtaposition of registers – natural history and eulogy – is one of the most appealing aspects of Muir's writing. But a consequence of this is that the referent does not, as it were, remain rooted to the spot. Even if the claim is advanced that wilderness and the experience of wilderness amount to the same thing (a problematic claim in itself given the Deep Ecology principle that the nonhuman has intrinsic value regardless of the presence of an observing human consciousness), attempting to pin down the experience of wilderness as a precise free-standing referent is well nigh impossible. The distinction between who is referring and what is being referred to is all but effaced. This is, of course, Muir's point ('We are now in the mountains and they are in us') but to valorise connection and merger, and thus dissolve boundaries, is inescapably to problematise

referentiality. Muir's use of the register of religious architecture, his description of the body as a 'tabernacle', makes the point. It may be a marvellous and striking metaphor, it may even be the best metaphor, but the very fact that metaphor is required demonstrates that there is not a straightforward correlation between text and referent. The wilderness which Devall and Sessions define in terms of the nonhuman, is also, in Muir's view, the human body, which is also a tabernacle, which is an aspect of the built, not the wild, environment.

Indeed, the referential dilemma is something which Muir himself realises. The paradox of Yosemite is that the very scale of its physical presence, its *there-ness*, makes it indescribable, 'beyond thought'.<sup>57</sup> In this respect wilderness takes on that sublime aspect which I discussed in Chapter Two. As sublime presence, wilderness exceeds discourse, it confounds referentiality. To bring this presence to some kind of actualisation on the page Muir thus requires not a single, secure referent called 'wilderness', but a whole array of referents whose principal source is religious imagery. The Yosemite peaks form a grand congregation of massive heights',<sup>58</sup> fir trees dip 'their spires in the starry sky',<sup>59</sup> a mountain stands 'as one of Nature's cathedrals'.<sup>60</sup> Still more strikingly, the wilderness, for Muir, may be rendered in terms of its conceptual opposite: the garden. Yosemite is described as 'Nature's garden at once tenderly beautiful and sublime'.<sup>61</sup> Wilderness is thus both wild *and* cultivated. In effect Muir blends two seemingly antithetical registers: the humanly accommodating discourse of the pastoral, connoting feelings of intimacy, security and home, which makes the landscape seem 'full of humanity',<sup>62</sup> and the Romantic vision of the natural sublime where nature stands for that which transcends the

human, and which, as Muir puts it, is without 'all human mark...glowing with Heaven's unquenchable enthusiasm'.<sup>63</sup> This attempted fusion of different registers and discourses of itself testifies to the difficulty, even impossibility, of bounding the referent 'wilderness' within the terms of a given discourse. For Muir, the power and beauty of a Yosemite skyscape is, ultimately, 'unsketchable and untellable'.<sup>64</sup> There is, however, a paradox here. In trying to make the 'untellable' tellable Muir conceives of the wilderness not as something wholly beyond and other to discourse, to the text, but as itself a text. A horizon of pine trees shows how 'every tree [is] harmoniously related to every other; definite symbols, divine hieroglyphs written with sunbeams'.<sup>65</sup> Elsewhere he writes of a mountain as 'a temple displaying Nature's best masonry and sermons in stones'.<sup>66</sup> This merging of text and world places an even greater question mark over the nature of the referent, or indeed the 'referent of nature', and, from the point of view articulated by Buell, seems to fundamentally problematise the text's capacity to represent 'factual reality'.

However, from another perspective this textualisation of nature may accord with an environmentally oriented poetics. Muir's valorisation of nature as text recalls Baudelaire's conception of nature, in his poem 'Correspondences', as 'forests of symbols'.<sup>67</sup> As the critic Robert Pogue Harrison argues, this symbolic aspect of nature is not, however, something which, for Baudelaire, the mind confers on nature. Rather it is intrinsic to nature. When Baudelaire, in the same poem, declares that 'Nature is a temple where living pillars/Sometimes let out confused words'<sup>68</sup> the point is, according to Harrison, that 'Nature is a temple, not like a temple'.<sup>69</sup> In other words Nature is the *space*

of reverence and communion but, more than this, becomes the *subject* of reverence insofar as it provides the very seedbed of poetic utterance, 'the original familiarity that makes analogies between different things possible'.<sup>70</sup> Moreover this correspondence, through 'symbolic analogy', demonstrates that supposedly distinct entities, including mind and matter, self and world, are 'prerelated through kinship'.<sup>71</sup> In this sense nature is not so much symbolic of something else. It is the ground of symbolism itself.

The Muir-Baudelaire connection can of course be stretched too far. As Harrison points out Baudelaire rejected treatments of nature that were, paradoxically, too naturalistic, too literal, which lost touch 'with the more distant realms of sense perception'.<sup>72</sup> For Muir, on the other hand, approaching nature as objective reality, as the literal object of scientific study, is an important aspect of his search to understand wild places. But the distinction between the object described and the text which describes is ultimately insufficient to Muir's experience of wilderness. Imagination, text, nature and matter all intersect in, and *as*, wilderness. Insofar as Muir reads wilderness in the 'divine hieroglyphs' of nature, wilderness as a referent is itself intrinsically textual.

There is, moreover, another objection to classifying various pieces of the earth as 'wilderness'. It is an objection which arises not because of the difficulties in establishing precise boundaries between text and world, but because of how the idea of wilderness is bound up with historically contingent imperatives of ideology and culture. Put simply, the question is: for whom is a particular desert, mountain or forest 'wilderness'? In effect, I want to develop the argument touched on in Chapter One which took issue with the idea

that Jack London's writing defined the 'essence' of the North, the 'true' aspect of a place which overrode the psychological and cultural predilections of the observer or reader. In the case of John Muir, and the concept of wilderness, this point is perhaps best illustrated by his description of Native Americans in *My First Summer in the Sierra*. At one level he appears to accept that the relationship of Indians to the Yosemite environment seems more balanced, more 'natural' than that of the white settlers. Indians, according to Muir, 'walk softly and hurt the landscape hardly more than the birds and squirrels...while their enduring monuments, excepting those wrought on the forests by the fires they made to improve their hunting grounds, vanish in a few centuries'.<sup>73</sup> In contrast, 'the white man's marks made in a few feverish years', including roads, dams, mines and mills, will take much longer to wear away, 'though Nature is doing what she can, replanting, gardening...patiently trying to heal every raw scar'.<sup>74</sup> For Muir, however, this affinity between the wilderness and the Indian, is only ever skin-deep. In other ways the Indians are profoundly at odds with the Sierra landscape. Compared to the 'divine beauty' of nature, Indians lead 'a strangely dirty and irregular life'.<sup>75</sup> In this respect, unlike the indigenous plants, trees and animals, the Indians Muir encounters do *not* belong to the wild: 'from no point of view that I have found are such debased fellow beings a whit more natural than the glaring tailored tourists we saw that frightened the birds and squirrels'.<sup>76</sup> Thus Indians are, for Muir, strangers to the wilderness, not in terms of ecology, but in terms of aesthetics. Not only are their allegedly dirty lives a blemish on the face of nature, where 'nothing truly wild is unclean',<sup>77</sup> but they do not demonstrate in word or deed any sign of that ecstatic rapport with the wild to which Muir finds himself prone. To be fair, Muir is scarcely less impressed by whites on this score, and in *Travels*

*in Alaska* he is considerably more generous in his treatment of the culture and customs of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific North West. But as far as the Indians of the Sierra are concerned, Muir's attitude recalls that expressed by Wordsworth towards 'Gipsies' in the poem of the same name:

Behold the mighty Moon! This way  
She looks as if at them – but they  
Regard her not: - oh better wrong and strife  
(by nature transient) than this torpid life:  
Life which the very stars reprove  
As on their silent tasks they move!  
Yet witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!  
In scorn I speak not; they are what their birth  
And breeding suffer them to be;  
Wild outcasts of society!<sup>78</sup>

As Robert Pogue Harrison points out, Wordsworth's complaint about 'gipsies' is that 'He sees no evidence of the great romantic eye that observes the world in rapturous admiration'.<sup>79</sup> Muir may display more insight than Wordsworth on the environmental pragmatics of the relationship between land and inhabitant, but on the key question, from an ecocritical perspective, of how environment and aesthetics intersect, Muir and Wordsworth share common ground. In this respect the Indians of Yosemite are not *indigenous*, but *anomalous* to the wilderness.

This relationship, or rather *lack* of relationship may, however, be put in rather different terms. Rather than asserting that the Indians are anomalous to the wilderness, it may be more accurate to argue that the category of wilderness is an anomalous category, especially when seen in the light of its antecedents in Romanticism and a eurocentric post-Enlightenment idealisation of nature as sublime presence. The ecofeminist critic Vera Norwood makes this point in her discussion of Mary Austin's *The Land of Little*

*Rain*, originally published in 1903. Describing the relationship of the Shoshone people of the American Southwest to their desert environment, Austin comments ‘Not the weathered hut is his home, but the land, the winds, the hill front, the stream’.<sup>80</sup> The important word in this context is ‘home’. Understanding somewhere as home requires invoking a different paradigm from that of wilderness. It means experiencing the land in terms of its familiar particularity rather than its transcendent grandeur. The two perspectives are not necessarily diametrically opposed – indeed one of the main functions of an environmentally oriented text may be to deconstruct any sense of *intrinsic* oppositions – but to acknowledge that wilderness is only one way of experiencing and interpreting place means it cannot form some core essence which, of itself, may serve as an unsullied material and ideational touchstone for environmental thinking and practice. Instead, it is itself hedged about with meanings derived from specific cultural contexts. An appeal to wilderness may have considerable merits, especially in an age where the built environment is dominating increasingly large areas of the planet, but such an appeal needs to be made with an eye for culture and history as well as for nature. As Alison Byerly has noted in her analysis of the public management of wilderness areas in the United States, ‘The idea of wilderness refers to an absence of humanity, yet “wilderness” has no meaning outside the civilization that defines it’.<sup>81</sup>

That wilderness is an idea constructed on shifting ideological sands is exemplified by Barry Lopez’s account of how both Native Americans and wolves were framed in terms of a pejorative notion of wilderness that informed the colonisation of America. He cites a Massachusetts law of 1638 which stated that ‘Whoever shall [within the town] shoot off a

gun on any unnecessary occasion, or at any game except an Indian or a wolf, shall forfeit 5 shillings for every shot'.<sup>82</sup> Both wolf and Indian were, then, exceptions, beyond the pale, constituent features of a nexus of mysterious and dangerous forces which taken together amounted to 'wilderness'. Lopez traces the historical roots of this mindset to the biblical view of wilderness as 'the place without God', the subjugation of which was thus divinely sanctioned, so that 'the act of killing wolves became a symbolic act, a way to lash out at that enormous, inchoate obstacle: wilderness'.<sup>83</sup> The wilderness was thus seen as the enemy of enlightened progress, a physical and metaphysical barrier in the way of civilisation. But wilderness offers other meanings as well. Over the last fifty years the concept of wilderness has been re-invested with positive values, as a place of asylum, sanctuary, freedom, as somewhere where, in an inversion of the Enlightenment paradigm, nature stands forth against the ambiguous march of civilisation. This renaissance of the wilderness has various sources, including a burgeoning environmental awareness, the Romantic idealisation of nature, and not least Muir's own proto-Green and post-Romantic synthesis of these perspectives. One effect of this renaissance has been the recuperation of both the Indian and the wolf as exemplary figures. As Shepard Krech puts it, for many people the contemporary view of the Native American is that of the 'Ecological Indian', a paragon of environmental virtue 'who understands the systemic consequences of his actions, feels deep sympathy with all living forms, and takes steps to conserve so that earth's harmonies are never imbalanced and resources never in doubt'.<sup>84</sup> The rehabilitation of the wolf follows the same logic. Hank Fischer ends his account of wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone by declaring that as the wolves were released from their holding pens 'Yellowstone Park was on the road to becoming whole once more'.<sup>85</sup>



This view of the wilderness, as a living symbol of wholeness and integrity, is a far cry from the chaotic wilderness that America's first European colonists confronted. But the difference is psychological, not topographical, and if wilderness, rather than civilisation, is seen as paradigmatic of place, then wolves rather than humans exemplify the paradigmatic inhabitant. As Barry Lopez puts it:

When, from the prisons of our cities, we look out to wilderness, when we reach intellectually for such abstractions as the privilege of leading a life free from nonsensical conventions...a life of integrity...I think we can turn to wolves...we do sense that they are somehow correct in the universe and we are somehow still at odds with it.<sup>86</sup>

Lopez's point is subtly made, and may well be a needful truth for our time, but as his own analysis of lupine history reveals, in as much as the wilderness is made up of earth, sky, rock, water, plant and animal it is also made up of human fears and desires. The wolf is no different. We may admire or condemn the wolf as an alternative to a human way of being in the world, but, in Lopez's words, 'We create wolves. The methodology of science creates a wolf just as surely as does the metaphysical vision of a native American, or the enmity of a cattle baron of the nineteenth century'.<sup>87</sup> Considered as referent both wolf and wilderness bear the indelible mark of the human.

But can arguments in favour of a more complex and ambivalent approach to questions of referentiality, and the border between text and world, serve an ecocritical practice? If poststructuralist and, particularly, deconstructive modes of criticism really do reduce nature itself to, in Coupe's words, nothing more than a 'linguistic construct', then the fundamental ecocritical premise of respect, care and responsibility to what is non-self, to the nonhuman other, falls by the ethical wayside. How can we care for a 'linguistic

construct' in the same way that we might care for an animal, a forest or a river? This, in crude terms, is the case made against those who would follow a deconstructive path, or maze, in the interpretation of literary texts. For Leonard Scigaj, the differences between ecocriticism and deconstruction are, in this respect, fundamental:

Derrida's attempt to treat the referential world as text soon breaks down under the simplest commonsense scrutiny. If one fails to read a book, no discernible consequences ensue in the referential world, unless, of course, one is enrolled in courses where grades and graduation may depend on understanding certain texts or where our failure to read an instruction manual causes mistakes in operating a machine. On the other hand, America's failure to prosecute the abuse of toxic substances by its chemical companies has resulted in somewhat permanent consequences: damage to our lakes, our soil, our fresh air.<sup>88</sup>

The supposed shortcomings of a deconstructive approach are epitomised by Jacques Derrida's famous or, depending on your point of view, infamous, pronouncement, that there is 'nothing outside of the text'. For Buell, valorising the text in this way necessarily entails a valorisation of the human subject, as text-producer, to the extent that the nonhuman world ceases to possess anything that might be acknowledged as legitimate existence. Seen in the light of Buell's claims, Derrida's emphasis on text appears to extinguish nature as both a material and ideational habitat, only to subsume nature in what Buell calls 'discursive force fields',<sup>89</sup> and a force field, it should be noted, is designed to keep things apart, to register and enforce the integrity of a border. But is this what Derrida's notion of text seeks to achieve? A closer examination of Derrida's arguments may suggest otherwise.

Central to Derrida's thought is the notion of 'différance', a kind of subversive undercurrent which flows through language and disrupts the network of binary

oppositions, including culture/nature, by which meaning is ordered. Différance reveals that such networks are not fixed in some inviolate, transcendent real of metaphysical 'truth', but are themselves subject to a de-centring rupture. The concept of différance thus picks up on, and more importantly *departs* from the structuralism of Saussure and Levi-Strauss. Essentially Derrida's point is that if the meaning of a word, concept or value is constituted only *in relation* to another word, concept, or value, then those meanings which might be considered primary, or a priori, are themselves *effects*, since, as Derrida puts it:

Difference is what makes the movement of signification possible only if one element that is said to be "present", appearing on the stage of presence, is related to something other than itself but retains the mark of a past element and already lets itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element.<sup>90</sup>

Potentially, this critique of meaning seems to strike at the heart (or what an orthodox metaphysics conceives of as the heart) of an anthropocentric worldview: human consciousness. According to Derrida, 'consciousness, the being-next-to-itself of consciousness' cannot be conceived of as 'the absolutely matrinal form of being but as a "determination" and an "effect"'.<sup>91</sup> This perspective not only entails a de-centring of the human cogito, but also implies that no experience, and especially an experience of and in language, can be resolved in terms of metaphysical absolutes, such as God, Truth, Presence, Nature, History. So-called absolutes take on meaning only in relation to other terms. Rather than looking to some bedrock of reality or existence, Derrida instead argues that this play of différance means that meaning is dependent on context:

What is called "objectivity", scientific for instance (in which I firmly believe in a given situation), imposes itself only within a context which is extremely vast, old, powerfully established, stabilized or rooted in a network of conventions...and yet which still remains a context.<sup>92</sup>

This emphasis on context returns us to the dictum with which Derrida's critics have sought to nail deconstruction: 'There is nothing outside of the text'. For Derrida, however, 'text' and 'context' are all but interchangeable ways of attempting to describe the same phenomenon:

The phrase which for some has become a sort of slogan, in general so badly understood, of deconstruction ("there is nothing outside the text"[*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]) means nothing else: there is nothing outside context.<sup>93</sup>

The Derridean emphasis on context strikes a manifest chord with a critique of the Deep Ecology position on wilderness. Wilderness cannot have the kind of ahistorical, transcendent, fixed meaning which Devall and Sessions would like. The wilderness of John Muir is as much an effect of history, of context, as it is of place. This does not mean that wilderness, as a concept, is without value. On the contrary, a deconstructive approach can suggest how wilderness and its supposed binary opposite, civilisation, are not locked in a kind of eternal, mutual stand-off, like two magnets facing one another. Instead the play of *différance* disrupts, to borrow Buell's phrase, any such 'force field' with the result that wilderness and civilisation infect and contaminate one another. The either/or choice, which Freud sets down in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, between the wild animal (etymologically, wilderness is nothing less than the place of the wild animal, specifically wild deer) and civilisation, breaks down. Indeed one might almost say that *différance* is precisely the making wild of meaning and signification, including the term 'wild' itself. What regulates this movement is context. As Derrida puts it, *différance* does

not imply the non-existence of the 'real', but that the real gives itself in the form of a text and that therefore 'one cannot refer to this "real" except in an interpretative experience'.<sup>94</sup>

A more cogent critique of Derrida's position is implied in the argument David Abram makes in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. Abram calls for a revivification of 'our forgotten relation to the encompassing earth',<sup>95</sup> so that 'extrahuman' reality provides a meaningful context for human modes of living. Drawing on the phenomenologist tradition of Husserl, and especially Merleau-Ponty, Abram stresses that human intellect, indeed human consciousness itself, and consequently the acquisition of knowledge and the making of meaning, derives from a sensuous and, importantly, reciprocal interaction with animate nature:

By disclosing the body itself as the very subject of awareness, Merleau-Ponty demolishes any hope that philosophy might eventually provide a complete picture of reality (for any such a total account of "what is" requires a mind or consciousness that stands somehow *outside* of existence, whether to compile the account or, finally, to receive and comprehend it). Yet by this same move he opens, at last, the possibility of a truly authentic phenomenology, a philosophy which would strive, not to explain the world as if from outside, but to give voice to the world from our experienced situation *within* it.<sup>96</sup>

Abram's point is that consciousness itself flows from *physical* experience, from our sensorial participation in the material flux of existence and that what holds true for consciousness also holds true for that primary sign of human consciousness: language. Language is not, in other words, another world but resonates with 'the inflections and accents common to our locale and community'.<sup>97</sup>

The advent of written language, however, has, as far as Abram is concerned, had a crucial effect in tending to efface a relationship of connection between self and environment. This is especially so in terms of western, ideographic, rather than pictographic, alphabetical systems, since the arbitrary nature of the signifier bears no intrinsic relation to the signified. The word 'stone', for example, neither sounds nor looks like a stone. The connection to the physical environment is thus *overwritten*. With telling emphasis, Abram argues '*the larger, more-than-human life-world is no longer part of the semiotic, no longer a necessary part of the system*'.<sup>98</sup> Put differently, the text replaces the world as the site of meaning. Seen in this light, the differences between Derrida's and Abram's perspectives seem, on the face of it, to be plain. The concept of *différance* implies that, as human subjects, we are pitched into the play of language and signification, out of which meaning and knowledge, including knowledge of what we would ordinarily refer to as external reality, takes shape, albeit that this shape does not remain static. Abram, on the other hand, stresses pre-verbal modes of perception of and engagement with the material world, from which language ultimately derives, and points to the dependence of language and meaning on Derrida's 'nowhere' of the *outside* of the text: the world. For Abram, the essential aspect of this meaning-giving relationship between self and world is that it is pre-verbal, but with 'its own coherence and articulation'.<sup>99</sup> It is this 'ongoing reciprocity' between the perceiver and the perceived which 'forms the very soil and support of that more conscious exchange we call language'.<sup>100</sup> In this respect he quotes Merleau-Ponty:

in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon's light, it is a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it. Hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, moonlight and sunlight, present themselves in our recollection not pre-eminently as sensory contents but as certain kinds

of symbioses, certain ways the outside has of invading us and certain ways we have of meeting this invasion.<sup>101</sup>

This invasion of the 'outside' is what, effectively, gives rise to a self. More precisely, from Abram's perspective, the self is nothing more than the experience of this invasion. Thus Derrida's emphasis on text would seem at odds with a vibrant and ecologically needful reorientation with the animate, physical world, since the written text redirects our senses from the world to 'the flat surface of the page'.<sup>102</sup> According to Abram, while Derrida is right to show how western philosophy 'ceaselessly forgets, or represses, its dependence upon writing', his assimilation of 'all language to writing' is mistaken.<sup>103</sup> Instead, Abram argues that 'all discourse, even written discourse...is implicitly sensorial and bodily, and hence remains bound, like the sensing body, to a world that is never exclusively human'.<sup>104</sup> For Derrida meaning is ultimately *textual*; for Abram meaning is ultimately *sensuous*.

