

The wolf as an icon of wildness

Romanticization and demonization

Endre Harvold Kvangraven



Master thesis in Development, Environment and
Cultural Change

Centre for Development and the Environment

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

May 15th, 2019

© Endre Harvold Kvangraven

2019

The wolf as an icon of wildness : romanticization and demonization

Endre Harvold Kvangraven

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

Wolves have been demonized and romanticized, feared and admired, figuring as barbaric intruders in some cultures and as kindred spirits in others. This thesis explores what wolves symbolize for different social groups in Norwegian cultural narratives. Through analysis of myths, legends, novels, music and film, the wolf is shown to be a key symbol that contributes to shaping cultural codes, while so-called wolfish behaviour is often merely human behaviour projected onto wolves. Demonization and fear of wolves are traced back to superstition, folk lore and Christian morality, while romanticization is linked to environmentalism and longing to reconnect with primal nature. Finally, ecological knowledge is shown to be an important corrective to narratives of demonization and romanticization in the current wolf debate.

Keywords: wolves, wildness, nature and culture, rewilding, wilderness, cultural landscape, nature writing, myth, folk tales, fairy tales, superstition, human–animal studies, wolf management.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Nina Witoszek, for invaluable guidance, feedback and encouragement.

I also want to thank my mom for supporting me while I've been working on this thesis.

I'm grateful to the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM) for giving me the chance to do this kind of interdisciplinary study, combining literature with ecology.

Finally, I want to thank all the wolves in Norway for making the country a little wilder. This thesis is dedicated to the memory of the Slettås pack.

Table of contents

Preface	ix
1. Staking out the territory	1
Central questions	1
Methodological, theoretical, and analytical framework	2
Background.....	6
2. Cultural history of wolves in Norway: a comparative overview... 13	13
International wolf representations: a brief overview.....	13
Norwegian wolf representations: from paganism to pragmatism.....	15
Gazing into the wolf's green eyes	20
Werewolves: shape-shifters and victims of witchcraft.....	21
Folk tales and common knowledge	22
Construction of a symbol.....	29
3. The last Norwegian wilderness: Mikkjel Fønhus on Finnmarksvidda.....	33
Human–wolf relations in Mikkjel Fønhus's stories	33
Fønhus's environmentalism in the light of recent developments.....	43
Summary and conclusion	45
4. Wolf–dog hybrids in popular literature: Gard Erik Sandbakken and Lars Lenth.....	46
Cultural history of wolf–dog hybrids: a comparative overview	46
Two novels about the Norwegian “wolf debate”	50
Summary and conclusion	56
5. Crossing the threshold: transformation, liminality, and wildness. 58	58
Reinventing Romanticism: Ulver's <i>Madrigal of the Night</i>	58
A fairy tale turned on its head: <i>The Company of Wolves</i>	68
Facing fear: freedom and security	73
Of wolves and gender	76
Of wolves and initiation	77
The wolf as a boundary animal: liminality and transformation	78
Nietzschean wildness: transgressing culture and reason.....	80
Domestication, Christianity, and capitalism.....	83
Crossing the threshold	85
6. Untangling semiotic knots in wolf symbolism	87
Wolf as symbol: an overview	87
Wolves and dogs: ethical implications of language usage	90
Wolves in the semiosphere.....	92

Wolves in folk psychology.....	94
7. Conclusions.....	98
8. Afterword	100
References	102
Appendix 1: Wolf persecution in North America as compared with Scandinavia	111
Appendix 2: Wolves in Norwegian children’s literature.....	113

Preface

It's been raining all day, rained most of the night, too, little pools of water gathering in the corners of my tent. If I had checked the weather report I might have stayed home. As I approach a lake, the view opens, offering a break from the undulating, densely forested terrain I've been hiking through. Out on the bridge a wind blows steadily from the south, funnelled through the valley, stirring up the water that reflects pale grey cloud cover. I cross the bridge and continue deeper into the forest. It's evening but still broad daylight, mid-summer in Østmarka at the edge of Oslo.

At a fork in the path I stop to look at a painted wooden sign the Norwegian Trekkers Association has nailed to the trunk of a spruce tree. As I turn back towards the path, about to start walking again, I see a large canine, about twenty metres away, yellowish grey-brown, wide eyes fixed on me as it crouches for a moment and springs smoothly onto the path, up a slope and out of sight.

It takes me a few seconds to realize it's a wolf. I run after it up the slope, hoping to catch sight of it again, but it's gone. I know there are wolves in Østmarka, have seen the episode about them in NRK's documentary series *Ut i Naturen*, but never thought I would actually see one.

I go back down to the scene and study the terrain. The ground is mostly either bare rock or covered in moss, but, after a while, I find its tracks in a patch of mud strewn with pine needles and decomposing leaf litter at the edge of the path. The rain has stopped, so I pack my camera out, place a pen beside the tracks for scale, and take photos. I try to make out a trail, but the tracks quickly disappear into the undergrowth.

A massive boulder rests against the hillside beside the path, and walking over for a closer look, I find an open space underneath, completely dry, like a cave. The wolf must have been taking shelter there, perhaps resting there through the day. There would usually have been other people on the path to disturb it, but I see no human tracks. Suddenly I realize I haven't seen any other people all day – it's the weather, too miserable; if it wasn't for the rain the wolf would have heard or smelt me coming. It probably decided to make its escape when I turned my back to look at the sign, and if it hadn't run out into the open I might have walked straight past

without even seeing it.

Wolves had been absent from Østmarka for a century, having been hunted out, when a pair established their territory in 2013, having wandered in from separate localities in Sweden (Holm 2018). A poll was organized by NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) in collaboration with the newspaper VG and the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (*Naturvernforbundet*), and the wolves were named Fenris and Frøya. In Norse mythology, Fenris is a monstrous wolf associated with chaos and destruction,¹ while Frøya (Freyja) is a goddess of fertility, love, and war, among other things.

Frøya gave birth to three pups, but after a few months, she disappeared. Two years later, Fenris mated with one of his own daughters – this can happen when there are no other wolves around – and they had a litter, but later his daughter was shot by a hunter in self-defence when she attacked his hunting dog. The necropsy revealed she had been poisoned. Fenris was found severely ill with mange at the edge of Enebakk soon afterwards, had lost much of his fur, and had to be put down. He too, had been poisoned, which may have weakened his immune system. Poisoned bait is sometimes found in both Norwegian and Swedish wolf territories (Liberg et al. 2008, 24). In 2017 a new male appeared in Østmarka, having wandered south from Slettås in Hedmark county near the Swedish border. He was probably the one who mated with the remaining female, but he vanished without a trace soon after their pups were born. In 2018, a mother–son mating occurred, the son only ten months old at the time, resulting in five pups, one of whom was found dead while another went missing.

I felt fortunate to have seen a wolf, but I wouldn't consider the encounter spectacular or sublime; it was already running when I spotted it, getting away as quickly as possible, and I only saw it for a few seconds. Since then, I've found wolf droppings several times in the same area, and submitted some of them for genetic analysis, but had no more sightings.²

Though some have reacted in a similar way, spontaneously following the wolf

¹ See chapter 2.

