

2015-04-30

Under Serious Threat: Representations of Predatory Mammals in the Literary Nonfiction of Sid Marty, Charlie Russell and John Vaillant

Emery, Tempest

Emery, T. (2015). Under Serious Threat: Representations of Predatory Mammals in the Literary Nonfiction of Sid Marty, Charlie Russell and John Vaillant (Master's thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada). Retrieved from <https://prism.ucalgary.ca>. doi:10.11575/PRISM/28555
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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Under Serious Threat: Representations of Predatory Mammals in the Literary Nonfiction of Sid

Marty, Charlie Russell and John Vaillant

by

Tempest Emery

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

CALGARY, ALBERTA

APRIL, 2015

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Abstract

Drawing on the fields of ecocriticism and animal studies, this research engages with three examples of creative nonfiction to examine literary representations of other-than-human beings that are categorized as predators. This thesis examines the treatment of grizzly bears and black bears in Sid Marty's *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*, grizzly bears in Charlie Russell's *Grizzly Heart: Living Without Fear Among the Brown Bears of Kamchatka*, and tigers in John Vaillant's *The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival*. This project investigates the extent to which the concept of the predator is an anthropocentric reflection of human fears and analyzes new forms of ethics and politics regarding the human-bear relationship. It also demonstrates that human and other-than-human beings are more profoundly connected than conventional Western paradigms acknowledge. Reconsidering human perceptions of so-called predators creates opportunities to alter and improve our interactions with them.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Pamela Banting. It has been my privilege to have worked with such a skilled and supportive person as you. Your insight and guidance have helped me to grow as an academic and to complete a piece of work that I not only feel proud of but have enjoyed immensely. Thank you for providing me with the tools I needed to be successful with this project and for helping me build more confidence in my scholarly work.

Thank you also to Dr. Harry Vandervlist and Dr. Shelley Alexander for serving on the examining committee for my oral defence. You each brought interesting and compelling questions to my work and it was a joy to share in a discussion with you both.

To the English Department, including the faculty members and students I've had the pleasure of working with, as well as the administrators who keep us all organized, you each contribute to a supportive and encouraging academic environment of which it has been my good fortune to be a part. Thank you for making the often isolating task of writing a thesis feel much more communal and connected.

To Dr. Richard Leigh and the rest of the team at the Respiratory Clinical Trials Centre, thank you for accommodating my schedule and allowing me to continue in my role with our group while completing my program. I am a fortunate person to have colleagues who value and support education and who would enable me to pursue my own.

I am incredibly lucky to have a number of good friends who have offered encouragement and distraction as necessary throughout my program. Thank you to Nyle Feist for making me feel like a "scholarly superstar," even from as far away as Squamish, British Columbia. To Kat Carson, whether it was just to share some giggles or to help lift my spirits, thank you for always

being ready with a listening ear, a cup of tea and some form of baked goods. To Gavin Steedman and Nora Spencer, thank you both for your understanding when my studies had to take the place of spending time together and for being such wonderful company when we were able to see one another.

To my family: Thank you to my Mom and Dad for being my biggest cheerleaders. Your confidence in me is infectious and has helped to push me along in my academic efforts. Thank you to my sister, Natasha, for helping me to keep a level head and for celebrating my milestones with such enthusiasm and generosity. Kirk and Grace Keller, thank you for believing in me, even when I doubted myself, and for always reminding me of my capabilities. To Diane Devonshire, I have so appreciated your constant support and reassurance, thank you for always being available for a phone call or a lunch date to hear about how my work was progressing. Lastly, given the general theme of my thesis, I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge my feline family member, Artemis, who provided warm and pleasant company through long hours of writing.

Finally, thank you to my partner, Kari Oman. I have the deepest sense of gratitude for you. Whether it was by offering words of encouragement, taking on extra chores at home, or making sure I ate enough, you've been a loving and supportive presence throughout my program, especially while I completed this project. For those things and more, I sincerely thank you.

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Epigraph

For we're all threads in the same cloth of creation, and we dwell in this Earth household together.

Cristina Eisenberg, *The Carnivore Way: Coexisting with and Conserving North America's Predators*

INTRODUCTION

Attitudes and points of view are often reflected in the language used by an individual or a group, making the investigation of language and vocabulary an excellent method for learning what paradigms hold sway for a given person or society. French philosopher Jacques Derrida takes on the concept of "The Animal" in his essay, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," and discusses the complicated use of that term within Western culture. Derrida asserts that whenever a person "says 'The Animal' in the singular and without further ado, claiming thus to designate every living thing that is held not to be human . . . he utters an *asinanity*" (31). He is pointing out the irrationality of expecting a single word to encapsulate and signify the vast variety and diversity to be found among other-than-human beings. Illustrating this point nicely, Derrida offers the example of his cat, saying that it does not interact with him "as the exemplar of a species called 'cat,' even less so of an 'animal' or genus or kingdom" (9). He recognizes the absurdity in thinking that the creature pacing in his hallway stands in as "Animal," a representation not only of its species, but of all species that are not human. He assesses the use of the term by saying it "is a word that men have given themselves the right to give" (32) and that "They have given themselves the word in order to corral a large number of living beings within a single concept" (32). The use of the word, "Animal," then, is an expression of human power and dominance which enforces a division between the human species and all others.¹

In *The Practice of the Wild*, American poet, essayist, and environmental activist Gary Snyder argues for opening a dialogue that includes all beings and that "moves toward a rhetoric of ecological relationship" ("Tawny" 74). The development of such rhetoric, he says, will allow the human species to be "uniquely 'human' with no sense of special privilege" ("Tawny" 74). Snyder's suggestions are twofold. He states the need for an alternative discourse with regard to

the natural world and points to a modified understanding of the human species' ecological position as a result of that discursive change. What Snyder proposes is a linguistic and attitudinal shift that considers human and other-than-human nature as equal, interconnected and interdependent. Locating examples in which this adjustment in perspective is undertaken serves as a channel for entering into this dialogue. Such examples exist in Sid Marty's *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*, a text that examines a series of bear attacks that took place in 1980 in the Whiskey Creek area just outside of the Banff town site in Banff National Park; Charlie Russell's and Maureen Enns's² *Grizzly Heart: Living Without Fear Among the Brown Bears of Kamchatka*, which deals with their project in Russia, where they attempt to live peacefully with the numerous grizzly bears of the Kamchatka region; and John Vaillant's *The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival*, which explores the events leading up to and following an anomalous tiger attack in the Sobolonye area of Russia's Far East. Although these authors' topics range across time periods, species and geographical areas, each of their texts offers representations of wild creatures currently under serious threat of extirpation. Instead of treating the predators of their texts as generic representatives of the natural world, Marty, Russell and Vaillant look closely at the individual experiences of each of their other-than-human "characters" and analyze the specific circumstances surrounding the events in which they are involved. Serving as contributions to the development of a rhetoric of ecological relationship, each text interrogates sites of tension between people and other-than-human creatures and insists upon the interconnection and interdependence of all earthly beings, human or otherwise.

Ecocriticism is a theoretical lens that concerns itself with the literary portrayal of human interactions with the natural environment. In her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Cheryll Glotfelty describes this field as one that "takes an earth-

centered approach to literary studies" (xviii) and recognizes that "human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it, and affected by it" (xix). According to her, ecocriticism acknowledges a relationship between humans and the rest of nature by recognizing that humans not only act on and influence the natural world, but that nature acts on and influences the human species as well (xix). In his book *Ecocriticism* Greg Garrard says, "the widest definition of the subject of ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the nonhuman, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself" (5). Of note here is the important ability of ecocritical analysis to question the human position. Italian ecocritic Serenella Iovino also helps to explain what this mode of analysis can tell us about our own species and cultures in her article "Ecocriticism and a Non-Anthropocentric Humanism: Reflections on Local Natures and Global Responsibilities." She states that, because it is "An ethically oriented analysis of literary works, ecocriticism reveals the mutual mirroring of nature and its representations, maintaining that interpretation, as a sort of cultural archeology of the present time, can decipher the 'world' in which this mirroring occurs" (41). Put another way, because ecocritical analysis interrogates the literary portrayal of nature, it is able to expose something of the values, priorities and other human constructs that will be inherently coded in those representations. Taking as its primary subject "the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature" (Glotfelty xix), the methodological approach of ecocriticism is an apt tool with which to examine the language and the narrative styles used in relation to the other-than-human mammals whose stories emerge in Marty's, Russell's and Vaillant's texts.

The realm of animal studies is also rich with analytic devices that can be used to unpack the intricacies and nuance involved in the portrayal of these texts' so-called predators and their

interactions with humans. By way of introduction to his book *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, Matthew Calarco explains that, although the area of animal studies cannot be neatly defined or delineated, "it is clear that most authors and activists in the field share the conviction that the 'question of the animal' should be seen as one of the central issues in contemporary critical discourse" (1). For those working in the field of animal studies, Calarco says, "the effort to place questions concerning animals at the centre of critical inquiry" is of utmost importance (2). Calarco expresses the need for an interdisciplinary approach to such questions. Though he appreciates the value of the sciences and philosophy, he says these are somewhat limited "by their anthropocentric origins" (6), adding that "they are unable to accomplish on their own the revolution in language and thought that is needed to come to grips with the ideas surrounding animal life" (6). Calarco calls for "new languages, new artworks, new histories, even new sciences and philosophies" as the means through which questions of the animal must be approached (6). It is here that ecocriticism and animal studies intersect. As a mode of critical thought that considers a broad ecological milieu, ecocritical analysis is open to questions that centre on the other-than-human. It can engage with various forms of language and literature in order to critique the regard for and treatment of other-than-human beings within human culture, while also leaving space to examine the priorities, assumptions, attitudes, and other constructs of that culture. In his article, "Human, All Too Human: 'Animal Studies' and the Humanities," Cary Wolfe provides an overview of the field of animal studies. He posits that, for animal studies to be truly effective, it must unsettle the human position from which this field is undertaken (569). It is not enough, Wolfe says, to re-examine and re-evaluate overlapping structures of speciesist, sexist and racist discourses in literature with a new focus on how other species are treated, because that process alone would leave "unquestioned the humanist schema

of the knowing subject who undertakes such a reading” (569). He argues that this type of analysis only “sustains the very humanism and anthropocentrism that animal studies sets out to question” (569). What Wolfe emphasizes is the importance of "locating the animal of animal studies and its challenge to humanist modes of reading, interpretation, and critical thought not just 'out there,' among the birds and the beasts, but 'in here' as well, at the heart of this thing we call human" (572). In a similar vein as Snyder, Calarco and Wolfe signal the need to engage in a dialogue about and in conjunction with other-than-human beings, which carefully navigates the privileged human perspective and remains open to novel and innovative modes of inquiry.

In an effort to disrupt the dominant and often environmentally damaging position occupied by humans, several theorists challenge human privilege by suggesting that we step away from the assumptions that say humans are superior to and somehow separate from the natural environment, offering the concept of wholeness as an alternative. Snyder suggests that "To resolve the dichotomy of the civilized and the wild, we must first resolve to be whole" (24). He says, "We need a civilization that can live fully and creatively together with wildness" (6). Inherent in Snyder's suggestion is a radical shift in human perspective. Wholeness as he presents it requires the human species to adjust our perceptions on two levels; the first is to resolve to be whole as human beings by acknowledging all parts of the self, including those elements which are rooted in nature and are closely linked to the nonhuman sphere; the second is to function as one part of a wider ecological community instead of as the master of a realm from which we are separate.

As part of her consideration of the history of wildlife management and conservation in Canada, in her text, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*, Tina Loo discusses the work of Aldo Leopold, an American known as the "'father' of modern

game management" (155). Loo explains that, published in 1933, Leopold's *Game Management* "would become the foundational text for the new discipline" (155). Writing during a time when predators (coyotes, wolves, cougars) were referred to as vermin and were perceived as being in direct competition with the human hunters who relied upon the same prey animals (152-53), Loo notes that Leopold's work recognized "the poverty of a conservation system 'based wholly on economic motives'" (156). According to her, Leopold was able to acknowledge that, because "people were not outside nature, but part of an ecological community . . . they had to govern their actions accordingly, in a less anthropocentric way, and one that valued the integrity of the whole community over the welfare of any one part" (156). She says that his work called for "a way of living that recognized 'that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts'" (156-57). Loo observes that Leopold saw the error in placing too much importance on a single variable (i.e. economic objectives) and that he advocated for an adjustment in the way that humans relate to nature. His assertions have echoed through to a more contemporary setting, particularly with regard to Canadian ecologist, Stan Rowe, who elaborates on how exactly humans fit within an ecological whole in his 2006 text, *Earth Alive: Essays on Ecology*. Rowe takes the position that "All organic things are systems of smaller parts, as well as ecologically related parts of larger surrounding systems" (3). The human body is an example of a whole that is made up of parts but which is also part of a larger whole – cells combine to create tissue, tissues link together to create organs, organs interconnect to create a body, and that body houses what is known as the person (3). That complete person is then part of a greater ecological fabric or whole (3). Rowe also argues that all living organisms are autonomous and free to do what they wish with a single limitation that renders each organism responsible for maintaining "the integrity of the whole of which it is a part" (3). Keeping with the example of a person's body, he

says "When cells disobey their biological responsibility within the body, the result is cancer. When people disobey their ecological responsibilities, the result is over-population and degradation of the earth" (3). Rowe's assessment emphasizes the way in which the health and well-being of a particular organism, including the human species, is directly related to an understanding of relationship and interdependence. This mode of thinking refuses to allow humans an exemption from nature and firmly positions us in the midst of the broader environment, as a part of it, but not the only or most important one.

Beginning to view the world as a series of interconnected parts and wholes for which individuals are responsible is not an altruistic endeavour. It is not as if, by allowing space for other-than-human life forms to thrive, the human species is engaging in charity. In fact, the opposite is true; functioning as part of a whole is an act of self-preservation. By maintaining the integrity of the whole, as Rowe suggests we do, we would also be maintaining the environment and the conditions which are necessary for our species to not only survive, but to flourish. David Abram makes a similar observation in *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. He tunes into "the wider, more-than-human community of beings that surrounds and sustains the human hubbub" (9) and says that "Awakening to citizenship in this broader commonwealth . . . has real ramifications for how we humans get along with one another. It carries substantial consequences for the way a genuine democracy shapes itself—for the way that our body politic *breathes*" (9). According to Abram, in becoming aware of the human niche within a wider, grander ecological community, as opposed to functioning as a domineering force outside of it, human societies stand to experience change on fundamental levels. Adjusting the human perspective with regard to how and where our species fits within the broader environmental realm has implications for humans and other creatures alike.

Developing a rhetoric of ecological relationship and, in turn, encouraging the change in the human point of view that accompanies it, requires new forms of thought that will creatively and imaginatively express a sense of interconnection and wholeness among human and other-than-human beings. Such an undertaking requires language "that enacts our interbeing with the earth rather than blinding us to it" (Abram *Becoming* 3). Marty, Russell and Vaillant each contribute to this venture through their works of creative nonfiction. These authors focus on so-called top predators in their natural ecosystems. They consider real-life events involving specific other-than-human individuals and investigate some of the fault lines along which the human relationship with the natural world and its other inhabitants becomes fractured. Former park warden Sid Marty and journalist John Vaillant write about aggressive creatures that have attacked humans from the communities located in and surrounding their respective habitats. In contrast, Russell writes about his project with Maureen Enns in which they attempt to live in harmony with the resident bears of Kamchatka, Russia, where their project evolves to also include raising orphaned grizzly cubs to be wild and to live independently in that region. As works of creative nonfiction, these texts demonstrate the power of a creative approach to questions around other-than-human beings as they unsettle the human position, highlight the push and pull of humanity's relationship with the natural world and reveal the influence that one realm has over the other.

Where their work disrupts aspects of the human position, Marty, Russell and Vaillant also call into question the notion of the predator, a figure that proves to be complex and sometimes controversial. Examining the subtle differences between the use of the word "predator" in relation to human versus other-than-human beings, and parsing the history of the term closely, reveals much about the human perspective on organisms deemed to be predatory

and helps to illuminate the ways in which these creatures have been conceptually constructed in human culture. Interestingly, though the term “predator” in our contemporary context is most typically applied to other-than-human beings (to carnivores in particular though omnivorous creatures, such as the grizzly bear, are also characterized this way), the definitions offered for it in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, along with the etymological details included there, illustrate that this concept has its roots in a human-centered, or anthropocentric, perspective. The first entry for this term in the *OED* relates to the human species, indicating that a predator is “a person who plunders or pillages; a ruthlessly exploitative or rapacious individual; a depredator” (“Predator”), thereby relating the term to offenses involving property and associating the human predator with thievery and greed. This concept takes on a different meaning when applied to other-than-human beings, as demonstrated by the second *OED* definition entry which states that a predator is also “an animal that preys on other animals; an animal that kills and eats prey; a carnivore” (“Predator”). Though these explanations are housed under the same term, there is a significant difference regarding what types of actions are regarded as predatory. When used in relation to a person, the predator is defined by stealing or looting, taking that which does not belong to him or her. When this concept is employed in reference to other beings, however, it is to demarcate actions taken in order to meet biological requirements for flesh and a process that necessitates the death of other organisms. What remains constant, regardless of the species in question, is that when an individual is classified as a predator, it is as a result of their actions having been interpreted or read through the human lens.