It is, however, worth pausing a moment before drawing this distinction too tightly. Abram's critique of Derrida rests on the premise that by the 'text' Derrida alludes to an 'exclusively human' arena of signification, effectively demonstrating Christopher Manes' point that 'At one time nature spoke; now texts do'.<sup>105</sup> But insofar as deconstruction involves a radicalisation of received metaphysical hierarchies the human/nonhuman binary is itself subject to an at least partial collapse, with the result that 'text' is no longer shackled to the signifier 'human'. More precisely, it is a de-shackling that comes about from a realisation of how *différance* subverts the orthodox hierarchical relationship between speech and writing. As Derrida argues, in western metaphysics 'speech' has traditionally enjoyed an ontological privileging over 'writing', which has generally been

regarded as merely the graphic record of the spoken word. However, the notion of *différance* implies that since the concept of speech depends on writing to achieve meaning (within a binary hierarchy), writing may be regarded as *preceding* speech. Put differently, speech is an effect of writing as much as writing is an effect of speech. In thinking through this disturbance of 'speech' as a transcendental signifier we are thus prompted to the question of whether writing itself may be considered 'exclusively human' if it is something more and other than a human marking of speech. As Derrida puts it, 'the text is not the book, it is not confined in a volume in itself confined to the library'.<sup>106</sup> A little earlier in the same essay Derrida is at pains to show that writing, or 'the mark', not only escapes the confines of the book, but of the category human. In thinking about a nonhuman, prehuman, or, given the outlandish logic of *différance*, a posthuman writing, we are led by strange paths back to the wilderness of John Muir, who saw Yosemite both as text and as something 'untellable'. This apparent resonance between a deconstructive notion of text and Muir's vision of wilderness should not be stretched too far. Muir's experience of a world beyond his capacity to represent it speaks to a notion of the sublime that is, to some extent, time-bound in Romantic conceptions of nature, a sublime that risks being fixed into the dualisms of reason versus imagination, transcendence versus immanence, spirit versus body. But there *is* a resonance. When he is most at a loss for words, for a writing that will reproduce the speech the mouth would like to make, if only meaning and sound could locate one another, Muir turns to another kind of writing. The oppositions of wilderness and garden, God and matter, infiltrate one another as Muir, ears pricked and eyes wide open, listens to speechless 'sermons in stones', to a text that, like Derrida's context, is more than human. Thus deconstruction



and ecology may take different paths, but both may help recuperate the world by decentering the human subject and thereby granting the text the freedom to roam.

### *Greening the Intertext: Towards a Shallow Ecology*

In much the same way that he argues for the 'return of the referent' Buell also advocates the 'return of the author'. Starting from the premise that 'environmental history demonstrates the fallaciousness of imagining environments without agents responsible for influencing them'.<sup>107</sup> Buell's argument is essentially a pragmatic one. Although he acknowledges the dependence of texts on 'conventions of discourse, ideology, and literary market place forces', he contends that 'we are more likely to make progress if we imagine texts as emanating in the first instance from responsible agents than if we imagine texts without agency inhabiting discursive force fields'.<sup>108</sup> If the state of nature needs voices to speak on its behalf then those voices, Buell claims, are more likely to be heard if, as flesh and blood readers, we conceive of them as issuing from flesh and blood writers. Effectively Buell wants us to elide the difference between author and narratorial persona. Granted, Buell's focus is nonfiction, and nature writing in particular, with Thoreau as his point of reference, but he sees his argument as, in principle, applying across genres.

The particular 'discursive force field' from which, according to Buell, the author needs to be rescued is intertextuality, a concept that, as the critic Graham Allen has noted, 'cannot be evoked in an uncomplicated manner', and, furthermore, 'is in danger of meaning nothing more than whatever each particular critic wishes it to mean'.<sup>109</sup> While taking into

account this caveat, I want to conclude this chapter by examining, contra Buell, whether intertextuality can play a viable role as an ecocritical approach. In particular, I have in mind Roland Barthes's pronouncement of 'The Death of the Author' and his description of the text, not as 'the message of the Author-God', but as 'a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture'.<sup>110</sup> To lend focus to my discussion I shall, like Buell, whose point of reference is Thoreau, concentrate not on a novel or poem, but on a work of nonfiction: Rick Bass's 1992 work *The Ninemile Wolves*.

In *The Ninemile Wolves* Bass recounts the return of wild wolves to the USA, from Canada, in the 1980s, focussing on 'the orphaned cubs of the Ninemile pack',<sup>111</sup> and on the efforts of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure their preservation in the wild as 'endangered species'. On this level Bass's narrative appears to bear out Buell's dual emphasis on referentiality and authorship. The relationship of text to world has all the hallmarks of being *authentic*, of being the words and thoughts of an actual, identifiable author about actual, identifiable objects – animals, people and places – at a particular moment in history. In other words, the author Rick Bass seems to fit nicely into Buell's idea of the 'responsible agent' from which the text 'emanates'. As if to give credence to this view, Bass identifies his narrative on the book's frontispiece as 'An Essay', and his own role as that of 'a journalist'.<sup>112</sup> His may be only one of several perspectives on the subject, but it seems the perspective of a specific human consciousness, and *The Ninemile Wolves* seems to be the deliberate, purposive setting down of that perspective.

There is, however, another level of narrative tension to *The Ninemile Wolves* that draws its vigour not from the story of whether the wolves will win their freedom and survive in the wild, but from a certain self-reflexive anxiety about the status of Bass's text, its relationship to its lupine subjects, and Bass's own role as author. It is, moreover, an anxiety which announces itself, in positive terms, in the book's opening sentences, 'The story's so rich. I can begin anywhere'.<sup>113</sup> The very notion that the text may have an authentic moment of beginning, a specific point of origin, is thus problematised by Bass, not least because, by this juncture, his own text has, indeed, already begun. Of still more significance is Bass's exposition of the arbitrary nature of beginnings:

I can start with prey, which is what controls wolf numbers...or with history, which is rich in sin, cruelty, sensationalism...You can start with biology, or politics, or you can start with family, with loyalty, and even with the mystic-tinged edges of fate, which is where I choose to begin. It's all going to come together anyway. It has to. We're all following the wolf.<sup>114</sup>

There are several points to be made about this passage. Firstly, there is Bass's explicit recognition that his story begins outside of the authorial consciousness in the public realm of discourse. Although he does not name it as such, an intertext for the wolf exists which acts as a kind of narrative reservoir. Bass's, or for that matter, *any* story about wolves is bound up with stories about other animals, history, family, biology, politics. Put differently, what gives the text its coherence, is not that it is sufficient to itself, but its relation to myriad other texts. Running parallel to this self-conscious acknowledgement of an intertextual dimension is an *implicit* realisation of other intertexts. When, for example, Bass refers to a 'history rich in sin', he opens his account of the return of the American wolf, by linking it to the Judaeo-Christian story of the fall of man. Insofar as 'We're all following the wolf', we are following an implicitly christological version of

the wolf. This is to be a story of resurrection, and in as much as the resurrection story forms part of an extant intertext, Bass is effectively de-authorised. In Barthes's terms, he may no longer be regarded as 'the past of his own book'.<sup>115</sup> Instead Bass occupies the role which Barthes designates as writer, or *scriptor*, and which Graham Allen describes as being 'already in a process of reading and re-writing'.<sup>116</sup> Thus Bass is not the originator of a unique text, but the re-writer of the already-read.

This affirmation of reading is echoed by Bass in the way that he accords agency to both writer and reader in inaugurating his text. He begins by speculating on the places where the authorial 'I' can commence the story ('prey', 'history'), but passes on this role to the reader ('You can start with biology, or politics...'). Ultimately both writer and reader are subsumed into the plural 'we' which is 'following the wolf'. There is, moreover, another dimension to what is being said here. Bass's language suggests that what is being 'started' is not simply the story itself, but the writer and the reader. This is where 'I', 'You', 'We' begin. Writer and reader become subject positions initiated by the text which, at the same time, accords a radical primacy to the role of the reader. As Barthes puts it:

The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost: a text's unity lies not in its origins but in its destination...he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the text is constituted...the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.<sup>117</sup>

This subversion of normative notions of writer and reader, with its implication that neither inhabits an extra-textual situation, but are instead intertextual effects, invites a

similar critique to that invited by Derrida's notion of text. Wherein does the reader's, or the writer/scriptor's, aesthetic and ethical allegiance lie – to the material, 'factual' environment, as an ecocritical approach would seem to demand, or to the haphazard and apparently *ground-less* realm of textuality? To put the question in terms of the responsibility of Bass's text to its lupine subject, is the wolf itself denuded of aesthetic and moral significance because, like writer and reader, it is nothing more than a textual effect, a signifier not a signified? After all, Bass's narrative concerns flesh and blood living beings, the wolves whose lives are at stake and the officials and activists whose commitment to the 'cause' of the wolf is undertaken in the context of the 'real world', and the maelstrom of human politics that attends upon it. Furthermore, Bass is scrupulous in recording these details and establishing the status of the Ninemile wolves as real world referents in terms of time and place, and their individual characteristics and habits. For Bass:

What this story is about...is the young Ninemile pack whose mother wandered all the way down into the country west of Missoula...These pups raised themselves – were orphaned by fate while they still had their baby teeth – and in a move ripe with political festerings, were kept alive by USF&W biologists.<sup>118</sup>

However, when it comes to the awkward question of what these wolves actually *are*, of why they should matter, and of what they mean, Bass has recourse to the field of the intertext. This is manifest in how Bass perceives the threat to the wolves as twofold. On the one hand, they are at risk from trapping, poisoning and the cattleman's rifle, and on the other, they live in danger of what Bass calls 'the net', the admixture of diverse interests pursuing the wolf and including 'the state, the ranchers, the protestors of trapping and collaring'.<sup>119</sup> In the sense that 'the net' represents different and divergent

discourses, different stories about the place of wolves and humans – the competing ideologies of wilderness conquest and wilderness preservation, for example – the ‘net’ forms a deeply ambiguous intertext. Indeed, in the sense that it is the ‘net’ which the wolves need to escape, or be rescued from, Bass’s text attempts, at times, to perform this work by overcoming, on behalf of the wolf, the intertext of conflicting narratives that seek to enmesh it. When Bass imagines the wolves escaping ‘the net’ and living ‘wild lives’ he effectively tries to imagine a wolf that is free of the intertext, or at least not determined by it, and therefore serves as a ‘transcendent signified’, analogous to the valorisation that might, in other contexts, be afforded to God as the ultimate ground of truth. In this respect what Bass wants to preserve is not just the wolf itself, but the ‘bare mystery’ it represents, its freedom from (con)text.<sup>120</sup> But to evoke the wolf in this way is, in the end, to evoke another intertext: that of the ineffability of the wild, of nature as the Romantic sublime that surpasses understanding. But Bass takes his pursuit of a ‘sublime’ wolf only so far. Ultimately, he tries to recuperate the wolf not through a strict dependence on its evocation as mystic presence, nor, conversely, by relying on an empirical account of lupine ecology. Although he tries to imagine a wolf free of the complexity of ‘all the stories outside of wolves’, this is not a viable option:

It would be so lovely to not have to follow the scents of the politics, the laws, the cattle, the humans, the hunters, the roads. It would be so lovely to just stay in the dark woods and concentrate only on pure unencumbered biology: foot sizes and body weights, diets, range, and distribution. It would also be fiction.<sup>121</sup>

In the sense that this would be ‘fiction’, it is fiction because of the illusion of some truth outside of narrative. That the wolf, in so far as it can be apprehended, can achieve presence, is bound up intertextually in narrative, is something from which Bass cannot

shy away: 'One thing I've learned in reading and asking about wolves in Montana over the last three years is that *nothing's* a different story. It's all being woven together'.<sup>122</sup> Nor is it simply a matter of the weave of story, of the commingling of various intertexts, releasing a final referent called 'wolf'. Although he does not use the term, for Bass the wolf is itself an intertext. The wolf makes sense only as a space or site where different narratives, different desires, coincide: his own and others' desire for mystery, and, from an ecological point of view, the desire of the land, or the ecosystem, for the wolf, which Bass sees in the way that the 'deer populations keep climbing as if *desiring*' the outcome of being culled.<sup>123</sup>

If the wolf, as referent, does not transcend its intertext, then neither does Bass as the putative 'author' of *The Ninemile Wolves*. His task is not so much one of originating a meaning that lies outside the text, and for which the text acts as vehicle. Rather he acts as a compiler of different narratives, in the sense that, as Graham Allen remarks, 'the text is not an individual isolated object but...a compilation of cultural textuality'.<sup>124</sup> Consider how, for Bass, the appeal of the wolf lies in its 'bare mystery', but the hope for the wolf's survival lies in 'disseminating the facts, not the myths, the fears'.<sup>125</sup> There appears to be a contradiction here, between the rival discourses of science and mysticism, objective knowledge and subjective feeling, the belief in the capacity of the rational mind to know and to master and the unconscious impulse to submit to the desire exerted by the other. In terms of cultural textuality, Bass's text draws on the Enlightenment conviction of human progress and on Romantic notions of the natural sublime. In terms of structure and genre, *The Ninemile Wolves* combines reportage, personal confession and the hero/quest

narrative where wolves are the heroes and the wildlife biologists their 'helpers'. In these respects the intertexts of *The Ninemile Wolves* include the poetry of Wordsworth, the meditations of Thoreau, Darwin's evolutionary theory, and Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*. However, the point is not to extrapolate from this textual weave a single, pure narrative thread, somehow more 'true' than the rest, since *all* narratives are bound up in intertextual relations. Nor should *The Ninemile Wolves* be seen as simply a random intertextual assemblage, whose particular blending of texts is neither more nor less significant than any other potential blend. In this context it is useful to recall Kristeva's notion of the Symbolic Order, which operates to enforce and, as far as possible, preserve the dominant cultural codes which govern society at any given historical moment. In other words, the Symbolic Order is itself an intertext but one which tries to deny this by claiming that its intertextual components – God, the Law, Reason etc – are, instead, 'transcendent signifieds', the ultimate grounds of meaning and morality. The value of Bass's text is that it brings these intertextual relations into the open, and thereby subverts both the notion of a single, unified truth, and the idea that the author is in possession of that truth. In effect, Bass practises what Kristeva sees as the radical insight of Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism, and which, as Graham Allen notes, influences her own theory of intertextuality, 'It [Dialogism] does not strive towards transcendence but rather towards harmony, all the while implying an idea of rupture (of opposition and analogy) as a modality of transformation'.<sup>126</sup> Seen in this light, Bass's collocation of different, and ostensibly contradictory, narratives constitutes a radical re-harmonisation of the ways in which the wolf is understood. What matters is not the discovery and communication of some kernel of truth, played out dialectically, but the ways in which various truths come



together intertextually. By taking account of the historically contingent nature of the dominant intertext(s) of society, and challenging anthropocentrism by substituting, in place of the transcendent truth which western metaphysics has traditionally sought, a network of intertextual relations, including the supposedly antithetical discourses of science and mysticism, Bass seeks to invoke a new context. In other words the survival of the wolf depends not only on the preservation of a sustainable physical environment, but on the (re)invention of a sustainable narrative environment.

Historicising an intertextual approach in this way does not, however, simply entail transforming approaches to the environment and to the environmentally oriented text. There is a concomitant movement in the other direction. If, as Graham Allen contends, ‘intertextuality, as a concept, has a history of different articulations which reflect the distinct historical situations out of which it has emerged’,<sup>127</sup> then *The Ninemile Wolves* points to the need for a green intertext which our current ‘historical situation’ demands. It is the need for such an intertext that the critic SueEllen Campbell takes up in her essay ‘The Land and Language of Desire: Where Deep Ecology and Post –Structuralism Meet’. Campbell acknowledges the value of theory in elucidating ‘that what we are depends on all kinds of influences outside ourselves, that we are part of vast networks, texts written by larger and stronger forces’.<sup>128</sup> But Campbell also argues that ‘one of the most important of these forces is the rest of the natural world’, claiming that ‘we belong to networks of language and culture, but also to networks of the land’.<sup>129</sup> The value of Campbell’s approach is that it stresses the connection between text and environment. This is not to say that the environment is the same kind of text as a novel or poem. Nor

does it mean that our perceptions and experience of the land form a sort of extra-textual bedrock, an ultimate foundation or source. Ecology itself is, after all, a discourse about the 'land', not the land itself. But through the discourse of ecology the environment can be seen as working in ways that mirror the idea of the world as (inter)text, as a field of shifting relations. As Campbell puts it:

A deer...has no being apart from things like the presence or absence of wolves, the kind of forage in its environment, the temperature and snowfall of any given winter, the other animals competing for the available food, the number of hunters with licences, the bacteria in its intestines that either keep it healthy or make it sick. Theory and ecology agree that there's no such thing as a self-enclosed, private piece of property, neither a deer nor a person nor a text nor a piece of land.<sup>130</sup>

In effect, Campbell enlarges on and extends Barthes's vision of intertextuality by including 'innumerable centres' of nature, as well as culture, from which the 'tissue of quotations' which make up the text is drawn. She thus suggests how an encounter between ecology and literary theory may work to the benefit of both approaches. The contemporary environmental crisis may demand a re-thinking of intertextuality, as well as other aspects of poststructuralist theory, but intertextuality may, in turn, help us to recognise outworn anthropocentric ways of thinking which still cling to ecological thought. In this respect the problem with Deep Ecology is the word 'Deep' itself, with its connotations of immutability, essence, and transcendent knowledge. What matters, in the end, is not the *un-earthing* of universal truth which a 'deep' approach implies, but historically situated ways of *connecting*, and it is to intertextuality's emphasis on connection, through the 'shallow' metaphors of networks, webs and tissues, that may prove the more successful in realigning critical practice with the imperatives of ecological emergency. If the human subject can no longer be said to stand outside of the

text, even as its author, then neither can that subject stand outside of the environment, outside of the ecological process which sustain, and indeed *determine* him or her as a subject.

## Chapter Six

### Writing with the Wolf

In the previous chapter I looked at the relationship between literature and the environment in the light of the ecological principle that ‘everything connects to everything else’, that the connections between text and world are subtle, complex and reciprocal. I now want to look at the same theme from a different angle, namely at the negative aspects of the principle of connection in terms of how environmental degradation may be linked to other kinds of oppression. In other words, I want to take up the sorts of questions that Ursula Le Guin raises when she claims that ‘women, children and animals are the obscure matter upon which civilization erects itself phallogically’, and examine how both the environment and different marginalised groups, including non-whites as well as women and animals, may be the price that a certain notion of civilisation exacts in order to establish and sustain itself. It is a theme that has already been touched on in this thesis, particularly with regard to the wolf-man’s dream wolves and my discussion of Ted Hughes’s poem ‘Wolfwatching’, but my task now is to show how different kinds of oppositional writing have emerged which try to strike a more or less explicit alliance with ‘nature’, and especially the wolf. In particular, I have in mind the way that literature stages these alliances on behalf of women and Native Americans. Although this list is far from exhaustive (I might, for example, also have discussed how the industrial poor and people of other ethnic backgrounds are affected by the ways in which ‘nature’ is exploited in the name of civilisation), a degree of focus will help elucidate the argument. To this end I have chosen to examine texts by Clarissa Pinkola

Estés, Teresa tsimmu Martino, Peter Bowen, and Louis Owens. It is also, of course, the case that in discussing women and Native Americans I am not dealing with hard and fast categories. In other words, while I may have 'put fences' around these groups for the sake of organising my argument, I also intend to bear in mind, and indeed to demonstrate, that identity is not so easily 'fixed'.