² The sighting was on July 1st, 2016. The wolf could have been a yearling born to Fenris and his daughter – perhaps the female who stayed on in Østmarka – but there's no way to be sure. I've found droppings in 2016, 2018 and 2019, and some have been genetically traced to the male born in 2017 who fathered pups in 2018.

for a closer look (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 89), I know my reaction is not typical. Some are afraid of wolves, and even though wolves tend to be shy there is reason for caution, especially if one is accompanied by a dog. Others shoot wolves, for sport, for pelts, to protect game or livestock, or simply because they hate wolves or consider them vermin. Wolves trigger a spectrum of reactions from love to hate, arousing stronger feelings than almost any other wild animal.

1. Staking out the territory

Central questions

This thesis aims at exploring what wolves symbolize for different social groups in Norwegian cultural narratives. Could it be that constructions of the wolf in traditional folk tales and popular literature have led to misconceptions and prejudices? Since narratives function as artefacts of cultural history, observing how narratives have changed over time can be a means of tracing processes of cultural change. My main focus is on Norwegian narratives, but I will also analyse narratives from other parts of the world for broader context and comparison.

Sociological studies of wolf conflicts in Norway have accumulated over the years (e.g. Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013), as well as studies of wolf attacks on humans and how to deal with fear and avoid potentially dangerous encounters (e.g. Linnell and Bjerke 2002). Cultural constructions of wolves have been examined (Kragerud 2013), and the formative influence of literature about wolves has been explored to some extent (Østerås and Halmrast 2015, 286), but there have been few, if any, in-depth studies linking Norwegian narratives about wolves to contemporary conflicts. My approach is qualitative, based on analysis of popular narratives that have either been influential or that vividly capture cultural phenomena related to human–wolf relations. I will study narratives in mythology and folk tales, in novels, and finally in music and film.

My research questions rest on the assumption that narratives both reflect contemporary conflicts and influence them. To what extent are Norwegian narratives about wolves rooted in historical experience? Has demonization of wolves led to an unwarranted negative image? Are reinterpretations that attempt to cast the wolf in a more positive light useful or counterproductive?

Myths that present the wolf as an animal of mystery may be a source of the wonder, awe and humility that are fundamental to environmental virtue ethics (Hursthouse 2007, 161–162) and deep ecology (Cafaro 2001, 14), but the tendency in environmentalist discourse is to downplay romantic notions in favour of a balanced or scientific – allegedly “objective” – view. Which narratives have more cultural impact – those that are romantic and idealized, or those that aim to be purely

scientific? What about those that construe the wolf as dangerous and mysterious? As narratives have a strong influence on children, teenagers and young adults, they can contribute to changing attitudes. What kinds of narratives are best suited to triggering the cultural change necessary for compassionate – or at least sustainable – conservation, for human–wolf coexistence, or for projects of rewilding?

Part of the wolf debate in Norway and other Western countries revolves around the question of whether or not wolves are a threat to people, with wolf opponents deeming them dangerous and proponents denying it.³ Wolves have been known to attack humans in unusual cases, so it is not surprising that a ‘cultural fear’ of wolves persists, but sociocultural factors also influence feelings of fear (Linnell and Bjerke 2002, 8). Studies from Sweden suggest that fear of wolves is linked to fear of the unknown, which intensifies as the actual threat decreases and the fear becomes more abstract (Dirke 2015, 107). Irrational fear may be reinforced by the image of the wolf as a demonic monster that continues to be generated by films and literature and by the media.

Can the paralysing effects of fear be counteracted by ecological awareness? Is the question of whether or not wolves are dangerous even relevant if a holistic ecological view is applied? What are the ethical implications of depicting the wolf as dangerous? Have we become unable to tolerate dangerous animals? Is it possible to reconcile the opposite poles of alienation from, and identification with, the wild? Wolves have become icons of wildness, for better or worse, an ambiguous role that leads to both romanticization and demonization.

Methodological, theoretical, and analytical framework

Interdisciplinarity is crucial to understanding the wolf’s role in culture (Masius and Sprenger 2015, 14). With narrative analysis as a starting point, I will search for underlying patterns and connections, taking historical and cultural context into consideration while keeping an eye out for hidden motives and processes that have been obscured.

³ The popular terms ‘wolf haters’ and ‘wolf lovers’ (Drenthen 2015, 326) can be misleadingly polarizing while the ‘anti-carnivore front’ or ‘anti-carnivore alliance’ (Skogen and Kränge 2003, 309) refers to a specific social alliance in rural areas. I follow Jessica Bell in using the general terms ‘wolf proponents’ and ‘wolf opponents’ (2015, 284). The former are in favour of maintaining viable wolf populations and the latter aren’t, without necessarily being personally involved in wolf-related issues.

I will use interpretative hermeneutical analysis (Ricoeur 1967 and 1981), making excursions to narratology (Bruner 1990) and semiotics (Lotman 1990) to explore the wolf's role as a symbol in shaping cultural codes. Cultures always operate with multiple codes simultaneously (Eco 1990, x), and wolf conflicts in Norway can be seen as conflicts between competing codes: rural versus urban, tradition versus modernity, manifested as hunters and sheep farmers versus biologists and wildlife managers. Entrenched interpretations of the wolf's role in the landscape are expressions of folk psychology, and as folk psychology is organized through narratives (Bruner 1990, 35), analysis of narratives about wolves will be helpful in trying to understand it.

In studying narratives about wolves, it is a challenge to separate real wolves from the fictional. When fiction is mistaken for reality, misconceptions arise, and these often have damaging consequences. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that generalizations about wolves can be misleading, that wolves should be considered as individuals within different wolf cultures. Where fictional accounts are obviously at odds with science, I use biology and ecology as correctives in order to point out inconsistencies (Robisch 2009, 16). I recognize that it may be impossible to avoid bias, that even facts about wolves are subject to ethical assumptions and subjective interpretations (Fritts 2003, 297). Cultural constructions are always political, and where political agendas are challenged I try to maintain positioned objectivity through awareness and acknowledgement of ethical context (Hale 2008, 11).