A review of the etymology of the word “predator” also illustrates that this concept is deeply rooted in human perceptions and social relations. The *OED* notes an isolated use of the term by British writer Barnaby Rich, who includes it in his 1581 work, *Don Simonides*, to

describe one of his human male characters ("Predator"). The *OED* also indicates that by 1745 the word predator comes to represent a "person who lives on booty or plunder" ("Predator"). It is not until 1908 that it is used in relation to other-than-human creatures, with the *OED* pointing to an article written by C.W. Woodworth titled, "The Theory of the Parasitic Control of Insect Pests," published in the journal *Science* in August of that year ("Predator"). In this article various insects and parasites are described as "predators" or "predaceous" (Woodworth 228). According to the *OED*, it is 1909 before this term comes to denote those creatures that prey on other animals ("Predator"). This brief etymological overview demonstrates that the word "predator" was brought into use with reference to people, as a means of characterizing greedy or voracious human behaviour that is linked to property or possessions, long before it was employed to categorize other species with a dietary need for meat. Such a transformation in the way that this term is used is indicative of how we, as humans, perceive other-than-human carnivorous feeding practices. We might employ the notion of the predator simply as a means of identifying and classifying creatures that consume the flesh of other organisms, but the concept itself is imbued with a sense of avarice and excess which is, in turn, attributed to those beings we wish to characterize. Put another way, if the word "predator" has been used for a long period of time to describe or signify people who pillage or plunder with voracity and greed, when it becomes synonymous for "carnivore" it suggests that the same qualities are implicated in the human perception of meat-eating species.

Contemporary understandings of other-than-human predators have remained largely the same over the course of the last century. Loo describes predators as "animals that kill other animals for food" (152). Similarly, in his book, *Predators: Wild Dogs and Cats*, Kevin Van Tighem begins a nuanced consideration of canine and feline predators with the same common

definition, stating that predators are those “animals that kill and eat other animals” (15). The implication of such conventional identification is that the predator becomes defined solely in relation to its carnivorous tendencies and by its ability to inflict harm upon other creatures. Just as “The Animal,” according to Derrida, becomes a problematic and almost nonsensical phrase when used generically to label all beings that are not human, the notion of the predator suffers the same stumbling block when it is employed as a generic classification for all beings which rely on the flesh of other organisms in order to survive. Using this type of blanket categorization obscures the differences among species of predators and among the individuals that comprise their populations. Wolves and cougars, for example, are both classified as predatory beings but these creatures have vastly different hunting strategies, where wolves hunt in packs while cougars are known for living rather solitary lives. Conventional definitions of the predator also tend to erase the fact that some so-called predatory organisms subsist on an omnivorous diet.³ This typically limited perspective forms the basis for what Van Tighem describes as a war against predators (14). He explains that, through use of such weapons as “strychnine, bullets, snares, traps, and cyanide gas” (14), millions of wolves, coyotes, foxes, cougars, lynx, and bobcats (not to mention bears) have been killed in North America in the last century (14). Where human predators are depicted as people who pillage and take what is not theirs, it is interesting to consider the extent to which the connotations of greed and thievery are implicated in our interpretation of other-than-human predators, particularly given that this mass amount of killing has been largely in response to the belief that such creatures pose a threat to people on at least two levels, those being that “They hunt the animals we hunt or raise for food, and occasionally, they even kill us” (Van Tighem 15). When considered from this angle, the notion of the other-than-human predator becomes a reflection of our own human anxieties and fears. Managing

predatory populations through hunting, Van Tighem says, allows us to reinforce our dominance and control over nature and is meant to eliminate our fear (15). This is a dynamic that perpetuates conflict and violence between the human species and any other species group we perceive to be dangerous or capable of seizing what we consider to be ours, be it wild game, livestock or our own lives. If this precarious relationship is ever to be transformed, a greater understanding of these “wild hunters” is crucial (Van Tighem 15) and will contribute to redeveloping a connection between humans and other members of the natural world in positive and mutually beneficial ways. By providing deeper and more complex representations of other-than-human beings that are classified as predators, Marty, Russell and Vaillant offer refreshing viewpoints because they refuse to perpetuate a division between humans and other species. Each author engages in and contributes to a rhetoric of ecological relationship by demonstrating that the predators they write about are, in fact, interconnected with their surrounding environment, including its human inhabitants.

With *The Black Grizzly*, Marty investigates a moment in Banff's recent past in which people and bears came into serious conflict with one another. His carefully researched representation of the events of 1980, as well as of the bears involved, both illuminates and challenges common understandings of the notion of the predator. At various points he writes directly from the perspectives of the two bears associated with the Whiskey Creek incidents. Weaving those imagined voices through a broader account of the events of that summer, he experiments with a rhetoric of ecological relationship to demonstrate the role that humans play in constructing a creature we deem to be predatory.

Russell's and Enns's *Grizzly Heart* functions as a challenge to the divisive, culturally rooted views which create an “us and them” dynamic between humans and grizzly bears that can

often result in conflict between our two species. Having had a long career as a naturalist, writer and photographer, it is clear to Russell that "the North American approach to wildlife management was often based on untested prejudice, particularly against grizzlies, but also against bears in general" (29). He observes that "In our long history of conflict with bears, grizzlies in particular, no one has much considered the possibility of working out a truce" (7). In an effort to establish some of the terms of such a truce, by way of their project in Kamchatka, Russell and Enns embody and enact a rhetoric of ecological relationship that moves beyond language and allows for respect-based co-existence, and even community, among human and other-than-human beings.

Vaillant engages with a set of circumstances in *The Tiger* in which issues of politics, economics, conservation, and survival culminate to produce a dangerous situation for humans and other species. He considers the influence of *perestroika*, the black markets within Asia that demand tiger remains for traditional medicines, and long-standing aboriginal perspectives on living in community with tigers, bringing these and other elements to bear on his examination of the events leading up to and surrounding the 1997 tiger attacks which claimed the lives of two Sobolonye residents. Vaillant's text emphasizes interconnection and interdependence across multiple levels and works to refute any presumed discontinuity between our species and other inhabitants of the natural world.

Calarco and Wolfe indicate the need to employ novel forms of art, philosophy and science in order to properly engage with questions of the animal. Snyder and Rowe offer the notion of wholeness as one with potential to re-establish humanity's footing in nature and in particular in our connection to other-than-human creatures. These innovative approaches to the natural world and other species contribute to a rhetoric of ecological relationship, a discursive

change that will assist in establishing the human species as being integrated within a broader ecological environment, instead of maintaining a dominant position based on the misconception that we are somehow separated from nature. Marty's, Russell's and Vaillant's works of creative nonfiction engage with the stories of specific inhabitants of the wider natural world to consider other-than-human perspectives and portray the significance of interconnection and interdependence among humans and our surrounding ecologies.

RECASTING THE PREDATOR IN *THE BLACK GRIZZLY OF WHISKEY CREEK*

In her article, “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” Erica Fudge positions the history of animals as being a development in both the field of history “as well as in the wider world of human relationships with nature” (5). She acknowledges that, because other-than-human creatures do not, as far as we can determine, have a sense of periodization or temporal organization, nor do they produce documents, the history of animals is, in essence, the “history of human attitudes towards animals” (6). Fudge also argues, however, “that the history of animals is a necessary part of our reconceptualization of ourselves as human” (5), saying that this new form of historical consideration “cannot just tell us what has been, what humans thought in the past; it must intervene, make us think again about our past and, most importantly, about ourselves” (15). Fudge’s assertion serves as one possible response to Cary Wolfe’s call to unsettle the human position so as to rethink that of the animal (569). It also functions as one available avenue for developing the new histories that Matthew Calarco says are integral to bringing questions of the animal to the forefront (6). Fudge insists that with the history of animals we must “write a history which refuses the absolute separation of species; refuses that which is the silent assumption of humanist history” (16). In reconsidering our past, she says, “reading it for the animals as well as the humans—we can begin a process that will only come to fruition when the meaning of ‘human’ is no longer in opposition to ‘animal’” (16). Once this conceptual shift has been achieved, Fudge suggests that “‘human’ can be recognized as meaning something quite new: a being which only differentiates itself by being able to write and interpret its own history” (16). Her comment echoes Gary Snyder who looks forward to the day when we can be “uniquely human with no sense of special privilege” (74). At the core of each of these theorists’ insights is a desire to develop new forms of engagement with the natural world that do

not perpetuate its subjugation to a domineering human species. The history of animals, with its mandate to inquire about human attitudes and how they came to be, creates opportunities to rethink our relationship with and treatment of the wider ecological world. There is space within these frameworks to entertain novel conceptions of the human role in the natural environment and, of course, the converse is also true; nature and its other inhabitants can be re-envisioned here as well.

With *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*, Sid Marty begins to reconfigure conventional notions surrounding the concept of the predator and attempts to write other-than-human creatures into park history by revisiting events that take place in Banff National Park during the summer of 1980. He casts his gaze backward to examine the violent encounters that took place between humans and bears in the Whiskey Creek wetlands just outside the Banff town site. These encounters left Ernest Cohoe, Bob Muskett, Remy Tobler, Andreas Leuthold, and a drifter Marty names "Joe Dodge" injured, sadly, with Cohoe succumbing to his injuries in hospital shortly after his attack. These incidents also resulted in the deaths of a grizzly bear and a black bear. At the time of their occurrence, the official position taken by former Chief Park Warden, Andy Anderson, was that the attacks were "completely unexplainable" (178). Given that Park officials could not attribute the attacks to the bear being provoked or surprised, and because they could not locate a traditional food cache, nor was there any indication that cubs were involved, as Marty writes, "the mysterious, violent nature of the bear's character and motive were left up to the layman to ponder and any role man may have played in causing the problem in the first place was not mentioned" (133). Anderson is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* as saying that "the answer lies in the bear itself" (qtd. in Marty 133). While Marty is not shy about disagreeing with Anderson at various other moments throughout his text, he does agree with Anderson on this

point. Demonstrating that there *is* much to learn from the ursine perspective, Marty writes portions of his book from the points of view of the two bears who were held responsible for the Whiskey Creek attacks, referring to the grizzly bear as Sticky Mouth, a southern Blackfoot term for the species (9), and to the black bear as B054, a number assigned to this large male who was known to Park wardens because they had trapped and relocated him on four separate occasions (52-53). Marty explains in his introduction that he has "long wanted to give a full account of that summer, of the victims' suffering and of the hard work and dedication of those who hunted the Whiskey Creek bears" (7), and that he has wanted to "try to tell part of the story from the perspectives of the black bear and the grizzly bear" (7), indicating that his approach to these events has centered on the singular question "Why?" (7). In an effort to provide a balanced representation of the Whiskey Creek maulings, Marty draws on official Parks Canada reports, interviews with wardens, victims and experts, as well as on his own personal memories as a volunteer in the hunt for what proved to be two elusive bears. He is careful to include a multiplicity of voices in his account of these dramatic events, including the imagined voices of the bears involved. In his search for answers as to why these events took place Marty looks beyond the "11-day rampage" (7) in Whiskey Creek to explore the relationship between poor garbage management practices in Banff, that community's long acceptance of garbage-habituated bears, and the environmental phenomenon of Mount St. Helens erupting in America's Washington State. By broadening his scope of consideration, and by including a wide range of viewpoints (human and ursine alike), Marty not only provides a robust and nuanced account of the Whiskey Creek attacks, he reads this moment in Banff's recent past for the other-than-human experience in addition to that of the human, thereby creating a history for Sticky Mouth and B054. With his representation of the Whiskey Creek bears and their possible perspectives and

histories, Marty effectively renegotiates the concept of the predator. He looks beyond the parameters that narrowly identify this figure as an animal that kills other animals for food, to both expand those borders of characterization and demonstrate that so-called predatory creatures are laden with human cultural constructions that are based in fear and in our sense of ownership and entitlement with regard to the natural world.

In his recent publication, *Bears Without Fear*, Kevin Van Tighem outlines several (mis)conceptions of bears that are common to North America, an overview of which is helpful to understanding some of the cultural constructs that Marty must navigate, and sometimes work against, in his portrayal of Sticky Mouth and B054. Van Tighem says that "North American culture has simplified the idea of bears into three dominant themes: the lovable clown, the marauding monster or the besieged wilderness creature" (28). Children's stories and cartoons, such as Winnie the Pooh and Yogi, make up the clown motif (28), while representations of a being that is "fascinating but ultimately doomed," such as the one in the 1988 film, *The Bear*, comprise the image of the bear as an assailed wild creature (30). Most pertinent to Marty's text, however, is the conception of the bear as a marauding monster. Van Tighem explains that "Bears are often unfairly represented as vicious predators," likely as a result of "the frontier myth of the killer grizzly" that was prevalent during the turn of the twentieth century (29). This image was only strengthened by the "aggressive depredation" that arose later from garbage-habituated bears visiting strategically placed feeding sites and garbage dumps (29). He notes that this myriad of ursine icons serves to eclipse the biological realities and lived experiences of these creatures (30). One way to begin addressing such problematic representations of bears is to refocus our attention on the more objective facts of their biology and physiology. Doing so creates space to acknowledge the sites where human perception incompletely or inaccurately reflects the actual

behaviours of bears. Given that predation is so closely tied to carnivorous feeding tendencies it is important to note, as Cristina Eisenberg does in her book, *The Carnivore Way: Coexisting with and Conserving North America's Predators*, that "An average grizzly bear diet consists of 10 percent mammal meat, 5 percent fish meat, and 80 percent vegetation" (90), indicating that, though characterized as a carnivore and therefore also as a predator, the grizzly bear (and, by extension, the closely related black bear) will primarily subsist on a plant-based diet. These details about conventional human perspectives on bears, as well as an understanding of how these viewpoints inadequately integrate or account for the biological realities of ursine life, are important to a reading of Marty's text because they help to illustrate the aspects of this particular predator that his work serves to reconsider and reframe.

The process of reading and writing other-than-human subjects into a historical moment where they had previously been overlooked or dismissed is necessarily an inventive process. This need not be viewed, however, as a limitation to developing a history of animals. In her article, "Journey to the Heart of Stone," Australian philosopher and activist, Val Plumwood, states that creative writing has an important part to play in "making visible new possibilities for radically open and non-reductive ways to experience the world" (17). Her comment positions the imaginative and productive process of writing as a vehicle for innovative and meaningful engagement with the world. In another piece, titled "Nature in the Active Voice," she also asserts that "writers are amongst the foremost of those who can help us to think differently" (126). In their introduction to a collection of Plumwood's work titled *The Eye of the Crocodile*, Freya Mathews, Kate Rigby and Deborah Rose note that she includes in the category of "writer" the "story-tellers, poets, and other creative communicators who could produce enlivened or re-animated accounts of the agency and creativity of nature" (Mathews 4). According to Plumwood,

representing the natural world in literary form is a matter of being receptive to the power, agency and creativity present within the natural environment and allowing room within human society for corresponding sensitivities and vocabularies ("Nature" 126). She emphasizes the need for new perspectives and novel accounts of nature. Instead of looking to scientists or philosophers to achieve these insights, Plumwood seeks to recruit literary artists for the task. Because he writes from Sticky Mouth's and B054's possible viewpoints, thereby offering a unique angle from which to approach the Whiskey Creek maulings, Marty's creative nonfiction also fits nicely within Plumwood's parameters regarding the importance of remaining open to unconventional constructs within the natural world.

In portraying these ursine points of view Marty engages in what Steven Winter calls transperspectivity. Winter describes this concept in his article "Bill Durham and the Uses of Theory," saying it is "an exercise of the empathetic ability to imagine what a question looks like from more than one side" (685). He positions it as being a component of "Situated Self-Consciousness" (685), which he indicates is a two-part process involving, firstly, the ability to consider the way in which our personal perceptions and constructions build our understanding of the world, and, secondly, the capacity to imagine how others may understand the world differently as a result of their own perceptions and constructions, something that he says can be achieved by making an imaginative effort to take on another person's or culture's point of view (685-86). Mark Johnson engages with Winter's description of transperspectivity in his text *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*, rephrasing an explanation of this concept slightly when he outlines it as "a limited freedom to imagine other values and points of view to change one's world in light of possibilities revealed by those alternative viewpoints" (241). Johnson argues that transperspectivity is "the only way we can criticize our present moral

understanding, take up the part of others, and expand our sense of possibilities for constructive action" (242). He situates it as a powerful tool that can be used to disrupt and alter current cultural paradigms. Though Winter and Johnson discuss transperspectivity as it relates to human-centered topics, when applied to issues of ecological relationships it becomes a means by which one can reconsider earthly potentialities and offer suggestions for novel engagement with the broader environment. It is a tool that is helpful in constructing another creature's history because it allows for the inclusion of that creature's possible point of view. In making room for this viewpoint, transperspectivity is also useful in decentering the human and foregrounding questions of the other-than-human because it grants validity to points of view beyond the scope of our species.

Using transperspectivity as a tool for acknowledging and imagining the possible viewpoints of other-than-human beings works in opposition to the process of denarrativization. In his book, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Martin Jay describes this concept as a "shift from reading the world as an intelligible text (the 'book of nature') to looking at it as an observable but meaningless object" (51). Deborah Bird Rose puts it another way in her text, *Reports From a Wild Country: Ethics of Decolonisation*, saying that denarrativization is a "western intellectual development by which people ceased to regard the world as having its own story . . . and started to look at the world as a story-less object" (183). This development, Rose says, relies "on hyperseparations, and the result is a commitment to there being a gap between the mind and the world; from this gap arises the idea that the world is devoid of mind" (183). This description of denarrativization rearticulates the concept of human/nature dualism that is so prominent in Western culture, a paradigm that Plumwood describes in her article, "Meeting the Predator." She says the human/nature dualism

"sees the essentially human as part of a radically separate order of reason, mind, or consciousness, set apart from the lower order that comprises the body, the animal and the pre-human" (15). Christopher J. Preston identifies this dualism in his text, *Grounding Knowledge: Environmental Philosophy, Epistemology, and Place*, as "one of the philosophical canon's most pernicious conceptual divisions" (xiv) and acknowledges that as humans, we have elevated ourselves above the rest of the natural environment and have justified it on the grounds of our "supposedly unique capacity to use reason" (xiv). The process of denarrativization broadens the basis for this self-appointed elevation by including the ability to tell stories as another uniquely human capacity which is thought unlikely to be shared by the rest of nature. By refusing to acknowledge the existence of story, and, therefore, of mind, in the natural world, humans reassert their dominance over nature and enforce both their perceived superiority to and separation from it.