### *Of Women and Wolves*

Published in 1992, Clarissa Pinkola Estés' *Women Who Run With The Wolves* is a book both *of* stories and *about* stories. Its author attempts to combine the roles of storyteller with that of literary theorist. As an American woman who traces her ancestry to Latino and Hungarian roots, and who celebrates a life lived among émigrés from diverse European countries, as well as with people from Afro-American and Native American backgrounds, Estés describes herself as a writer of 'original stories', and a '*cantadora*, keeper of the old stories', a curator and (re)teller of 'peculiar' narratives which have been 'given into my keeping by...the old ones of my families – those whose oral traditions have been unbroken for as far back as we can remember'.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand Estés also presents her role in terms of her training and practice as Jungian psychoanalyst, who approaches stories through the study of 'amplification of leitmotifs, archetypal symbology, world religions, and interpretation.'<sup>2</sup> It is, then, with these twin credentials that Estés claims for her collection of stories, and commentaries on stories, a specific and significant purpose which the subtitle of her book proclaims as, *Contacting The Power Of The Wild Woman*.

For Estés, the need to re-connect with the 'Wild Woman' is evidence of how 'Over time, we have seen the feminine instinctive nature looted, driven back, and overbuilt.'<sup>3</sup> This implicit linking of woman with nature, evident in the concept of a 'feminine instinctive nature', is the predominant theme of her text. In short, the survival and revivification of the cultural significance of both women and nature is at stake in recuperating the connection to the Wild Woman. As Estés puts it, 'Without us, Wild Woman dies. Without Wild Woman, we die.'<sup>4</sup>

The first story of Estés' collection, 'La Loba', exemplifies the redemptive power of the Wild Woman. Estés tells of 'an old woman who lives in a hidden place that everyone knows in their souls but few have ever seen.'<sup>5</sup> Here La Loba devotes herself to collecting bones: 'Her cave is filled with the bones of all manner of desert creatures; the deer, the rattlesnake, the crow. But her speciality is wolves.'<sup>6</sup> When La Loba 'has assembled an entire skeleton' she sings over the bones until 'the wolf opens its eyes, leaps up and runs down the canyon.'<sup>7</sup> As the wolf runs, it is 'suddenly transformed into a laughing woman who runs free toward the horizon.'<sup>8</sup> As far as Estés is concerned, the Wild Woman thus (re)establishes a vital and intrinsic link connection between women and nature that inheres at the deepest level of the psyche. Commenting on the story of La Loba, Estés remarks, 'Her [La Loba's] home is that place in time where the spirit of women and the spirit of wolf meet – the place where mind and instincts mingle...It is the place where, in all spirit, women run with the wolves.'<sup>9</sup>

This notion that a revivification of the natural world, and the recuperation of the human relationship to it, is dependent on women opening themselves to the liberating power of animal presences, and touches on similar themes to those I discussed with regard to Alan Bleakley's concept of the 'animalizing imagination', and his discussion of the *Wolf Man's* dream wolves. But although Estés does indeed share much common ground with Bleakley, there is an important difference. Her focus is explicitly, and all but exclusively, on women, and it is in this respect that her arguments demand attention. Specifically we need to ask not only whether the exploitation of both women and nature derives from the same root causes, but also whether there is an *intrinsic* connection between women, or femininity, and nature, in its broadest sense as encompassing the totality of organic and especially animal life. Put differently, if women and nature represent exploited bodies, in terms of the way that the prevailing culture interprets and treats them, is this the result of how the relationship between women and nature is *constructed* by ideology, or because of the view that ideology adopts toward a fundamental, extant relation? This is a key question and insofar as it crystallises the wider debate about whether 'nature' forms some intrinsic ground of being, or is itself an ideational construct, goes to the heart of this thesis. The formidable polemical appeal of Estés' stance should not, then, obviate the need for her arguments to be subject to a rigorous critical analysis that will highlight, if not resolve, this tension.

The difference between the two positions is subtle but significant, and one that calls for an equally subtle elucidation. In 'Naturalized Woman and Feminized Nature' the philosopher Kate Soper addresses the intricacies of this question, commenting that the

'coding of nature as feminine' can be explained in the light of 'the double association of women with reproductive activities and of these in turn with nature.'<sup>10</sup> Soper goes on to remark that 'what is at issue here is not so much a simple conflation of women with nature, as an alignment of the two that derives from the female role in child-birth and her consequent activities as initial mediator between the natural and the cultural.'<sup>11</sup> Soper is making some important distinctions here. Although the link between women and nature *appears* to derive from woman's 'natural', and therefore intrinsic, role in bearing and raising children, Soper takes pains to point out that it is the 'coding' of this role that matters. In other words, what dictates the link between women and nature is how the role of women is incorporated into the signifying system of a particular culture at a particular historical moment. Thus Soper stresses 'alignment', with the implication that ideological factors are at work, rather than 'conflation' which supposes an innate link between women and nature. Conflating women and nature entails, as Soper argues, presenting women's reproductive role 'as if it were unaffected by cultural mediation and inured against the impact of socio-economic conditions.'<sup>12</sup> Moreover the conflation of women= reproduction=nature implies a dualism in which "man=production=culture.'<sup>13</sup> For Soper, this conceptualisation of 'man' is equally problematic and misleading since 'Production...can no more be regarded as independent of biological and physical process than reproduction can be viewed as reducible to an unmediated matter of biology outside the cultural symbolic order.'<sup>14</sup>

Estés, by comparison, takes a different, even opposite, view. Although she recognises, and laments, that the link between women and nature has meant that both have become



objects of oppression in an exploitative culture, the link is not itself the creation of culture. Thus, when she remarks that 'It's not by accident that the pristine wilderness of our planet disappears as the understanding of our own inner wild nature fades',<sup>15</sup> the fault lies with how a dominant and insensitive worldview misconstrues this link. By the same token Estés claims 'It is not so coincidental that wolves and coyotes, bears and wildish women have similar reputations. They all share instinctual archetypes, and as such, both are erroneously reputed to be ungracious, wholly and innately dangerous, and ravenous.'<sup>16</sup> In other words culture may misinterpret the meaning or value of archetypes, but this does not mean that archetypes do not exist. As far as Estés is concerned the link between women and nature is not merely a biological, but a psychic truth, and she is uncompromising in elucidating and celebrating this link as intrinsic: 'It is into this fundamental, elemental, and essential relationship that we were born and in our essence we also derive from.'<sup>17</sup> For Estés this 'essential relationship' both pre-exists culture, and in its deepest formation, is invulnerable to culture: 'The wilderwoman is the prototypical woman...no matter what culture, no matter what era, no matter what politic, she does not change. Her cycles change, her symbolic representations change, but in essence, *she* does not change.'<sup>18</sup>

This emphasis on an essential link between women and nature finds Estés making common cause with certain ecofeminist positions which, according to the critic Jonathan Bate, reject the 'orthodox' feminist view that women need to be liberated from their (assumed) bond with nature in order that they can be seen as endowed with the same faculties of reason and intellect ascribed to men. Instead ecofeminists argue that 'the

supposedly higher faculties' denied to women by a male-dominated culture 'are precisely those Cartesian presumptions with which we must do away if we are to save the earth.'<sup>19</sup> Indeed, in this respect at least, Estés' argument is yet more emphatic than the position articulated by, for example, the ecofeminist critic Marian Scholtmeijer. Scholtmeijer acknowledges that women and animals are connected through their victimisation by androcentric culture, arguing that 'Women can subvert the assumptions on which victimisation is founded through an allegiance with animals.'<sup>20</sup> But the 'allegiance' which Scholtmeijer proposes, and which she sees as being enacted through the writing of Clarice Lispector, Ursula Le Guin and others, is not based on an *essential* link between women and animals. Instead Scholtmeijer insists that animals are 'radically "other"', and that an emancipatory politics flows not from a denial of this otherness but from 'the liberation of animal otherness from cultural constructions [which] delivers a blow to the whole structure.'<sup>21</sup> For Scholtmeijer, then, the point is not that women and animals form a kind of natural equivalence, but rather that the position of otherness in which androcentric culture has situated both groups, can be employed strategically to advance the rights of both women and animals. In this view what matters are the interlinking causes of oppression, and how these may be overcome, not the recovery of some pristine relationship of connection prior to ideology.

For Estés, however, recovery is everything. The old woman of 'La Loba' recovers bones, not to create new forms, but to resurrect old ones. Estés' overall thesis adheres to the same principle. It is an act of resistance against an 'unconscious culture' in which 'those who claim to be the sole bearers of consciousness' would adapt woman 'into a more

intellectually acceptable shape.’<sup>22</sup> But the final goal of this resistance ‘must be the *retrieval* and succour of women’s beauteous and natural psychic forms’ (my emphasis).<sup>23</sup> This emphasis on recovery, on story as a means of healing, is unsurprising given Estés’ background as a psychoanalyst, but the idea of an essential female self, co-identical with nature, can prove problematic for both women and nature. In this respect, Kate Soper argues that ‘If women have been devalued and denied cultural participation through their naturalization, the downgrading of nature has equally been perpetuated through its representation as female.’<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in her appeal to some lost state of wild or natural femininity, Estés risks falling into a nostalgia-trap which, as Soper contends, comes about as an effect of the way androcentric culture produces nature as already ‘feminised’. In this sense nature ‘is not...emblematic simply of mastered nature, but also of regrets and guilts over the mastering itself; of nostalgia felt for what is lost or defiled in the very act of possession; and of the emasculating fear inspired by her awesome resistance to seduction.’<sup>25</sup> According to this view, then, the pure untrammelled essence of nature, and of women, that Estés seeks to recover is itself little more than a chimera resulting from the displacement and projection of masculine fears and desires. Indeed, the more Estés tries to lay claim to ‘our absolute, undeniable and irrevocable kinship with the wild feminine’, a relationship which she describes as ‘fundamental, elemental and essential’,<sup>26</sup> the more her argument accumulates contradictions. For example, consider again the basic core rhetoric of her text: women and animals ‘all share related instinctual archetypes.’<sup>27</sup> According to Estés this bond is especially evident in a comparison of women with wolves:

Healthy wolves and healthy women share certain psychic characteristics: keen sensing, playful spirit, and a heightened capacity for devotion. Women and wolves are relational by nature, inquiring, possessed of great endurance and strength. They are deeply intuitive, intensely concerned with their young, their mates and their pack. They are experienced in adapting to changing circumstances; they are fiercely stalwart and very brave.<sup>28</sup>

It is hard to see who would not want to associate themselves with this array of attributes, but Estés here makes no distinction between male and female wolves. Women, it seems, are like all wolves everywhere, or to invert the argument, all wolves, whether male or female, are like women. The trouble with this formulation is that the whole tenor of Estés' polemic is to establish gender not merely as a discursive category or cultural formation, but as an innate, *natural* condition. However the fact that gender appears to stop at the species boundary suggests the very opposite: that gender is a uniquely human attribute and therefore has as much to do with cultural practices as it has to do with natural forces. Even if, for the sake of pursuing her argument further, Estés' conflation of femininity and animality were accepted, we inevitably rub up against another question: where does this subsumation of nature into the feminine leave men? Although Estés acknowledges that men, like women, possess 'a human nature, and an instinctive nature',<sup>29</sup> the differences between the the natures of men and women – and differences there must be if Estés' claims on behalf of 'the indigenous, the intrinsic nature of women'<sup>30</sup> are to make any sense – remain unelucidated. Estés may found her approach on the basis of a polemic of 'wholeness', of the oneness of women with nature, but within her schemata nature itself seems irredeemably split.

These questions concerning the validity of Estés' approach are especially pertinent given her ambitions for a reconnecting of women with nature. As far as Estés is concerned what is at stake is not just the psychic revivification of individual women, but the nature of the kind of society in which women, and men, live:

Let us admit it. We women are building a motherland: each with her own plot of soil eked from a night of dreams, a day of work. We are spreading this soil in larger and larger circles...One day it will be a continuous land, a resurrected land come back from the dead... [a] psychic motherworld.<sup>31</sup>

We might, in the first instance, want to take issue with this remarkable claim by posing a simple question. If this 'motherworld' is a resurrection, a 'land come back from the dead', when exactly, at what point(s) in history, has this marvellous place ever existed? It is a question Estés leaves unanswered, perhaps because it does not admit of an answer. As David Punter points out, in the context of post-colonial literature, the appeal to an archetypal mother, to what he refers to as an 'immobilised matriarch', fails because, among other reasons, 'it supposes a continuing version of male/female relations which inhabits only a paradisaical fantasy of western imposition.'<sup>32</sup> Seen in this light, Estés is merely inverting the binaries upon which patriarchy is founded, a strategy that, in the end, plays easily into the hands of the systems she attempts to repudiate. This is not to say that an appeal to the mother/other, in some guise, is without force in the creation of a liberational polemic. As my earlier discussion of Kristeva's theories showed, the energies released by a continuing, if suppressed, relation to the maternal body, to the semiotic 'chora', are vital to the establishment of new 'thetic' positions. Indeed, at times, Estés' rhetoric carries a strong echo of the Kristevan semiotic. She writes, for example, of how women need to recover their power of singing by 'descending into the deepest mood of

great love and feeling, till one's desire for relationship with the wildish self overflows.'<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere Estés argues that contact with the realm of 'essences' can fill women 'with a feeling of expansion and grandeur.'<sup>34</sup> Insofar as this connection to some inner wild forms, as Estés claims, the basis of the creative act, 'the work of invention...that is the instinctive nature's main occupation',<sup>35</sup> her argument is more or less of a piece with Kristeva's approach. But in her valorisation of, in effect, 'Mother Nature', Estés does not so much establish a new thetic position, a breaching of the existing symbolic order, which is the effect, in Kristeva's terms of a release of the semiotic, as revert to a previously sanctioned position: woman=nature.

The drawbacks of this sort of essentialism, with its necessary corollary of positing a fundamental difference between the 'natures' of men and women, are highlighted by the critic Patricia Waugh who argues that 'To embrace difference in essentialist terms is to come dangerously close to reproducing that very patriarchal construction of gender which feminists have set out to contest.'<sup>36</sup> For Waugh, the problem with the kind of argument articulated by Estés is that it ignores the complexities and paradoxes that the 'emancipatory project' of feminism needs to confront.<sup>37</sup> On the one hand 'Feminism, as a discourse, clearly arises out of modernity and its models of reason, justice and subjectivity',<sup>38</sup> while on the other, it needs to situate itself within a post-modern context in order to show that 'gender is not a consequence of anatomy just as social institutions do not so much reflect universal truths as construct historical and provisional ones'.<sup>39</sup> The trouble with Estés' analysis is that it tries to overcome these difficulties by avoiding them, digging not *into* but *through* history and context in search of some primordial lost

ark of woman(ness). This does not mean that her call to women to act more 'wildly', to seek models in nature that resist contemporary societal constraints and undermine ideological norms, is of itself 'wrong' or lacks value as a strategy. Nor does it mean that uncovering the common sources of oppression both of women and of the planet's nonhuman inhabitants, is a misguided task. Indeed, it is a very necessary one. But to advance claims on behalf of an autonomous, unified and universal idea of 'womanness', which is co-ordinate with nature itself, may in the end thwart the very goals of connection which are so vital to the continuing emancipation of women, and the rehabilitation of the environment. As Patricia Waugh argues, what is needed is not the recovery of some archetypal core, but the recognition that the 'self' only takes shape in a dynamics of relation: 'Parts of other people, the parts we have relationships with, are parts of us, so the self is both constant and fluid, ever in exchange, ever redescribing itself through its encounters with others.'<sup>40</sup> So long as we include among 'others', not just other human beings, but nonhuman aspects of the environment as well, then a politics of emancipation, which is both 'feminist' and 'green', remains viable. Estés' call for women to 'run with the wolves' needs to be seen in this light. If women and wolves are to run together, they need to run in an earth that *is*, and not in the phantom realms of a resurrected motherland.

A text that deals with women and wolves, as well as a world that *is*, is Teresa tsimmu Martino's *The Wolf, The Woman, The Wilderness*. Like *Women Who Run With The Wolves* it also announces the kind of text it is with a subtitle: *A True Story of Returning Home*. In terms of its theme, then, Martino's text promises to cover similar terrain to that encompassed by Estés': the recuperation of a sense of the wild, which will serve the

interests of both women and nature. But it is also a title which, unlike Estés', alerts the reader to the inherent ambiguities and tensions involved in the search for a place fit for both women and wolves. For Martino is in search of both 'wilderness' and 'home', two terms which, as I noted in my discussion of John Muir in the previous chapter, exist in a complex and seemingly antithetical relationship to one another. Martino's narrative also differs from Estés in other ways. Although the latter comments that one of the influences on her account of the need for women to reconnect with the wild has been her own study of wolves, her text concentrates on myth and folklore as the basis for her theoretical, and polemical, enterprise.<sup>41</sup> Martino's text on the other hand, is a first-hand account of her efforts to return a human-fostered wolf cub to the wild. Of itself this does not lend *The Woman, The Wolf, The Wilderness* a decisive credibility. Indeed in thinking through her own relationship to McKenzie (the orphaned wolf), the land, and her mixed Osage and Italian heritage, as well as her own sense of being a woman, Martino touches on Estés' evocation of the 'wild woman'. When, for example, Martino writes of her efforts to return the orphaned wolf to the wild, 'If McKenzie goes back, there is some part of me that will remain wild too'<sup>42</sup>, she seems to be iterating the same kind of woman-wolf connection that Estés argues is exemplary of the deep, and currently obscured, nature of women. Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to describe Martino's act of wolf rehabilitation as anything less than the pragmatic response to a contemporary situation where, as Estés argues, 'Wildlife and the Wild Woman' are both endangered species.'<sup>43</sup> That being a woman is a vital aspect of Martino's identity is asserted in one of several poems integrated into her narrative: 'The women are there/Men people don't forget this/the women are there'<sup>44</sup>



But the issue of womanhood also marks a point of departure between Martino and Estés. Being a woman is only ever an *aspect* of an identity which, for Martino, is composed of many strands:

Someone asked me once what it meant for me to be a woman. I said I am a human being first, then I think of my ancestry and the wolves and horses. And after that I think of being a woman. I am a human being. My eyes are Mediterranean. My heart is Osage. I am a woman.<sup>45</sup>

Thus identity is, for Martino, complex and multiple, inescapably hybrid. Even the notion of gender itself, or the 'sexes' to use Martino's term, cannot be contained within the man/woman, male/female binary so essential to Estés' argument. In another of Martino's poems Coyote lists the eight sexes:

"Woman who loves man.  
Man who loves woman.  
Woman who loves woman.  
Man who loves man.  
Man loving as woman.  
Woman loving as man.  
The one who is both.  
The one who is alone.  
Got that?"  
said Coyote and he  
curled up to go to sleep.<sup>46</sup>

Her reading of identity as a hybrid formation, rather than a pure essence, does not mean that Martino is immune to the sense of nature as absolute universal presence, the fundamental source of being. Martino asks, for example, 'Does the land have an unconscious that comes into being by dreaming?', and elsewhere alludes to nature, and its cycles, as 'the Mother of us all', while its ineffable and ultimately 'beneficent' presence is seen as 'The Mystery'.<sup>47</sup> Where Martino does part company from Estés,

however, is in her efforts to resolve the contradiction between this essentially mystic notion of universal nature and its mediation according to circumstances of place, culture and history. It is an attempt at resolution that leads Martino into certain conceptual problems. For example, she insists that '*There are no others*', but needs to reconcile this with her belief in the 'need to return to tribalism, to identify with a particular group of people' on the ostensibly contradictory grounds that 'the world is already one.'<sup>48</sup> That Martino does not successfully resolve this, and other contradictions, is, however, perhaps not really the point. Rather, the point is that she recognises that they are there, and that, unlike Estés, the question of identity cannot be resolved through the resurrection of some timeless, wild, female essence, but is always a matter of struggle and mediation in which tradition, history, politics and place are all involved. When Martino visits an animal rescue centre and claims that 'The [wolf] cubs are like me. Second generation removed from the wild', the connection she identifies is as much a product of a shared history of colonisation and extermination, between wolves and Native Americans, as it is the realisation of some untrammelled natural bond.<sup>49</sup> I shall have more to say on the relationship of wolves and certain Native American peoples later in this chapter, but at this stage it is worth stressing Martino's most valuable insight. Nature, considered as some ultimate essence or ground of being, has an undeniable and potentially liberating appeal, but it cannot of itself form the complete answer to the pressures exerted upon women, native peoples, and, more generally, the land itself. It is only ever part of the answer.

Martino's advocacy of a return to what amounts to a kind of nativism needs to be viewed in this context. When she calls for a revived sense of tribalism, and for a renewed connection with her ancestors, as a way of 'looking for the earth', or claims, in another poem, that by 'writing wild' about animals and plants she can become them, she risks lapsing into an animism which only confirms the *negative* projection of animality onto native peoples which colonial authority employs as a justification for exploitation and even extermination.<sup>50</sup> As David Punter argues, 'the myths of animism...will always be contaminated at root by the power system in which they live and move and have their being.'<sup>51</sup> It is a trap which Martino, if only narrowly, avoids. In the first place, there is her unambiguous assertion (so seemingly at odds with her pronouncement that '*There are no others*') that 'I know what I am. I am a human being',<sup>52</sup> an assertion of difference and distinction that does not preclude, as her successful rehabilitation of McKenzie demonstrates, an engagement, even an alliance, with similarly situated nonhuman subjects.