My ethical approach is grounded in rewilding (Soulé and Noss 1998; Foreman 1999; Monbiot 2013; Bekoff 2014) and ecology (Leopold 1949; Shepard 1998 and 2002), recognizing that all species have intrinsic value and that indigenous species are crucial to the well-being of ecosystems. Rewilding is both a conservation strategy focused on reforestation and reintroduction of wildlife as well as a broader ideology of coexistence based on practical and emotional engagement with non-human nature. When the term first came into use during the nineties it referred to protecting core wilderness areas and corridors between them to facilitate the free movement of wildlife, with large carnivores as keystone species (Soulé and Noss 1998, 22). In addition to biology and ecology, rewilding was grounded in ethics and aesthetics, responding to an emotional human need to experience humility in the face

of ‘the wild’, which can only truly be found in intact wilderness (24). It has later come to signify reintroduction of extinct species or replacements for them (Jørgensen 2014, 486), while for primitivists and eco-anarchists, rewilding is about relearning lost survival skills, going off-grid and back to nature, even returning to a hunter-gatherer existence (Jacobi 2017). For evolutionary biologist Marc Bekoff, rewilding is a social movement seeking reenchantment of nature, and a reevaluation of our role in it, based on empathy, compassion, and wonder (2014, 5, 148). Rewilding is an ecocentric challenge to conventional wildlife management.⁴

Rewilding means different things for different people, and the term’s plasticity can be confusing when contexts and purposes clash (Jørgensen 2014, 485–486). For the purposes of this thesis, however, all its meanings are useful, as I discuss the ecological importance of wolves, the role of wolves as symbols of wilderness, and the challenges that arise when wolves recolonize cultural landscapes. Hunter-gatherer-inspired primitivism and passionate conservation are contrasting expressions of the concept of ‘wildness’ discussed in chapter 5, where I draw on Martin Drenthen’s (2005) work on wildness as a ‘critical border concept’, using Nietzsche (1964; 2001; 1990) to elucidate its ethical and social implications. I use the term ‘rewilding’ in a broad sense, as an ecological process, a management strategy, and an ideology.

Ulvekonflikter (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013) is perhaps the most comprehensive account of current issues in the Norwegian wolf debate and is my main source of background information about contemporary conflicts. Taking a sociological approach, the authors show how wolf conflicts in Norway are mostly conflicts between people, not between people and wolves (15). Landowners and hunters may be even more sceptical of researchers and environmentalists than they are of wolves; wolf proponents are identified with centralized government and research institutions that are seen as threats to traditional ways of life (8). Wolf

⁴ Rewilding remains a novel concept in Norway, but elsewhere in Europe – in countries such as the Netherlands and Great Britain, where landscapes are more densely populated and more thoroughly humanized – the movement is gaining ground. There are few, if any, rewilding initiatives in Norway, but the foundation Rewilding Sweden (previously Rewilding Lapland) is working to rewild Swedish Lapland, seeking to protect endangered and ecologically important species, and the area it operates in extends into Norway (Rewilding Europe 2015, 12). Through wildlife-based ecotourism development, Rewilding Sweden has ambitions to improve relations between local Sami people and large carnivores such as brown bear, lynx and wolverine, but not wolves, which are locally extinct and have historically been in conflict with reindeer herders (Rewilding Europe 2017). Rewilding Sweden’s focus on exclusive ecotourism has been criticized (see Koninx 2018).

opponents and proponents alike can mostly agree that wolves are impressive, intelligent, social, and – above all – wild (77–78), but where some idealize wildness and actively seek out wild animals and places, others seek to maintain a clear line between the wild and the humanized (87).

Human–wolf relations reflect the broader divide between culture and nature⁵ (Masius and Sprenger 2015, 4, 14), while demonization and romanticization of wolves may be expressions of ambiguity inherent in modernity. Techno-optimism that seeks control over and protection from nature leads to intolerance of wild animals that constitute a potential threat to lifestyle and property, while biological and often unconscious longing to repair broken connections leads to either nostalgia or contempt, which in extreme cases becomes pathological (Shepard 1998, xix, 14–15). A primary function of myth is to unify societies, but when different myths are in competition with each other, they become divisive; sceptics and romantics cling to separate myths that refuse to enter into dialogue. This is one of the global crises of modernity, a dilemma arising from the nature–culture divide, initially a psychological construct but now also a physical reality where nature has literally become inaccessible to many.

Representations of wolves are based not only on experience with “real” wolves, but also with their closest relatives – dogs and wolf–dog hybrids – as well as their fictional variants – werewolves. Wolves are often depicted as the enemies of dogs, hybridization and the risk of it are used as arguments against wolf conservation, and the belief in werewolves has contributed to legitimizing wolf persecution. As these related canids and imaginary creatures play a considerable role in our constructions of wolves, my study will at times drift away from wild full-blooded wolves to dogs, hybrids, and the supernatural.

Though my study makes excursions to human–wolf relations throughout history, my main focus is on Norway over the course of the past two and a half centuries. My findings may have implications for rewilding, environmental education, human–wildlife conflict mitigation, and by extension wildlife

⁵ It has been widely argued in recent years that the concept of ‘nature’ should be abolished along with the nature–culture divide, that these terms are no longer useful and have become a hindrance to ecological coexistence and climate change adaptation (Latour 2017; Morton 2010, 95 and 2016, 58, 83). Nevertheless, the cultural and intellectual shift necessary for effectuating such a change has yet to occur and is problematic in relation to the notions of ‘wildness’ and ‘wilderness’ discussed in this study; I will therefore stick to the term ‘nature’ (as well as ‘culture’) for the sake of clarity.

management. By reassessing the wolf's role in cultural history, I hope to contribute in whatever small way to shifting the discourse in a more ecological and knowledge-based direction. That said, it is not my intention to go deeply into current political debate on wolves in Norway – a topic that would require a thesis of its own – but it forms part of the context and reflects how narratives have developed. I will therefore briefly sketch an overview of the sociopolitical background before I move on to the narratives that are the object of my study.

Background

Winter 2018–2019 is approaching and with it the annual wolf cull with all its associated debate, protests and conflicts, in the Norwegian parliament as well as in the public sphere. Forest owners with commercial hunting interests will join forces with sheep farmers against the perceived juggernaut of environmentalists, researchers, and policymakers – the so-called “urban elite”. Meanwhile, the genetic origin of Norwegian wolves is being investigated again, breathing new life into the conspiracy theories propagated by the organization *Naturen for alle* [Nature for all]⁶ that Norwegian and Swedish researchers have conspired to illegally release foreign wolves in order to replace the cultural landscape with wilderness.

In late 2017 – when Vidar Helgesen was the Minister of Climate and Environment – wolf opponents seeking permission for a cull were unable to find an area where wolves constituted a significant threat to livestock and instead resorted to arguing that private hunting interests had to be protected, that these could even be considered ‘significant public interests’. WWF sued the government for allowing the cull to go through, lost the court case, but appealed and have another trial coming up

⁶ *Naturen for alle* have their counterpart in the United States in the form of the organization Abundant Wildlife, ‘the American anti-wolf society’ (Marvin 2012, 174). The names these organizations have chosen for themselves are strikingly similar, reflecting that they wish to be perceived as pro-nature yet anti-wolf. In this context, the name and slogan ‘Nature for all’ implies that people who are afraid of wolves – understood to mean children and old women – have been excluded from nature. The irony that ‘all’ does not include wolves seems to be lost on the members of this organization. The name ‘Abundant Wildlife’ implies that wolves lead to decline in populations of game animals, that the latter should only be hunted (“managed”) by humans, not by wolves. Again, the irony that ‘wildlife’ somehow doesn't include wolves fails to register. These organizations are a reaction against the reappearance of wolves in areas where they had been driven to extinction – Norway, the Midwest – and share common concerns: suspicion of and conspiracy theories about central (federal) government as well urban (Oslo, the East Coast) researchers and policy makers.

in December 2019, which has the potential to overturn Norwegian wolf management practices.