The perspectives of Sticky Mouth and B054 that Marty conjures in *The Black Grizzly* function as a refusal to participate in denarrativization, as well as a refusal to accept that the other-than-human world is devoid of mind and story. In fact, Marty *renarrativizes* these members of the natural environment by imagining what their personal experiences and stories may be. As one example, Marty illustrates Sticky Mouth's encounter with Highway 1, also known as the Trans-Canada Highway, that runs across the expanse of Canada and cuts through Banff National Park. Upon his approach to the thoroughfare, Sticky Mouth "remembers this Meatmaker; that is, his stomach reminds him that it had fed him once before, long ago" (63). His sensitive nose picks up the scent of a male bighorn sheep that had been killed by a vehicle in the days prior to his arrival, and the smell "rouses a picture in his head of a meat-beast with massive horns" (63). This recollection has Sticky Mouth searching the ditch in hopes of finding the carcass (63). What

the human population understands as infrastructure for transportation, Sticky Mouth relates to as an easy source of calorie rich food. Similarly, where human convention identifies a particular type of large ungulate as a bighorn sheep, Sticky Mouth categorizes it according to size and food-type. This scene is more than just a creative and amusing play on words. In depicting these elements of Sticky Mouth's point of view, Marty validates the existence of that unique viewpoint in the first place but also suggests that this bear (and, by extension, all bears) have personal experiences and memories which inform their perspectives and behaviours. Because he acknowledges the richness of ursine interiority, Marty credits these beings with possessing both mind and story, effectively countering the denarrativizing tendencies of the human/nature dualism.

Marty is not the first person to consider that the human species might have something to gain in looking at the world through the eyes of other-than-human beings. Estonian physiologist Jakob von Uexküll describes something like transperspectivity in his 1934 monograph, "A Stroll Through the Worlds of Animals and Men." He suggests that we "blow, in fancy, a soap bubble around each creature to represent its own world, filled with the perceptions which it alone knows. When we ourselves then step into one of these bubbles, the familiar . . . is transformed" (5). Uexküll calls this bubble the *umwelt*, a German term used in relation to other-than-human beings specifically to signify each individual creature's subjective experience and perspective (6). *Umwelten* exist within what Uexküll calls the *umgebung*, another German word that signifies the broader, "objective environment" of which we are all a part (Vaillant *The Tiger* 162). Taken together, "*umwelt* and *umgebung* offer a framework for exploring and describing the experience of other creatures" (Vaillant *The Tiger* 162). Coming back to Marty's portrayal of Sticky Mouth encountering the Trans-Canada Highway, we can identify the structure of the highway and the

physical being of the bighorn sheep as objective components of the physical environment, or, *umgebung*. Sticky Mouth's understanding of the roadway as a "meatmaker," and his understanding of the sheep as a "meat-beast," however, are aspects of his particular *umwelt*, which are distinct from the human perceptions of a thoroughfare for vehicles, and a four-legged mammal. Marty uses these tools throughout his text, employing them in his contemplations of the Whiskey Creek incidents and offering a possible explanation for what those altercations mean to the bears involved within the context of their respective *umwelten*. In this way, Marty illustrates that the conceptual markers of *umwelt* and *umgebung* are important facets of a rhetoric of ecological relationship. A relationship demands interconnection and interaction between individuals and groups. If those processes are to be undertaken successfully, some effort must be made to appreciate the positions and perspectives of all parties involved. Uexküll's terminology provides ecocritics and animal studies scholars the frame of reference from which that work can begin, where the objective facts of a situation or environment can be assessed and the possible perceptions of those facts can be considered.

Whenever writers, biologists and indeed anyone endeavors to represent the viewpoints and thought processes of other-than-human beings, they leave themselves open to being charged with perpetuating anthropomorphism and/or anthropocentrism, claims that have the potential to discredit their work. Marty demonstrates his sensitivity to just such an issue by opening his text with an author's note that addresses his creative leaps. He admits that his attempt to write from Sticky Mouth's and B054's points of view is "obviously an imaginative exercise, rather than reportage" (n.pag.) but assures his readers that his personal experiences as both a warden and a journalist qualify him for this literary task. He also says, "I have tethered my imagination also to the evidence uncovered in Whiskey Creek and vicinity, and to the experiences shared with me by

the victims and their families and friends, and by those involved as hunters, biologists, police officers, dispatchers, reporters, and interested observers." This extensive research, combined with the sound judgment afforded to Marty as a result of his history as a warden, journalist and nonfiction writer render his representations of Sticky Mouth and B054 as credible, even plausible, and mitigate against the possibility of charges of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism within his work.

Marty concludes his author's note with the comment that, "No one can say with any certainty what goes on in the mind of a bear . . . but I, for one, never get tired of wondering what the answer to that question might be. So here goes my best guess" (n.pag.). His acknowledgement of uncertainty, and his willingness to attempt a guess at the workings of the ursine mind despite that uncertainty, touches on an important aspect of each of the theoretical devices discussed thus far: transperspectivity, story and renarrativizing the natural world, and the other-than-human *umwelten*. These conceptual tools are meant to combat human dominance over nature by making space for other points of view and by validating other forms of existence and scopes of perception. While it is necessary to perform these intellectual feats cautiously and within reasonable boundaries, attaining absolute correctness is not required nor could it ever truly be determined. The effort to decenter the human and move outside of that sphere is in and of itself a recognition of the human species' relationship with a broader ecological realm. Beyond that, an honest and informed attempt at discerning the experiences and viewpoints of other-than-human beings can serve to strengthen those connections.

Reading human history with an eye to the inclusion of animals as well as humans is a key component to developing the history of animals (Fudge 16). This mode of inquiry creates space where both the human and the other-than-human can be re-envisioned and re-imagined. Marty,

with his stated desire to give a full account of the 1980 Whiskey Creek attacks for all associated parties, including the accused bears, performs this task of looking backward in time to reread the sequence of events for both the humans and the other-than-humans involved, and, in so doing, is able to offer new insights about both groups.

Marty represents Sticky Mouth and B054 in such a way as to complicate the concept of the predator. As has been mentioned, a predator is typically understood as an animal that will "kill other animals for food" (Loo 152). The *Oxford English Dictionary* includes a similar definition, stating that a predator is "an animal that preys on other animals; an animal that kills and eats prey; a carnivore" ("Predator"). Such definitions hold a connotative quality that imbues the predator with a measure of savagery or brutality. There is also an emphasis on not only the consumption of flesh for sustenance, but on the act of killing in order to obtain that flesh. Marty offers a more comprehensive illustration of the so-called predators he engages with, one that does not centre on their ability to act violently or cause death. The first glimpse he offers of Sticky Mouth is of this bear sleeping in his winter den, hibernating. Marty notes that, "For centuries the bear's ability to survive the winter without food or drink was one of the enduring mysteries of a predator that many cultures held to be sacred" (55), and so mystery and resilience are the first characteristics that he attributes to this grizzly in particular, and to all bears by extension. When Marty depicts Sticky Mouth emerging from his den, he gives the grizzly a point of view: "No creature he meets on that trail is his peer; none can look him in the face without turning away to show their deference, and every living thing he encounters gives up the trail and hurries out of his way" (63). These first thoughts that Marty writes for this bear are indicative of a powerful and superior individual who commands and demands respect. With his introduction of Sticky Mouth, Marty immediately expands the conventional representation of predator beings

to encompass a more thought-provoking sense of what qualities comprise this figure and how it *feels* to possess such attributes.

The feeding practices that Marty describes throughout his text also subvert the image of a predator as a killer and consumer of others. The first edible item that Sticky Mouth goes in search of are "clusters of red berries" (63), placing vegetation at the top of his list of dietary concerns. Of course, as Marty notes, "The bear is a versatile carnivore, eager to feed on meat when it can get it but evolved, like humans and pigs, to thrive on an omnivore diet" (29), so bears do ingest meat from the bodies of other creatures, but that does not mean that they always kill what they eat. Within days of emerging from his den, Sticky Mouth is able to discern the scent of rotting flesh when "the hindquarters of a moose killed in a winter avalanche has melted finally out of the snow. It is slowly decomposing and giving off gases" (58-59). Sticky Mouth "rips open the moose's belly from gullet to gut loops . . . he washes down the liver with a mouthful of snow, and swallows the stomach" (60). Devouring another organism's body renders him a carnivore, or rather, it demonstrates his participation in the carnivorous part of the omnivorous equation, but dining on this flesh cannot technically be classified as an act of predation because it is an avalanche that has killed the moose, not Sticky Mouth. This reasoning, when applied to the Whiskey Creek incidents, demonstrates that those attacks were not acts of predation either. In the first instance, the Whiskey Creek bear did not kill any of his human victims. All of the men who were attacked, with the exception of Tobler, were able to walk out of Whiskey Creek after their encounters with the bear. In addition, no evidence was recovered to prove that either Sticky Mouth or B054 had consumed human flesh. Warden Bill Vroom makes the gruesome discovery of Cohoe's nose and nine of his upper teeth at the site where he was mauled (146), indicating that although the ursine attacker had the opportunity, it did not ingest

these parts of Cohoe's body. Upon completion of a necropsy, it was determined that B054's stomach contents did include light brown human hairs, which may have been a link to Cohoe, but that hair may have come from the garbage that was also found in the bear's stomach and no other human tissue was uncovered (266). Likewise, Sticky Mouth's necropsy reported that "The only flesh in his stomach was the elk meat they had set out for bait; the only hair was elk hair. The rest of the materials in his guts was fir tree needles" (276). Having not directly ended another being's life,⁴ and not having consumed the flesh of the Whiskey Creek victims, these attacks are rendered inconsistent with regard to the two main tenets of a predatory act, those being killing and consuming, and so cannot be classified as acts of predation. This dynamic begs the question: If a so-called predator is not acting in a predatory fashion, what is that creature doing?

Snyder's discussion of wildness in his essay "The Etiquette of Freedom" is helpful in this process of renegotiating the idea of the predator, and is also useful to a discussion of what it is about predators that make us so uncomfortable. Snyder makes the observation that the notion of "wild" is most commonly described through negation, by identifying from a human standpoint what it is not (10). Under this mode of definition, wild creatures may be characterized as "not tame, undomesticated, unruly" (9), wild individuals might be seen as "unrestrained, insubordinate, licentious" (10), while wild behaviour would be described as "violent, destructive, cruel" (10). This framework of negation, particularly when used to describe the natural world, serves as yet another plane on which the human species is divided from the rest of nature. Snyder attempts to invert this dynamic and imagine the concept of wildness in terms of what it is instead of what it is not (10). From this standpoint, wild beings become "free agents, each with its own endowments, living within natural systems" (10), wild individuals are positioned as those who

are "Unintimidated, self-reliant, independent" (11), and wild behaviour is, among other characteristics, that which boldly opposes "any oppression, confinement, or exploitation" (11). Because his proposed method for defining wildness is inclusive, specifying what traits comprise wildness instead of pointing to all of the qualities that cannot be attributed to it, rearranging the parameters by which wildness can be determined allows Snyder to resist participating in a forced dichotomy between humans and nature.

Snyder's reconceptualization of wildness allows for the figure of the predator to be reframed more thoughtfully. In writing from the perspectives of Sticky Mouth and B054, Marty illustrates a revised view of the predator as a being that is steeped in wildness. Beginning with B054, he includes in this bear's memory a recollection of an "iron cave that smelled of rich fish" (92), referring to a baited culvert trap, a device often used by Park wardens when relocating so-called problem bears. The black bear remembers that this device "had swallowed him up once, so he avoided it" (92); this action is an expression of wild behaviour in that it is an effort made to avoid confinement. When B054 hears human voices approaching close to him in the Whiskey Creek area, it brings him to his feet: "his ears were perked up and he was ready to fight, if he had to or flee, if he could" (93). Marty portrays B054 as having the capacity to discern his degree of vulnerability and to make a choice regarding his course of action, demonstrating him to be wild by virtue of his self-reliance. Marty illustrates Sticky Mouth in a similar manner. Towards the end of his text he writes, "Sticky Mouth will not leave the wetlands now until it is time to go to his den. He has found nothing in the surrounding mountains to equal the cache of fatty flesh and sugar heaped up here. Now he will fight to keep it, he will fight anything that comes near it" (199). Like B054, Sticky Mouth is a self-possessed individual who is capable of making decisions. He is unafraid and willing to defend himself against any threat that may impose upon

his food source, and thereby, on his very survival. In accordance with Snyder, this perspective renders Sticky Mouth as a wild creature. The Whiskey Creek bears that Marty depicts are not one-dimensional predators that kill other organisms for food. By casting light on Sticky Mouth's and B054's possible points of view and psychological interiority, Marty demonstrates that these were not villainous bears whose motivations for the attacks were "completely unexplainable" (178) but other-than-human beings engaging with their surroundings from a position of wildness.

Marty identifies Sticky Mouth's and B054's wildness as the reason wardens decided that neither bear could be allowed to live following the Whiskey Creek attacks. As part of the hunting team that pursued Sticky Mouth to his death following Joe Dodge's mauling, Marty recognizes that he and the wardens he worked with were not truly hunters in that context, but were "managers of a wild animal that refused to be managed, an animal that was too wild to live in Banff National Park" (255). His summation echoes Snyder's configuration of what wildness is and signals the human discomfort associated with it. In his article, "The Uncanny Goodness of Being Edible to Bears," James Hatley addresses human unease with wildness by exploring our resistance to becoming the object of a predatory act. Hatley suggests that human aversion to "such a thoroughly natural phenomenon" as the predator-prey relationship is reflected

not only in our individual attempts to prevent other animals from seizing our flesh, but also in a massive social and cultural appropriation by human society as a whole of the space surrounding it in such a manner as to eradicate the possibility of human 'victimization' by animals and plants and even natural occurrences. And so we methodically cut away the numerous tendrils of the innumerable beings wishing to take a bite out of our own bodies or possessions. (14-15)

What Hatley pinpoints here is a major facet of human domination over and separation from the rest of the natural world, namely, our intense and fearful need to control it. He identifies that our discomfort with our own vulnerability in the face of creatures who could cause us harm is clearly reflected in the efforts we make to ensure our safety and eliminate, to the greatest extent possible, the perils and threats we perceive to be present in the natural world. Hatley specifies that this human tendency for cutting away potential risks and appropriating nature in such a way as to “eradicate the possibility of human victimization” (14) is actually “a process of domestication” (15) wherein the “space in which we would dwell is rendered humane; our surroundings come to afford us an opening to pursue our lives without the teeth and appetites of other creatures intervening” (15). He comments on the asymmetry of this perspective when he says: “we make over the space in which we live *as if* humans had become inedible and everything else is revealed to be more or less available for ingestion” (15). Hatley recognizes an imbalance in the way that people engage with nature, and Marty makes a similar observation with regard to how we locate ourselves conceptually in the environment, particularly in relation to the ursine species, when he writes, “Our flesh is not for the eating; the very possibility terrifies us” (19), indicating that, as far as we are concerned, it is unacceptable for the human body to occupy the prey position in the predatory-prey relationship. This viewpoint functions as a guiding principle in the response to the Whiskey Creek incidents. On the odd occasion that a bear does make a meal out of a person, Marty says, “Then the fires of hell open, and the bear is cast down into them as a lesson to the rest of its tribe” (19). Marty’s discussion with Dan Vedova, a young warden working in Banff in 1980 who was involved with the hunt for Sticky Mouth, expresses this principle another way. In recalling the Whiskey Creek events Vedova tells Marty that he was not really there to hunt the grizzly bear “like a true hunter of old; he was there

to punish it for defending its home against incursions. He was there, in essence, to punish the bear for being a bear, there to weed out its dangerous DNA" (255). Vedova's comment underscores the fact that the accused bears were killed because of the potential risk they posed to the people living in and visiting Banff. Sticky Mouth and B054 were believed to have breached an asymmetrical boundary imposed by people and could not be allowed to live because they represented an intolerable threat to the human community's domesticated space.

Marty further emphasizes the role that human perceptions play in constructing the predator, and also gestures toward the importance of wildness and its disquieting effect on people, by demonstrating that we do not always eradicate potential threats to domestic human space with consistency. Following the first altercation in Whiskey Creek involving Cohoe and Muskett, the plastic surgeon who treated Cohoe "pointed out that he had seen the same kind of damage inflicted on people by dog bites" (100). Similarly, the plastic surgeon who treated Tobler made the comment that "'We see this kind of injury from just a bad beating from human beings sometimes'" (202). This feedback indicates that, even though they were inflicted by a bear, a creature that has the size and strength to cause serious trauma or death, the injuries that Cohoe and Tobler suffer are no more severe than what might be caused by another offender, such as a dog or a person. Dogs and people, however, exist within a domesticated space while bears do not. Our laws create a framework by which human and canine behaviour is governed and so we are able to accept, and are very often comfortable with, a close degree of coexistence with each other and with the canine species. The possibility of being attacked or killed by another person or by a dog is made tolerable by the fact that both are domesticated figures who are expected to adhere to established laws and conventional codes of conduct. In the case of Sticky Mouth and B054, no reassurance can be offered through the process of domestication because both bears

refuse it completely, and so as perceived unpredictable, uncontrollable threats they cannot be allowed to exist.