But of even more significance is Martino's recognition that the terms in which her own search for 'wilderness' and 'home' are conducted, are precisely that, *terms*, and not inviolable essences. In this respect consider how the question of wilderness itself, a question so vital as to be foregrounded in the title of her text, is addressed by Martino. She acknowledges that wildness, and wilderness, act as a necessary counterbalance to domesticity but also suggests that insofar as the 'wild' and the 'suburban' are construed as binary oppositions to one another, this binarism is of *itself* potentially destructive for wolves and (suburban) human beings.<sup>53</sup> People take wolves as pets, Martino argues,

because of the loss of our own 'wildness', but in so doing they do not so much recover 'wildness' but confirm their own suburban entrapment by 'taking a wild animal as a prisoner.'<sup>54</sup> Instead, then, of an interpenetration of the 'wild' and the 'suburban', the confinement of the wild animal merely serves to concretise the binarism. What is at stake in this problematic is then not simply a question of physical environment, although this is hugely significant, but of the meanings that are invested, rather than embodied, in different kinds of environment. For Martino, these meanings should be fluid. Therefore the distinction between the domestic and the wild is not, nor should it be, impregnable, as the wasps and spiders, which form 'small wildernesses that comfort the tameness' of the walls of her house demonstrate.<sup>55</sup>

That the question of wilderness is, inescapably a question of context, and therefore a term that may be contested, is central to Martino's approach. Her search for wilderness and for home is not just the search for a piece of land, nor even for a psychological state, but the search and struggle for discourse. Thoroughly committed to returning McKenzie to what would be his 'natural' home, in the forests of the Northwest states, Martino realises that this is not so much a place that *is* wilderness, but a 'place that is *called* "wilderness"' (my emphasis).<sup>56</sup> The distinction, as Martino recognises by placing "wilderness" in inverted commas, is crucial. Having checked in her dictionary and thesaurus for the meanings of wilderness, Martino finds that 'Wilderness equals dangerous and unpredictable in a world suffocated by illusions of safety.'<sup>57</sup> The only positive connotation of wilderness that Martino locates is 'free'. Given this imbalance, she concludes 'We need more good words.'<sup>58</sup> To 'need more good words' is to recognise, as

Estés, and advocates of Deep Ecology apparently do not, that no politics of nature, whether personal or collective, can assume that there are meanings intrinsic to nature independent of discourse and outside particular historical and cultural contexts. Yet such a position need not imply an act of bad faith with nature, as if there were no reality to nature except a discursive one. On the contrary, an engagement with discourse is necessary to how material nature is comprehended, to how it is brought on to the stage of human imagining and, vitally, re-imagining. As Martino puts it, 'There must be new words created to better explain the wild, and to better understand our civilization.'<sup>59</sup> Among these new words, it is tempting to speculate, might be ones that would replace the very terms 'wild' and 'civilization'.

This dual emphasis on language, as well as the material world, means that, on a surface level at least, Martino's exploration of women and wilderness, of identity and place, promises rather less than that of Estés. Specifically, Martino does not offer a promised land, the resurrected realm of the wild woman. But in recognising that any re-connection with nature must not only take account of tradition and myth but also of history and context, especially in so far as this context is realised in discourse and narrative, she understands the provisionality and hybridity of identity. By placing her faith not in some pure, immutable essence, either of woman or nature, but in the mutability of the text, and the potential this gives to create 'new words', Martino offers both a more realistic and, we might even say, *truer* account of the possibilities for a realignment of the status of women and, indeed, wolves.

## *Whose Wolf is it Anyway?*

Environmentalism, like any political movement, requires metaphors and symbols that encapsulate the core principles and issues which are at stake, in order that they may then penetrate and inhabit public consciousness. One thinks, in this respect, of 'global warming' and the 'greenhouse effect', of smouldering rainforests and polluted beaches, and, in a more positive light, of the panda logo of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, and, indeed, the word 'green' itself. Another positive symbol that has come to lodge in the public mind is that of Native American. Advertising campaigns in the United States have used the image of the 'weeping Indian' to highlight the dangers of pollution, while Kevin Costner's film *Dances With Wolves* portrays the Native American as the prudent steward of natural resources beset by the rapacious forces of white colonial expansion into the West. As Fergus Bordewich puts it in *Killing The White Man's Indian*, there is a popular belief that 'spiritually superior native peoples are uniquely fitted to lead the bewildered and the tormented back onto a path of "balance" and harmony.'<sup>60</sup> An early version of this modern conception of the Native American can be found, as we have seen, in John Muir's account of his travels in Yosemite. He may not have thought the local Indians 'spiritually superior' but he was prepared to acknowledge the integration of their way of life to the environment that sustained them.

The view that the Native American is 'of the earth' and intrinsically attuned to the ways of nature, has its dangers. Principal among these is the idea of the Native American as a

contemporary version of Rousseau's 'noble savage', someone who is, in effect, all nature and no culture. This perceived 'closeness' to nature may then give rise to a dehumanisation of the native subject who becomes, at best, a projection of western nostalgia for a mythical lost paradise, or, at worst, the living embodiment of Freud's primitive man, a volatile admixture of the child and the savage, whose blind obedience to instinctual nature renders him, or her, incapable of civilisation. Nevertheless, and while mindful of the perils of this kind of stereotyping, many contemporary Native American writers and critics are keen to emphasise a sense of the embedment of Native American culture within what would now be called an 'ecological' worldview. For example, the critic Paula Gunn Allen, of Laguna Pueblo/Sioux background, argues that 'American Indian and Western Literary traditions differ greatly in the purposes they serve', since the former is not primarily concerned with 'pure self-expression', but with the need of the tribe to 'embody, articulate, and share reality, to bring the isolated, private self into harmony and balance with this reality, to verbalise the sense of majesty and reverent mystery of all things.'<sup>61</sup>

This identification of Native Americans as ideal dwellers on the land can be seen as arising from the conjunction of two distinct mindsets: the eurocentric worldview that is anxious to delineate its own, and hence, civilisation's 'other', and the worldview(s) of Native American cultures themselves, with their own body of rituals and narratives which inscribe the place of human beings in the wider cosmos. It is with this conjunction in mind that we need to discuss how literature represents the relationship of Native Americans to nonhuman nature, and especially to that particularly problematic

manifestation of the natural world, the wolf. Barry Lopez, as I noted in the previous chapter, has commented on how, for the early European settlers of the 'new' continent, the Indian and the wolf were seen as conjoined in a savage, unholy alliance against the civilised forces of Christendom. The current environmental crisis, however, allows for a re-envisioning of that alliance. Instead of representing the dark barbarism of the godless wilderness, wolf and Indian stand as models for an enlightened way of inhabiting the earth which avoids the hubris of an extreme anthropocentrism, as well as the physical impacts on the environment that flow from this. As Lopez puts it, 'the wolf seems somehow *right* in the world; we don't.' <sup>62</sup>

It is in this context that I want to discuss Peter Bowen's 1996 novel *Wolf, No Wolf*, and Louis Owens' 1991 novel *Wolfsong*. Both novelists employ the devices of the crime thriller to address the idea of the Native American as both traditional and contemporary exemplar of ecological responsibility, and both also deal with the status of the wolf as a symbol for a lost, wild America, and of its potential regeneration. What is at stake, then, in these novels are issues of identity, or rather *identities*, and how these are connected to how the land itself is conceived. In discussing these interwoven themes I want to enlarge on the ecological principle that 'everything is connected to everything else' to show how Bowen's and Owens' novels attempt to make connections, or register disconnections, between identity and place, and between place and history.

Peter Bowen's *Wolf, No Wolf* engages directly with the vexed question of the 'place' of the wolf in America's understanding of itself. Indeed, few wildlife issues have attracted



the welter of political controversy prompted by the return of wolves into the north-western quarter of the contiguous United States, either as the result of 'natural' migrations from Canada, or as the consequence of publicly sponsored programmes. The return of the wolf has depended not just on their ability to cross borders and find prey, but of the ability of their human advocates to successfully negotiate a plethora of political and legal hurdles. These have been well documented in, for example, Hank Fischer's aptly titled *Wolf Wars*. In his first hand account of the introduction of wolves to Yellowstone Fischer describes in detail the legal 'chicanery' and 'obstructionism', that have attended this drawn out, but ultimately successful, enterprise.<sup>63</sup> Underlining the manifest issues of ranching economics, public safety, and the rights of sports hunters, are questions of identity politics which may be crudely summarised as a question not only of *To whom does the land belong?* but also of *who belongs to the land?* It is against this background that Peter Bowen's crime thriller *Wolf, No Wolf* is set. In short, a Montana ranching community is thrown into an unwanted media spotlight with the murder of several pro-wolf activists in which leading members of the community are implicated. This serves as the basis for an unashamedly polemical treatment of environmental politics and cultural identity. In other words, Bowen's novel takes sides. But the side it takes is not that of the wolf-loving murder victims. In *Wolf, No Wolf* both wolves, and especially the land that they once, and might again inhabit, represent contested territory. But this contest consists as much in who owns the *meaning* of the land as in who owns the title deeds, and it is in these terms that I want to discuss how Bowen's novel attempts to appropriate the tropes and metaphors of popular environmental discourse, especially that

of the Native American, in order to claim for its own perspective the ‘rights’ to nature’s narrative.

On the face it, Gabriel Du Pré, Bowen’s detective, represents the ideal eco-hero. As a Métis (of mixed European and Native American ancestry) he would appear to embody the ‘green’ ideological shorthand that equates all things Native American with all things environmentally correct. If Greenpeace can name the ‘Rainbow Warrior’ after a Cree Indian myth then who better to lead the good fight on behalf of wolves than an original, or almost original, son of the American soil. Bowen’s novel, however, exploits this ‘popular’ image of the Native American in unexpected ways. Solve the murders he must – this is a crime novel after all – but as far as Du Pré is concerned his job is ‘to keep any more of these fools from being killed.’<sup>64</sup> I will have more to say about the supposed idiocy of environmentalists a little later in this chapter, but for the moment it is important to recognise how Bowen’s novel iterates its own ideological perspective by wresting the trope of the Native American, as spokesman for nature, from the ‘ownership’ of the environmental movement. Elsewhere Du Pré refers to the growing influx of green activists as ‘bunny-huggers’, and ‘shitheads from the flats’.<sup>65</sup> Similar narrative tactics are employed with the novel’s other Native American characters. For example, the ‘bunny-huggers’ and ‘shitheads’ fall for the fake medicine of Bucky Dassault, or Benjamin Medicine Eagle, to give him his assumed name, and who is described by Du Pré as “a child molester...a bad guy”, a sham shaman in effect, for whom gullible green activists represent the chance of easy money.<sup>66</sup> In contrast to the despicable Dassault, Du Pré seeks the guidance of the *authentic* local Indian visionary, Benetsee, recognised by Du

Pré as both a spiritual mentor and true representative of the voice of the land. For Benetsee, the green activists represent the very antithesis of earth-minded idealism. In a fit of rage he denounces the murder victims and their allies as people who want to turn Montana into a place where “Fools can play. Wear feathers. Maybe try to dance. Rub them crystals.”<sup>67</sup> The novel, then, in professing to present the reader with the genuine Native American, and not the distorted New Age version, heaps derision on those who would seek in characters such as Du Pré and Benetsee validation of their own green ideology. In other words, the ‘authentic’ voices of nature, Du Pré and Benetsee, show up the urban outcry over furry animals as so much chaff in a fashionable wind.

This concern with the ‘authentic’, as opposed to the misguided and foolish, forms the thematic tension of the novel. In this context Benetsee’s dismissal of environmental activists as outsiders, who want to turn the American West into a playground, is an important trope. Outsiders play but insiders work. A local lawyer puts it this way:

The political reality is that fatuous rich kids perceived as defenders of the environment are thought much more valuable than the...sixth-generation ranchers who...stand or fall on how they take care of the grass.<sup>68</sup>

The efforts of activists to protect the wolf is thus seen only as a *perceived* defence of the environment. It lacks the real, but apparently widely disavowed connection of rancher to land which, as the above quotation implies, takes place, literally, at a grass-roots level. What counts, then, in Bowen’s narrative, is whose experience of, and relationship to, the land is the more authentic. In terms of the novel’s own polemics this results in some rather surprising alliances, in particular the strange alliance of white ranching interests with the ‘authentic’ Native American perspective. What might be thought of as a history

of conquest and resistance becomes a shared history based on a mutual understanding of the natural environment. For example, a local ranchwoman declares, “We aint raising cattle to feed goddam wolves, so these Californian bastards can like Montana better. We like it just fine and been here a hundred years.”<sup>69</sup> Benetsee, the contemporary counterpart of her ancestors’ adversaries, takes the same view, “They think, bring back the buffalo, forget the people.”<sup>70</sup> The intended outcome of this meeting of disparate minds is to establish a new starting point for the history of the American West. In effect the novel seeks to bypass what the historian Donald Worster has called the ‘ecological conquest’ of the west which, under the banner of civilisation, saw native peoples as part of the ‘Nature’ that needed to be conquered.<sup>71</sup> Bowen’s novel must largely overlook this history if its efforts to turn environmentalist rhetoric against itself are to succeed. The symbolic representatives of environmental destruction (white colonists) and of environmental responsibility (Native Americans) are narratively welded together, and the agent force that forges this unlikely coalition is nothing less than the land which, in the past at least, has been both the object and the site of struggle between the two groups.

This emphasis on the land represents the most ambitious of the novel’s strategic moves in that it tries to appropriate that most sacred of the environmental movement’s symbols, the earth itself. If, in the place of a transcendent God, the earth, or more specifically the ‘land’, represents the ultimate ground of being, then claims to a privileged closeness with the land are claims to a fullness of identity that, in other contexts, might be expressed as a closeness to God. *Wolf, No Wolf* is nothing if not daring in its attempts to seize control of this vital metaphor. Having granted its rhetoric the exemplary authority of being

articulated by *First Americans*, eco-warriors may be re-designated as eco-villains. Benetsee, for example, declares that as far as the environmentalists are concerned, “the earth hate them”, and when a party of activists are killed in an avalanche he titters “They thought they could do something very smart but them mountain eat them.”<sup>72</sup> Du Pré may be more circumspect in his critique of ‘trendy’ environmentalists, but his claims to knowledge not only of the land, but of the *meaning* of the land, are equally unequivocal and, if anything, rather more telling in their appropriation of environmentalist discourse. For Du Pré the right relationship to the land consists in letting it take you over. At one point he remarks

You live in this country, a time...you walk on it and you listen to it talk with you...you are Indian. It will happen, you don't know it, maybe you are a rancher, *hates* Indians. But it take you.<sup>73</sup>

The implication, then, is that all those protesting ‘bunny-huggers’ and ‘shitheads’, *playing* in the woods and pastures, and disrupting good, honest ranchers engaged in authentic *work*, cannot, or will not, listen to the land. Whether the land was being listened to when wolves were exterminated in the first place may be glossed over, and wolves relegated either to legend – Du Pré’s grandfather, we are told, killed the last wild wolf in Montana – or displaced into the quasi-mythical northland of Canada and Alaska where, the novel claims, ‘they are free.’<sup>74</sup> What is crucially at stake here is *not*, then, a clash of metaphors, such as conservation versus progress, or native wisdom versus scientific knowledge. Rather, Bowen’s novel wages an overt and determined struggle for the control of particular metaphors. Control the signifier and you control the signified. As Native Americans, Du Pré and Benetsee ‘own’ the right to speak on the land’s behalf, and the land is saying ‘people, not wolves’.

The notion that people need to listen to the land is not new. As we have already noted, Aldo Leopold makes much the same case in one of the seminal texts of the modern environmental movement 'Thinking Like a Mountain'. Leopold's ecological epiphany arises, however, precisely because of a traumatic realisation of the *necessity* of wolves to the forest environment. Bowen's attempt to re-inscribe Leopold's metaphor of 'earth-listening' but by, in effect, *erasing* the wolf is, to say the least, a striking piece of rhetorical bravura. But it does cohere within the novel's overall strategy of claiming the initiative in the environmental debate by what amounts to a narrative abduction of the very terms of its discourse, and in such a way that the absence of wolves may pass, if not unnoticed, then at least without attracting too great an outpouring of lupine sympathy.

Ideology, however, like nature, abhors a vacuum and although *Wolf, No Wolf* lacks any actual wolves for the reader to identify with, it provides a ready substitute. Du Pré sums up the 'real' intentions of environmentalists by claiming 'they just march in here, say, you are bad people, this is our land now, get off it.'<sup>75</sup> In other words, environmentalists are trying to do to the local Montanans, the *authentic* voices of the land, what Montanans once did to wolves, and there is scarcely a more powerful trope in environmental discourse than that of the 'endangered species'. Elsewhere Du Pré remarks, 'They think ranchers are not part of this country. They say you are to move right on. Take your dead grandparents with you, dig them up and haul them away, we want to play here.'<sup>76</sup> The 'strange alliance' of Native Americans and local ranchers is thus portrayed as being in the place of the wolf, not only in terms of their intimacy with and belongingness to the land,

but also insofar as an alien culture threatens them with extinction. But to be persecuted requires a persecutor, and for this an even more improbable alliance than that of Indian and Rancher is called for. Ranged against the good land-loving folk of Montana are not only hordes of urban eco-activists but also the nefarious forces of big government in the shape of the FBI and US Fish and Wildlife Service, who, according to Du Pré 'will let more wolves loose...and more wolves will get shot, and I suppose more people too.'<sup>77</sup> Seen in this light, wolves are little more than the federal government in wolf's clothing. The same logic determines that the militant wing of the environmental movement is not a loose grouping of anti-establishment protesters but, in effect, a fifth column of the Oval Office, of the Washington-based drive to kill off the 'small-town West.'<sup>78</sup> Thus what in the end needs to be resisted is not wolves as such, but rather the threat to a perceived collective identity posed by what is deemed alien, inauthentic and without 'natural' authority. For Du Pré not only has the Montana State Legislature gone to pieces since it was taken over by 'social workers', but the real message of the combined forces of the federal government and bunny-hugging idiots is, 'You can be just like us.'<sup>79</sup>

*Wolf, No Wolf*, as the title suggests, is not in the end a novel about wolves. Indeed the narrative is as wolf-free as its heroes intend the mountains and forests of Montana to be. What is really at stake in these wolf wars is not so much an animal, nor even the land itself. What matters are competing ideologies of nature and identity. In this context Bowen's attempt to (re)claim the lingua franca of environmental discourse – the metaphors and tropes of 'indigenous people', 'the call of the land', and the 'endangered species' – is, primarily, a strategy of establishing who has the right to speak about nature,

whose voice is the more authentic, the more *natural*. However, as Rom Harré, Jens Brockmeier and Peter Mülhäuser have argued, 'There is no hidden essence that explains all the ways we use the words nature and natural. There is no one thing that is Nature.'<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, it is through arguments about in whose voice nature speaks that we arrive at an understanding of what nature is. In which case *Wolf, No Wolf* has everything to do with wolves. It may be the task of literature to *imagine*, rather than *represent* reality, but the question of what nature *means*, of what a wolf *means*, is critically at stake in how we go about this work of the imagination. The complexity and difficulty of this work is illuminated by the denouement of *Wolf, No Wolf*. The novel closes with Du Pré setting off to shoot a pack of wolves that have been reintroduced to the wolf-less 'Wolf Mountains'. He remarks, "You know, this is my land here. And I like the wolf all right. And when I am ready, they can come back."<sup>81</sup> Thus at the very moment when it seems at its most sympathetic to wolves the novel's rhetoric collapses under the weight of the contradictory meanings that its metaphors are asked to carry. Du Pré may insist on listening to the land, but here he speaks as its ruler and master. When it comes to the question of wolves it seems that the land must wait on him for an answer.

Set in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State, Louis Owens' earlier (1991) *Wolfsong* opens with a bathetic echo of native resistance to the colonial decimation of the land. Jim Joseph, an aged Stehemish Indian, is taking pot-shots at the trucks and machinery deployed by a mining company to drive a road deep into the heart of a 'wilderness' area of old-growth forest.<sup>82</sup> The difference between modern industrial and traditional Indian approaches to the land is, for Jim Joseph, painfully apparent: 'In the old



days, a man might be thrown away by the people. Today, it seemed sometimes that the whole world was being thrown away by the whites.<sup>83</sup> But his efforts to thwart the mining company cannot amount to anything more than a gesture, as the road crew foreman realises: "That old man ain't going to shoot nobody except hisself. He's just nuts, that's all, crazy as a July rabbit. Crazy fuckin Indian"<sup>84</sup>

Jim Joseph, then, is fighting a battle that has already been lost. The futility of trying to revive it seems confirmed by the circumstances of his own death. He dies of a heart attack when he slips and falls, knocking his head against his own rifle.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Jim's death follows a dream-vision in which he sees himself as a boy following the spirit of a wolf. In modern America a dream of this kind, the revivification of an old way of seeing the world, seems doomed to failure. After all, wolves have long since disappeared from the Cascade Mountains.