Though the target population has been exceeded this year, wolves in Norway remain critically endangered. A hunting quota of 43 wolves has been set in order to bring the population down to the annual target of four to six reproductions, a target originally set as the ‘minimum viable population size’ by biologists but shrewdly reinterpreted as the maximum by politicians (Stokland 2015, 133). As a signatory to the Bern Convention,⁷ Norway is obligated to protect endangered species, yet the Norwegian government has decreed that the wolf population shall be kept at a critically endangered level. For the first time there are plans to cull wolves also inside the designated ‘wolf zone’ (*ulvesonen*), which was established as a core area for wolves where they can only be shot under exceptional circumstances. The Slettås, Hobøl and Mangen packs, a total of 17 wolves, are set to be killed inside the wolf zone.

Taking out the Slettås pack is especially problematic. This is the oldest and most stable pack in Norway; the original breeding female who founded the pack in 2009 is still there (Wabakken 2017, 7) and could well be the oldest wolf in Norway. Since there are no sheep pastures in their territory, loss of livestock is not a problem, though they have killed dogs (Aarbø 2014, 9). The main cause of conflict seems to be that they can attack hunting dogs and compete with hunters for moose,⁸ but in public debate the focus has been on fear – feelings of fear among people in the Slettås area have become a political argument.⁹

The pro-wolf organizations *Bygdefolk for rovdyr* [Rural people for predators], *Rovviltets Røst* [Voice of wild predators], *Naturvernforbundet* [Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature], *Ulvens Dag* [Day of the Wolf], WWF, and NOAH

⁷ Also known as The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.

⁸ Traditionally, ‘elk’ is British English and ‘moose’ is American English for *Alces alces*. As European and American *Alces alces* are widely considered to be the same species (though this is subject to debate: American populations are descended from European but exhibit some differences that have evolved over recent millennia) and fill comparable ecological niches, and the term ‘elk’ also refers to the wapiti *Cervus canadensis* (descended from European red deer *Cervus elaphus*), I will use the term ‘moose’ throughout to avoid confusion, a practice that has become common in academia.

⁹ On a general level, stable wolf packs rarely eat livestock, preferring moose, but when packs are destroyed or disrupted by culling, young wolves looking for a territory of their own tend to wander in. Lone and inexperienced wolves who are unfamiliar with local conditions and haven’t learned to hunt properly are more likely to attack livestock. Social stability may be more important than population size for preventing conflict with humans and livestock as well as for maintaining ecological integrity (Wallach et al. 2009, 1).

along with *Foreningen Våre Rovdyr* [Our Predators Association] filed complaints that the quota is too high. Conversely, hunting and farming organizations, forest owners, some of the affected municipalities, and *Folkeaksjonen ny rovdyrpolitikk* [the People's action for new predator policy]¹⁰ complained that the quota is too low.

Ola Elvestuen – the new Minister of Climate and Environment – is an enthusiastic wolf proponent. He even accompanied the Norwegian Nature Inspectorate (*Statens Naturoppsyn*) on a routine inspection of a den where he picked up a three-week-old wolf pup.¹¹ Holding the pup in front of the camera, Elvestuen said its name is Balder – the name of one of Odin's sons in Norse mythology – and that Norway has, and will continue to have, wolves. If he gives the go-ahead for culling inside the wolf zone it will be perceived as a betrayal by many of his supporters, and culling wolves inside the zone can conflict with the Nature Diversity Act (*Naturmangfoldloven*). If Elvestuen puts his foot down and blocks culling in the zone, however, he'll be breaking *Rovviltforliket* [the Predator Settlement], which states that even though Norway shall have wild predators, livestock grazing interests shall also be protected, and that the main strategy to achieve this is to maintain predators at fixed populations.

Though conflict is persistent also in other countries where wolves coexist with livestock, the wolf population in Norway is exceptionally low, while the population of sheep is exceptionally high. If the Norwegian wolf population wasn't shared with Sweden, where most of the wolves are, it would be unviable, and inbreeding remains a problem that leads to reduced fertility and fitness.¹² Sweden, in

¹⁰ *Folkeaksjonen ny rovdyrpolitikk* publish their own journal (Ystad and Solberg 2018), but the content of their complaint was copied and pasted from the complaint submitted two weeks earlier by the Norwegian Association of Hunter and Anglers (NJFF) – Akershus (Rovviltnemnda i Oslo og Akershus 2018), illustrating the close ties between NJFF and the anti-carnivore lobby. NJFF is divided on the wolf issue and some members are wolf proponents, but a significant minority wishes to extirpate wolves. Some environmentalists and animal rights activists demonize all hunters based on these individuals.

¹¹ The Norwegian Nature Inspectorate routinely visits wolf dens when cubs are about three weeks old in order to take samples and assess the pups' condition. The parents invariably flee at the approach of people, returning to the den as soon as they're gone and moving the pups to a different location. Disturbing wolves at their most vulnerable causes them extreme stress, but the scientific data that are gathered are useful. When endangered species are under constant threat, intrusive management techniques can be a necessary evil – the incidence of poaching would for example have remained unknown if a sample of wolves hadn't been fitted with GPS-collars (Liberg et al. 2008, 32).

¹² The wolf population shared by Norway and Sweden is dependent on dispersers from Finland or Russia to maintain genetic diversity. Finland's wolf population is currently in decline due to poaching and can also benefit from wolves wandering in from Sweden and Norway (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 212–213).

contrast to Norway, has cancelled this year's wolf hunt on the grounds that the population has declined due to heavy poaching. Poaching¹³ is by far the leading cause of death for wolves in Norway, Sweden, and Finland alike, accounting for approximately half of all mortalities in all three countries (Kaltenborn and Brainerd 2016, 179; Suutarinen and Kojola 2017, 15; Liberg et al. 2008, 16–17). In Finland, poaching appears to regulate the wolf population, increasing in response to population growth and dropping off in years when legal harvest is permitted, keeping the number of wolves at a low but roughly steady level (Suutarinen and Kojola 2017, 15–16). The same seems to be the case in Sweden and can potentially also happen in Norway.

Wolves loom large in Norwegian politics, even though most Norwegians have never seen a wolf, much less experienced loss of livestock to wolves. Most Norwegians have a positive attitude to wolves, but there is considerable resistance in some quarters, especially among hunters and farmers, though there are exceptions also within these groups (Skogen 2001, 203). Anti-wolf attitudes in Norway are largely derived from hunting interests, attachment to traditional land use practices, scepticism of centralized authorities and scientific discourse, and fear (Skogen, Kränge and Figari 2013, 8, 13). These attitudes are not predominantly based on facts but on cultural values and personal beliefs, and biological wolves are thereby overshadowed by sociocultural interpretations (Skogen and Figari 2017).