Marty continues to challenge current understandings of what a predator is, and demonstrates how this figure is constructed from a human-centered perspective, with a subtle invocation of the word's original meaning. Where a predator is now typically identified as a creature that kills and eats other organisms for food, as mentioned above this term has been used historically to characterize a rapacious person who pillages, plunders, and otherwise violates or steals property that does not belong to him or her ("Predator"). In keeping track of the pressures being placed on Banff Park officials to resolve the Whiskey Creek situation before the fast-approaching Labour Day Weekend, Marty demonstrates that Sticky Mouth and B054 pose a threat not only to the lives and limbs of Banff's human community, but also to the human sense of ownership and entitlement that is rife within this tourism-driven centre. Marty notes that, after Cohoe's and Muskett's attack, "With the Labour Day weekend only five days ahead, people were planning to visit the area, hoping to find the leaves changing colour for the fall, a glorious time for photographers and artists. Now they would be denied those pleasures until the bear was either captured or destroyed" (118). His comment points out that the Whiskey Creek bears are encroaching on several activities or opportunities we perceive to be somehow due to us, namely, access to the park and the ability to use the landscape for aesthetic inspiration, as well as any accompanying feelings of enjoyment or pleasure that stem from them. Offering insight into a commonly held attitude about Banff National Park at the time, Marty says "In 1980, one seldom heard of ecological integrity: what we heard was 'Parks are for people'" (175). His response to this convention is to also say, "Of course they are, but the implication of this mantra was that people's needs for access trumped wildlife protection in Banff" (175), thereby signalling the

hierarchical human/nature dualism that privileges the human position. Another implication of this mantra is that, when so-called predatory creatures impose on our ability to enter the park and take in our chosen activities, we perceive them to be pilfering from us that to which we believe we are entitled.

In a similar vein, Marty connects the concepts of thievery and plunder to the figure of the other-than-human predator in the way that he portrays the threat that Sticky Mouth and B054 pose to both the careers of park staff and to the financial security of local business owners. There was a great deal of pressure on park officials to adequately manage what the media had dubbed the "Bad News Bear" (155-56). Marty summarizes these tensions by saying "the Bad News Bear could gobble up someone's career in the regional office or the Banff administration building" (156). By using the term "gobble" Marty cleverly links this risk of job loss to the more conventional concept of predation, clearly illustrating how this elusive and dangerous ursine presence represents a threat on an economic level as well as a physical one. The bear responsible for the Whiskey Creek attacks is perceived as an economic menace to the business community of Banff as well. Following the altercation involving Cohoe and Muskett, Marty notes that "The long weekend was only two days away, and what should have been a revenue booster was shaping up to be a financial disaster for the Banff hospitality industry. The bear must be found, the situation must be defused" (159). Sticky Mouth and B054 may not actually be stealing from the people of Banff, but their presence creates an obstacle that makes it difficult for local businesses to thrive in the way that their owners expect. Although the "predator" is no longer preying on other organisms in order to survive, he is jeopardizing the financial well-being of a human community. In this sense, the bear is perceived as acting in accordance with the original

understanding of what a predator is, a rapacious and marauding thief who steals property or possessions that do not belong to him or her.

Unpacking the dynamic between Sticky Mouth and B054 and the economic structures that their presence imperils illuminates the human-centered construction of the predator. This analysis highlights where human perspectives and priorities have been grafted onto those creatures we deem to be predatory. An examination of these sites of intersection calls attention to the fact that the actual organisms we characterize as predators, their points of view and biological realities or requirements, are often missing from our conceptualizations of them. Marty demonstrates that human construction of what we label a predatory creature tends to privilege our own needs and perspectives without leaving space for the particularities of the other-than-human being we identify as occupying that role. Where Derrida identifies the term "animal" as being a conceptual tool we have granted ourselves use of in order to exert and maintain our dominance and authority over the natural world (32), Marty's representation of the figure of the predator reveals that the word "predator" is a similar mechanism for exerting human control.

In *The Black Grizzly* Marty takes up both of the main tenets that Fudge argues are central to writing the history of animals, namely, bringing other species into focus while also rethinking our own position as humans (5-6). In writing a history for Sticky Mouth and B054, Marty is able to both expand the conventional associations that define the figure of the predator and examine the degree to which it is created from a human-focused point of view, one that burdens so-called predatory creatures with the expectations, fears and anxieties of the people who regard them. In this way, he offers a starting point for beginning to reconsider our perceptions of other-than-human creatures and, by extension, our interactions and relationships with them as well. By writing these bears back into the historical record Marty sheds light on the extent to which Sticky

Mouth and B054 have been held accountable for the way their kind is constructed in the human perspective, and the extent to which their lives and deaths have been compromised in the name of human values and priorities.

The notion of the predator has been so thoroughly forged out of human apprehensions and misgivings, as well as out of our sense of entitlement to and ownership of the natural world, that it fails to adequately characterize the creatures to which it is applied. It is a concept bound to the human perception of other-than-human species and, as such, offers very little information at all about those beings that are categorized as predatory. It does point to the inclusion of meat in a creature's diet, but the terms "carnivore" and "omnivore" accomplish the same task with greater specificity and without burdening their subjects with the additional qualitative assumptions that accompany "predator." These linguistic distinctions call the utility of the term "predator" into question, making it a problematic word choice for describing other-than-human creatures. The concept remains useful, however, when it is employed as a guidepost for parsing the human perspective on other inhabitants of nature. Those people or organizations that wield the term "predator" reveal much about their viewpoint regarding the creatures they identify this way. Instead of looking to this concept to represent and categorize other-than-human beings we can repurpose it as a mechanism for illuminating the human mindset, using each utterance as our cue to ask such questions as: What do we believe is being threatened? What do we fear is being taken from us? Why do we believe we have a right to that which we are afraid of losing? In cases where actions are taken to defend or protect that which we perceive as belonging to us, we must also ask why we believe that our interests are more important than those of whichever creature from which we are shielding ourselves. Because they interrogate the human position and call into question the assumptions we hold about ourselves and the environment, making these types

of inquiries will serve as a guard against anthropocentric tendencies to privilege human concerns over the needs of nature's other inhabitants.

RENEGOTIATING THE HUMAN-BEAR RELATIONSHIP IN *GRIZZLY HEART*

In his text, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, Matthew Calarco surveys Derrida's work and examines his position on the animal rights movement. He notes that Derrida is primarily concerned with questioning the typical approaches one might take in an effort to create change with regard to how other-than-human beings are treated in human society (114-15). Calarco observes that Derrida is not fully engaged with common forms of discourse around the issue of animal rights and indicates that Derrida "remains deeply skeptical of the notion that *fundamental* changes in our thinking and relation with animals can be effected through existing ethical and political discourses and institutions" (114-15). Put another way, he understands Derrida as doubting the effectiveness of attempting to significantly alter the status quo by means of already established ethical and political paradigms. Calarco identifies that, for Derrida, "Deconstruction is situated precisely at this level, namely, at the level of trying to articulate another thought of relation (ethics) and practice (politics) that moves beyond the limits of anthropocentric traditions and institutions" (115). He notes that Derrida's work reflects a call for a transformation of the relationship between humans and other-than-humans on a fundamental level, a shift that "requires a deconstruction of the very notion of moral and legal rights and its underlying metaphysical and philosophical support" (115). Calarco acknowledges that "This task requires a considerable amount of invention as well as time" (115); one reasonable method for tackling such a substantial project is to approach it from multiple and more modest fronts, an example of which can be found in *Grizzly Heart: Living Without Fear Among the Brown Bears of Kamchatka*.

Written by Charlie Russell and Maureen Enns, in conjunction with Fred Stenson, *Grizzly Heart* chronicles Russell's and Enns's work with grizzly bears from 1994 to 2000 in the South

Kamchatka Sanctuary of Russia's Far East. Motivated by the knowledge that wildlife management in North America "was often based on untested prejudice, particularly against grizzlies, but also against bears in general" (29), Russell and Enns travel to Kamchatka to learn whether or not bears and humans can live harmoniously in close proximity to one another. In addition to living among the bears that inhabit the Kambalnoye Lake area, where their cabin is located, Russell and Enns are also helped along in their endeavors by Chico, Biscuit and Rosie, grizzly cubs that they rescue from a substandard zoo in the community of Yelizovo at the beginning of their second season in Kamchatka, bringing them to Kambalnoye Lake with the intention of raising them to be wild (121-36). Russell makes the observation that "Science has the highest standards for most animals, but resorts to myths when it comes to bears" (29), including such myths that say bears are dangerous killers and that they cannot safely live near humans (29). In travelling to Russia in search of a bear population that had had minimal human contact (14), Russell and Enns set out to test these myths "against their opposite: that bears, treated with respect, might not be killers; that bears might only be as dangerous as we make them; that bears can live in proximity with people, if people observe some rules that make bears feel secure" (30). Russell underscores his and Enns's efforts in Russia by stating, "For the relationship between bears and people to improve generally, we had to come up with a diplomatic protocol and some simple procedures that other people could easily and reliably follow when living around bears" (49). By positioning these research questions and goals as the foundation for their project, Russell and Enns challenge both conventional and scientific knowledge about bears and identify human attitudes and associated behaviours as the sites at which change must occur in order to reduce conflicts between people and bears. Because the premise of their project serves to deconstruct discourses around bears Russell's and Enns's work

is aligned with what Calarco describes of Derrida's viewpoint, namely his desire to articulate novel forms of relation and practice (which Calarco equates to ethics and politics, respectively) with regard to the way people engage with other-than-human beings. Where Marty's text begins a re-evaluation of some of our conventional ideas around the figure of the predator, with *Grizzly Heart*, Russell and Enns look to reconsider some of our typical approaches to interacting with such creatures. In their search to learn whether or not a greater degree of peaceful coexistence among humans and bears is possible, Russell and Enns propose renewed forms of ethics and politics between our two species.

The work that Russell and Enns undertake in Kamchatka is informed by a keen understanding of the prevalent human perspectives on bears specifically, and on the natural world more broadly, making them well equipped to begin renegotiating these constructs. Prior to his work with Enns, Russell penned a book entitled *Spirit Bear: Encounters With the White Bear of the Western Rainforest*, a text that focuses on the kermode bears of Princess Royal Island off the coast of British Columbia. Russell describes several observations he made while completing that project which are also applicable to the work he undertakes in Russia. He says that, while writing *Spirit Bear*, he nearly had to "invent a new language to describe the human-wild animal relationship in ways that were not about conflict and fear" (*Grizzly Heart* 12), highlighting the central tenets of the human perspective on bears.

Further to his observation about available terminology in relation to wild creatures, Russell also remarks that humankind no longer perceives itself as being part of the wild, that our species no longer sees a need to fit into the wider ecological community (13). He says, "We have spent centuries perfecting a rhetoric that distances us from the idea that we are also animals, a rhetoric that closes the door to understanding what we have in common with our fellow

mammals and other fauna" (13). Russell's observation strengthens the link between language and point of view. He acknowledges the conception of our species which positions humans as being separate from the rest of nature, and which smacks of self-declared superiority. Russell's comment also reflects the human/nature dualism, described by Val Plumwood in her article, "Meeting the Predator," as a product of Western culture that radically separates the human from the other-than-human (15). It is this dichotomized conceptual organization that allows human language and behaviour to distance our species from the natural world in which we are embedded. One expression of this binary is found in the perception people have that bears are too dangerous and too unpredictable to coexist with humans. It is also reflected in the actions taken to ensure the separation of our two species, whether it be through relocating those bears deemed to be a problem, responding to them with aggression so as to instill in them a fear of humans, or having hunters or wildlife officials kill them. This dynamic is both specific to the human-bear relationship and indicative of a larger human paradigm that refuses to accept our species' deep-rooted connections with nature and its inhabitants. With *Grizzly Heart*, Russell and Enns set out to prove that a greater degree of coexistence and more positive interactions are possible between people and bears. In so doing, they address the specific, pressing wildlife issue of so-called bear management and also confront the attitudinal and perceptual frameworks that support the separation of humans from nature.

Before they engage in any specific activity or task in their exploration of the possibility of peaceful coexistence between people and bears, Russell and Enns begin to challenge and deconstruct popular cultural paradigms with regard to the human-bear relationship by way of the overarching approach they take to their project. In their desire to develop what they call a "diplomatic protocol" (49) for people to follow when interacting with grizzlies, combined with

their choosing to live amongst wild bears for an extended period of time in order to develop and establish such a protocol, Russell and Enns position themselves in opposition to the common conceptual framework of moral extensionism. Christian Diehm discusses this construct in his article, "Predators and Prey: On Hunting and Human Identity," which examines the rhetoric surrounding sport hunting and includes voices from both those who do and those who do not support the activity. Diehm explains that moral extensionism "is a strategy for expanding the sphere of moral considerability that involves pointing out ways in which other-than-human entities are similar to human beings such that their inclusion in the moral community becomes a natural extension of existing moral concepts" (7). In other words, moral extensionism is a means of expanding the borders of human privilege while leaving it otherwise unaltered. This theoretical framework quickly becomes exclusionary in that any organism that is not perceived as being akin to the human species is left outside the boundaries of moral consideration. It is also a highly anthropocentric organizational method whereby the human figure maintains its privilege and has the power to bestow varying degrees of that privilege upon other creatures when the appropriate eligibility requirements are met, requirements which are established from within the human realm to begin with. Finally, moral extensionism inherently perpetuates the human/nature dualism by operating under the premise that humans and the rest of the natural world are always already separate. Diehm suggests that an alternative to "trying to bring other-than-human animals into a sphere thought to be governed by the rules of interpersonal relations between people" (12) is to "situate humans within the natural world" (12). He goes on to say that, instead of employing an "ethic that regards animals as entitled to the benefits of membership in the human moral community" it is possible to engage in an "ethic that regards humans as members of the more-than-human community of nature on the same terms and conditions as other living things" (12).

Diehm offers this assessment after providing an overview of the arguments for and against hunting for sport but the differences in approach that he highlights serve to illuminate Russell's and Enns's project as well. They rework concepts surrounding human relationships with grizzlies, not by attempting to make grizzlies more tolerable within human parameters, but by positioning themselves (as humans) in nature directly and by looking for change that results from altering their own behavior. Their questions do not centre on how bears can be made to exist more easily alongside people. They are interested, instead, in learning how people can adapt to living alongside and possibly in community with bears.

Serving as reflections of Russell's and Enns's inversion of moral extensionism are their efforts to carefully communicate with the bears that they encounter in Kamchatka. Be it verbal or nonverbal, communication creates pathways between two or more parties where needs and intentions can be articulated. Russell and Enns employ both verbal and nonverbal modes of communication in their work. During their first season in Russia, while they are familiarizing themselves with the Kambalnoye Lake region, surprising bears at close range, particularly bears that fear humans, is a major concern (66). Experimenting with different ways of announcing their presence, Russell says "I was able to soothe each bear we surprised by talking to it softly" (66). When Enns, too, begins to diffuse tense situations with a cheery tone of voice it is a good indication to both her and Russell that "the talking technique was not some aberration" that was unique to him and that it could be developed by others as well (66). This potential for development was particularly important to Russell and Enns, as they were working to prove that all people, not just a select few, can live safely alongside bears.

Russell also incorporates the element of body language into his communication strategy. During one especially hair-raising moment in that same first season, in which a female grizzly

with cubs charges Russell and Enns, Russell says he was able to keep his voice calm and soothing, and that he also turned his "body sideways to her and nonchalantly reached down to pluck some goldenrod" (77), which he explains is "another method of looking as non-threatening as possible" (77). The encounter came to a peaceful conclusion, with the mother grizzly collecting her cubs and leaving the area (78). Russell summarizes the incident by stating that he and Enns had passed the greatest test they had faced to that point. He says that, "Thanks to remaining calm and to using our voices well, and to maintaining non-threatening postures and not succumbing to our desire to flee—and thanks to the good sense of the mother bear—we had passed the test with no harm done" (78). Russell's and Enns's success on this front is twofold. The peaceful resolution that they were able to facilitate provides strong support to their claims that grizzlies and humans can coexist without violence or danger.

Communication allows Russell and Enns to operate outside the constraints of moral extensionism because it acknowledges the ursine position without first attempting to manipulate it to fit humanistic terms. It creates space for the possibility of dialogue between the human and the other-than-human, a gesture that recognizes the validity of the other-than-human perspective and which indicates an acceptance of the fact that the human point of view is not the only or most important viewpoint. Making the effort to engage in some form of communication with the bears they meet also signals a desire on Russell's and Enns's part to collaborate or cooperate with them instead of only considering how and where these grizzlies might rank under human moralistic codes. In making this effort, they also demonstrate an aspect of innovative ethics and politics with regard to the human-bear relationship, as communication is both a method for relating to another individual or group as well as an action that can be put into practice.

The inversion of moral extensionism is represented in *Grizzly Heart* in the way that Russell and Enns make accommodations for the needs of Kamchatka's bears. There are many instances in which they are mindful of particular ursine requirements, but perhaps in no case more acutely than in the deployment of their electric fencing. The fences that Russell and Enns use "get their shocking power from an energizer that converts twelve-volt battery power into millisecond pulses of several thousand volts, each one second apart. Very low amperage keeps the shock from being dangerous" (56). While they do not cause injury, these fences are capable of delivering a startling shock and, having used them in his work on Princess Royal Island, Russell knows them to be an effective tool for setting boundaries with bears (56). As per their protocol, Russell and Enns place electric fencing around the sites they think may be attractive to their ursine neighbours. They are discerning, however, with regard to where they place them and how much space they encompass. At the beginning of their first season in Kamchatka, Russell and Enns construct a cabin just above Kambalnoye Lake and encircle the area around that structure with electric fencing (55). They are modest in the land they stake out for themselves, only enclosing their cabin, their wall tent and a small amount of space for a visitor to pitch a tent (55). Russell explains that they had enough materials for more space but that they did not want to "invade any more of the bears' territory than was necessary" (55). As much as possible, he says, "we wanted to stay off their trails. Since our objective was to get along with the local bears, not impeding their movement seemed a good start" (55). Russell's use of the term "invade" signals his awareness that he and Enns have injected themselves into the region as visitors, while his description of the area as the "bears' territory" and "their trails" suggests a certain degree of ownership or belonging on the part of the bears to which he and Enns are sensitive. They observe early on "a mosaic of deep trails in the tundra that had been worn exclusively by the feet of

brown bears" (25). This nuanced vocabulary decenters the human and foregrounds the other-than-human. That Russell and Enns do their best to avoid encroaching on the local bears' habitat any more than they must is an expression of their willingness to coexist with these bears in a manner that does not impose human-centered constructs upon them.