Like *Wolf, No Wolf*, Owens' novel is, then, predicated upon a notion of wolves as a kind of absent presence. But unlike the Montana of *Wolf, No Wolf*, the Washington of *Wolfsong* is not presented as somewhere where white and Indian identities have coalesced to form some ideal, authentic voice of the land. With the death of Jim Joseph, the conflict between 'native' and 'white' ways of seeing, and inhabiting, the world, is immediately foregrounded, as is the question of how a dominant worldview can, if at all, be resisted.

It is a struggle that, eventually, is taken up by Jim's nephew Tom Joseph, the novel's main character. Returning from college in California for his uncle's funeral, Tom hitches a ride on a logging truck. Through the window he sees another logging truck drive past and wonders 'where they were finding the old-growth cedar. Cedar was sacred.'<sup>86</sup> It is a moment that crystallises the clash of attitudes over landscape and identity with which Tom must contend. The cedar is destined for the mine company's road project, but cedar is also the wood which his mother burns to keep away his uncle's ghost.<sup>87</sup> Depending on perspective, cedar is just raw material, a commodity like any other to be harvested and traded, or it's a sacred substance that helps underpin a way of life. Tom's dilemma is to be caught between these perspectives. His choices are not straightforward. It is not simply a matter of choosing between the old and the new, of clinging to the vestiges of tradition or pursuing the modern, for he is simultaneously implicated in, and distanced from, both modern white America and the traditional world of his Stehemish ancestors. The fact that he is hitching a ride on a logging truck, the vehicle, in both senses of the word, of the desecration of the sacred forests demonstrates the point. His longing for an all but vanished native culture, overridden by the demands of a timber-hungry, and overtly Christian, capitalist America, is constrained by his dependence on American capitalism. Full access to either culture is denied him. His white contemporaries at college expect young men like Tom to live up to a popular notion of the Indian, and to give a sort of guarantee of 'Indianness' by using a 'proper' Indian name.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, the law forbids that his uncle be given a traditional Stehemish funeral, which would involve putting the dead 'up in trees, in canoes, in special places.'<sup>89</sup> Instead Jim Joseph is buried in a Christian cemetery with the grudgingly bestowed trappings of Christian

ritual.<sup>90</sup> In effect, Tom is in the position of being denuded of cultural identity through the pressures on his native culture, and of having to respond to a notion of the Indian which, as Owens puts it in *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*, is a hybrid product of 'literature, history and art'.<sup>91</sup>

This objectification of the American Indian recalls the ways in which the Arab, or oriental subject has been objectified by western imperialist discourse, a process which Edward Said has termed 'Orientalism', and has described as:

a whole series of "interests", which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description...not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world.<sup>92</sup>

Tom Joseph's situation differs from that of the oriental subject in so far as his culture and heritage is not, as is the case with the West's conception of the Orient, seen as having once possessed a 'historical preeminence and importance' which had now been ceded 'to the world spirit moving westwards away from Asia and towards Europe'.<sup>93</sup> In historical terms, the Native American has been too closely associated with 'natural man' to be granted any such cultural validation. But insofar as the Native American subject emerges as the product of western discourses about the Native American (a process of differentiation or 'othering' which also produces the western subject) Tom's identity is similarly problematised. The question is one of how to respond to, negotiate and, ultimately, resist this objectification. For Said, the most obvious response is one of countering this 'othering' by a revival of some 'original' native identity that will lead to 'revaluing the weaker or subservient partner'.<sup>94</sup> To accept 'Nativism' is, however, 'to

accept the consequences of imperialism, the racial, religious and political divisions imposed by imperialism itself', which can lead to 'an unthinking acceptance of stereotypes, myths, animosities, and traditions encouraged by imperialism'.<sup>95</sup> Tom's struggle for a sense of identity on these terms, as well as attempt to understand his relationship to the land, needs to be seen in this context. If a wholehearted embrace of white values is not an option, then neither is a return to the past, since that 'past' survives only in an attenuated form, or as an invention of the western imagination.

The significance of Tom's predicament is manifest at the level of language itself. When Tom returns to his hometown, he tries to recall the Indian names for the local mountains, but only one comes to mind, 'Dakobed'.<sup>96</sup> The others have been given white names: 'Whitehorse, Skullcap, Stujack, Three Fingers, Pugh, Sloan'.<sup>97</sup> This fragmentation of language is mirrored by a corresponding fragmentation of landscape. The forests of the mountain slopes have been reduced to 'patchworks' as the result of 'high-head logging'.<sup>98</sup> Both indigenous culture and indigenous nature have, effectively, been 'clearcut'. The intimacy of the link between culture and environment, and of their mutual vulnerability to the westward march of industry, had already been recognised by Tom's uncle who, as Tom recalls, had talked of his people as 'old-growth Indians', likely to go the way of the old-growth forests.<sup>99</sup> Thus Tom is the inheritor of a 'patchwork' land and a 'patchwork' culture insofar as the processes of colonisation work at the level of topography and language. As a young boy, Tom's uncle had been 'stolen' from his parents and placed in the 'government school' where 'they had cut out the tongues of Indians, sewing in different tongues while the children slept.'<sup>100</sup> When he eventually

returned home he was silent for a year before finally gaining the courage 'to say his real name aloud.'<sup>101</sup> Afterwards, when Jim Joseph does begin to speak again 'it was never easy, and it was always the old signs twisted into another language.'<sup>102</sup> Thus through colonisation are both outer and inner landscapes reshaped.

As the inhabitant of a re-shaped and re-named world, Tom, in taking up his uncle's struggle, lacks a secure base, or more accurately, perspective, from which to act. In effect he must learn how to occupy the 'gaps', the vacant spaces, that have resulted from the erosion of his Stehemish heritage, and which the ambivalent attractions of white America are unable to fill. Thus when a local white man refers to Tom's 'people', Tom is forced to confront the fact that, as far as the problem of identity is concerned, he is at a loss: 'he remembered a song that said "Let my people go". Who were his people? It seemed like they'd been let go a long time before.'<sup>103</sup> Tom's position is thus acutely precarious, not least because of the difficulty in identifying what exactly it is that has to be defended, and, still more problematically, against whom. Indeed in as far as Owens' novel adopts the structures and forms of a crime novel, it does so with an ambivalence that subverts the assumptions behind the genre. The question raised by *Wolfsong* is not so much one of *whodunnit*, but of what *is* the crime, and who is the criminal? After all, nobody killed Tom's uncle, and in rattling off a few paltry shots at the mining company's vehicles, it was Jim Joseph who was, at least in a technical sense, the criminal.

Tom Joseph's world, then, is one of contradictions, where even trying to separate the victimised from the victimiser is a task laden with problems. He recalls his uncle's

account of how immigrant Chinese workers had been driven from the area on the very railway they had laboured to build; or of how, in the early part of the Twentieth Century, Scandinavian loggers had threatened to 'burn the valley' if their demands for safe and decent working conditions were not met: 'These good, desperate men were the enemy too, he realized, men who would destroy their mother earth.'<sup>104</sup>

Tom's predicament is scarcely less fraught. Following his uncle's death he too finds himself in the position of, in effect, waging war on the land, when he joins his brother on a logging crew. As Jimmy, his brother, says, "What matters is that we're people and we have to live here...Hell, I don't even know what Indian means, and neither do you."<sup>105</sup> Not only do economic imperatives mean that conservation comes a poor second to the need for jobs, but to stand up for oneself as an Indian is to stand up for an identity without meaning. The logging company boss sums up Tom's situation: "You ain't a real logger and you ain't a white man, and the only kind of men in this valley is loggers and white men...You know, about the only color of Indian I ain't never seen is a red one."<sup>106</sup> By attempting to assert a supposedly native identity Tom thus situates himself as a stranger in his own country.

But to try to become 'white' would be to kick over whatever traces of a native identity are left to him, as well as to corrupt, perhaps irretrievably, a sense of deep connection to the land. For 'whiteness', as a mode of being, seems fundamentally riven, prone to destroy what it might otherwise honour and venerate. The logging company boss may begin each day by watching 'the alpenglow on the glacier across the valley', but he

remains intent on clearing the same valley of its native forest.<sup>107</sup> In short, 'The old man loved nature and was deadly efficient at stripping it bare.'<sup>108</sup> He is, in other words, in thrall to that set of white, European, Christian attitudes that Tom sees as providing the ideological framework for the decimation of the land. The embedment of this anti-ecological tendency in the Christian faith is recognised by Tom's mother who remarks "I think white people treat the earth like they do because they think they'll only be here a little while. They believe Jesus Christ, our Lord, is going to come and fix everything and take them all away, so they don't take care of things."<sup>109</sup> The implication is that, unlike Christ and his followers, resurrection is not an option for the earth itself. But even this insightful suspicion of Christian values has not prevented Tom's mother from 'crossing over', from taking up the faith. She presents her analysis with a bible resting on her lap. Identity, for her, is a matter of necessary compromise. The things that her brother, Tom's uncle, knew, in part at least, 'no one knows anymore.'<sup>110</sup> So she reaches out to Jesus, albeit that she situates him within an Indian frame of reference, "Jesus was a good man, he was a singer, too."<sup>111</sup>

Tom's uncle, however, has been still more direct in his critique of white Christian values, believing that, as Tom's mother recalls, "Jesus is what messed everything up, that it was Jesus-sickness."<sup>112</sup> For Jim Joseph, 'Jesus-sickness' is little more than a byword for the colonial exploitation of the land and its people that has proceeded as much by stealth and subterfuge as it has by outright conquest. The trouble is that, as an enemy, colonisation never presents its real face. It is too sick. You have to read through its words, words like 'wilderness', which, as we saw in the previous chapter, are not so much a description of

the land as a way of looking at it. In this sense, wilderness, and more generally the environment itself, as the critic David Mazel has argued, is not 'the prediscursive origin and cause of environmental discourse but rather an effect of that discourse.'<sup>113</sup> This notion of wilderness as a construct of western discourse is superbly exposed by Jim Joseph who, as Tom recalls, had once explained how colonisation justifies itself by seeming to backtrack on its own motivations:

The mountains had been taken from Indian people by white invaders and been taken from the invaders by the invaders' government and made an official wilderness area...This is a good thing they did because now maybe they won't cut all the trees and build roads. But if you think about it, it's pretty funny. When our people lived here long ago, before the white folks came, there wasn't any wilderness and there wasn't any wild animals. There was only the mountains and river, two-leggeds and four-leggeds and underwater people and all the rest. It took white people to make the country and the animals wild. Now they got a law saying it's wild so's they can protect it from themselves.<sup>114</sup>

But laws, as Jim Joseph realises, can be broken, "they say it's set aside forever, but that's just like in all them treaties with Indian people...They busted every one of them treaties, and someday they're gonna bust this one too. And then maybe this wilderness is going to have to go on the warpath."<sup>115</sup> Effectively Jim Joseph is warning Tom against the dangers of the 'broken word', in the sense both of 'bad faith', and at the level of the word itself. As a signifier 'wilderness' cannot be relied on to mean what Tom would want it to mean, and as for the words that his own people had for the land, these have been so broken by the 'white folks' that they exist now as mere fragments, a few place-names, the residual syllables from a cut-out tongue.

It is in light of the 'broken word', of things failing to make sense, that Tom's decision to keep faith with his uncle's resistance needs to be considered. When Tom finally goes on



the 'warpath' on behalf of the wilderness, and actively defends it against the incursions of the mining company, the question of who or what he is defending, and how to go about it, is so hedged with uncertainties that he needs a guide, and this guide presents itself in the shape of a wolf, the animal that links Tom to the world of his Stehemish ancestors. As a young boy his uncle had earned the honorific "Wolf" because of his hunting prowess, but more importantly the wolf spirit, *staka' yu*, had been his uncle's spirit helper, coming to him in a boyhood initiation rite and telling him, "You will be afraid of nothing and hunt like the wolf."<sup>116</sup> Indeed, it is this special relationship with the wolf that, unlike so many aspects of his 'native' identity, had survived into the present. It had, though, in the end, proved fatal. His uncle's one-man war against the mining company had, apparently been prompted by the 'mad' belief that wolves were returning to the land.<sup>117</sup>

In choosing whether or not to enter into struggle, Tom, then, has to choose whether or not to engage with an essentially animistic belief system that has already cost the life of his uncle. To 'become' Indian might mean re-entering the world but it might also mean dying from the world in that, as Said argues, Nativism can lead to 'compelling but demagogic assertions about the native past, narrative or actuality that stands free from wordly time itself.'<sup>118</sup> It is, moreover, a way of being from which Tom feels a perhaps unbridgeable distance. When, as a boy, he's listened to his uncle talk of the wolf spirit, 'the few old words his uncle used had been confusing, an other-world language connected with strangeness and magic. He's felt the words cutting him off from something at the same time as they brought that something closer.'<sup>119</sup> As far as Tom's brother is concerned there is hardly a choice to be made: "Forget that old crap. That

stuff's for old men and crazy longhairs. You forget about wolf spirits and all those other things...and learn about chainsaws and carburetors. That ghost stuff is for movies."<sup>120</sup>

However, with the uncle's death, the brother becomes the albeit reluctant conduit through which the wolf spirit passes, as he explains to Tom:

I'll tell you something else he [the uncle] said, something I wasn't going to tell you because it's too weird...he told me that when he died the wolf spirit would go to you, that you would get the power.<sup>121</sup>

But for Tom this power has already proved elusive. As a boy he'd tried to re-enact his uncle's spirit quest without success. If now the time has come for Tom to take on this power then it will require something more than his uncle's advice that "You got to search for it, and you got to need it...and you got to not be scared."<sup>122</sup> It will, in short, require a wolf.

But in so far as wolves form a presence in Owens' novel, it is an uncertain and ambiguous one. Shortly after Tom returns home from California he encounters an animal with 'yellow eyes' and a 'deep chest swept back to narrow hindquarters' prowling around his mother's house.<sup>123</sup> But the animal retreats into the woods leaving Tom and his brother to conclude that what they have seen is "somebody's dammed big dog".<sup>124</sup> On other occasions a 'shadow' with 'narrow yellow eyes' gazes at Tom as he lies sleeping in the forest, and another 'shadow', 'like a coyote but much bigger' leaps out in front of his truck.<sup>125</sup> That the name 'wolf' cannot, as yet, be ascribed to these animal visitants echoes the ambivalent status of Tom himself. What right has he to the name of Indian, or Stehemish, when colonial exploitation of the forest has eliminated his own culture almost as surely as it has eliminated the wolf? By situating both wolf and Indian in this kind of

half-life, Owens draws attention to how both groups are acted upon by an alien ideology. What is at stake is not simply an eco-system as such, but rather a belief system which sustains that eco-system and is, in turn, sustained by it. Once again, the environmental dictum 'everything is connected to everything else' is directly relevant here, especially in the sense that connection works on both an ideational and physical level, and, just as importantly, between these levels. The land, in other words, needs animals and people, not only to behave in certain ways, but, in the case of people at least, to maintain certain beliefs that will sustain that behaviour.

For Tom, this sense of connection is realised intuitively when, as a boy, 'he's come to the wilderness, stepping in the bootprints of his uncle...and the wilderness had been an enormous, boundless world.'<sup>126</sup> Later, however, with the dwindling of the wilderness, he begins to understand 'the smallness, the delicacy of the place...with everything connected so carefully like the strands of a spider's web.'<sup>127</sup> With his return from college the relationship becomes still more intimate when he camps out in the forest. In a delirious dream sequence, as Tom experiences the land as 'all movement, all flux, a wailing arc from birth to death', <sup>128</sup> he finally recognises that sense of reciprocal identity between self and world:

He balanced on the precipice of sheer sleep, letting his thoughts drift with the river until they were far down the dark drainage and laboriously reeling them back to the place in the trees. "Stehemish", he said in his mind. "Stehemish", the river echoed, rolling the vowels and consonants of their identities.<sup>129</sup>

But it takes the death of Tom's mother – a death that prefigures the potential loss of his 'motherland' – for this sense of connection to translate itself into action. When the

*Christian* funeral is over, and the small company of mourners has moved on, Tom rips his mother's cross from her grave, along with the markers of his uncle's and long-dead father's graves.<sup>130</sup> With this dramatic renunciation of the white man's faith, of 'Jesus-sickness', Tom is engaged in his own private form of cultural cleansing, of 'making things clearer'.<sup>131</sup>

For Tom the way ahead involves trusting himself to the wilderness he sees in his head, to 'wave after wave of mountains and deep valleys stretching far north across Canada and the unknown territory of Alaska. And then there was the Bering Strait and still more wilderness on and on forever.'<sup>132</sup> It is this wilderness which, Tom supposes, will provide him with sanctuary after he has sabotaged the mining company's operation. Tom succeeds in his mission, by dynamiting a water tank and flooding the site, but Owens' account of the pursuit of Tom Joseph, and his eventual escape, is subtly and profoundly equivocal. At one level Tom Joseph's personal quest for a reintegration with the culture of his Stehemish ancestors seems complete. As he flees his pursuers he hears the unmistakable howling of a wolf, and it is this song which gives him the strength to escape.<sup>133</sup> The novel ends with, in effect, the *becoming-wolf* of Tom Joseph as he outruns the rangers and police who are vainly trying to hunt him down: 'He ran with long, smooth strides down the mountain, the moon hurling his shadow northward before him, listening to the rising howl of the wolf that went on and on until the night seemed ready to burst.'<sup>134</sup>

But where exactly is Tom Joseph supposed to run to? In running from the law he is also running from the land to which he has committed himself, and his efforts to halt the inroads of industry may prove only temporary. Tom's gesture may, in its way, be telling and heroic, but it remains little more than a gesture. By refusing to offer a resolution to the wider crisis of the land, and of culture, Owens' narrative acknowledges the complexities of the issues involved. The final outcome of Tom Joseph's stand against the mining company is not that he becomes *native*, but that he becomes *fugitive*. Up to a point his symbolic victory may provide a sense of hope – he does, after all, escape – but it cannot provide an answer. The way forward, in other words, cannot be followed by turning back, back into a past that has either been lost or mythologised into a parody. The past still matters, tradition still matters, but, ultimately, their value lies in their re-invention, not their resurrection. For wolves and Indians alike, and for the rest of us as well, a clue to that re-invention lies perhaps in the fact of Owens' novel itself. Put simply, Owens has adopted a western, European form to tell an Indian story. The discourse of the coloniser is turned against itself, even if that means an implicit acknowledgement of the reach of colonial discourse and cultural forms. Tom Joseph may have blown up a mining site, and escaped into the wilderness, but when it comes to countering the larger story, in which the stories of mining and wilderness have their meaning, the real resistance may need to take place by repossessing the narrative itself. In effect, *Wolfsong* is a manifestation of what the critics Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin describe as 'the condition of hybridity' that 'exists in the production of the post-colonial text'.<sup>135</sup> By adopting the novel form Owens both demonstrates that 'Post-colonial culture is a hybridized phenomena' and participates in the 'vital and inescapable task' of subverting

the 'European historical and fictional record' through an act of 'rereading and rewriting'.<sup>136</sup> Although this means that the conditions for resistance lie in acknowledging that identity is a matter of *difference* rather than *essence*, the discourse of the coloniser may be turned against itself.

Ultimately, then, the significance and interest of Bowen's and Owens' novels inheres at the level of discourse. Both narratives may succeed in meeting Buell's criteria of referentiality that I discussed in Chapter Four, in that they deal with issues that are grounded in time and place. But their real focus is how this reality is mediated through ideology. Moreover, to read these wolf stories in terms of the ideological stances that undergird them is not to forsake a 'green' reading. Rather, it is to explore exactly what a 'green' reading, or indeed 'green' writing, might mean. Bowen's audacious, if rather obvious, attempt to seize the idioms of 'green' discourse demonstrates the need for an environmentally critical praxis that is as alert to questions of textuality as it is to questions of an extra-textual reality. Louis Owens' *Wolfsong* succeeds because it foregrounds the importance of this hazy border between text and world, discourse and reality. The danger faced by Tom Joseph is that of being without either, of dissolving into the border. Seen in this light his escape is also an effacement. Without a story he has no world to inhabit. The strength of Owens' novel, as an act of resistance in its own right, is that it makes clear the frames of reference, the cultural codes, through which nature is mediated and made meaningful, and how these codes are themselves continually in flux and subject to contestation.