Wolves are often referred to as a burden, with a challenge being how to distribute this burden as evenly as possible, but wolf proponents mostly consider wolves an asset that enriches the community. People will probably always disagree about wolf management, but debates have degenerated to the level of propaganda and personal attacks that undermine the possibility of constructive debate. For

¹³ In Western countries, poaching is now often referred to as 'illegal hunting' or 'illegal killing'. Through the Middle Ages, European peasants who hunted game belonging to the nobility were labelled 'poachers', but today the word 'poacher' is mostly used about people from so-called Third World countries. It is a loaded term that has often been used along class or race lines to discredit disempowered communities. The term 'illegal hunting' makes it sound as if poaching in Europe is less morally reprehensible than poaching in Africa. While the voices of Third World poachers are rarely heard, vocal wolf opponents in Norway and Sweden have made public statements to the effect of justifying poaching. Considering the history and general usage of these terms, I have chosen to use 'poaching' instead of 'illegal hunting' in order to avoid Eurocentric bias.

Of course, hunting and poaching alike involve killing animals – 'theriocide' (Sollund 2017, 7–8) – and it makes no difference to the individual animal whether it gets killed legally or illegally. The terms 'management' and 'control' are often euphemisms for killing.

management policy to become sustainable, there needs to be broad agreement that current policy is at least legitimate, even if not ideal.

The media plays a crucial role in forming and reinforcing attitudes to wolves. Sensationalism sells better than relevance, and texts are often intended to shock readers.¹⁴ Prejudices against wolves are analogous to prejudices against immigrants, fuelled by the same kind of divisive rhetoric, with the media's narrow focus twisting public perceptions so that a handful of criminals can come to represent a whole population. Conflicts between wolves and sheep farmers are given disproportionate attention as the motif of "innocent" and "defenceless" sheep being killed by wild carnivores arouses more sympathy than that of forest owners looking out for their commercial hunting interests.

In the Norwegian media, wolves are often portrayed as a threat to sheep farming as such, but the number of sheep lost to wolves is negligible in comparison with other factors such as disease, infections and accidents, though wolves can cause considerable damage locally. The wolf zone constitutes approximately five percent of Norway's total land area, and – as wolves that stray outside are generally shot legally as soon as they become a problem – most sheep farmers don't have to deal with them. Where sheep are let out to pasture within wolf territories, the use of fencing or shepherds is necessary, but the technology for this is available, as well as government subsidies to help implement it. The fact that wolves generally prefer to prey on wild game rather than sheep still remains obscured in public debate, even though it was known as early as the beginning of the twentieth century (Lopez 1978, 289) and has been repeatedly confirmed by contemporary research (Zimmermann et al. 2014, 232). Other carnivores, such as wolverine and lynx, kill more sheep than wolves do, but are spared the invective wolves are subject to, which suggests that the wolf is problematic not as much because of what it does but what it represents (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 99).

¹⁴ The tendency to illustrate texts with accompanying photos of dead and bloody animals – whether a wolf killed by hunters or a sheep killed by a wolf – is tasteless at best and can at worst contribute to reinforcing negative attitudes. Apart from being disrespectful to the animals concerned, this approach encourages negative thinking, leading the public to care less about the animals than they otherwise might have (Bekoff 2014, 74). If the purpose of journalism is to inform the public and contribute to constructive debate, images of blood and gore are a counterproductive distraction: predator-prey encounters in the wild are no more violent than what goes on in the average slaughterhouse, but as the latter is hidden from public view it is rarely commented upon. Scare tactics undermine potential for empathy, and respect for animals decreases when they are portrayed in disrespectful ways.

As wolves are territorial and modern humans think of territory as property, wolves that hunt game and sometimes livestock on private property can provoke resentment from landowners. In the long run, however, landowners are likely to benefit from having wolves around. For one thing, wolves have the potential to alter the feeding habits and regulate the artificially high population of moose, which may contribute to reducing overbrowsing (Zimmermann et al. 2014, 223, 237).¹⁵ For another, a viable wolf population will give the market for photographic wildlife tourism a boost. The opportunity to see wolves in a more or less natural environment will be a huge draw for wildlife enthusiasts. Wolf and bear safaris are popular attractions in Sweden. In Norway, tourists go to Telemark to photograph golden eagles, to Oppland to encounter musk ox, to Tromsø to view whales, but wolf-related tourism remains on an experimental level and is hardly feasible because wolves are rare and subject to intense and unpredictable hunting and poaching.

As the wolf is a key symbol in our construction of wilderness (Masius and Sprenger 2015, 3), attitudes to wolves may also reflect attitudes to wilderness, and how rewilding can conflict with preservation of cultural landscape. Social constructions of landscape and land use have a considerable impact on attitudes to large carnivores in Norway (Ghosal, Skogen and Krishnan 2015, 272–273). In an international context, the Norwegian approach to nature management is highly unusual in that – instead of protecting wilderness – the focus is on protecting cultural landscapes created by humans through agriculture and pasture. This tendency also manifests itself in parts of Britain and is rooted in the negative connotations of wilderness in Christianity as well as the modern urge to control nature (Masius and Sprenger 2015, 3). Carnivores are integral to wilderness, but problematic in cultural landscapes. The ecological, aesthetic and recreational values of wilderness are weighed against economic value and biosecurity (Hermans 2015, 269).

As a result, wolves have become associated with the decline of cultural landscapes and the loss of rural livelihoods. The political party *Senterpartiet* – formerly *Bondepartiet* [the Farmer’s Party] – plays on this development, their cause of decentralization going hand in hand with the extermination of large carnivores. Those who value wilderness, on the other hand, tend to see wolves as symbols of

¹⁵ Since the eighties, the average weight of moose in Norway has decreased, possibly due to competition for food as the moose population has increased (Hjorteviltportalen 2018).

pristine and unspoiled wild nature. Only a few small and radical political parties appear to transcend this contradiction.

In short, the wolf debate in Norway embodies a cultural struggle between nature and culture, rural and urban, which dates back to the nineteenth century when cities began to modernize (Witoszek 2016, 214–215). The tragic irony here is that urban representatives of culture, for whom nature is largely an abstraction, tend to support conservation, while wolf opponents are largely farmers and hunters who demonize the wolf mostly due to commercial interests but drawing on traditional constructions of wolves and cultural landscape.

2. Cultural history of wolves in Norway: a comparative overview

In this chapter I will give a general account of wolf representations in Norwegian cultural history, placing these in an international context. I will take a roughly chronological approach, eventually focusing on anecdotes from the nineteenth century, a period with considerably richer source material than previous centuries, characterized by norms and values that still influence contemporary culture. To provide background, I will begin with an international overview.

International wolf representations: a brief overview

Variations of the Germanic word *vargr*, wolf, have been synonymous with criminal, outlaw (Rheinheimer 2015, 43), also functioning as a metaphor for misfortune, and anything dangerous and uncontrollable such as harsh winters and disease (Dirke 2015, 115). In Snorri's Nordic kings' sagas (*kongesagaer*) from the thirteenth century, wolfish behaviour results in being outlawed, while the life as outlaw, roaming the woods, living in hiding, in turn leads to wolfish behaviour (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 130). During the Middle Ages, the wolf symbolized 'anything that threatened a peasant's precarious existence', whether famine or the feudal lords themselves (Lopez 1978, 206).