Russell also introduces electric fencing to an area just north of their cabin called Kurilskoy Lake, where a small community of about twenty people conduct salmon research and which is frequented by foreign filmmakers looking to shoot documentaries about Russian brown bears (26). This region is densely populated by grizzly bears who use the lake shores as a highway (24) and who benefit from the large number of salmon available at the village's salmon research station (102). During his first visit to the area Russell is stunned to see more bears in a single day at Kurilskoy Lake "than existed in the entire Khutzeymateen Inlet" (24) of Canada's British Columbia, where he had worked for many years as a guide. As a key food resource for the local bears and the centre of scientific inquiry for the resident humans, salmon brings bears and humans into very close proximity to one another (102). With one notable exception, which will be discussed shortly, this high degree of coexistence occurs largely without incident but Russell takes note of the fact that the presence of bears in the village, often scavenging through people's garbage or gardens, and the bears' propensity for breaking the weir at the salmon research station, causes tensions to rise (102). Russell seeks to "eliminate these frictions with an electric fence" (152). What is significant about the way in which he discusses these circumstances is his use of the terms "tension" and "frictions." Unlike the conventional view of bears, which would declare this situation unsafe for people simply because of the "dangerous" ursine presence, Russell's diction here avoids saddling them with fault or responsibility for the strain that they and the humans in the region are under. Instead, by identifying these

circumstances as tensions and frictions, Russell acknowledges that there is discomfort for bears and humans alike as both species must work to navigate a shared territory and set of resources. Keeping in mind that the research station is positioned at "a crossroads for travelling bears" (153), Russell takes a similar approach to constructing the fence at Kurilskoy Lake as he had for the fence surrounding his and Enns's cabin, taking into account the needs of the local bears as well as the needs of the village people. Russell explains that the fencing for this community was planned so as not to disturb the bears' most pertinent trails, as well as to ensure that a corridor was left to enable bears to "fish both sides of the river and a small creek that skirted the village on its east side" (153). Even though physical boundaries have been put into place, the bears of Kurilskoy Lake are able to live unimpeded in their movement and their perpetual search for food. Russell and the people of Kurilskoy Lake clearly demonstrate an understanding that the human requirements in the region are not the only or most important elements at play, leaving room for them to relate to the bears in the area. Acting on that understanding by working to meet the needs of these bears effectively illustrates how renewed ethics and politics around the human-bear relationship can produce positive results for both species.

In 1999, when the fencing around the village and its salmon research station had been in place for three years, Russell declared it to be a "fantastic success" (293-94). He explains that:

The station and its associated village are the best example in the world of people and bears going about their separate business in close proximity without conflict: a model worth copying. The research station workers and their families were happy not to have bears wandering their streets and paths any more, and were no longer at risk of tripping over a sleeping bear at night. The bears respected the electric fence and did not try to cross it. As a result, they could relax too. (294)

His description of this achievement is informed by a perspective that defines success in terms of meeting the needs of both the bears and the humans involved. With mutually respected boundaries in place both the people and the bears of Kurilskoy Lake can go about the activities of their daily lives without disrupting or endangering one another. Russell refers to these daily lives as "separate business" and is careful not to prioritize one set of activities over another. In so doing, he resists the human/nature dualism. In *Grounding Knowledge: Environmental Philosophy, Epistemology, and Place*, Christopher J. Preston delves into this concept further and explains that, "Dualistic thinking involves setting up two mutually exclusive categories that come to be treated as not only different from each other but also oppositional" (112). In the case of Kurilskoy Lake, the human/nature dualism would have pitted the bears against the humans in an adversarial manner. Preston goes on to say that, once the dualism has been established, "one side is typically given a higher value than the other. This hierarchy is then used to legitimate the subordination of the category valued lower by those in the category valued higher" (112). Under these parameters, the human/nature dualism would see human culture privileged over the natural world. Had Russell and the people of Kurilskoy Lake been working within such a paradigm they may have invoked this privilege in order to secure their own needs above, and likely to the detriment of, those of the bears who shared the area. Preston notes that simply inverting the dualism to elevate that which is originally valued to a lesser extent is not particularly useful "because it would leave most of the structure of the dualism intact" (113). At Kurilskoy Lake, the solution to the tensions between bears and humans in the region is not one that rushes to this inverted dualistic framework, as indicated by the fact that the bears' requirements for space to move and salmon to fish are not placed above the village people's requirements for space to live and salmon to study. By using electric fencing in such a way that creates respectful, egalitarian

boundaries between the human and ursine residents of Kurilskoy Lake, Russell ensures that the needs of both species are accounted for, resisting completely the human/nature dualism that works to separate people from the natural environment.

The efforts that Russell and Enns make to communicate with and accommodate for the bears around them essentially amount to practicing manners. The success they see in developing trust between themselves and the bears with whom they engage is largely a product of using good etiquette.⁵ In her article, "From *Grizzly Country* to *Grizzly Heart*: The Grammar of Bear-Human Interactions in the Work of Andy Russell and Charlie Russell," Pamela Banting acknowledges the presence of "ethics, etiquette and protocol" (166) in *Grizzly Heart* as well. She points to "language, sound, tone, and bodily gesture" as also playing a role in the proper manners that Russell and Enns demonstrate (161). Etiquette is a human construct that guides people to appropriate social behaviours. It represents both relation (ethics) and practice (politics) in human interactions in the way that manners are a reflection of a person's sense of what is the correct or best way to behave with or toward other people. When the use of etiquette is extended to include other-than-human beings, it may be that those creatures become subject to a higher standard of treatment or regard, similar to what would transpire within the framework of moral extensionism. It is important to note, however, that Russell and Enns do not extend courtesies to Kamchatka's grizzlies because they find these bears to be closely related or very similar to humans and therefore deserving of such elevated treatment; they practice good manners with the grizzlies they meet in an effort to build relationships with them and to create circumstances that allow for harmonious coexistence.

Another overarching aspect of Russell's and Enns's engagement with their project that disrupts conventional treatments of other-than-human creatures is their willingness to

acknowledge individual bears within the ursine species as a whole. In her article, “Ecofeminism and Nonhumans: Continuity, Difference, Dualism, and Domination,” Ronnie Zoe Hawkins explores the intricacies of individual versus group identities (159). She notes that humanity is often “hyperseparated from nonhuman organisms in being the only class of natural beings *that count* as individuals, while the members of all nonhuman groupings are still homogenized and objectified, their significance exhausted by being cogs in the wheels that run the ‘machinery of nature’” (169-70). Hawkins calls this a “dualistically distorted view” (170) and explains that a perspective that acknowledges humans only as individuals and all other creatures only as members of a larger group or species is “a major impediment to conceiving of ecological relationships in such a way that we can begin to solve some of our most critical environmental problems” (170). In addition to perpetuating the issue of essentialism with regard to nature and other-than-human beings, the trouble with this perspective is that it does not leave space for humans, if they are only ever individuals, to be part of a larger ecological community. Similarly, if other-than-human creatures are only ever understood as members of a greater population, the significance of the individual in relation to their species as a whole goes unseen. As Hawkins indicates, pressing environmental problems, such as the one which sees high degrees of conflict between humans and bears, for example, will be difficult to resolve if the roles of relevant players are only partially accounted for. Russell and Enns make a commendable effort to avoid such a distorted point of view by recognizing the individuality of each of the bears they interact with there.

Deliberately enacting a renewed perspective on grizzly bears that includes the recognition of individuals might appear to be an abstract undertaking, but in their relationships with Chico, Biscuit and Rosie, Russell and Enns demonstrate beautifully what this adjustment might look

like. Having travelled to Kamchatka already equipped with an extraordinary understanding of and positive attitude toward grizzly bears, Russell's and Enns's ursine interactions reflect this unique point of view. One example of Enns's recognition of intelligence, instinct and personality in the cubs is found in her discussion of their walking order. From the beginning of their time together, Enns says, the cubs always "walked in the same order: Chico-Biscuit-Rosie" (249). Enns, picking up on characteristics that define Rosie as an individual, had assumed that she acted as the caboose because she was the most curious and the most likely of the three to become distracted and lag behind (249). On one particular walk, Enns "noticed that Rosie was frequently looking back" (249) and upon coming up closely behind her while she was back-checking, Rosie gave Enns "a really annoyed look" (249). "Acting on a hunch," Enns says, she "moved into the line between Rosie and Biscuit and was at once rewarded when they both relaxed" (249). Enns goes on to explain that, regardless of what other meanings that moment may have held, it became clear to her that she had "misunderstood Rosie's role. She wasn't a straggler, she was a rear guard" (249). Shortly after making this adjustment, Enns says, "Rosie showed what a difference my breakthrough in understanding made to her" (249). She does so by grazing on sedge grass very close to Enns's feet, nibbling the grass into semi-circles around her boots (249). Russell suggests that this is an invitation from Rosie for Enns to trust her (249). In this moment, Enns acknowledges Rosie's singular identity in the group, thereby refusing to engage in a generalizing approach to her. While it takes some adaptation on her part, Enns works to understand what Rosie is trying to convey through her motions and her facial expressions and gradually becomes attuned to Rosie's instincts, intelligence and ability to communicate. She also demonstrates her awareness that she herself has a role in relation to Russell and the three bears that is determined, at least in part, by the bears' perspectives. Because Enns believes that bears are capable of much

more than what conventional wisdom ascribes to them, she is able to respond to Rosie in a manner that serves to further develop and strengthen their relationship.

People in North America will not likely find themselves needing to determine whether a particular bear identifies as the rear guard of their group, but acknowledging the significance of the other-than-human individual is still applicable to more common-place situations. In her text, *The Carnivore Way: Coexisting With and Conserving North America's Predators*, Cristina Eisenberg discusses the role that the individual will play in the overall resilience of the population to which they belong. She points to the concept of resilience as it was first defined by ecologist C.S. Holling, in his article, "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems," wherein he explores the value and insight that might be garnered by "viewing the behavior of ecological systems in terms of the probability of extinction of their elements, and by shifting emphasis from the equilibrium states to the conditions for persistence" (Holling 2). Eisenberg neatly synthesizes Holling's concept of resilience, describing it as "the ability of ecosystems to absorb disturbance and still persist in their basic structure and function" (32). She states that ecologists evaluate resilience by examining population connectivity as it relates to the genetics and overall health of a particular population (32). There are three levels at which resilience is evaluated: "At the smallest scale we find the *individual* organism, and at the next scale the *local population*, also called a *deme*. At the largest scale lies the *metapopulation*, also known as a 'population of populations'" (33). Overall resilience is accrued through each of these levels (33). Eisenberg illustrates this scale by using the grizzly bears of Banff as an example; offering a female grizzly as the individual she explains that:

A female with cubs plus two or three other bears that inhabit the same small valley in the park make up the local population. All the bears in Banff historically formed one

metapopulation, but Highway 1 and related human development has fractured it into two or more separate populations and diminished the natural movements and exchange of animals and their genes. To promote genetic connectivity and ensure that species don't become extinct (that is, that species show *persistence*), we need connectivity among local populations within a metapopulation. (33)

What Eisenberg outlines here speaks to small and large groups of bears by way of the local and metapopulation but the significance of the individual is inherent to this framework as well. A particular bear's sex and whether or not it is capable of reproducing are important factors to that bear's contribution to the resilience of the larger population. Similarly, genetic diversity among individuals determines the extent to which members of a local population can produce offspring, while the number of adult males in a region may pose a risk to younger bears, as adult males have been known to "prey on all cubs, including their own" (Eisenberg 90). Given, as Eisenberg points out, that the metapopulation of grizzlies in Banff has been fragmented by human infrastructure, the individual becomes ever more important to supporting resilience within the species because each bear will have something different to contribute to the overall population. In her recognition of Rosie's preference to operate as a rear guard for the group Enns does not discuss issues of resilience, but she does provide an example of the value in identifying particularity and specificity with regard to other-than-human beings, a shift in perspective which can be useful when navigating other aspects of engaging with all forms of wildlife.

Russell and Enns enter into their project in Kamchatka with a positive regard for grizzlies and the conviction that harmonious coexistence between people and bears is possible, but they are not naive to the potential for danger when living in close proximity to grizzlies, and their

time in Russia is not spent without witnessing some degree of violence between humans and bears. Russell says "I have never believed that bears are harmless and that people should be let loose on them. That would be terrible. Rather, I believed there needed to be protocols for the meeting of the two species" (9). Unfortunately, in 1994, during their first season in Kamchatka, Russell and Enns are forced to confront the consequences of not adhering to appropriate protocols in human-bear interactions when problems arise at Kurilskoy Lake between visitors there and a resident male grizzly. That they must contend with some amount of adversity with regard to negative or violent altercations between people and bears is an important aspect of Russell's and Enns's time in Russia because it demonstrates that, when they insist that humans and bears can coexist without fear and conflict, they are not blindly idealizing what might be possible between our two species.

In addition to being the location of a salmon research facility, Kurilskoy Lake is also where Russell's and Enns's guide, Igor Revenko, works as a bear biologist out of a small cabin on the lake (26). Revenko hosts a variety of different people and groups during Russell's and Enns's time in Kamchatka, including, during their first season, a Japanese film crew that is there to shoot a documentary about Japanese-American photographer, Michio Hoshino (75). During this time, Revenko and his guests experience difficulties with a local male grizzly who has become habituated to human food. This bear is believed to have ransacked the cabin for food earlier in the season and comes back to raid the film crew's food supply while they are out working (75-76). While visiting these neighbours Russell also observes the male bear eating food at the base of a filming tower as a member of the crew videotapes from above (75). Later on, Russell watches while this same bear feasts on fish scraps that have been left on the shoreline of the lake, no more than fifteen yards from the cooking area (80). In light of these tensions rising

between this bear and the people at Revenko's research cabin, Russell and Enns evaluate their own experiences on Kambalnoye Lake. The two camps become juxtaposed as examples of how human behaviour functions as the key element with regard to this interspecies relationship. Illustrating the importance of appropriate conduct with regard to living alongside grizzlies, Russell says, "Our own situation was so dramatically different. Our electric fence and our disciplined care not to leave food or garbage outside the perimeter had prevented the problems that were plaguing Igor and his film crew" (76-77). Because Russell and Enns are careful to maintain respectful boundaries with the bears they encounter, in relation to both territory and to food resources, they do not find themselves having to navigate the possibility of conflict with bears around their cabin. Their mindful and deliberate actions make a significant difference to their interactions with Kamchatka's bears.

Sadly, the situation at Kurilskoy Lake reaches its breaking point with the death of Michio Hoshino, who is attacked and partially eaten by the food-seeking male grizzly (87-88). His death forces Russell and Enns to confront the possibility that they have been incorrect in their conviction "that bears would not be dangerous to people without cause" (89) and consider the possibility "that bears simply had it in their nature to turn on humans" (89). Hoshino's death throws Russell's and Enns's entire project into question and requires them to re-evaluate their presence in Kamchatka (90). As a means of dealing with the doubt and anxiety that this event produces, Russell reminds himself of the many positive, peaceful and often profound experiences he has had with different grizzlies over the years prior to his coming to Russia and which inspired his and Enns's work there (91). He decides that these memories are not mere illusions, saying, "They were not slight and inconsequential things that I had teased out into a theory that was now breaking off under its own unsupportable weight" (91). After carefully considering the

circumstances of Hoshino's death Russell comes to what he calls a "rededication" (93) to his and Enns's project. He says, "I still did not believe there was anything in a bear's nature that would make the animal turn on humans for no reason. There was always a reason. In the story of Michio's death, there were so many reasons it was almost pointless to number them" (93). Russell is reaffirmed in his belief that people's behavior will influence the direction an interaction with a bear will take. He comes to understand Hoshino's death as a result of circumstances specific to him and the male grizzly who killed him, not as an inevitable outcome that could not have been avoided. With regard to his rededication to his and Enns's work in Kamchatka, Russell says, "I was more certain than ever that it was time for someone to go searching for peace with these animals. If no one did, the time would come when *all* relationships between humans and bears would just be a dismal memory" (93). This process Russell goes through, of questioning and recommitting to his work with Enns in Russia, is of crucial importance because it gestures toward the fact that, to some extent at least, their ideas about bears and the novel ways in which they choose to interact with them have been challenged and have withstood thorough, careful and thoughtful scrutiny. That their project survives in the face of a tragic event that has the potential to undermine and undo their work bolsters the validity and the significance of their endeavors.⁶

The protocol that Russell and Enns develop as the culmination of their work in Kamchatka is meant to improve the human-bear relationship on a larger scale by proposing alternative ways for people to act towards and think about bears. At the end of *Grizzly Heart* they outline a series of actions that can be helpful in the case of a bear encounter and suggest novel ways of considering the perspectives and experiences of bears. They encourage people to use electric fencing as a means of establishing boundaries with neighbouring bears, and they stress

the importance of eliminating access to attractants, such as garbage and toilets (345). Carrying pepper spray while in bear country and speaking calmly to bears in surprise encounters are also strategies they suggest will assist in limiting conflict (345). With regard to creating a shift in the human viewpoint, Russell and Enns say, “Always assume that bears’ activity is important to them and do your best not to interfere, especially when their need to fatten becomes urgent in late summer and fall” (345). They encourage readers to “appreciate the intelligence, instincts, vulnerabilities, and memory of bears” (345) and ask us to keep in mind that an encounter with a bear does not necessarily equate to danger or violence and that peaceful interactions are possible (345). Where relation and practice come into alignment with ethics and politics, the means by which we connect to and behave towards others become powerful tools with which we can effect change. The protocol that Russell and Enns propose for improving interactions and relationships between humans and bears insists upon novel forms of ethics and politics because it requires people to alter their perceptions of and actions toward bears.

Through their work with grizzly bears in Kamchatka, and their corresponding introduction of new forms of ethics and politics that pertain to the human-bear relationship, Russell and Enns offer an alternative to existing paradigms for thinking about and relating to other-than-human species. With their inversion of moral extensionism they demonstrate what thoughtful engagement with bears can look like when undertaken from a standpoint rooted in good manners and etiquette. They act in opposition to the human/nature dualism that privileges the human species and they engage with the bears in their midst with a sense of courtesy, fairness and equality. Their efforts show how revised ethics and politics that are inclusive of other-than-human points of view and experiences, and that are respectful of the same, can reduce friction between people and bears and allow our two species to live alongside one another peacefully.