## Chapter Seven

‘Homeless, Hunted, Weary’: Witnessing the Wolf in Cormac

McCarthy’s *The Crossing*

The wolf had crossed the international boundary line at about the point where it intersected the thirtieth minute of the one hundred and eighth meridian and she had crossed the old Nations road a mile north of the boundary and followed Whitewater Creek west up into the San Luis Mountains and crossed through the gap north to the Animas range and then crossed the Animas Valley and onto the Peloncillos...She wandered the eastern slopes of the Sierra de la Madera for a week...She was carrying her first litter and she had no way to know the trouble she was in. She was moving out of the country not because the game was gone but because the wolves were and she needed them. When she pulled down a veal calf in the snow at the head of Foster Draw in the Peloncillo Mountains of New Mexico she had eaten little but carrion for two weeks and she wore a haunted look and she found no trace of wolves at all...She ate till her belly dragged and she did not go back. She would not return to a kill. She would not cross a road or a rail line in daylight. She would not cross under a wire fence twice in the same place. These were the new protocols. Strictures that had not existed before. Now they did.<sup>1</sup>

What is immediately striking about the wolf whose presence dominates the first part of Cormac McCarthy’s 1994 novel *The Crossing*, and whose absence haunts its pages thereafter, is that this is a wolf with a history. Unlike Montague Summers’ werewolves, she has not issued from a dark niche of the medieval psyche. Nor like Jack London’s wolves has she emerged from some impenetrable recess of the primeval forest. This is a wolf that is *in* and *of* the world, that very same world over which we cast an invisible net of lines - whether of longitude and latitude or of text - through which she passes. The fact

that this wolf seems so palpable, so vital, does not, however, mitigate her inappropriate strangeness. She must be trapped and killed, because she embodies a certain kind of threat, and not just to the cattle she preys upon. She has strayed into a land where she does not belong, wolves having been exterminated from that part of south-western United States in the years prior to the late 1930s and early 1940s which constitute the novel's historical setting. At this time, in this place, she is a parasite, a foreign body.

It is in terms of the idea of the foreign body, and of related questions of alienation and belonging, that I want to discuss the achievement of McCarthy's extraordinary and complex novel. It is, as the above extract suggests, a narrative that deals with journeys and wanderings, especially those that involve the crossing and transgression of borders. But is also a novel about home, about what might constitute home, or more generally, a sense of dwelling. To raise the question of home is, implicitly, to engage with the idea of ecology. As its etymology reveals, ecology (from the Greek *oikos*, meaning 'house') is a concept that, at root, involves ways of thinking about home and belonging, and to do this also means confronting both the sheer emotional pull of these terms, and their intractable ambiguity. It is a debate that Freud famously entered into in his essay, 'The Uncanny', and his trenchant analysis of how the meanings of the words 'heimlich' (homely) and 'unheimlich' (unhomely) exhibit a remarkable tendency to merge with one another.<sup>2</sup> This tension informs, as we have seen, *Civilization and Its Discontents* where Freud's exploration of civilisation, the 'proper place' of humanity, is riven by an inevitable unease, by a sense that, in civilisation, 'man', or a part of man at least, is profoundly *out*



*of place*. Similarly Ted Hughes' poem 'Wolfwatching' questions our sense of belonging by focusing not only on the question of *where* to belong, but also of *how* to belong.

These themes go to the heart of McCarthy's novel. The itinerant she wolf may indeed seem an animal that is out of both place and time, but from whose perspective is the wolf a foreign body? This is, after all, the land where her ancestors have hunted since time immemorial, and it is the cattle whose baffled ignorance at the ways of wolves seems, as the novel puts it, to have evoked in wolves 'some anger. As if they were offended by some violation of an older order. Old ceremonies. Old protocols'.<sup>3</sup> The very phrase 'Old ceremonies. Old protocols' serves to problematise any rigid, self-assuring distinction between the human and the animal. McCarthy's use of the register of culture prompts the thought that the bonds and allegiances that connect wolves to the world are infinitely more varied and subtle than Jack London's rule of 'Eat or be eaten'. From the wolf's point of view it is the cattle who are strangers in a strange land, and if this is the case, what of the men who ranch them? *The Crossing* begins with the Parham family's arrival in New Mexico. Billy, the novel's main character, carries Boyd, his younger brother, in the bow of his saddle and names to him 'features of the landscape and birds and animals in both Spanish and English'.<sup>4</sup> There is an echo here of Adam's naming of animals in the Book of Genesis. By naming the world men take possession of it, but McCarthy hints at an equivocality inherent in this act by suggesting that at least two languages are needed, Spanish and English. Nonetheless the Parham family are described in terms redolent of that prime archetype of American identity, the 'settler'. It is a term that carries with it connotations of a primeval, and possibly evil, wilderness that requires the civilising

imprint of western man. But this, in turn, begs the question of what exactly it is about the land that is so unsettled, and unsettling. From the perspective of wolves 'man' represents a quintessentially *unsettling* presence. He is, as the novel puts it, that 'malignant lesser god come pale and naked and alien to slaughter all his [the wolf's] clan and rout them from their house. A god insatiable whom no ceding could appease nor any measure of blood'.<sup>5</sup> The ease with which the valorised term 'settler' slips into the pejorative 'invader' recalls the slippage that Freud identifies between the 'homely' and the 'unhomely'. Perspective is everything. The larger point to be made here is that 'man', or western man at any rate, does not so much establish a home, and thereby create a sense of place out of placelessness, as take over, in the name of settlement, a land that is already 'settled'. He routs others from their house. Who or what is the foreign body in *The Crossing* is thus always and inescapably a matter of context.

Exemplary among these contexts is the foreign body of the wolf, that foreign body which Billy Parham will, having trapped, attempt to return to its 'home' in Mexico. But what is it about this particular foreign body that makes Billy Parham commit himself to such an enterprise? What is it, to whittle the point of this thesis as finely as possible, about wolves? To answer this question entails looking beyond the facts of the matter, whether of biology or history, and turning to the imagination. For as much as McCarthy presents us with a thoroughly historicised and worldly wolf, it is yet a wolf that must be imagined. Indeed the story of Billy Parham's attempts to repatriate the wolf may be considered as nothing more nor less than the effort of imagining the wolf, of imagining the foreignness of the foreign body. The difficulty, even impossibility, of coming to terms with the wolf

is impressed on Billy by an ailing wolf hunter who, in keeping with the logic of his profession, is, like his fast disappearing quarry, among the last of his kind. He tells Billy:

Between their acts and their ceremonies lies the world and in this world the storms blow and the trees twist in the wind and all the animals that God has made go to and fro yet this world men do not see. They see the acts of their own hands or they see that which they name and call out to one another but the world between is invisible to them.<sup>6</sup>

The wolf, then, and the world of which it is a part, cannot be reduced to something men name. It resists taxonomy, classification, whose entire project, it might be argued, has all along been inextricably bound up with the urge to draw a line in the ontological sand between human beings and other animals, whether we posit that line as soul, reason, language or culture. According to this view the mere act of naming, even, and perhaps especially when a place is named 'home', separates man from nature. The world we see and name is not the world that *is*. To know what a wolf *is*, is a similarly fraught proposition. When the wolf hunter, rather wonderfully, compares a wolf to a snowflake, claiming that 'You catch the snowflake but when you look in your hand you don't have it no more...If you catch it you lose it', he summarises the unanswerability of the question, 'What is a wolf?'<sup>7</sup>

To say that this question is unanswerable does not, however, make it futile. On the contrary, it is deeply pressing, and calls to mind another question which brings into play that other phenomenon which provides this thesis with its impetus and its title: *What is literature?* It is a question that has drawn the attention of Jacques Derrida but, as the deconstructionist critic Derek Attridge argues, not because it admits of a definite answer. Rather, it is first of all 'the question of the question that fascinated him', the possibility

that 'something in the final word retroactively challenges the first two, with their assumptions about essence, identity and truth'.<sup>8</sup> Literature, in other words, cannot be reduced to something that simply *is*, and in its heterogeneity challenges the notion that anything can be finally objectified, tied to a fixed point within a given hegemony. I am touching here on similar grounds to my arguments in Chapter 4 when I discussed Derrida's emphasis on context, and how his notion of *différance* undercuts the hierarchical binaries that support metaphysical assumptions about the nature of human consciousness, and the relationship of the human to the nonhuman. I shall explore later in this chapter how a critical approach that takes into account Derrida's insights can elucidate the situation of Billy Parham, but for the moment it is worth acknowledging that the question which Derrida raises concerning literature is the same question which McCarthy raises in respect of the wolf. In effect both Derrida and McCarthy are pointing to the problem of how to engage with otherness, of how to connect with something that unsettles the presumptions that govern how the world is 'read' and of the self-identity of the human subject which is itself an effect of those presumptions.

As far as Billy Parham is concerned, to engage with the otherness of the wolf remains a matter of seeking the *place* of the wolf. At a purely topographical level this place, this putative home, is Mexico. But both place and home, in McCarthy's exploration of these concepts, cannot be reduced to a simple geographical location, though this is important. To Billy Parham wolves seem to come 'from another world entire', from a world so suited to their needs it seems as 'perfect to their use as if their counsel had been sought in the devising of it'.<sup>9</sup>

Between a wolf then and the world, or at least *its* world, there would appear to be no gap, no fissure, no space for 'culture' ('that which [men] name and call out to one another') to bridge. It is this seeming intimacy between a wolf and its world that so quickens the imagination of Billy Parham. As a human subject he sees himself as being woven from the ties of culture, of family, nation and history. The wolf, on the other hand, appears to embody a radically different narrative of being. In Billy's eyes, it compensates for a certain sense of lack, for a slippage in identity which, traditionally, western metaphysics has sought to repress by an emphasis on the unity of human consciousness. But the wolf also means something more than this to Billy, even if at this stage in the novel, it is something that he cannot articulate for himself. For the 'self-corroboration' of the wolf, unlike the supposed 'self-corroboration' of the human subject, does not imply a split from the world. In *The Crossing*, wolves are involved in, and derive their being from, a network of relations, and to lose the wolf from the world is not just a matter of the extinction of a particular species, but primarily the loss of a way of being in the world. It entails the loss of a radically *other* narrative, the effacement of a certain kind of history:

He [Billy] wrapped himself in a blanket and watched her [the wolf]. When those eyes and the nation to which they stood witness were gone at last with their dignity back into their origins there would be other fires and other witnesses and other worlds otherwise beheld. But they would not be this one.<sup>10</sup>

A number of points arise from this brief passage which are indicative of the wider themes that lend the novel its telling power. In the first place a simplistic human/wolf, or wild/civilised dichotomy is undermined by McCarthy's use of register. Not just human

beings, but wolves too, belong to 'nations'. Indeed this re-designation of wolves within an *ostensibly* human paradigm can be seen as quite logical given the shared etymology of 'nation' and 'nature', from the Latin *nasci nat*, to be born. It is not so much that the wolf is anthropomorphised. Rather the supposed uniqueness of the human is cast into doubt. The effect of this is to show that the type of border crossings which Billy Parham attempts cannot be reduced to a matter of simple human politics, the arbitrary line on a map dividing the USA from Mexico. In other words, borders are everywhere, a proposition which in itself subverts the grounds on which difference, whether biological, geographical, historical or ontological, is constructed.

Secondly the wolf is figured not simply as an unconscious actor in the world, but as its witness, and, moreover, it is in this act of witnessing that the world, or more accurately 'this world', has its being. I shall return to the question of the witness in more depth, but for the present it is worth noting that by evoking a multiplicity of worlds, each unique to how it is witnessed, McCarthy conjures up a vision of the world that is implicitly, and indeed profoundly, intertextual. The world takes shape(s) according to the proliferation of readings, or 'witnessings', which it engenders. By this move not only does McCarthy question the notions of 'reading' and 'narrative' as purely human characteristics, he also, like Ted Hughes, suggests that the death of a species is a textual as well as an ecological event. Indeed 'death' is perhaps the wrong word in this context, and McCarthy does not use it. Instead the wolf, and the world to which it bears witness, are figured as going back into 'their origins', a retreat or effacement that seems all the more final for leaving no trace. The story that the wolf 'reads' is unrecoverable.

Seen in this light, what Billy Parham is seeking, via the wolf, is not some ultimate truth about wolves, some essence of 'wolfness', or 'wilderness', and although there may be a kind of lycanthropy at work, it is not that of the shape-shifting werewolf. Nor is McCarthy attempting that lycanthropic transformation by which London and Lawrence seek to arrogate the power of the animal to a vision of the artist as heroic outsider. Instead what Billy seeks is an intersection of narratives, his own with that of the wolf's. However, for all that Billy's self-abandoning love of the wolf reaches out to extinguish the oppositions of nature and culture, to establish a point of intersection, a moment of crossing that is both a traversal and a commingling, he is still, at this point in the novel at least, held by those very oppositions. What else is his attempt to return the wolf from the USA to the supposedly still wilder west of Mexico but an attempt to remove the wolf from the deadly foreign ground of history to its home ground of nature? He may, in his own way, be testing these oppositions, wondering, for example, 'at the world it [the wolf] smelled', and whether 'the living blood with which it slaked its throat [had] a different taste to the thick iron tincture of his own. Or to the blood of God'.<sup>11</sup> But for Billy Parham to separate himself, if only a little, from the culture that gives him being, and know what the wolf knows, he will need, as the wolf hunter has already warned him, 'to see' the wolf 'on its own ground'.<sup>12</sup> And to see the ground of the wolf entails the death of the wolf, at Billy's own hand to save it from a yet more agonising end in a fairground dogfight. He will, however, fulfil his promise to return her to the mountains whence she came:

He'd carried the wolf up into the mountains and buried her in a high pass under a cairn of scree. The little wolves in her belly felt the cold

draw all about them and they cried out mutely in the dark and he buried them all and plied the rocks over them and led the horse away.<sup>13</sup>

Paradoxically it is only with the death of the wolf that Billy can, in part at least, come to know the ground of the wolf. In his exile in Mexico, and in his subsequent crossings between that country and the USA, he too will know what it is to be 'homeless, hunted, weary',<sup>14</sup> and now the categories of history and nature, human and animal, can begin to collapse into one another. Mexico is described as that land 'where the antique world clung to the stories and the spores of living things',<sup>15</sup> while Billy himself comes to be perceived by other people as the living embodiment of the ambivalence which civilisation feels towards its wild other:

Something in off the wild mesas, something out of the past. Ragged, dirty, hungry in eye and belly. Totally unspoken for. In that outlandish figure they beheld what they most envied and what they most reviled. If their hearts went out to him it was yet true that for very small cause they might also have killed him.<sup>16</sup>

The figure of Billy thus appears to represent in exemplary fashion both the predicament of the wolf he attempted to save and all of our own contradictory feelings for wolves. He evokes both envy and revulsion, and if he pulls at the heartstrings he pulls at the trigger finger as well. This 'animalisation' of Billy is enhanced by the way that McCarthy's otherwise omniscient narrator is all but silent on the question of Billy's thoughts and feelings. Not only does Billy remain tight-lipped throughout but his state of mind, his hopes and fears, desires and regrets, are rendered only in rare and fleeting glimpses. His consciousness seems as beyond the reader's grasp as that of animal. He seems, in other words, to be wolf in all but name, and with the death of his father and mother, and, later, of his brother, he, like the wolf whom he has served as both guardian and gravedigger,



will come to learn 'that same reckonless deep of loneliness that cored the world to its heart'.<sup>17</sup> The becoming-wolf of Billy Parham is then a matter of geographical and historical context. He does not 'shape-shift'; it is the shape of his world that shifts. Billy Parham, as cowboy, is an anachronism, an eschatological effect. Like the wolf, he moves on the brink of extinction.

And yet this ground of the wolf is somewhere that Billy can never *wholly* know. He still senses the albeit muted insistence of other 'protocols', other narratives. He still searches for his father's stolen horses, and is still saddled with his father in the form, no less, of his father's saddle. Thus the place that Billy comes to occupy is not, nor can ever be, *exactly* the same as the wolf's. Caught in the paradox of being in the place of the wolf, and at the same time not belonging to that place, he evokes the figure of the parasite. It is a figure, or phenomenon, which Derrida has been at pains to explore, especially within the arena of human speech acts, but which he also extends to questions of humanness and animality, and their alleged contradistinction:

When I speak here of law, of convention or of invention, I would not like to rely...upon the classical opposition between nature and law, or between animals alleged not to have language and man...my statements on this subject should be valid beyond the marks and society called "human".<sup>18</sup>

It is to this 'beyond' of human society that Billy Parham is, not altogether unwillingly drawn. As parasite, as foreign body, his realm is that of the border, a realm which, as Derrida remarks, confounds notions of the internal and the external, and of a rigorously delineated place that might be taken in the world:

It should also be remembered that the parasite is by definition never simply something *external*...Parasitism takes place when the parasite...comes to live *off the life* of the body in which it resides – and when, reciprocally, the host incorporates the parasite to an extent...providing it with a place. The parasite then “takes place”. And at bottom, whatever violently “takes place” or occupies a site is always *something* of a parasite. *Never quite* taking place is thus part of its performance, of its success as an event, of its taking place.<sup>19</sup>

To describe the becoming-wolf of Billy Parham as a ‘success’ would, however, overlook the extent to which his situation is figured as tragic. His estrangement from human society is also an estrangement from history. He is sundered from and rejected by the stories that would otherwise constitute him in society to the extent that he is rejected for army service because of a ‘heartmurmur’, a disturbance in other words of his centre.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, with the death of the wolf, and with no other object with which his love might involve itself, he becomes, in effect, a foreign body without a host. He becomes foreign to himself:

He seemed to himself a person with no prior life. As if he had died in some way years ago and was ever after some other being who had no history, who had no ponderable life to come.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, as David Punter comments, the story of Billy Parham does not offer a model of resistance to the effects of twentieth century capitalism on the world’s human and nonhuman subjects. The profoundly elegiac note struck by the *The Crossing* represents instead ‘a doomed attempt at rescue and salvation and it is this elegaic that we have to keep in mind when we look at ambitious and in many ways entirely admirable attempts to “re-animate” the animistic’.<sup>22</sup>

Seen in this light we need to ask what, from an eco-critical perspective, might be the value of McCarthy's novel? In aesthetic terms *The Crossing* may represent an extraordinary achievement, but if the situation of Billy Parham, as well as the wolf, is one of abjection, how can it point the way towards a recuperation of our attitudes to the 'natural world', even as it chronicles a breaking of our ideological and aesthetic ties to that world? To begin to answer this question it is worth, again, bearing in mind Kelly Hurley's discussion of how the related concepts of the 'abjection' and the 'abhuman' imply not just a state of absolute negation, but also a 'movement away' from the human, and the possibility of a radical de-centring and reorientation. In this respect it is also worth noting the convergence in meaning of the terms 'abjection' and 'parasite'. The prefixes 'ab' ('off', 'away') and 'para' ('beside', 'past', 'beyond') suggest a condition which is simultaneously one of alienation *and* proximity, and it is within this rubric that McCarthy's elucidation of the figure of the foreign body can aid in the work of 'negotiating connection and difference', and of re-thinking the relationship of the human to the nonhuman.

In re-thinking this relationship it is worth recalling another term for that condition of separation and proximity which we have otherwise identified as parasite or foreign body. Instead of these ostensibly pejorative labels, consider the situation of the 'witness'. The centrality of this figure to McCarthy's narrative has already been touched on when I noted that, in *The Crossing*, wolves are witnesses to a world that, reciprocally, derives its being from being witnessed. But wolves too have a witness, in the shape of Billy Parham. The novel begins with an act of 'wolfwatching' which is in diametrical contrast to the

sanitised and commodified voyeurism described in Hughes' poem about zoo wolves. In the small hours of a winter night Billy Parham leaves the family ranch house to bear witness to wolves running on the plain: 'He could see their almond eyes in the moonlight. He could hear their breath. He could feel the presence of their knowing that was electric in the air.'<sup>23</sup> Billy Parham is, then, drawn not simply to the spectacle of wolves, but to a sense that he is on the verge of another way of knowing and of being in the world. But in the very act of killing the wolf he tries to save, he is also witness to the death of a wolf, and it is these acts of witnessing which mean that his subsequent journeying 'began to take upon itself the shape of a tale'.<sup>24</sup> In other words, Billy Parham becomes, as the figure in a tale, something that in itself is constituted by acts of witnessing, of reading.