Ancient Rome, on the other hand, was said to have been founded by two brothers who were suckled by a wolf (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 157; Masius and Sprenger 2015, 2), while in Alaskan Tlingit mythology, the Tlingit people are descendants of two wolves that became human by shedding their skins (Jones 2015, 175–176). In rural France, the wolf was a 'spirit of the crops', honoured with a series of rituals through the summer (Lopez 1978, 220). Wolves can control populations of crop-raiding wildlife, as was the case in Japan, where wolves were revered and prayed to at shrines throughout the country until agriculture was modernized and wolf hunting intensified during the late nineteenth century (Müller 2018, 193, 282; Fritts et al. 2003, 293).

Wolves have been loved and hated, feared and admired, appearing in myth wherever they occur. Hunter-gatherers have tended to see the wolf as a kindred spirit, but once humans domesticated livestock and began to think of livestock as property, this relationship turned competitive (Kardell and Dahlström 2013, 344). Ancient wolf stories are ambiguous, but from the Middle Ages to the mid-twentieth century wolves were demonized and persecuted, almost completely wiped out in most of Europe and North America. Superstition, religion, poverty, and industrialization all played a role. Since then, the wolf has made a comeback, this time as a wilderness icon, a flagship species for environmentalism.

We have developed in parallel with wolves, at times in close association with them. It remains unclear when the first wolf domestication events occurred, but humans and wolves had mutually beneficial relationships during the later stages of the Pleistocene, after which their domesticated forms – as dogs – diversified and spread as human influence became pervasive (Schleidt and Shalter 2003, 59). It is widely believed that humans and wolves alike first arrived in Norway by following herds of reindeer as the ice retreated, but wolf bones found in Nordland county have been dated to 31 000 years ago (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 155), suggesting that wolves survived in isolated ice-free pockets during the last glaciation and may have been in Norway before humans.

Wolves that cooperated with humans became “man’s best friend” while others became our enemies. Then again, dogs too have widely been considered ravenous, lowly and dangerous, with a shift occurring during the nineteenth century. Past prevalence of rabies probably played a major role in social constructions of wolves and dogs alike (Paton 2017).

Ritual hanging of wolves, in the belief Odin’s scavenging ravens would carry the demon possessing the (were)wolf’s body to the land of the dead, persisted until the eighteenth century in parts of Europe (Rheinheimer 2015, 39, 43–44). In Denmark, wolves and thieves were hung side by side to show that thieves were no better than wild predators (Tømmeraas 2017, 23). Hanging was also a common method of putting down dogs at the time (Paton 2017). Death by hanging was not necessarily dishonourable, however; on the contrary, it could be reserved for animals that were granted a special status. Sami people had a tradition of hanging dogs, not as punishment but as a method of putting them down that might have been considered

humane. According to Sami myth, dog approached Sami and offered his services on condition that he would be fed meat broth and that when he became too old to follow reindeer he would be killed by no other means than hanging (Turi 2012, 123; Fønhus 1986a, 109). The practice of hanging dogs and wolves, whether as punishment or euthanasia, reflects a degree of anthropomorphism, assigning animals moral agency or moral value that was otherwise reserved for humans.

Wolves' potential to become dogs partly explains why they evoke such strong emotional reactions. They are our next of kin in that they can be domesticated as pets, guard dogs or hunting dogs, and in that their cooperative social system is similar to ours. Like humans, wolves are loyal to family and friends, willing to risk their lives to protect those they love. In their psychology and social organization, humans arguably have more in common with wolves than with non-human primates (Derr 2011, 125; Schleidt and Shalter 2003, 57, 59). The way wolves protect and care for each other – their loyalty and empathy – is almost morally exemplary by human standards (Dutcher and Dutcher 2013, 24–25, 29). Wolves can be even more humane than humans, but as in human society, there is brutality, and violent crime does occur.

Norwegian wolf representations: from paganism to pragmatism

Wolves have been cultural icons throughout Norwegian history, but the role they have played has shifted radically at a handful of junctures. Very roughly, we can argue that wolf representations in Norway have passed through three key stages: a pagan or pre-Christian stage, when wolves played a prominent role in mythology and were associated with power; a stage dominated by Christianity and superstition, when belief in werewolves and witchcraft led to the demonization of wolves; and finally a post-Enlightenment, capitalist, pragmatic stage, beginning around the early to mid-nineteenth century, when the human population increased dramatically, superstition waned, religion lost much of its influence, and material concerns came to the forefront.

In Norse mythology, wolves could be malevolent or benevolent, functioning as active and autonomous agents rather than static archetypes (Robisch 2009, 225). They were associated with Ragnarok – the Norse equivalent of Armageddon, when chaos would break loose – and were often represented as dangerous and destructive, but in Norse warrior culture, war-like qualities could inspire respect and admiration.

Norse Gods possessed all manner of human weaknesses and failings – they were superhuman only in physical strength – and like ancient Greek gods, they were continuously fighting each other, their relations characterized by conflict and intrigue. The status of wolves in Norse mythology is ambiguous, and stories about individual wolves do not necessarily reflect attitudes to wolves in general.

Fenris, or Fenrir, a gigantic wolf, was son of the trickster god Loki and the giantess Angur-boda. Like his siblings, the death goddess Hel and the serpent Iörmungandr, he grew at a frightening pace, visibly bigger by the day. Where Hel was associated with death and Iörmungandr with sin, Fenris was associated with pain. Odin brought Fenris to Asgard, the home of the gods, hoping he would become tractable if treated well, but, with the exception of Týr, the gods were afraid of Fenris. Killing him was impermissible in their sacred and peaceful home, so they decided to keep him in chains (Guerber 1909).

Fenris broke the first chain they tried to bind him in, and when they made a stronger chain, he broke that too. The gods sent the servant Skirnir to get help from dwarves, who used magic to make a thin rope known as Gleipnir, which they claimed was unbreakable and would only become stronger the more it was tested. Fenris grew suspicious when he saw the rope and refused to let the gods tie him up again unless one of them placed their hand in his mouth. Týr volunteered, and when Fenris found himself unable to break the rope, he bit off Týr's hand. The gods fastened Gleipnir to a boulder to keep Fenris securely in place, and when he began to howl, they jabbed a sword into his mouth; the blood or saliva that came pouring out became the river Von. Only at Ragnarok would Fenris be able to seek revenge (Guerber 1909). There is a similar story about the hound Garm, so Garm may have been another name for Fenris (Davidson 1982, 54).

Ragnarok began when Fenris's sons Sköll and Hati, the embodiments of repulsion and hate, who had been fed the bone-marrow of adulterers and murderers, chased down the sun and moon and swallowed them, at which Fenris broke free and engaged Odin in battle. As they fought, Fenris continued to grow, and his jaws spanned the distance from the earth to the sky before they closed down on Odin. Fenris was in turn slain by Vidar, a silent god associated with the forest, who stepped down on Fenris's lower jaw with a specially prepared shoe while he grabbed his upper jaw with his hands and ripped him apart (Guerber 1909).