What becomes clear in *Grizzly Heart* is that ethics and etiquette are inextricably linked. One moves the other. Where etiquette and manners are the labels we give to appropriate behaviour, that behaviour is informed by underlying moral principles that determine what is or is not acceptable. We extend courtesies to those individuals we believe are deserving of such consideration and when it matters to us how our actions will impact those around us. Those cases in which we do not exercise proper etiquette when interacting with individuals or groups are indicative of a dismissive attitude that does not regard their needs and viewpoints as important or worthwhile, or at least not as important or worthwhile as our own concerns. These judgments relate to our beliefs, values and priorities and comprise our sense of right and wrong, all of which constitutes our sense of ethics. To function within the bounds of proper etiquette, therefore, is to also function ethically. The converse is also true; that is, to operate without etiquette is to do so unethically. Equating a lack of manners to a lack of ethics may seem a dramatic leap to make, but it is not an unreasonable conclusion given that human choices and behaviours are guided largely by the beliefs and the principles we deem to be important. The interplay between these constructs serves as a useful tool for reframing human interaction with and treatment of other-than-human creatures, creating new angles from which to consider how we engage with the natural environment and making available new vocabulary to describe the quality of our interactions and approaches. What might we discover if we begin with an analysis of a particular human action or habit that involves another species and work backwards to examine the mental processes and the moral structures that drive them? How different the world might begin to look if we were to evaluate our encounters with other creatures on the basis of manners and whether or not our conduct is polite. Where human interests are given preference over the needs of other species, or where other organisms' requirements are not considered at all, we could rightly deem

the associated actions to be impolite or discourteous, in which case they would also be unethical, a charge that carries a great deal of weight. Being accused of acting outside of appropriate ethical frameworks is a serious allegation that can have major repercussions in human-centered spaces; transferring the same sanctions to our interactions with other species creates an avenue through which we can identify and name the actions we observe and hold each other accountable for our attitudes and our behaviours. Just as retaining the term "predator" but under erasure can be a signal of latent information about a person's perspective regarding carnivorous or omnivorous creatures, so too can the constructs of etiquette and courtesy be redeployed as indications of larger psychological frameworks, or ethics, pertaining to other-than-human beings.

RETHINKING PREDATION IN *THE TIGER*

In *The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival*, John Vaillant examines points of intersection and fierce conflict between humans and the predatory figure of the tiger; in so doing, he blurs the assumed stark contrast between humans and other creatures. Vaillant investigates a series of events that took place in 1997 near Sobolonye, a small village in the Primorye territory of Russia's Far East, an area of the country that is nestled along eastern China (21) and which is home to the Amur tiger (19). These events centre on two tiger attacks that result in the deaths of Vladimir Markov (15) and Andrei Pochepnya (216), residents of Sobolonye who are referred to as *tayozhniks*, or, forest dwellers (40). With extensive research into the history of the region and its inhabitants, as well as into the attacks themselves, Vaillant brings the human aspects of this story into close relation to the other-than-human. He acknowledges the impact of *perestroika* on the country, particularly on those living in the remote community of Sobolonye, where many people find themselves having to "cook with wood and draw water from community wells" (85) and otherwise rely on the forest for survival. Vaillant also illustrates that the struggles resulting from the political and economic failures associated with *perestroika* do not impact the human species in isolation but trickle through the rest of the natural world as well. In his narrative, the tiger population, and one individual tiger most particularly, are profoundly affected by the collapse of these human institutions. His engagement with the figure of the predator in the form of the tiger illuminates a deeply interconnected and interdependent relationship between it and the human species. Vaillant demonstrates that the rigid boundaries which are perceived to separate our species from any other are not only unreasonable, but are ultimately insupportable. If Russell and Enns seek to reconfigure the human-bear relationship specifically through the development of novel forms of ethics and politics, Vaillant's work takes this type of endeavour a

step further so as to de-polarize all forms of human connection with nature's other inhabitants. Through his examination of Markov's and Pochepnya's deaths, as well as of the place and circumstances in which they are embedded, Vaillant challenges the conceptual dichotomy that radically distinguishes humans from other-than-human beings.

Markov and Pochepnya lived in the desperately impoverished conditions ushered in by *perestroika*. With limited means of earning a living both men were made to spend large amounts of time in the taiga,⁷ hunting game, trapping small animals or collecting pine cones in order to feed their families. The prevailing theory around Markov's death is that he had made an attempt at a "big score" by hunting a tiger, the body of which could be sold for as much as \$50,000 American (85). Those investigating his death believed that Markov had shot and injured a tiger but did not kill it (133-36). Evidence suggests that, subsequent to their initial altercation, the tiger sought out Markov specifically. The scene at his meagre cabin outside of Sobolonye indicates that the tiger had followed him there and "had staked a claim to the premises and all they contained" (55). The snow reveals tracks showing that the tiger had repeatedly circled the cabin, stopping periodically to wait, and at one point had even lain down long enough to partially melt a patch of snow (55). All of Markov's belongings outside of the cabin – an axe, a washstand, a latrine, and his beehives – have been disturbed by the tiger, much of it chewed and destroyed (54-55). Most chilling of all is the bloody paw print the tiger left on Markov's door (55). Tracks in the snow also tell the story of Markov's death. Vaillant describes two sets of footprints, tiger prints traveling south and human prints traveling north "as if the meeting had been intentional—like an appointment of some kind" (14). At the point where these two sets of tracks meet, "the northbound tracks disappeared, as if the person who made them had simply ceased to exist" (14). The tiger killed Markov and fed on his remains over the course of three days (202). Vaillant

acknowledges that attacks are not uncommon in this part of the world, where there are “two species of bear, two species of big cat, and humans all vying in earnest for similar prey” (55), but he notes that when conflict does occur it typically takes the shape of “spontaneous, impulsive reactions to immediate threats, competition, or surprise” (55). In the case of Markov’s death, however, Vaillant says the attack “was far more sinister. It resembled something closer to first-degree murder: premeditated, with malice aforethought, and a clear intent to kill” (128). This sense of eerie malevolence also infuses the circumstances surrounding Pocheptya’s death. Shortly after Markov’s remains are discovered, despite this dangerous feline remaining at large, and in defiance of warnings from his family and neighbours, Pocheptya ventures out into the taiga to check the trap lines he had set near a friend's cabin (200-203). When he does not return home for several days a group of men from Sobolonye search for him, only to discover “a story very like the one at Markov’s cabin: that of a tiger who made no attempt to hide and who attacked an alert, armed man head-on from ten paces away—as if he was an adversary, as opposed to prey” (215). The tiger killed Pocheptya and fed on his remains as well (216). Vaillant notes that tigers are known to leave extremities from their prey, such as this tiger does in leaving one of Markov’s femurs at the scene of his death (15), but in the case of Pocheptya, the tiger ate in such an unprecedented fashion that the remains “were so small and so few they could have fit in a shirt pocket” (216). As part of his investigation into these events, Vaillant considers what may have driven this particular tiger to behave in such an anomalous manner, a process that requires him to examine sites of interconnection and interdependence between this other-than-human creature and the humans in its midst.

Markov's and Pocheptya's deaths prompt an investigation led by a man named Yuri Trush, the head of an Inspection Tiger task force, one of six such units in the Primorye area that

are meant to "investigate forest crimes, specifically those involving tigers" (7). Another of *perestroika*'s numerous negative effects has been a sharp increase in tiger poaching (Vaillant 8). Approximately one hundred tigers were killed in Russia between 1992 and 1994, as "professional poachers, businessmen, and ordinary citizens alike" responded to the collapse of the country's economy, and to its rapidly increasing unemployment rate, by taking advantage of the forest's resources (8-9). The tiger population has been targeted specifically due to how rare and valuable tiger blood, bone, and organs are, particularly in relation to traditional Chinese medicine and the black market that supports the illegal aspects of its practices (9). With the failure of the political and economic systems in Russia, for those who lived in the Primorye area, especially those along the Bikin River where Sobolonye is situated, "the laws imposed by the river and the forest are more relevant than those of the local government" (9). Vaillant says that while most of the people who poach game in this region do so "simply to survive, there are those among them who are in it for the money" (9). Inspection Tiger was born in 1994 out of pressure and assistance from conservation agencies around the world in the hope that Primorye's forests could be monitored and protected, tasking these units with deterring poachers and resolving altercations between people and tigers (9). In linking these moments together – the collapse of Russia's economy with *perestroika*, the marked increase in tiger poaching and the advent of Inspection Tiger – Vaillant shows that the workings of Russian society are tightly bound to the country's tiger population; they influence and shape one another to varying degrees.

In his review of *The Tiger* for *Quill and Quire*, Paul Gessell describes the nuance and detail that Vaillant brings to *The Tiger* as mere disruptions when he discusses his observation that "The story of the hunt for the murderous tiger is frequently interrupted by page after page of background on Siberia,⁸ its declining animal population, and the unwritten laws of the forest" (n.

pag.). Gessell asserts that "This flood of information is interesting, but detracts from the flow of an otherwise spellbinding narrative" (n. pag.), an assessment of Vaillant's diligent research that is rather limited in its scope. The story Gessell describes as "spellbinding" is the portion of the text that relates directly to Markov and the tiger who takes his life, while Pochehnya is not even mentioned. To say that Vaillant detracts from his narrative by bringing a broader range of considerations to it is to declare a problematic human-centered position, one that privileges the human and refuses to recognize the extent to which our species is imbricated in and influenced by other inhabitants of the natural world. The intersections between the people of Sobolonye and the tiger intrigue Vaillant the most, which he points out in an interview with CBC Books, as part of the Canada Reads program, saying, "One of the things that drew me to the story that became *The Tiger* was the way in which a solitary animal was able to make a modern community, equipped with cars, TVs, telephones, and firearms, revert to a Stone Age mindset almost overnight" ("John Vaillant" n. pag.). He goes on to say that "in the space of one week at the turn of the millennium, this tiger was able to strip away the fragile veneer of civilization and human superiority and replace it with a kind of ancient, elemental terror" ("John Vaillant" n. pag.). The sections of Vaillant's work that pertain directly to Markov's and Pochehnya's deaths are certainly compelling (and horrifying), but their deaths are a product of the broader milieu in which they occur. What Gessell fails to acknowledge is that an account of Markov's death alone, without some consideration of the political and economic factors that drive him to rely on the taiga, and therefore also precipitate his conflict with the tiger to whom he loses his life, would not only be incomplete, but would overlook a number of important implications and connections. In fleshing out the context of Markov's circumstances, Vaillant demonstrates that the event of his death is

one tendril among many which thread the realms of the human and the other-than-human together.

Vaillant points to an alternative to a stark human-animal distinction by populating his text with people who exist in both greater proximity to and in closer relation with the natural world and its other-than-human inhabitants, including so-called predatory creatures such as the Amur tiger. In her article, "Predators and Cosmologies," Natalia Rybczynski describes such groups of people as using "Traditional Ecological Knowledge" (105), which she explains is both "an accumulated body of ecological data" (108) as well as a "cosmology derived from a holistic perspective" (108). Rybczynski indicates that these "cultures see themselves as existing in symbiosis with animals" (105). Vaillant discusses the Udeghe, Nanai and Orochi indigenous groups of Primorye, in a similar fashion, saying that these aboriginal peoples conceive of the tiger as a supreme being and know it to be "a consummate hunter and the undisputed lord of the taiga" (28). This perception of the tiger has been manifested in the form of shrines erected in its honour and in the practice of hunters laying down their weapons to plead forgiveness upon crossing a tiger's path (28). These actions demonstrate the high degree to which the Udeghe, Nanai and Orochi peoples have integrated the tiger into their daily lives and also gesture toward their keen awareness of being in relationship with this particular feline species. Within this relationship the human players do not assume a dominant position from which they attempt to overpower or control the tiger; instead, the tiger is respected and even venerated, leading the people involved to act in such a way as to encourage peaceful coexistence.

With a discussion of the possible pitfalls of relating to creatures of the natural world in a manner that may personify them, Vaillant demonstrates his awareness of a potential criticism of attempting to relate more closely to other-than-human beings. He states that "Anthropologists

who write about indigenous peoples often note their tendency to anthropomorphize the animals around them" (175). Criticism of anthropomorphic approaches to other-than-human beings is endless, Vaillant says, asserting that such critiques also miss the point. He states:

these feelings of trans-species understanding and communication have less to do with animals being humanized, or humans being 'animalized,' than with all parties simply being sensitized to nuances of the other's presence and behavior. If you spend most of your life in a natural environment, intimately connected with, and dependent upon, the animals around you, you will undoubtedly—*necessarily*—feel a certain kinship with those creatures, even if you have no conscious intention of doing so. (175)

The concept of human and other-than-human beings alike becoming sensitized to the subtleties of each other's presence is of prime importance because it gestures toward a way of life in which the human species does not exist within a realm that is separate from the rest of nature.

Through his discussion of indigenous points of view, Vaillant is able to establish a long history of accepted interconnection between humans and other species within the Primorye territory. Although the Udeghe, Nanai and Orochi communities have decreased in size and density as a result of “having suffered from the same imported diseases and depredations that wreaked havoc on their North American counterparts” (28), these indigenous groups have had considerable influence upon Russian hunters and explorers (28). Born in 1872, Vladimir Arseniev explored and mapped a great deal of Primorye over the course of nine major expeditions, which he led between 1900 and 1930, assisted in large part by Dersu Uzala, a Nanai hunter and trapper whom Arseniev came to regard as a “wise and gentle protector” (28-29). As a more contemporary example, and as a way of highlighting a person who has been influential among modern day *tayozhniks*, Vaillant offers Ivan Dunkai. From Krasny Yar, or, "Red Bank"

(104), an aboriginal village that is “fifteen miles downstream from Sobolonye” (104), Dunkai, who died in 2006, was an elder of the Nanai community (104-105). He viewed “the taiga as the source of all things, in which the tiger occupied a place of honor” (105) and, “Despite spending more than seventy years in the taiga, much of it on foot or in a tent, Dunkai never had any serious difficulties with a tiger” (110). He operated within the conventions of Udeghe and Nanai hunters who make “efforts to propitiate the tiger, first and foremost by staying out of his way, but also by leaving him a cut of the spoils” (110). There are stories told in and around Krasny Yar of Dunkai receiving meat from tigers in the area as a form of a returned favour (110). This type of reciprocal exchange may be quickly dismissed by people who are more comfortable in an urban setting, Vaillant says, but when considered from a traditional *tayozhnik's* viewpoint it is a reasonable series of events, because Dunkai, in his own way, has provided for the tiger (110). These examples of aboriginal perspective demonstrate a tendency toward relationship and interdependence within the Primorye region which functions as an alternative to the position that insists upon a fundamental discontinuity between human and other-than-human beings. Markov himself would have been affected by these indigenous points of view as well. Dunkai oversaw a large hunting area within which he allowed Markov to erect his hunting barracks, enabling the two men to develop a "close but casual friendship" (106-107) and creating space for Dunkai's engagement with the natural world to impress itself upon the younger *tayozhnik*.

During Dersu Uzala's time, in the early twentieth century, a common belief among indigenous peoples and their Russian neighbours was that “if you killed a tiger without just cause, you in turn would be killed” (31). This understanding worked in both directions, however, as it was also believed that “if a tiger were to kill and eat a human, it would be hunted by its own kind. Both acts were considered taboo and, once these invisible boundaries had been crossed, it

was all but impossible to cross back” (31). The belief in ethics, punishment and reciprocal consumption is echoed in our contemporary context. When he sees Markov shortly before his death, Dunkai's son, Mikhail,⁹ understands Markov to be concerned about his encounter with a tiger and offers him reassurance by saying, "If you didn't do anything bad to him, he won't do anything to you" (179). Part of what makes Pochepnnya's death so difficult for the Sobolonye community to accept is that there is no logic or justice to assist in making sense of the tragedy the way that there is in the case of Markov's death (218-19). Because Markov had been suspected of shooting the tiger, his death fits easily within the rationale that a tiger will not harm a person unless a person does harm to it. As Vaillant says, Markov "had judged the tiger and, in turn, been judged by him" (219). Pochepnnya, however, "had been devoured while checking his traps for weasels" (219) and had not trespassed against the tiger, making it a greater challenge for his family and neighbours to come to grips with his death (219). There is no way to determine whether or not the tigers in the area have agreed to this dynamic of "don't hurt me and I won't hurt you," but this missing piece of information does not completely undermine the significance of such a configuration. These examples serve to demonstrate a longstanding tradition of awareness of interrelation within the Primorye region, where residents understand themselves to be elements of a grander ecological fabric and, as a result, strive, to the best of their abilities, to coexist with the other beings in their midst.

The potential threat that what we call predator species pose to humans often overshadows the considerable influence such beings have had in shaping some of the key elements we use to distinguish ourselves from our other-than-human counterparts. Vaillant takes up and refutes one major feature we employ to reinforce this differentiation when he begins a discussion around storytelling and written language. He considers the way in which, throughout our history, the

human species has spent a great deal of energy attempting to understand the world around us, working to comprehend the weather, the planet, the stars, as well as other creatures and people (236). Most importantly, he says, "we are compelled to share our discoveries in the form of stories" (236), noting that we place great significance in the fact that "ours is the only species that does this, that the essence of who and what we understand ourselves to be was first borne orally and aurally: from mouth to ear to memory" (236). He makes clear that the ability to share stories is a central component to how we construct our collective identity as a species. Vaillant also says that "before we learned to tell stories, we learned how to read them" (236), indicating that storytelling did not originate with us. He explains that "The first letter of the first word of the first recorded story was written—'printed'—not by us, but by an animal. These signs and symbols left in mud, sand, leaves, and snow represent proto-alphabets" (236).¹⁰ By his estimation, the human ability to tell stories, a highly valued aspect of our conception of our species and its unique standing in the world, is actually an adaptation of a process that is bound up in the broader natural environment and which is deeply entwined with other-than-human beings.