The strange and crucial role that the witness is given to play is explained to Billy by a hermit he encounters in a deserted Mexican village:

Acts have their being in the witness...In the end one could even say that the act is nothing, the witness all...If the world was but a tale who but the witness could give it life?<sup>25</sup>

The relationship of witness to world is important in several respects. In the first place, it suggests that the foreign body, as witness, separate from but also intimately connected to its host, is something that does not simply live off the life of the other, but also gives life to the other or, at least, provides a context in which that life becomes realisable. The role of the witness, and the reader, is to honour presence. This does not mean that the witness is protected from the violence that may be visited upon the host. The logic of the foreign body, as well as that of the witness, involves a standing *beside*. To act as witness therefore entails a certain risk, the possibility of loss, and is haunted, in its paying

testimony to what is passing, by a sense of mourning. For what are Billy Parham's crossings if not fugue journeys, travelogues of mourning? Nevertheless, as witness, Billy occupies a position which is of critical importance, and one that is analogous to that of the reader. In 'Shibboleth' Derrida describes the reader or witness of the literary text as guaranteeing an 'excess of intelligibility which the poem can also forego'.<sup>26</sup> Billy Parham is in exactly this relationship to the wolf, and to the world of the wolf. This world may not absolutely require Billy Parham, or any other human being, in terms of its functioning as an ecosystem, but in that 'excess of intelligibility' which the world yields up, and which the witness guarantees, lies the potential for affirming the human being as narrative-making subject, and of honouring the presence of that other upon which every narrative depends as its host.

There is, however, a danger in an uncritical reliance of the paradigm of host and foreign body in trying to formulate an aesthetics which takes account of the relationship of witness to the witnessed, of text to world. The host/foreign body dynamic can seem to retain echoes of a binarism that emphasises difference at the expense of connection and thereby suggest that any host/foreign body interaction is biased in favour of one or other of the two terms. In attempting to resolve this problem it is worth pausing to consider that small word 'host', and the various meanings it has accumulated over time. It can mean 'a person who receives or entertains other people as guests', and 'a large number of people or things', 'an army'. Moreover these seemingly antithetical meanings stem from the same Latin root, *hostis* (stranger, enemy). 'Host' may also mean 'the bread consecrated in the Eucharist', from the Latin *hostia* (victim). It is, then, a word that seems, in its very

meaning(s), to exemplify the liminal situation of the parasite. The host is both host, someone who receives the presence of another, *and* foreign body. The world, the nonhuman environment acts as host body to the foreign body or witness, and at the same time also serves as the consecrated other which the witness incorporates. The relationship is one of communion. Eating the consecrated bread means incorporating the stranger, the foreign body, and if we extend this parasitical interaction outwith its Christological trappings, then the idea of communion can come to represent the exchange between the imagining mind and the world which hosts or, to borrow a term from ecology, environs it.

But need this foreign body always be seen, ultimately, as sacrifice, as victim, the unnameable other which, as Barry Lopez suggests, may be real target whenever a man aims a rifle at a wolf's head? Where *The Crossing* succeeds is in directing our attention towards that meaning of host as someone or something which receives a guest, which stages the presence of another, and thus to how animals, and nature as a whole, plays host to the human imagination, while human beings, as imagining animals, can in turn stage the presence of the nonhuman other. By concentrating on this sense of reciprocity any absolute distinction between foreign body and host, witness and witness is diminished. Thus the stranger or enemy doubles as the welcoming other; the positions of host and witness, or parasite, are, in essence, a question of context. Put differently, the human is both *guest* and *host* at the same time, and as host their first duty is, as Derrida reminds us, 'to pay attention...to pay homage or tribute to [linguistic] difference'.<sup>27</sup>

Seen in this light the relationship of the foreign body to the host, the narrative to the witness, provides a textual analogue to the human interaction with, and dependence on, the nonhuman environment. In other words our acts of the imagination are no less tied up with the dynamics of ecology than the acts of our bodies. Text and world relate to one another in ways that demand the subtlest attention. As the hermit tells Billy:

For this world also which seems to us a thing of stone and flower and blood is not a thing at all but is a tale. And all in it is a tale and each tale the sum of all lesser tales and yet these also are the self same tale and contain as well all else within them. So everything is necessary. Every least thing. This is the hard lesson. Nothing can be dispensed with. Nothing despised. Because the seams are hid from us, you see. The joinery. The way in which the world is made. We have no way to know what could be taken away. What omitted.<sup>28</sup>

Thus the nature of the tale conforms to the nature of the world. The intertextual and the ecological name the same phenomenon. Roland Barthes' declaration that the text is a 'multidimensional space in which a variety of writings...blend and clash'<sup>29</sup> is a reformulation of the ecological maxim that 'everything connects to everything else.' As the hermit puts it, 'everything is necessary...we have no way of knowing what could be taken away'.

That this sense of interconnection implies a de-centering, although not necessarily a diminution, of the human subject is enacted in the syntax, register and narrative structure of *The Crossing*, as the following description of Billy's father setting a wolf trap suggests:

He held the trap up and eyed the notch in the pan while he backed off one screw and adjusted the trigger. Crouched in the broken shadow with the sun at his back and holding the trap at eyelevel against the morning sky he looked to be truing some older, some subtler instrument. Astrolabe or sextant. Like a man bent on fixing himself

someway in the world. Bent on trying by arc or chord the space between his being and the world that was. If there be such space. If it be knowable. He put his hand under the open jaws and tilted the pan slightly with his thumb.<sup>30</sup>

In this passage the everyday and the mundane segues into the grave and fundamental, and back, as if to suggest that the border between the two is narrower than we may think, that it may even be a mere convention, the habitual re-inscription of a certain perspective, and not the iteration of a universal truth. The apparently inconsequential may possess the utmost significance so that while the power of McCarthy's novel may be fuelled by a sense of the grand myth, of the lonely hero doomed to a restless sojourn, this mythic framework is itself riven by a rapt attention to the incidental and prosaic. In this respect, exactly how Billy captures the wolf matters as much as the fact of its capture, even to the extent that the ropes and knots employed by Billy are given a name:

When he had her stretched out he took the other hobble and tied her back legs to the little jackpine he'd been using for a snubbingpost and then freed the end of the catchrope from her legs and looped up the slack and slung it over his shoulder.<sup>31</sup>

Elsewhere McCarthy devotes six pages of the novel (308-318) to a description of how a Mexican doctor dresses the gunshot wounds of Billy's younger brother, Boyd.<sup>32</sup> Means, as much as ends, matter in *The Crossing*. Any action retains the potential for ritual.

Similarly, a concentration on the grandeur of the landscape, and Billy's rites of passage, may recall a mythic quest, but certain strange symmetries of plot serve to demonumentalise the novel and undermine the teleology of the hero narrative. Billy may begin by attempting to rescue a wild wolf, but the novel ends with his casting aside of a



stray dog. If the wolf stands as a symbol of connection with the land, with nature, the 'arthritic and illjoined' dog<sup>33</sup> articulates Billy's separation and abjection:

The dog howled again and began to run, hobbling brokenly on its twisted legs with the strange head agoggle on its neck. As it went it raised its mouth sideways and howled again with a terrible sound. Something not of this earth. As if some awful composite of grief had broke through from the preterite world.<sup>34</sup>

Still more tellingly, as the first part of the novel is taken up with Billy's efforts to return the wolf to Mexico, and concludes with him burying the wolf's corpse, so the final stages of *The Crossing* focus on the *disinternment* of Boyd's corpse and Billy's struggle to return his brother's bones to the United States. Thus Billy is still possessed by an idea of home, of a proper and rightful place in the world, even if that place is nothing more than a grave. But a grave is a fixed point on the earth, and insofar as *The Crossing* opens up possibilities of relating to the world, it does so by *unfixing* the human subject, of shaking him loose from the received cultural wisdom about man's place in the world. As Billy rides towards the US border, carrying the bones of the brother who he had once carried as a small child, he encounters a band of 'Indians or gypsies' with their own wrecked burden: a disassembled airplane 'of some ancient vintage'.<sup>35</sup> But the gypsies enact a narrative that is in direct contrast to Billy's, and one that seems to refute any sense of absolute origins or destinies. Billy needs to return Boyd to the US and bury him there as if to bring a story to an end. For the gypsies, however, all stories are provisional. There is no *one* story, and thus no final ending. Not only does their own account of the wrecked plane turn out to be at odds with that of its owner, but, as the gypsy leader explains, to invest one's faith in story as a kind of monument, as if any one story could mark the border between present and past, is to succumb to a history 'that each man makes alone

out of what is left to him. Bits of wreckage. Some bones. The words of the dead. How make a world out of this? How live in that world once made?'<sup>36</sup> Instead the gypsies offer Billy a different account of borders, an account which challenges any claim either to a specific territory, or to a specific history, that establishes 'man' as owner, as a being separate and distinct from the world:

They stood in no proprietary relationship to anything, scarcely even to the space they occupied. Out of their anterior lives they had arrived at the same understanding as their fathers before them. That movement itself is a form of property.<sup>37</sup>

It is an understanding that Billy, in his continuing effort to return Boyd, is unable to grasp, but the idea of 'movement as property' suggests a re-thinking of the idea of the border itself, and of the question of home. Our relationship to the world, like the stories we tell of the world, is one of *movement* not *stasis*, and as such echoes the dynamics of ecology. In this respect it is worth recalling Ursula Le Guin's view that the purpose of narrative is 'neither resolution nor stasis but continuing process'. Indeed insofar as McCarthy's novel imagines the wolf as essential to the world, it is essential because it embodies a sense of movement and process, as the scene of Billy burying the she-wolf reveals:

He took up her stiff head out of the leaves and held it or he reached to hold what cannot be held, what already ran among the mountains at once terrible and of a great beauty, like flowers that feed on flesh. What blood and bone are made of but can themselves not make on any altar nor by any wound of war. What we may well believe has power to cut and shape and hollow out the dark form of the world surely if wind can, if rain can. But which cannot be held never be held and is no flower but is swift and a huntress and the wind itself is in terror of it and the world cannot lose it.<sup>38</sup>

In reaching out to 'hold what cannot be held' Billy Parham asks of himself the same 'unanswerable' question with which this thesis began: what is it we imagine when we imagine a wolf? The question remains unanswerable because, in the end, there is no simple 'it' to imagine. For all that the wolf, or any other animal, impresses itself on the human imagination in terms of its beauty or strength, its habits or lifestyle, it cannot be reduced to any single defining quality, nor even to any combination of qualities. And this holds true for the valorised and celebrated wolves of Cormac McCarthy, Ted Hughes and Rick Bass as much as it does for the vilified beast of Montague Summers. For the human imagination is itself ceaseless, as ceaseless as the world on which it feeds, and which, with care, it can also nourish. What we can imagine, what, in a sense, we cannot help but imagine, is our relationship to the animal other, and insofar as the present environmental crisis is also a crisis of the imagination, this should now mean a re-imagining of the human/animal border. We cannot erase this border, but by taking into account the insights of ecology and literature, we can re-mark its configurations, acknowledging all the while that these configurations are themselves a matter of shifting contexts, of the unarrestable fluctuation between the foreign body and the host, the witness and the witnessed. For the world, like the stories it engenders, is always on the move. If no one image of the wolf succumbs to our attempts to trap it in narrative, then it is because the wolf is itself an instance of this idea of movement, of continual border crossings, and of that 'excess of intelligibility' that the world grants. We may have many names for that world but, as McCarthy's novel testifies, and for as long as we are willing to give it space on earth and in the imagination, 'wolf' may be among the best.

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## NOTES

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1: 20 New Jerusalem Bible

<sup>2</sup> Roberta L. Hall, 'Variability and Speciation in Canids and Hominids', *Wolf and Man: Evolution in Parallel*, ed. Roberta L. Hall and Henry S. Sharp (New York, London: Academic Press, 1978) 161

<sup>3</sup> Tim Ingold, 'Introduction', *What Is an Animal?*, ed. Tim Ingold, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) 3

<sup>4</sup> Cheryll Glotfelty, 'Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Change', *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) xviii

<sup>5</sup> Barry Holstun Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995)

### Chapter One

#### Reflections in a Lupine Eye (I)

<sup>1</sup> Montague Summers, *The Werewolf* (Secaucus NJ: Citadel Press, 1973) 123

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955) 35

<sup>3</sup> Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men* (New York: Touchstone, 1995) 239

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 238

<sup>5</sup> Jane P. Davidson, 'Wolves, Witches and Werewolves': Lycanthropy and Witchcraft from 1423-1700', *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 2, no. 4 (1990) 63 & 57

<sup>6</sup> Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, 241

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 242

<sup>8</sup> In *Montague Summers: A Bibliographical Portrait*, Frederick S. Frank acknowledges the difficulty in assessing the value of Summers' scholarship, commenting that, as a bibliographer, he combined 'a passion for completeness and minuteness with his own special kind of eccentric erudition' (pviii). Indeed Summers' biographical details are scarcely less controversial than his scholarship. In this respect Frank not only questions the validity of Summers' claims to be an ordained Catholic priest but also remarks on how Summers himself 'cultivated all of the notorious and absurd stories about him'.

Frederick S. Frank, *Montague Summers: A Bibliographical Portrait* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1988) x

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, viii

<sup>10</sup> Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, tr. Montague Summers (London: Hogarth Press, 1969) xix

<sup>11</sup> Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, 239

<sup>12</sup> Summers, 'Introduction' in *Malleus Maleficarum*, xiv. Despite the disparity of their views on the wolf and the werewolf Lopez himself acknowledges, in the bibliography of *Of Wolves and Men*, the value of Summers' research, commenting that *The Werewolf* 'despite its bias, is requisite.' 297

<sup>13</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 1

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 118

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 103

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 30

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 103

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, 73

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, 76

<sup>20</sup> Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, 123

<sup>21</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 119

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 120

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 121-122

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, 121

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, 121

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 122

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 120

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- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 78  
<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 28  
<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, 28  
<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 22  
<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 65  
<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 22  
<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 66&96  
<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 65  
<sup>36</sup> Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of The Middle Ages* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1971) 303  
<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 334-335  
<sup>38</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 103  
<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 65  
<sup>40</sup> Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* (Hassocks: Harvest Press, 1979) 25  
<sup>41</sup> Summers, *The Werewolf*, 65  
<sup>42</sup> cited in Patrick Parrinder (ed.), *H.G Wells: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1972) 50&53  
<sup>43</sup> cited in George Bernard Shaw, *Major Critical Essays* (London: Penguin, 1986) 93  
<sup>44</sup> H.G Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993) 3  
<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 39  
<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, 49  
<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 50  
<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 69  
<sup>49</sup> Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 3  
<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 26-27  
<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 28  
<sup>52</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, 32  
<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 59  
<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 76  
<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 70  
<sup>56</sup> Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 110  
<sup>57</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, 77  
<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 77  
<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 92  
<sup>60</sup> Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 4  
<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, 4  
<sup>62</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, 93  
<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 129  
<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, 129  
<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, 129  
<sup>66</sup> Margot Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst & Lawrence* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1993) 1. Norris (p2) excludes Jack London from her study on the grounds that a viable discussion of his work would entail extending her 'historical background beyond the Continental philosophies' that inform *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*. That I discuss London in the context of her notion of the 'biocentric writer' does not, then, imply either agreement with or departure from any views that Norris may have of his writing.  
<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 225  
<sup>68</sup> Jon Yoder, 'Jack London as Wolf Barleycorn', *Western American Literature* 11 (1976), 116  
<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 116  
<sup>70</sup> Jack London, *The Call of the Wild, The Call of the Wild, White Fang and Other Stories*, ed. E.Labor & R.C Lietz (Oxford: OUP, 1998) 5  
<sup>71</sup> Gerd Hurm, 'Of Wolves and Lambs: Jack London's and Nietzsche's Discourses of Nature', *Nietzsche in American Literature and Thought*, ed. Putz, M. (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995) 125  
<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, 125

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- <sup>73</sup> London, *The Call of the Wild*, 21  
<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 34  
<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, 32  
<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, 34  
<sup>77</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 3  
<sup>78</sup> London, *The Call of the Wild*, 34  
<sup>79</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 15  
<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 15  
<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, 15  
<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, 3  
<sup>83</sup> London, *The Call of the Wild*, 63  
<sup>84</sup> Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, 'Jack London: A Professional', *Critical Essays on Jack London*, ed. Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin (Boston: G.K Hall, 1983) 10  
<sup>85</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 10  
<sup>86</sup> London, *The Call of the Wild*, 88  
<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 88  
<sup>88</sup> Hurm, 'Of Wolves and Lambs: Jack London's and Nietzsche's Discourses of Nature', 125&126  
<sup>89</sup> Earle Labor, 'Jack London's *Mondo Cane*: "Batard", *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, *Critical Essays on Jack London*, ed. Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin (Boston: G.K Hall, 1983) 115  
<sup>90</sup> Jack London, *White Fang, The Call of the Wild, White Fang and Other Stories*, ed. Labor, E. & Lietz, R C. (Oxford: OUP, 1998) 200  
<sup>91</sup> London, *The Call of the Wild*, 23  
<sup>92</sup> London, *White Fang*, 245  
<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, 93  
<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, 139  
<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, 157&142  
<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, 93  
<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, 117-118  
<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, 209  
<sup>99</sup> D.H Lawrence, 'The Red Wolf', *Selected Poetry*, (London: Penguin, 1986)  
<sup>100</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 185  
<sup>101</sup> D.H Lawrence, 'The Red Wolf'  
<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>107</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 175  
<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, 13  
<sup>109</sup> D.H Lawrence, 'Fish', *Selected Poetry*, (London: Penguin, 1986)  
<sup>110</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 5  
<sup>111</sup> D.H Lawrence, 'Fish'  
<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>116</sup> Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, 173  
<sup>117</sup> D.H Lawrence, 'Fish'  
<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*

## Chapter Two

### Reflections in a Lupine Eye (II)

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- <sup>1</sup> Jane Yolen, *Children of the Wolf* (London: Puffin, 1993) 37
  - <sup>2</sup> Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995) 226-227
  - <sup>3</sup> Jean Itard, 'The Wild Boy Aveyron', *Wolf Children/The Wild Boy of Aveyron* (London: NLB, 1972) 95
  - <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 98
  - <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 99
  - <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 99
  - <sup>7</sup> Lucien Malson, 'Wolf Children', *Wolf Children/The Wild Boy of Aveyron* (London: NLB, 1972) 9
  - <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 79
  - <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 24
  - <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 10
  - <sup>11</sup> Jean Itard, 'Report on the Progress of Victor of Aveyron', *Wolf Children/The Wild Boy of Aveyron* (London: NLB, 1972) 158
  - <sup>12</sup> Itard, 'The Wild Boy Aveyron', 76
  - <sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 105
  - <sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 97
  - <sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 100
  - <sup>16</sup> Itard, 'Report on the Progress of Victor of Aveyron', 150
  - <sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 150
  - <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, 150
  - <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, 150
  - <sup>20</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1991) 139
  - <sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 139
  - <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 39-40
  - <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 40
  - <sup>24</sup> Itard, 'The Wild Boy Aveyron', 99
  - <sup>25</sup> Itard, 'Report on the Progress of Victor of Aveyron', 151
  - <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 171
  - <sup>27</sup> Jane Yolen, *Children of the Wolf*, 43
  - <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 37
  - <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 5
  - <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, 64
  - <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 65
  - <sup>32</sup> Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 4
  - <sup>33</sup> Yolen, *Children of the Wolf*, 112
  - <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 112
  - <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 72
  - <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 91
  - <sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 111
  - <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 7
  - <sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 133
  - <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 133
  - <sup>41</sup> Jill Payton Walsh, *Knowledge of Angels*, (London: Black Swan, 1995) 39
  - <sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, 39
  - <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, 7
  - <sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, 84
  - <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 60
  - <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, 21
  - <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 191
  - <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 202
  - <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, 224
  - <sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 261
  - <sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 9
  - <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 170
  - <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 277
  - <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 277

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- <sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 283  
<sup>56</sup> Angela Carter, 'Afterword to Fireworks', *Burning Your Boats: Collected Short Stories*, (London: Vintage, 1996) 459  
<sup>57</sup> Angela Carter, 'Wolf Alice', *Burning Your Boats: Collected Short Stories*, (London: Vintage, 1996) 223  
<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 223  
<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 221  
<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, 221  
<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, 221  
<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, 222  
<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 224  
<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, 225 & 224  
<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, 224 & 223  
<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 224  
<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 222  
<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 225 & 224  
<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 224  
<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 221  
<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, 226  
<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, 226  
<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, 226  
<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 225  
<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, 226  
<sup>76</sup> Carter, 'Afterword to *Fireworks*'  
<sup>77</sup> Carter, 'Wolf Alice', 227  
<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, 227  
<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 227-228