Apart from praising the wolf's strength, the story of Fenris could also reflect the fact that wolves were already a threat to livestock. Pasture grazing was not as important as it would later become, game and fish were probably plentiful, and the human population was low, but people kept chickens, goats, pigs and horses, all of which were vulnerable to depredations by wolves (Tømmeraas 2017, 22). The key difference is that where Norwegians in recent centuries acknowledge their fear of wolves, pre-Christian Norwegians imagined they had control over them (Tømmeraas 2017, 22). Seeing courage as the 'greatest virtue' (Guerber 1909), their attitude was assertive rather than defensive, but with the advent of Christianity, courage was replaced with piety.

The hellhound Garm was set to guard the entrance to Hel, the underworld, while Odin set the wolves Geri and Freki to guard the entrance to Valhalla (Tømmeraas 2017, 22–23), winning their loyalty by always feeding them himself (Guerber 1909), and the other gods gained control over Fenris by tying him up (Tømmeraas 2017, 23). Paradoxically, these wolves were both prisoners and guards – the gods used wolves as guards as a means to keeping them under control. Even though this can be interpreted as an urge to control wild nature in a wider sense, it was well understood that control was not total and had to be enforced continually, and that Ragnarok, when the wolves would break loose and wreak havoc, was inevitable. Life was seen as a constant battle between the forces of darkness and light, and the bravest warriors would be rewarded by Odin with an after-life in Valhalla, where they would slay each other and be reborn daily (Guerber 1909). The state of struggle was embraced, even sought, and relations were cheerfully adversarial; wolves came to personify danger and chaos, presenting a challenge even to the gods.

During the Viking Age, the most feared warriors were the berserkers, who were said to go to battle wearing wolfskins or bearskins (Davidson 1986, 149). This can be interpreted literally or metaphorically, but whether they dressed like wolves or behaved like them, there was a clear link between wolves and warriors (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 94). Scabbards and helmet plates pre-dating the Viking Age were decorated with images of figures with heads and skins like wolves and bears, but feet like humans (Davidson 1986, 149). The two large carnivores probably signify different battle strategies: where the bear is a lone but extremely

powerful fighter, the wolf operates in organized packs (150). Blinded by rage, temporarily oblivious to pain and injury, berserkers would sink into apathetic torpor once the battle was over. The berserk state may have been achieved in a self-induced, collective, dissociative trance (Høyersten 2004, 3250); or the berserkers may have been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (Shay 1994, 98). Either way, the wolf was a symbol of their fury.

As Christianity replaced paganism, with Jesus – the ‘good shepherd’ leading his flock of sheep – as a moral exemplar, veneration turned to intolerance and Christians demonized wolves for much the same reasons the Vikings respected them. Where Vikings glorified and reveled in battle, Christians ultimately sought to avoid it (though this is contradicted by the Crusades, which in some ways were a continuation of Viking raids and conquests). Where Vikings took pride in their ability to handle wolves, Christians feared and despised them; this is not so much a matter of positive or negative attitudes to wolves as the difference between warrior and peasant culture. Vikings could identify with the wolf as a cultural symbol, but this was unthinkable for good Christians. Berserkers were banned, and from a position firmly on the inside of the dominant culture, wolves were relegated to the outside, like the outlaws they became associated with. Demonization of wolves intensified with the witch hunts of the Middle Ages, and as populations of livestock (and humans) increased and transhumance became widespread from the seventeenth century onwards, wolves became the enemies of farmers.

There are parallels between the myth of ‘the free Norwegian farmer’ (Syse 2013, 223–225) and the figure of the Western frontiersman in North America: both were glorified as heroic national icons whose objective was to defeat the villain wilderness (Lopez 1978, 143) and replace it with ordered, open, anthropogenic landscapes (Syse 2013, 224–225). When steel traps specially designed to trap wolves were mass-produced during the mid-nineteenth century, they were marketed as a ‘symbol of civilization’ (Lopez 1978, 189).¹⁶

In 1845, a law was passed in Norway to facilitate the extermination of wolves, other large carnivores, and various birds of prey. Generous bounties were paid for each wolf killed. In addition to being a protective measure for livestock, and a means of allowing wild game populations to recover, the hunting of large

¹⁶ See Appendix 1.

carnivores was considered suitable training for soldiers. The extermination campaigns had strong popular support and went almost unquestioned (SSB 2004). Nevertheless, it was known that lax hunting laws were the main cause of the decline of game populations. In his draft bill, Halvor Heyerdahl Rasch – one of Norway’s leading naturalists at the time – wrote that ‘everyman had felt entitled to kill and catch game at any time, in any way, in other words, he had been a complete predator’ (Rasch quoted in Richardsen 2012, 39–40, my translation). A law facilitating the extermination of wild predators was thereby proposed on the grounds that humans had behaved like predators. It was the tragedy of the commons, but even though it was acknowledged that humans were the main culprits, it was perceived as acceptable to target wild predators in the hope that game populations would increase again. The hunting culture this fostered may have contributed to entrenching intolerance of large carnivores. When wolves compete with humans for prey, it is often seen as theft.

Modern, mass-produced traps, rifles, and poison made extermination easier, and by the late nineteenth century there were few wolves left in Norway. The tradition of using children – sometimes with guard dogs – as shepherds on summer pasture was gradually abandoned in favour of allowing sheep to roam freely with only occasional supervision. Despite having developed over the course of the twentieth century in the absence of large carnivores, this practice is widely considered tradition. Now that wolves have returned, there is strong resistance among farmers against resuming the use of shepherds.

From the mid-twentieth century onwards, a new shift has been gaining momentum as environmentalism has gained a foothold in Norwegian culture, and wildlife management has become informed by ecology. Today, almost two thirds of the Norwegian population have a positive attitude to wolves and other large carnivores, while less than a fifth dislike them (Krange, Skogen and Helland 2017, 13). The minority that opposes wolf conservation, however, is very vocal, well organized, and backed by strong business interests in the form of private landowners and the forest owner organizations NORSKOG and Glommen Skog. Broad sympathy for wolves in the Norwegian population is counteracted by the sheer intensity of wolf opponents’ resistance. Mainstream conservation values are challenged by peripheral land use practices, and wolves have unwittingly come to symbolize an intangible

urban elite.

Gazing into the wolf's green eyes

Dating from the fourteenth century, or possibly earlier, the folk tale of '*Vargkongen*' ['the Wolf King'] reflects common prejudices against wolves that still resonate today (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 122). Nevertheless, it is also one of few Norwegian folk tales in which some respect and empathy for wolves is acknowledged. Two outlaw brothers settle in a remote and mountainous area where they trap bears and other animals. When they bring the pelts across the mountain to sell, they find a woman who comes to join them, bringing along a flock of sheep that she tends. Living far away from people, eking out a living in harsh conditions, they are forced to earn the respect of the local wolf pack, and their relations with the wolves shifts from antagonism to cooperation (125–128).¹⁷ The turning point occurs when the outlaws have trapped and wounded the 'Wolf King'. One of them looks into the wolf's emerald-green eyes, reads a plea for mercy there, and decides to release him. After this, the wolves greet the humans with tail-wagging whenever their paths cross, occasionally leaving a moose or reindeer carcass near their cabin as a token of gratitude (128).