Vaillant is not alone in his thinking about the extent to which other creatures inform and shape the human species. In her article "Magic is Afoot: Hoof Marks, Paw Prints and the Problem of Writing Wildly," Pamela Banting explores the concept of intertextuality and suggests it is pertinent to "interpolate how animals in many ways made us human—and textual—in the first place" (32), saying that it was "nature which taught us to read and write" (30). In his text, *Deadly Powers: Animal Predators and the Mythic Imagination*, Paul A. Trout identifies predators specifically as the catalyst for storytelling among early humans. He says, "We became a storytelling animal to deal with our predicament as a prey species—to address our fear of being

hunted, killed, and eaten by predators" (26). These comments help to position human storytelling, and the writing that stems from it, in the natural world and among all of the other creatures who inhabit it. Instead of being a capability that is unique to the human species, reading and writing among people has developed as a result of interacting with and learning from other-than-human beings, including predators. This intimate degree of interconnection makes it unreasonable to continue to use these constructs to reinforce human distance from and dominance over other species. Certainly, people employ these tools and skills in ways that other creatures do not, but when the roots of reading and writing are taken into consideration it becomes absurd to view these constructs as strictly human capabilities that ensure a privileged separation between our species and all others.

Vaillant relates his consideration of the origins of human storytelling to the events around Sobolonye in his description of the hunt for the tiger responsible for Markov's and Pochepnya's deaths. He continues the parallel between tracking and reading when he asserts that "The notion that it was animals who taught us to read may seem counterintuitive, but listening to skilled hunters analyze tiger sign is not that different from listening to literature majors deconstruct a short story" (236). Vaillant represents the human and the feline elements as being engaged in the same process of reading and deciphering signs, effectively demonstrating a close link between the people involved and the predator they are hunting. He makes clear that the capacity to observe and interpret signs is not specific to the men responsible for the investigation and that the tiger is working through the same processes with a similar set of tools. Describing the circumstances of Trush and his Inspection Tiger unit in their hunt for this particular tiger, Vaillant explains:

Even as the men read his tracks, the tiger could have been nearby, reading them, deciding how or when to work them into the plot. Tigers, of course, are experts at this game, and they use the same methods humans do: pick up the trail of potential prey by scent, sight, or knowledge of its habits; follow it in order to get a feel for where it is going; and then, in effect, read ahead and wait for the prey to arrive. (237)

Vaillant describes tigers as "experts" in this process of stalking potential prey but notes that both tigers and humans use the same method for tracking their marks. Having already discussed the close relationship between human storytelling and the predator-prey dynamic of analyzing and tracking foot or paw prints, he continues to diminish the distance between people and other-than-human creatures by portraying the tiger and Trush's team as being engaged in the same series of actions. These actions correlate to the early forms of storytelling and written language that Vaillant outlines. He illustrates a group of modern men participating, through tracking, in tandem with a member of another species, in the early form of reading that allowed us to generate and establish our literate human culture. This depiction gestures towards a parallel between our species and all others, serving as a reminder that, regardless of the extent to which we have developed it, the skill of interpreting signs is a capacity that is common amongst many creatures and is an ability which we have been fortunate enough to foster and hone as a result of observing and interacting with the other-than-human beings around us.

Two articles by James Hatley, namely, "Where the Beaver Gnaw: Predatory Space in the Urban Landscape," and "The Uncanny Goodness of Being Edible to Bears," are helpful in understanding how the process of predation serves as a site of connection between humans and the natural world. Hatley says, "Nothing could be more intimate and natural than to be eaten by an animal in the wild, yet nothing could be more terrifying and seemingly outside the normal

scope of human experience (at least in Western culture) than this event” (“Beaver” 35). He explains that people create asymmetrical predatory spaces, saying that “in a humanized landscape nature is to be eaten and we are to be its eaters” (“Beaver” 35). He emphasizes our expectation that other beings will satisfy our needs and highlights our aversion to becoming prey to them. Hatley also makes the comment that human cultures are meticulous in constraining or eradicating the numerous beings that might make a meal of us, but stresses that “the relative success of this endeavor should not fool us into assuming that the underlying predatory nature of the earthly space we inhabit no longer makes its claim upon us” (“Uncanny” 14-15). The points that he makes gesture towards human efforts to control predation, to ensure that people do not become prey to other creatures, as one method by which we work to distinguish ourselves from other species. Val Plumwood makes similar observations in her essay, “Prey to a Crocodile,” in which she recounts her near-death experience with a crocodile while canoeing in Australia's Kakadu National Park. She notes that, “in the human supremacist culture of the West there is a strong effort to deny that we humans are also animals positioned in the food chain” (n. pag.). Just as Kevin Van Tighem makes mention of the numerous techniques we use to kill various predator species as a way to prevent them from preying upon us (*Predators* 14), Plumwood observes that we also create obstacles to predation in our practices relating to death and burial. She points specifically to our use of durable coffins, which we typically bury “below the level of soil fauna activity” (n. pag.), and the instalment of concrete slabs “over the grave to prevent any other thing from digging us up” (n. pag.). Plumwood identifies both practices as efforts to keep “the Western body from becoming food for other species” (n. pag.), touching on Hatley's discussion of asymmetrical predation by adding that “Animals can be our food, but we can never be their food” (Plumwood n. pag.). By exempting ourselves from the prey position of the predator-prey

relationship we situate the human population as being somehow unique to the rest of the world and its inhabitants and, as Plumwood puts it, render ourselves as "external manipulators and masters" of those spaces and beings (n. pag.). Both philosophers refuse to accept this exemption. For his part, Hatley considers the moment that a person may become prey to another creature, noting that "when predation lifts its head . . . a crisis is sure to ensue that puts into question the very modes by which we draw a line between ourselves and the wild" ("Beaver" 36). Here, predation, an event that would consume the physical human body and remove its known form from existence, is actually the site at which the separation between human and other-than-human beings begins to soften. Hatley extends his consideration, saying, "The stalking bear's gaze reminds me that my flesh is not only my own but also a mode of becoming a bear" ("Uncanny" 21). In this way, because of the interconnected and interdependent state of the natural world, earthly beings, human or otherwise, are always already linked through the systems and cycles that are necessary to sustain life. That is, the consumption of other creatures forces all of the planet's inhabitants into closer relation, making it difficult to maintain the notion of human exceptionalism.

Within his reflection on Markov's and Pochepnaya's deaths, Vaillant examines predation as a site of intimate connection between the human being and the other-than-human predator that the tiger represents. He describes Markov as being "transubstantiated" (130) and as having become "energy in one of its rawest, most terrifying forms" (130). These comments indicate a modification to the human position in the natural world, at least as it is typically conceived. By taking notice of the transformation that Markov has undergone, describing his new state as "energy," Vaillant situates the human body not as a powerful or masterful entity, but as a resource for another being. In this predator-prey dynamic there is nothing unique or singular

about Markov's physical form; his bodily tissues serve as sustenance for another creature without special consideration, privilege or value. Vaillant voices a similar observation in his description of the search party's reaction to discovering Pochepnya's remains, saying, "It was clear on this day that, in the taiga, the sacred vessel of a human being has no more intrinsic value or meaning than a wild boar or a roe deer, and no greater purpose beyond its potential as prey" (234). Bleak though it may seem, Vaillant demonstrates that, at a base level, the human species occupies a similar space as our other-than-human counterparts, one that does not acknowledge or emphasize our assumed difference and superiority. More interesting, however, is the fact that Vaillant also gestures toward the deep-rooted connection that is produced through predation, when the body of one being quite literally becomes the body of another. He says, "Markov's flesh and blood were driving a hungry, wounded tiger through the forest" (130). Metabolic processes meld these two individuals together, demonstrating that the flesh of the body is both one's own and also the means of becoming another (Hatley "Uncanny" 21). Markov's body now functions as fuel for the tiger, involving him in the tiger's physical, biological existence, as well as in its future movements and actions.

Hatley frames his consideration of enfleshed connection in another way, suggesting a profound relationship among all creatures who inhabit the natural world. He argues that our physical forms are an indication "that nothing that we are is in the first instance provided by ourselves" ("Beaver" 46). Elaborating, he says, "To be enfleshed is to be already in debt to all other creatures who have not only set the stage for our own emergence into existence but also have given us their very bodies so that we too might have one" ("Beaver" 46). This dynamic, then, casts our deaths as "an occasion for facing up to this debt, by rendering our flesh back to all living entities for the sake of their lives too" ("Beaver" 46). His comments extend beyond the

typical predator-prey relationship to include all manner of life and consumption, be they in microbial, vegetative, mammalian, or other forms, indicating that it is not only those species which we categorize as predators that consume the bodies of others. All species in existence must engage in this cycle of consumption in order to survive. The event of death and becoming a food source for another creature is simply an intrinsic part of the system that sustains us. The efforts we make to contain, constrain and exterminate predator species fool us into believing that, as humans, we have removed ourselves from this consumptive environment, into thinking we are no longer indebted to the natural world which allows us to thrive.

Vaillant's text is infused with an understanding of this give-and-take dynamic that brings all beings, human or otherwise, into relationship with one another. One example comes from his discussions with Mikhail Dunkai, who "had a good relationship with Markov" (174) and who has also had his own experiences with tigers. He describes one instance to Vaillant in which a tiger kills a wild boar directly outside of his cabin; having picked the boar clean, the tiger leaves one of the haunches, seemingly for Mikhail (179). Despite the fact that food, meat in particular, is always hard won in the taiga, Mikhail does not take the ration the tiger has left him, saying, "if you take it, then you are in debt and have to give something back'" (179). Knowledge of that possible debt carries a weight that Mikhail chooses not to take on. He explains that, "If you take meat from the tiger . . . you will feel that you owe him, and then you will be afraid of the tiger" (179). Mikhail does not necessarily understand himself to be inherently indebted to the natural world simply by virtue of his existence, in the way that Hatley describes, but he is clearly comfortable with the concept of debt and repayment in nature in some form. His perception that he would fear the tiger should he become indebted to it indicates a belief that he may be called to

repay what is owed with his own flesh. This understanding gestures toward his view of the human position being inextricably enmeshed in the processes of the natural environment.

The most poignant example of this intimate level of interdependence, however, is the image Vaillant provides of the search party collecting Pochepnnya's remains. Vaillant explains that Pochepnnya had ventured into the forest, despite warnings from his friends and family about the risk of encountering the tiger that had killed Markov, in order to catch mink or weasel (200); he "had been carrying an army-issue ditty bag with him in case his traps produced anything, and this is what they collected him in" (216). There is a sad irony in the fact that Pochepnnya's meagre remains are being gathered in the bag that was meant to collect the bodies of other creatures he had been hoping to capture, but there is a beautiful symmetry to this outcome as well. Certainly, this young man's death is heartbreaking, and that truth can be recognized in parallel with observing the reciprocal exchange that has taken place in the forest on the day he died. Hatley describes this kind of exchange as being part of a new form of old or traditional ethics "in which the goodness of nutrition, of eating as a universal, *inter-species* phenomenon, is acknowledged and affirmed" ("Beaver" 48). As an embodied individual, Pochepnnya had the potential to feed and sustain other life forms in the same way that he had relied on the forest and its other-than-human inhabitants to sustain him. Being a member of the human species did not excuse him from this relationship.

Countering the assumed discontinuity between humans and other creatures, Vaillant provides a thoughtful re-consideration of the ways in which people are supported by so-called predatory beings. Due to its conventional definition, the idea of the predator is most strongly aligned with the concept of consumption; very rarely, if ever, is this figure imagined to give back to the environment it uses to support itself. Contrary to this typical image that would cast

predators as consumptive beings that eliminate other creatures from their ecosystems as a result of their dietary requirements, Vaillant depicts the tiger as a provider for its particular ecological realm. Similar to Hatley's discussion of the way in which predation works to connect various elements of the environment, Vaillant describes a process of "passive food sharing" and reciprocation in the taiga that supports coexistence (110). He claims that this dynamic is rather similar to the communist ideal put forth by Karl Marx: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (qtd. in Vaillant 111), and goes on to explain that, "what the bulldozer is to communal trail breaking, the tiger is to the food chain: among animals in the taiga, there is no more efficient or bountiful provider" (111). This is the second revision Vaillant makes to the figure of the predator and to the concept of predation. In addition to serving its ecosystem as a point of integration, as a being who engages in predatory activity the tiger also gives back to the ecological system of which it is a part. Explaining the tiger's contribution further, Vaillant says that, "By regularly bringing down large prey like elk, moose, boar, and deer, the tiger feeds countless smaller animals, birds, and insects, not to mention the soil. Every such event sends another pulse of lifeblood through the body of the forest" (111). Vaillant is careful to note that humans are also direct beneficiaries of this ecological structure. He points out that such "random but rhythmic infusions nourish humans, too, and not just wolfish hunter-biologists. . . . Udeghe and Nanai hunters occasionally scavenge from tiger kills, and so do their Russian neighbours" (111). Where the tiger's acts of predation seemingly take from the environment, Vaillant reconfigures this process and illustrates how preying upon forest inhabitants is actually a means of giving back to and supporting the broader ecosystem.

Vaillant also portrays the tiger as an indicator of health and general welfare for a particular ecological community, inclusive of its human inhabitants. He says that if efforts made

to conserve and protect the Amur tiger population are to be successful, people must come to appreciate the value and necessity of this particular creature (300). To this end, Vaillant notes "the fact that an environment inhabited by tigers is, by definition, healthy"(300). The presence of tigers, he explains, is an indication that there are enough resources to support such a keystone species and also "implies that all creatures beneath it are present and accounted for, and that the ecosystem is intact. In this sense, the tiger represents an enormous canary in a biological coal mine" (300). His comments echo a similar observation that Van Tighem makes in his text, *Predators: Wild Dogs and Cats*. Van Tighem explains, "If a landscape still has predators, then it must certainly still have all the animals they eat, all the plants those animals eat, and all the habitats and connections that all those plants and animals require" (152). Both Vaillant and Van Tighem describe a network of interdependence in nature, one that inherently entwines the human species, whether or not we choose to acknowledge or accept the extent to which we are embedded in our surrounding environment and the degree to which it determines our quality of life.

At the end of Vaillant's text, the body of the tiger itself provides a corporeal representation of how intimately enmeshed the human species is with the rest of nature. According to Van Tighem, "Some ecologists call predators 'umbrella species' because ecologically, they represent so much more than just themselves" (*Predators* 152). In the case of Sobolonye, the tiger that preys upon Markov and Pocheptya comes to represent Russia's political and economic failures. Once they kill the tiger and begin skinning it, Trush and his men find that, in addition to the wounds the tiger suffered from their own and Markov's gunshots, the tiger had also been hit with "a steel bullet from another rifle and many pieces of birdshot" (282). They also found that the tiger had long been missing the end of his tail, lost either to freezing

temperatures or to yet another gunshot (282). As the Inspection Tiger unit continues to examine the tiger's remains, it becomes clear to them that "during its short life in the traumatic aftermath of *perestroika*, this tiger had been shot with literally dozens of bullets, balls, and birdshot" (282). Vaillant makes the suggestion that, instead of being the catalyst for the tiger's anomalous behaviour, Markov may actually have been "the last straw" (282), as this tiger had dealt with a great deal of human aggression and violence up to that point, as evidenced by the extensive physical injuries he suffered. The body of this particular tiger, all of the assaults and traumas that it had sustained, serves as a reflection of the hardship and desperation that surround it. Societal failings and the human struggles that result from them have been etched onto this tiger's body, illustrating that the realms of the human and of the other-than-human are intimately and inextricably intertwined.

In *The Tiger*, Vaillant illustrates that human and other-than-human beings are more intimately connected than we tend to acknowledge. Through his careful investigation of Markov's and Pocheptya's deaths Vaillant demonstrates how those aspects of human culture that presumably make us unique in relation to the rest of the natural world are in fact imbricated in and sometimes directly influenced by other-than-human life. He brings to light the collisions and the subtle brushes between human and other-than-human life, illuminating the staggering depth of our interconnection and interdependence with other species and making it difficult to claim that humans are separate and somehow fundamentally different from the rest of the living world. When the human position in the natural environment is reframed this way, so as to expose the inextricable linkages between us and the other-than-human creatures we share spaces and resources with, it casts a new light on how we function in the world. Suddenly, as Vaillant points to with his depiction of a tiger who has been harassed and injured by desperate, impoverished

people, our mistreatment of other species becomes a signal for dysfunction within the wider human realm.

The implication of this dynamic of intimate connection and mutual influence between humans and other species is that, whether for better or for worse, our choices and actions extend out in waves to flow through all aspects of nature. The decisions we make and the quality of our conduct are reflected back to us and within us through the health and integrity of the ecologies and other-than-human populations with which we interact. That being the case, a move toward respectful and careful engagement with other species that is mindful of the needs that exist outside of a human sphere is not an altruistic undertaking. Questioning our assumptions about the natural world, as Marty suggests we do with regard to so-called predatory species, and working to interact with other creatures from a place of etiquette and ethics, as Russell and Enns do, are not efforts made solely on behalf of other species; such endeavours affect the human experience as well. Taking steps to preserve, conserve and otherwise take care of the environments that support and enrich us, including their other-than-human inhabitants, is ultimately an investment in our own well-being. Conversely, when we fail to act as though we exist in relation to the natural world and to other beings, we inherently neglect the physiological, psychological and spiritual aspects of our own humanity that are intertwined in complex and nuanced ways with nature. When our engagement with our surrounding ecologies is considered from this standpoint, an abused tiger in Russia and a dwindling grizzly bear population in Alberta come to represent lapses in our ability or our willingness to attend to our own welfare as members of the wider environmental community. This lens helps to refocus the concept of ecological conservation away from a moralistic view of right and wrong, which, however desirable a wide-spread adoption of such a viewpoint may be among enthusiastic

environmentalists, seems to be difficult for some people to accept, and centers it on a paradigm of ecologically-informed, long-term self-preservation, something that is arguably easier for diverse groups of people to prioritize. This shift signifies a rearrangement of our priorities that moves away from immediate gains or gratification and toward continuous and lasting enrichment. Embracing a perspective that acknowledges our profound and extensive relation to and reliance on the natural world and the creatures who inhabit it, such as Vaillant portrays in *The Tiger*, is a powerful adjustment that carries with it the potential to influence and enhance the lives of human and other-than-human beings.