### Chapter Three

#### A Wolf Sublime: Psychoanalysis and The Animal

- <sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'The History of an Infantile Neurosis', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 17*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1961) 29  
<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 106  
<sup>3</sup> Kate Soper, 'The Idea of Nature', *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, (London: Routledge, 2000) 123  
<sup>4</sup> Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, 138  
<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, (London; Hogarth Press, 1963) 50 & 79  
<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 50  
<sup>7</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul*, (London: Penguin, 1991) 99  
<sup>8</sup> Freud, 'The History of an Infantile Neurosis', 120  
<sup>9</sup> Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 23  
<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 53 & 54  
<sup>11</sup> Freud, 'The History of an Infantile Neurosis', 119 and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 118  
<sup>12</sup> Alan Bleakley, *The Animalizing Imagination: Totemism, Textuality and Ecocriticism*, (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 2000) 88  
<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 89  
<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 90  
<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 35  
<sup>16</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Economic Problems of Masochism', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 19*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1961) 167  
<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 167  
<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, 167  
<sup>19</sup> Freud, 'The History of an Infantile Neurosis', 120  
<sup>20</sup> Christopher Hitt, 'Towards an Ecological Sublime', *New Literary History* 30, no.3 (1999) 608



- <sup>21</sup> Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 54
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 54 & 63
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 38
- <sup>24</sup> Freud, 'The History of an Infantile Neurosis', 10
- <sup>25</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 23*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1964) 100
- <sup>26</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Resistances to Psychoanalysis', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 19*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1961) 221
- <sup>27</sup> Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 104
- <sup>28</sup> Modern ethology tends to be less dogmatic on the culture/nature divide in respect of human beings and wolves. Roberta Hall, for example, remarks that 'culture-dependence is a relative phenomenon that varies along a continuum. This perspective helps us to be more keenly appreciative of the cultural behaviour of other living species; among other advantages it helps us to bridge the gap from wolf culture to hominid culture.' Roberta Hall, 'Variability and Speciation in Canids and Hominids', *Wolf and Man: Evolution in Parallel*, (New York, London: Academic Press, 1978) 173
- <sup>29</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 13*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1955) 126-127
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, 129
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 141
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 143
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 140
- <sup>34</sup> *The Wolf Man*, 'The Memoirs of the Wolf Man', *The Wolf Man and Sigmund Freud*, (London: Karnac Books, 1989) 12
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 12
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 12

## Chapter Four

### "Who Are The Bandar-log?"

- <sup>1</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, "Introduction" in *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1987), 10
- <sup>2</sup> i.e. those stories from *The Jungle Books* which feature Mowgli. The other stories from *The Jungle Books* also reward analysis, but the character of Mowgli, as 'child of the jungle', lends my discussion of the human/animal border an especially fine focus.
- <sup>3</sup> Further references to Le Guin's story in the text are abbreviated as "Buffalo Gals..."
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 10
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 10&11
- <sup>6</sup> Karla Armbruster, "Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight: A Poststructuralist Approach to Ecofeminist Criticism", *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 3.1 (1996): 19
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 19
- <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 20
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 20
- <sup>10</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 54
- <sup>11</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) 25
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 50
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 22
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 103
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 24
- <sup>16</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "How Fear Came" in *The Jungle Books*, ed. Daniel Karlin (London: Penguin, 1989) 10
- <sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 173
- <sup>18</sup> Shamsul Islam, *Kipling's Law: A Study of His Philosophy of Life* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1975), 123, 124

- <sup>19</sup> John Murray, "The Law of the Jungle Books", *Children's Literature, Annual of the Modern Language Association Division on Children's Literature* 20 (1992): 3
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 4,5
- <sup>21</sup> Islam, *Kipling's Law*, 5
- <sup>22</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "Mowgli's Brothers" in *The Jungle Books*, ed. Daniel Karlin (London: Penguin 1989) 35
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 35
- <sup>24</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "Kaa's Hunting" in *The Jungle Books*, ed. Daniel Karlin (London: Penguin 1989) 58
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, 59
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 59
- <sup>27</sup> Julia Kristeva, "From One Identity to an Other" in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alise Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980) 137, 133
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 134, 136
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 138
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p140
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p140
- <sup>32</sup> Kipling, "Kaa's Hunting", 59
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 60
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 58
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 61
- <sup>36</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 43
- <sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 62
- <sup>38</sup> Kipling, "Mowgli's Brothers", 36
- <sup>39</sup> Islam, *Kipling's Law*, 132
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 132
- <sup>41</sup> Kipling, "Mowgli's Brothers", 38
- <sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, 36
- <sup>43</sup> Karin Lesnik-Oberstein, "Children's Literature and the Environment" in *Writing The Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, ed. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells (London: Zed Books, 1998) 212, 210
- <sup>44</sup> Kipling, "Kaa's Hunting", 57
- <sup>45</sup> Kipling, "Mowgli's Brothers", 46
- <sup>46</sup> Kipling, "The Spring Running" in *The Jungle Books*, ed. Daniel Karlin (London: Penguin 1989) 323
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 340
- <sup>48</sup> Daniel Karlin, introduction to *The Jungle Books*, by Rudyard Kipling (London: Penguin, 1989) 19
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, 9
- <sup>50</sup> Kipling, "Mowgli's Brothers", 46
- <sup>51</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 51
- <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 34 Kristeva is here describing the implications of Husserlian phenomenology. Kristeva's thesis is, effectively, a critique of Husserl.
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 43
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 48
- <sup>55</sup> Kipling, "How Fear Came", 187
- <sup>56</sup> Kipling, "Kaa's Hunting", 68
- <sup>57</sup> Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" in *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. Phillip Rice and Patricia Waugh (London: Edward Arnold, 1992) 235, 240
- <sup>58</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "Red Dog" in *The Jungle Books*, ed. Daniel Karlin (London: Penguin 1989) 330
- <sup>59</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 136
- <sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, 135
- <sup>61</sup> Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Men", 239
- <sup>62</sup> Kipling, "Kaa's Hunting", 70
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 69
- <sup>64</sup> Kristeva, "From One Identity to an Other", 138
- <sup>65</sup> Le Guin, "Buffalo Gals...", 32
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 117, 118

- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 20
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 23
- <sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 23-24, 30
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 31
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, 34
- <sup>72</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction" in *Dancing at the Edge of the World* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1989) 169
- <sup>73</sup> Le Guin, "Buffalo Gals...", 27
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 32
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, 32
- <sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, 43
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, 28
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, 40
- <sup>79</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 182
- <sup>80</sup> Le Guin, "Buffalo Gals...", 42
- <sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, 50
- <sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, 51
- <sup>83</sup> The trickster figure in Native American culture has been widely discussed by a variety of critics. See, for example, Katrina Peiffer *Coyote At Large* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000), John Sandlos "The Coyote Came Back: The Return of an Ancient Song Dog in the Post-Colonial Literature and Landscape of North America" (*ISLE—Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment*) Summer 1999 (vol 6.2), pp. 99-120, Dell H. Hymes, "Coyote, the Thinking (Wo)man's Trickster" in *Monsters, Tricksters and Sacred Cows: Animal Tales and American Identities*, ed. A. James Arnold (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996). Hymes makes an interesting point when he argues that, as far as the Native American trickster figure is concerned, it is "a mistake to characterize all tricksters, or even the trickster of a particular society, in the same way" (110). That Coyote can thus be seen as eluding its own stereotype serves to emphasize its very 'trickiness' as a narrative figure.
- <sup>84</sup> Kristeva, "From One Identity to an Other", 133
- <sup>85</sup> Le Guin, "Buffalo Gals...", 34, 33, 48
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, 35
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 50
- <sup>88</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 17
- <sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, 17
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, 62
- <sup>91</sup> Le Guin, "Buffalo Gals...", 48
- <sup>92</sup> Kristeva herself maintains an implicit human/animal distinction, arguing that on the "other side" of human sociality 'is the a-symbolic, the dissolution of order, the erasing of differences, and finally the disappearance of the human in animality.' In this respect, my discussion aims to unfold Kristeva's thesis in ways that challenge this assumption. See Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 76

## Chapter Five

### The Wolf, The World and The Text

- <sup>1</sup> Aldo Leopold, 'The Land Ethic', *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, (New York: OUP, 1968) 224-225
- <sup>2</sup> Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, (Layton: Gibbs Smith, 1985) 60
- <sup>3</sup> Aldo Leopold, 'Thinking Like A Mountain', *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, (New York: OUP, 1968) 130
- <sup>4</sup> Leopold, 'The Land Ethic', 203-204
- <sup>5</sup> Leopold, 'Thinking Like A Mountain', 129
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 130
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 130
- <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 129

- <sup>9</sup> Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995) 2
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 430
- <sup>11</sup> Keith Sagar, *The Art of Ted Hughes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 4
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 4
- <sup>13</sup> Leonard M. Scigaj, 'Ted Hughes and Ecology: A Biocentric Vision', *The Challenge of Ted Hughes*. ed. Keith Sagar, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994) 160
- <sup>14</sup> Ted Hughes, 'The Black Rhino', *Wolfwatching*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1989)
- <sup>15</sup> Ted Hughes, *Wolfwatching*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) 55
- <sup>16</sup> Ted Hughes, 'Wolfwatching', *Wolfwatching*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1989)
- <sup>17</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> Ted Hughes, 'The Howling of Wolves', *Wodwo*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1971)
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> Hughes, 'Wolfwatching'
- <sup>26</sup> Hitt, 'Towards An Ecological Sublime', 619
- <sup>27</sup> Hughes, 'Wolfwatching'
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Bishop, 'The Bight', *Selected Poems*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1991)
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Terry Gifford, 'Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral, Post-Pastoral', *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, (London: Routledge, 2000) 222
- <sup>38</sup> Terry Gifford, 'Gods of Mud', *The Challenge of Ted Hughes*. ed. Keith Sagar, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994) 130
- <sup>39</sup> Gifford, 'Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral, Post-Pastoral', 221
- <sup>40</sup> Hughes, 'Wolfwatching'
- <sup>41</sup> Laurence Coupe, 'General Introduction', *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. Laurence Coupe, (London: Routledge, 2000) 3
- <sup>42</sup> Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 2
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, 5
- <sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, 86
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 92
- <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, 104
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 103
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 98-99
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, 55
- <sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 113-114
- <sup>51</sup> Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, 110
- <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 110
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 110
- <sup>54</sup> John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra*, in *The Wilderness Journeys*, (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996) 8
- <sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 8
- <sup>56</sup> Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, 4
- <sup>57</sup> Muir, *My First Summer*, 7
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 7

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- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 153
- <sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, 84
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, 120
- <sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, 137
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 59
- <sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, 83
- <sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, 11
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 144
- <sup>67</sup> Charles Baudelaire, 'Correspondences', cited in Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid.*,
- <sup>69</sup> Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 179
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 179
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, 175
- <sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, 183
- <sup>73</sup> Muir, *My First Summer*, 31
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 31
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, 119
- <sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, 33
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, 131
- <sup>78</sup> William Wordsworth, 'Gipsies' (lines 12-28), *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson & Ernest De Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)
- <sup>79</sup> Pogue Harrison, *Forests*, 217
- <sup>80</sup> Vera L. Norwood, 'Heroines of Nature: Four Women Respond to the American Landscape', *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryl Glotfelty & Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 333, quoting Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974) 108
- <sup>81</sup> Alison Byrely, 'The Uses of Landscape: The Picturesque Aesthetic and the National Park System', *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryl Glotfelty & Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 54
- <sup>82</sup> Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, 170
- <sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, 141
- <sup>84</sup> Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, (New York: Norton, 1999) 21
- <sup>85</sup> Hank Fischer, *Wolf Wars*, (Helena: Flacon Publishing, 1997) 167
- <sup>86</sup> Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, 249
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 203
- <sup>88</sup> Leonard M. Scigaj, *Sustainable Poetry: Four American Ecopoets*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999) 62-63
- <sup>89</sup> Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 384
- <sup>90</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Différance', *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 394
- <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, 397
- <sup>92</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Limited Inc a b c', *Limited Inc a b c*, ed G. Graff, tr. S. Weber, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 136
- <sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, 136
- <sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, 148
- <sup>95</sup> David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language In a More-Than-Human-World*, (New York: Vintage, 1996) xi
- <sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, 47
- <sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, 75
- <sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, 101
- <sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, 74
- <sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, 74

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- <sup>101</sup> David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* 54, quoting Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) 317
- <sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, 131
- <sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, 287
- <sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 287
- <sup>105</sup> Christopher Manes, 'Nature and Silence', *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryl Glotfelty & Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 19
- <sup>106</sup> Derrida, 'Limited Inc a b c', 137
- <sup>107</sup> Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 372
- <sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, 373 & 384
- <sup>109</sup> Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, (London; Roudlege, 2000) 2
- <sup>110</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh, tr. S. Heath, (London: Edward Arnold, 1992) 116
- <sup>111</sup> Rick Bass, *The Ninemile Wolves*, (Livingstone: Clark City Press, 1992) 8
- <sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, 127
- <sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, 4
- <sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 4
- <sup>115</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*, 72
- <sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, 74
- <sup>117</sup> Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', 118
- <sup>118</sup> Bass, *The Ninemile Wolves*, 13-14
- <sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, 90 & 127
- <sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, 132
- <sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, 83
- <sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, 13
- <sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, 8
- <sup>124</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*, 36
- <sup>125</sup> Bass, *The Ninemile Wolves*, 158
- <sup>126</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*, 11
- <sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, 5
- <sup>128</sup> SueEllen Campbell, 'The Land and Language of Desire: Where Deep Ecology and Post-Structuralism Meet', *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Harold Fromm & Cheryl Glotfelty (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 134
- <sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, 134 & 136
- <sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, 132-133

## Chapter Six

### Writing With The Wolf

- <sup>1</sup> Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run With The Wolves: Contacting the Power of the Wild Woman* (London: Rider Books, 1998), 16,17 & 13
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 17
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 1
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 4
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 20
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 24
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 24
- <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 24
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 26
- <sup>10</sup> Kate Soper "Naturalized Woman and Feminized Nature." In *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. Laurence Coupe (London: Routledge, 2000) 139
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 140
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 140
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 140

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- <sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 140  
<sup>15</sup> Estés, *Women Who Run*, 1  
<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 1  
<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 5  
<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, 8  
<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, (London: Picador, 2000) 150  
<sup>20</sup> Marian Scholtmeijer, "The Power of Otherness: Animals in Women's Fiction." *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*. ed. Carol J. Adams, and Josephine Donovan (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 1995) 235  
<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 233&234  
<sup>22</sup> Estés, *Women Who Run*, 4  
<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 4  
<sup>24</sup> Soper, "Naturalized Woman", 142  
<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, 143  
<sup>26</sup> Estés, *Women Who Run*, 5  
<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 5  
<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 2  
<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 117  
<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, 6  
<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 459  
<sup>32</sup> David Punter, *Postcolonial Imaginings*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) 150  
<sup>33</sup> Estés, *Women Who Run* ' 24  
<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 28  
<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 10  
<sup>36</sup> Patricia Waugh, "Stalemates? Feminists, Postmodernists and Unfinished Issues in Modern Aesthetics." *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*. ed. Phillip Rice, and Patricia Waugh (London: Edward Arnold, 1992) 343  
<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 344  
<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 343  
<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 348-49  
<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 357  
<sup>41</sup> Estés, *Women Who Run*, 2  
<sup>42</sup> Martino, Theresa tsimmu. *The Wolf, The Woman, The Wilderness: A True Story of Returning Home*. (Troutdale, OR.: NewSage Press, 1997) 60  
<sup>43</sup> Estés, *Women Who Run*, 1  
<sup>44</sup> Martino, *The Wolf*, 46  
<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 46  
<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, 45  
<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 427, 73&85  
<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 48  
<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, 14  
<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 48&86  
<sup>51</sup> Punter, *Postcolonial Imaginings* 148  
<sup>52</sup> Martino, *The Wolf*, 57  
<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 41  
<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 41  
<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 82  
<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, 85  
<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, 85  
<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 85  
<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 130  
<sup>60</sup> Fergus M. Bordewich, *Killing the White Man's Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century*. (New York: Anchor Books, 1997) 211  
<sup>61</sup> Paula Gunn Allen, "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective" in *The Ecocriticism Reader* ed. Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 242

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- <sup>62</sup> Lopez *Of Wolves and Men*, 249
- <sup>63</sup> Hank Fischer, *Wolf Wars*, (Helena, Montana: Falcon Press, 1995)
- <sup>64</sup> Peter Bowen, *Wolf, No Wolf*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997) 21
- <sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, 37&156
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 20
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 23
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 36
- <sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 19
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 23
- <sup>71</sup> Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 242
- <sup>72</sup> Bowen, *Wolf, No Wolf* 24 & 84
- <sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, 40
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 178
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, 37
- <sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, 90
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, 174
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, 48
- <sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 22&156
- <sup>80</sup> Rom Harré, Jens Brockmeir, and Peter Mühlhäuser. *Greenspeak: A Study of Environmental Discourse*. (London: Sage Publications, 1999) 41
- <sup>81</sup> Bowen, *Wolf, No Wolf* 213
- <sup>82</sup> Lee Schweninger notes that Owens changes 'the Snohomish River and Snohomish tribe...to Stehemish (his fictional name for a Salish tribe). Lee Schweninger, "Landscape and Cultural Identity in Louis Owens' *Wolfsong*". *Studies in American Indian Literature: The Journal for the Study of American Indian Literature* 10 (1998), 97
- <sup>83</sup> Louis Owens. *Wolfsong*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995) 6
- <sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, 4
- <sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, 7&30
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, 20
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 20&33
- <sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, 126
- <sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, 49
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, 53
- <sup>91</sup> Louis Owens, *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994) 4
- <sup>92</sup> Edward Said, 'Orientalism', *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 873-874
- <sup>93</sup> Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Essex Sociology of Literature Conference Vol. 1: Europe and Its Others*, ed. Francis Barker (Essex: University of Essex, 1984) 17
- <sup>94</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Vintage, 1994) 275
- <sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, 276
- <sup>96</sup> Owens, *Wolfsong*, 22
- <sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, 22
- <sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, 22
- <sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, 22
- <sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, 5
- <sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, 5
- <sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, 5-6
- <sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, 19
- <sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 26&140
- <sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, 112
- <sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, 152
- <sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, 150
- <sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, 150



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- <sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, 77  
<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, 78  
<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, 77  
<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, 77  
<sup>113</sup> David Mazel, 'American Literary Environmentalism as Domestic Orientalism', *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryl Glotfelty & Harold Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 143  
<sup>114</sup> Owens, *Wolfsong*, 80-81  
<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, 81  
<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, 34&86  
<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, 31  
<sup>118</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 275  
<sup>119</sup> Owens, *Wolfsong*, 34  
<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, 35  
<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, 57  
<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, 86  
<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, 42  
<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, 42  
<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, 90&211  
<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, 82  
<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, 82  
<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, 160  
<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, 160  
<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, 205  
<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, 206  
<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, 207-08  
<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, 248  
<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, 249  
<sup>135</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*, (London: Routledge, 1989) 180  
<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, 195-196

## Chapter Seven

### 'Homeless, Hunted, Weary': Witnessing The Wolf in Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing*

- <sup>1</sup> Cormac McCarthy, *The Crossing* (London: Picador, 1994) 24&25  
<sup>2</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, Vol. 19, (London: Hogarth Press, 1955) 220-226  
<sup>3</sup> McCarthy, *The Crossing*, 25  
<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 3  
<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 17  
<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 46  
<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 46  
<sup>8</sup> Derek Attridge, 'Derrida and the Questioning of Literature', *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992) 2  
<sup>9</sup> McCarthy, *The Crossing*, 4 & 31  
<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 74  
<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 51-52  
<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 46  
<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 129  
<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 296  
<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 331  
<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 170

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- <sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 105
- <sup>18</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Afterword: Toward An Ethic of Discussion', *Limited Inc*, ed. G. Graff, tr. S. Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 134
- <sup>19</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Limited Inc a b c...', *Limited Inc*, ed. G. Graff, tr. S. Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 90
- <sup>20</sup> McCarthy, *The Crossing*, 339
- <sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 382
- <sup>22</sup> David Punter, *Postcolonial Imaginings*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) 149
- <sup>23</sup> McCarthy, *The Crossing*, 4
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, 331
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, 154
- <sup>26</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Shibboleth', *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge, tr. Joshua Wilner (London: Routledge, 1992) 392
- <sup>27</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, tr. Thomas Dutoit (Stamford: Stamford University Press, 1993) 8
- <sup>28</sup> McCarthy, *The Crossing*, 143
- <sup>29</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Death of The Author', *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh, tr. S. Heath (London: Edward Arnold, 1992) 116
- <sup>30</sup> McCarthy, *The Crossing*, 22
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 80-81
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 308-318
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 423
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 424
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 401
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 411
- <sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 410
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 127

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Note: This bibliography has been divided between works cited in the thesis and other texts, which although not explicitly referred to, have been invaluable in helping to shape the finished article. I have not executed a further subdivision between primary and secondary texts since, in terms of the nature of my thesis, such a distinction can seem, at best, arbitrary.

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