CONCLUSION

The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek, *Grizzly Heart* and *The Tiger* are texts that foreground the other-than-human and decenter the human by investigating moments of stress or conflict between people and members of other species, and by including therein a consideration of other-than-human perspectives and experiences. In turn these works challenge dominant concepts surrounding the figure of the predator, re-imagine typical forms of human engagement with those creatures we fear or are threatened by, and reconnect with the notion that our species is deeply embedded in the natural world through the processes of consumption that sustain all life. Marty, Russell and Vaillant each contribute to the development of a rhetoric of ecological relationship with writing that maintains unwaveringly that all creatures on earth, including humans, exist in interconnection and interdependence with one another.

Where Marty, Russell and Vaillant disturb conventional paradigms built around the notion of the predator and, by extension, illustrate our intimate connection with the other creatures in our midst, they do not suggest that in order to recognize the degree to which we are enmeshed in the natural environment each human individual must prepare themselves to run headlong into the jaws of a hungry carnivore. Rather, they implore us to reconnect to the idea that we are part of nature, to engage with the thought that we are linked to the environment on all levels, including the level at which we may become a food source for other members of our ecologies. These authors focus on particular individuals within specific species and within specific sets of circumstances, but the implications of their works extend beyond those sites where people and so-called predators intersect to permeate all manner of human relationships with nature. Whether directly or indirectly, each author asks us to consider the following possibilities: that our conventional ideas around certain other-than-human creatures, especially

those we call predators, might not be as useful or as appropriate as we may previously have believed; that there are alternatives to our current modes of engagement with those beings we have decided are predatory; that the human species may not be as unique, singular or exceptional as we have held ourselves to be; and that our bodies might rightfully serve as sustenance for other organisms because our species categorization as human does not excuse us from the processes, such as eating and being eaten, that are integral to sustaining all forms of life.

Accepting these possibilities would represent a shift in our ethics regarding our role not only in relation to other-than-human beings, but to the natural world as a whole. As Stan Rowe argues, this type of adjustment would reposition the human species as parts of that whole with no greater or lesser importance or responsibility than the other organisms around us who also contribute to it (3). This ethical transformation also speaks to Gary Snyder, who suggests that moving into a state of wholeness is the first step in liberating ourselves and the rest of the earth from the dichotomy that polarizes humans and nature ("Etiquette" 24). *The Black Grizzly*, *Grizzly Heart* and *The Tiger* function as stepping stones in that transformation. In the way that they advocate for and illustrate interconnection and interrelation among human and other-than-human beings, Marty, Russell and Vaillant make a strong claim for the value of wholeness within the human species and within interspecies relationships, providing questions and suggestions by which we might begin our work to attain it.

That these authors are able to so thoroughly challenge and unsettle the conventional view of the figure of the predator and the notion of predation is a cue to consider what other words or concepts might be problematically incorporated into our everyday language. The terms "vermin" and "pest" are employed in a fashion similar to "predator" and, when unpacked and examined, demonstrate an anthropocentric basis. These words can further illuminate other aspects of the

way the human species relates to the natural world through language, providing a platform from which we can re-imagine human and other-than-human interactions beyond those that involve creatures we categorize as predators. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines "vermin" as "Animals of noxious or objectionable kind," explaining that this word is "applied to reptiles, stealthy or slinking animals, and various wild beasts" and that it is "almost entirely restricted to those animals or birds which prey upon preserved game, crops, etc." ("Vermin"). The *OED* defines "pest" in much the same way, including as its third definition that a pest is "Any animal, esp. an insect, that attacks or infests crops, livestock, stored goods, etc. Also (less commonly): a plant that is an invasive weed" ("Pest"). The specificity with which these terms are applied mainly to organisms that impose on human agriculture and possessions relates them to the idea of the predator, except that in the case of "vermin" and "pest" a sense of disgust and annoyance replaces the connotations of threat and fear that the word "predator" carries. In all cases, however, the human perspective takes priority and the descriptors "vermin," "pest" and "predator" are wielded on the basis of our interpretation and evaluation of other-than-human beings without leaving space for their requirements and points of view. When these characterizations are taken as a set, it becomes clear that those creatures that frighten us, such as bears and tigers but also cougars, wolves and any other being with teeth and claws that might injure or kill us, do not exist in isolation as members of the natural world for whom the human species holds disdain. The terms "vermin" and "pest" bring reptiles, birds, insects, and even plant-life into that realm of contempt, revealing that there truly are no limits to what we find offensive or inconvenient to our own species. Just as Marty, Russell and Vaillant do with the concept of the predator, as a means to examine our relationship with nature's other inhabitants

we might begin to contemplate the extent to which our use of these additional terms may be misguided or altogether inappropriate.

Another area of language that it would be useful to interrogate as we explore our perceptions of the human species in relation to other beings, and in relation to our broader environments, is the terminology we employ to discuss our own consumption of meat. The words and phrases we use with regard to how the flesh of other creatures is eaten in a human context differ quite dramatically from those we apply to other-than-human meat-eaters. When people kill other creatures for food, such as deer, elk or moose, they are not often referred to as predators but are called hunters instead. We also refer to the creatures they hunt as "game" and the process of hunting as "sport." These terms are distinct from "predator" and "prey" which are most often used in other-than-human contexts and, as such, signal a difference in the way we perceive of the process of killing and eating flesh in each domain. Most people do not hunt and kill their own food, however, but purchase it at a grocery store after it has been slaughtered, butchered and packaged. In this scenario we can identify people as consumers of meat in two respects. We are consumers in the sense that we ingest the meat we purchase but we are also economic consumers, working in a system where goods and services are bought and sold and where other creatures are rendered commodities or products. At no point in this arrangement are people who eat meat identified as predators, and rightfully so since they are not involved in the process of killing.¹¹ How then, might we frame human meat-eating practices if not within the predator-prey relationship? Gerald Haslam makes an interesting comment in this regard in his article "Predators in Literature." He says that "if, in our urban world, many of us have lost the stomach for killing our prey, we still eat meat, but have assigned the killing to a professional class. We have become, or are becoming, carrion eaters rather than predators" (126). Many

people would object to such an unattractive characterization, but Haslam makes an astute observation. If we were to discuss the same series of steps in relation to an other-than-human creature, whereby an organism consumes the flesh of something that they themselves have not killed, we would describe the meat as carrion and call that organism a scavenger. These terms, however, are not typically used to depict our own methods of obtaining and ingesting food. Our systems of industrialized farming and the purchase of packaged meat make it difficult to draw a direct comparison to the dynamic between scavengers and found flesh, but the image that Haslam conjures is thought provoking. It offers a challenge for us to examine the ways in which we sustain ourselves and pushes us to ask questions about the assumptions we bring to those processes, assumptions that are largely coded in the language we use to participate in and describe said processes. *The Black Grizzly*, *Grizzly Heart* and *The Tiger* serve as effective entry points for thinking about these broader issues. Each text offers an example of how conventional language and viewpoints can be unpacked to reveal much about the human perspective and modes of relating to the natural world, providing a framework for how we might engage with other linguistic, conceptual and systemic structures.

Marty, Russell and Vaillant unveil points of connection, similarity or common experience among people, bears and tigers in their respective texts. In doing so, they help to reposition humans in nature, planting us there and demonstrating that the gap we perceive as existing between our own species and others is not nearly so wide as we may think. Where the idea of predation is brought under scrutiny there is also space to contemplate food and the practice of eating in a broader sense than looking solely at the killing and consuming that occurs between predator and prey. This association provides another site where we can think about how we are linked to our ecologies and to other-than-human creatures. While it is true that all forms of life

have a common need for food, across all human cultures food and eating hold a unique position. In Western culture one need only look to a typical dinner date or to the gathering of family and friends for large meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas to see that people use food as a means to both establish and maintain connections with one another. It serves as a conduit for expressions of joy, comfort, support, congratulations, and even wealth, and is a method of participating in a wide range of relationships, including those between family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues. These activities and customs around food and sharing meals are also a reflection of our connection to nature and of our ties to other-than-human beings. Just as our written languages and our affinity for storytelling have their roots in the natural environment and are mirrored in other species by way of leaving and reading tracks,¹² so too are the social aspects around food and eating in human culture an echo of our relationship to our surrounding ecologies and their inhabitants. Of course, this is not to say we have learned how to properly throw a dinner party from our other-than-human counterparts or that other species are directly involved with such a custom, but people quite obviously make and eat food together as a means of connecting to one another, so it is not unreasonable to imagine that these activities may stem from the fact that all life is interlinked through the processes involved in eating. When viewed from this perspective, the prominence with which food and sharing meals figures into human culture comes to represent an amplification of an ecological reality that entwines all species and that grounds another of our human constructs in the natural world. This magnification of something that is shared with the rest of nature makes us, to borrow Snyder's phrase, "uniquely 'human'" ("Tawny" 74), but does not divide us from or privilege us over the rest of the natural world. Inquiries into human relationships with the natural environment and with other-than-human beings may be

augmented by a consideration of what other elements of our societies have tendrils hooked into pervasive ecological dynamics.

The Black Grizzly, *Grizzly Heart* and *The Tiger* are not the only works that seek to explore the connections between our species and others. These texts reside within a larger literary milieu that engages with similar questions and issues around human and other-than-human relationships and which includes a more extensive selection of literature. In addition to *The Black Grizzly*, Marty has written two collections of essays that chronicle many of his experiences in the Parks Canada warden service, namely, *Men for the Mountains* and *Switchbacks: True Stories from the Canadian Rockies*. His portrayal of so-called predators extends throughout these works. In *Men for the Mountains* he represents bears in such essays as "Mustahyah," a piece that details his efforts to track a female grizzly through the Tonquin Valley in Jasper National Park, and in "Killing Bears So They Won't Die," in which he criticizes the bear management practices that were common when he was stationed in Banff. He writes about grizzlies again in *Switchbacks*, first in "The Bear's Mouth," an essay that focuses on a number of cases in which people have been killed by bears, but shifts his attention with "Black Bears, Poem Bears," in which he writes about learning to live in close proximity to this smaller ursine species. Other creatures make appearances throughout Marty's work as well. *Men for the Mountains* also contains an essay titled "The Highway Blues" in which he notes the intelligence and cunning of the coyote, a creature considered to be both a predator and a pest, by pointing to members of this species who have been known to look both ways before crossing the highway, or have been observed watching a bear dig into a burrow of ground squirrels in order to snap up the rodents as they flee their nest (233). It is in this piece that Marty introduces one particular coyote who has been dubbed "Spalding" because of its tendency to steal golf balls from the Banff Springs Golf

Course (232). Marty's theory is that, when there was no bear present to assist with the task, Spalding would use the golf balls to flush out a meal by dropping them down into a ground squirrel colony (236-37).

Marty is not the only writer who provides these additional examples of rethinking other species and our moments of intersection with them. For example, Farley Mowat writes about the strained human relationship with wolves in *Never Cry Wolf*, a nonfiction narrative of his experiences in Canada's Arctic with these often maligned creatures. Mowat rebuffs the trope of the wolf as a vicious predator and portrays it instead as a strong and capable social creature.

Ernest Thompson Seton provides a much earlier example of representations of other-than-human life in literature with his 1898 collection of stories, *Wild Animals I Have Known*. In the preface to this collection Seton makes the provocative comment that "The life of a wild animal *always has a tragic end*" (11). His emphasis on "always" and "tragic" raises such questions as: What circumstances qualify as or constitute a tragedy? Is it ever possible for the lives of other-than-human creatures to end without tragedy and under what conditions might that occur? How do humans figure into these tragic ends? There is at least one instance in which other-than-human death is not tragic and that is when one creature becomes prey to another. All bodies will ultimately be consumed by other beings, whether it be by a carnivore that hunts and kills for food or by the micro-organisms that decompose physical remains after death. Becoming a source of sustenance for another creature is an unavoidable outcome of life. This being the case, within the other-than-human context, a death that is related to feeding and supporting another living individual can be cast as a necessity and an inevitability, but not as a tragedy. *The Black Grizzly*, *Grizzly Heart* and *The Tiger*, however, offer specific examples of other-than-human lives that have ended tragically and the common element amongst them is the presence

and involvement of people. Sticky Mouth, B054, the grizzly who killed Michio Hoshino and the tiger who killed Vladimir Markov and Andrei Pochepnaya all come to untimely deaths because of their inability to understand or conform to the human expectations and structures that are at play around them. An examination of these so-called predators and the circumstances with which they must contend before their deaths reveals their interactions with people to be the real tragedy. Be it tourists and staff in Banff National Park or forest dwellers in Russia, people encroach on these creatures' habitats, constrain their movements and their ability to find adequate food, and ultimately kill them for attempting to survive. The assumption is that we are justified in these actions because of the need to secure human interests and safety, but that rationalization really only amounts to an expression of human privilege, dominance and control. It is not a new claim to say that people cause destruction to the earth or to the other species who inhabit it, but to reframe that destruction as tragedy brings to it a greater weight and deeper sense of pain and injustice. In locating specific examples of how and where these tragedies occur, such as with Marty's, Russell's and Vaillant's texts, we are able to identify the viewpoints, presumptions, beliefs, and priorities that allow them to occur. Such a nuanced understanding of our actions will, hopefully, empower us to move toward more compassionate forms of engagement with other-than-human beings.

Each of these works creates a new avenue by which to address our interactions with other-than-human beings. Taken together they carry a great deal of weight with regard to challenging the human perspective on those creatures we have characterized as predatory, as well as of our role within the natural environment. In conjunction with *The Black Grizzly*, *Grizzly Heart* and *The Tiger*, this broader array of literary texts creates space where we can begin to ask

questions of ourselves, our communities and our governments about the frameworks we construct around other species and the exceptions we grant for our own.

ENDNOTES

1. In an effort to avoid uttering the type of asininity that Derrida describes, I will refrain from using the term "animal," except where necessary to refer to source material, and will employ the phrase "other-than-human" instead. Irving Hallowell, an American anthropologist, refers to the term "other-than-human-persons" in his 1960 article titled "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View." He notes that the social sciences identify a person specifically as a human organism with distinguishable traits and social relations (143) but that the Ojibwa categorize persons far more comprehensively (145). In the definition of "person" they include "spiritual beings who are persons of a category other than human" (144), so that, in Ojibwa culture, there is no "distinction between human persons and those of an other-than-human class" (144). The *Historical Dictionary of Shamanism* includes this phrase as well, crediting it to Hallowell and the influence of the Ojibwa people, and indicating that it is meant to refer to "the widest possible community of living beings" ("Other-Than-Human Persons" 160). This quality of inclusiveness, which acknowledges but does not privilege the human, is why I prefer to use "other-than-human" in place of "animal." Other alternatives to "animal" include nonhuman, and more-than-human. To use nonhuman, it seems to me, is to emphasize and therefore privilege the human position, resulting in a process of identifying other beings through negation where the generalizing and defining feature is that they are not human. David Abram uses the phrase "more-than-human" in his text *Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. This combination is useful because it points to the fact that other species outnumber us, as we are a single species among many. It is also suggestive, however, of the supernatural, if not the superhuman, which may be

an apt connotation for other contexts but works somewhat outside of the scope of my interests here.

2. *Grizzly Heart* is written directly from Russell's voice and Enns's voice in turns, with the majority of the text being in Russell's voice, as such, my in-text references to them will alternate as appropriate.
3. Humans, too, are omnivorous creatures and also eat meat. It is interesting to note, however, that we do not necessarily consider our own consumption of other organisms to be an act of predation.
4. Cohoe died in hospital as an unfortunate result of a complication with his breathing tube (Marty 203).
5. For a more detailed discussion of the role of etiquette in human relations with the natural world, see Gary Snyder's essay "The Etiquette of Freedom" in his collection of essays *The Practice of the Wild*.
6. Russell and Enns must negotiate violence between bears in the Kambalnoye Lake region, particularly with regard to a predatory adult male who preys upon an unknown cub (234) and who they believe killed Rosie (282). I do not discuss these incidents in detail here because they concern interactions between bears as opposed to points of interconnection between bears and people directly.
7. Vaillant indicates that "The mixed (broad leaf and conifer) forests of Siberia are generally referred to as taiga. While the forests of Primorye differ in some very significant ways, they go by this name as well" (19).
8. These events actually take place beyond Siberia in the Primorye territory of Russia's Far East (Vaillant 8).

9. In order to avoid confusing Mikhail Dunkai with his father, Ivan Dunkai, I will follow Vaillant's lead and refer to Mikhail by his first name.
10. While Vaillant does not reference his work directly, Paul Shepard also makes a similar argument in *The Others: How Animals Made Us Human*.
11. Humans are sometimes referred to as predators but this usually occurs within the context of a criminal act. Under those circumstances the term "predator" is employed to dehumanize the criminal and create distance between that person and the rest of the human community. James Hatley comments on this specific use of the term "predator" as well in a note in his essay "Where the Beaver Gnaw: Predatory Space in the Urban Landscape." He says that using "predator" this way "allows at least one segment of our population to view human perpetrators of violence as 'mere' animals. This thought, combined with a history of viewing animals as a disposable resource, opens the way to becoming so hateful toward the perpetrator of violence as to be utterly indifferent to her or his humanity" (50).
12. Gary Snyder discusses what he calls "Nature's Writing" in his essay "Tawny Grammar," which is included in his collection *The Practice of the Wild*.

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