This story is reminiscent of a far better-known encounter from Aldo Leopold's classic essay 'Thinking like a Mountain' in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949). As Leopold – forester, wildlife manager and ecologist – looks into the eyes of a wolf he has shot, he sees a green fire in them, and recognizes the hidden knowledge that will be lost when she dies (1949, 130). Leopold had been involved in wolf control and had long believed that killing wolves was necessary to increase deer populations, but as he realized that overpopulation of deer leads to overbrowsing, to denuded mountains that take decades to recover, he came to understand the ecological importance of wolves (130–132). The encounter was a turning point that

¹⁷ The wolves appear in packs of hundreds (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 125). Wolf packs emerging from the mountains in Norway were traditionally referred to as a "*fjellskred*" – a "landslide" – of wolves (Müller 2018, 282). According to Barry Lopez, however, the 'largest authenticated report is of a pack of thirty-six in Alaska' (Lopez 1978, 26), and beyond that, a pack of forty-two has been recorded (Mech and Boitani 2003, 2). In legends and folk tales – as well as in modern literature – pack size tends to be just as exaggerated as the size of individual wolves. It remains a dilemma to what extent implausibility is a problem – if the wolves of literature are mere symbolic constructs, this involves a disengagement from reality in which wolves are carelessly misrepresented (Robisch 2009, 22–23).

led him to change his views about the persecution of wolves (Marvin 2012, 144; Kellert 2012, 45), but reassessment of the wolf's role was a logical outcome of Leopold's ecological findings, his recognition that wolves were a keystone species (Foreman 1999, 542). Ecological reasoning aside, both these stories reflect the powerful impression wolves can make on people, how a close encounter with a wolf can trigger a change of mind.

Werewolves: shape-shifters and victims of witchcraft

As in the rest of Europe, folk legends about werewolves are well represented in Norway. Typically, a *hamløper* – a shapeshifter, usually male – dons a wolf skin and turns into a wolf, running in rage, sometimes attacking people or livestock. A few hours or days later he regains his human form and wakes up with no memory of where he has been or what he has done, but there are threads of cloth lodged between his teeth (ml4005 in Christiansen 1958, 58; e.g. Leif Vestli in *Demokraten*, 1985, in Snerte 2000, 36). Such legends, which are compatible with those from elsewhere in Europe, are known from all over Norway, but were generally recognized as legends, even during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and are not documented in parish registers or other official documents.

The Norwegian word for shape-shifting – *hamskifte* – carries slightly different connotations than the English word. Both imply a change of 'shape', of form, but *hamskifte* can also mean 'change of skin'. In Old Norse sagas, as well as more recent legends, transformation could be brought about by putting on a wolf skin, or a belt made of wolf skin (Davidson 1986, 149–150). In some versions, the shapeshifter dons a bear skin and turns into a bear; the Norwegian term *hamløper* is not species-specific, and the word '*husebjønn*' – literally 'house-bear' – has been translated as 'werewolf'. The curse can sometimes be lifted by 'drawing blood' – slashing the shapeshifter with a scythe when he is in animal form – or by burning the animal skin when the shapeshifter is not wearing it (ml4005 in Christiansen 1958, 58–60).

There are, however, more ambiguous stories, in which the werewolf is seen as a victim of witchcraft. In a legend from Østfold, a farmer saw a wolf lurking around the barn on Christmas Eve and decided to leave a piglet outside for it. Several days later, he went to church, and after the sermon a stranger approached and greeted him,

said that he knew him. When the farmer said he must have mistaken him for someone else, the stranger replied: ‘No, we know each other. You gave me a piglet in the name of God on Christmas Eve, and that was what changed me back into human form. I had been bewitched, transformed into a wolf, and your good deed saved me’ (Leif Vestli in *Fredrikstad Blad*, 1975, in Snerte 2000, 32, my translation).

A similar story is known among the Sami, where a man threw a wolf some dried meat and, a year later, encountered a stranger who invited him for a meal. The stranger revealed that he had been transformed into a wolf, and that the man’s good deed led to the lifting of the curse. This transformation was brought about through *noaidevuohhta*, Sami shamanism, which was banned as the Sami were forced to convert to Christianity; a *noaidi*, a Sami shaman, had cast the spell that transformed the stranger into a wolf (Vorren quoted in Frandy 2011, 556–557).

The motif of an innocent person being transformed through malevolent witchcraft, needing another person’s good deed to break the spell, is widespread (Frandy 2011, 557). *Noaidi* practices are unlikely to have been familiar to people in Østfold, at the south-eastern tip of Norway, but the similarities between the stories are strong enough to suggest a common origin. In both cases, the reason why the stranger was transformed into a wolf in the first place is unclear, but his kindness and courteousness towards his benefactor suggest that he is an innocent victim rather than a criminal that has been punished. The Sami story could well be an anomaly that entered Sami culture from a foreign source, especially considering that it contrasts sharply with the traditional Sami transformation motif as described by Johan Turi, in which thieves are transformed into wolves by *noaidi* because of their wolf-like behaviour (Turi 2012, 118; Frandy 2011, 557). This supposedly kept Sami thieves in check, but when *noaidevuohhta* was banned, it led to an increase in the number of thieves (Turi 2012, 119).

Folk tales and common knowledge

In response to the often repeated and somewhat inaccurate claim that wolves simply don’t attack people, some authors have attempted to show how dangerous wolves really are. Kjell Snerte’s *Ulvehistorier* (ed., 2000) and Astor Furseth’s *Drept av bjørn og ulv* (2005) are based on village books (*bygdebøker*), parish registers, and other local Norwegian accounts, also drawing on sources from abroad to strengthen their

argument (Furseth 2005, 186; Snerte 2000, 8).

Snerte and Furseth have been dismissed as ‘amateur historians’ (Linnell and Alleau 2016, 360), but they represent a movement that seeks to prove that wolves are a threat to people (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 139), and which also finds expression in conspiracy theories, in Norway most conspicuously represented by Lars Toverud (2001). Within this movement, hegemonic scientific discourse is perceived as removed from and at odds with “folk wisdom” and “common sense” (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 144). Debate about whether or not fear of wolves is justified reveals a chasm between adherents of science and adherents of lay knowledge: the former are often highly educated, politically radical, and urban, while the latter are more rooted in tradition (Linnell and Bjerke 2002, 8).

The question of whether or not wolves are a threat to people is a moot point – all animals can be dangerous – but there is something about wolves that inspires fear in certain people, and these stories are worth a closer look for the insights they offer into cultural constructions of wolves. Anecdotes and legends passed off as truth reflect widespread attitudes and prejudices, and their popularity and durability suggest that they remain influential. Some of the stories recounted by Snerte and Furseth have been confirmed, most notably the story about the six-year-old girl who was killed in Sørum in 1800, the only record of a fatal wolf attack on humans in Norway that has been accepted as valid by modern researchers (Norske Intelligens-Seddeler, 1801, in Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 133 and Snerte 2000, 10; Linnell and Bjerke 2002, 7; see also Furseth 2005, 219–222). Most of the stories, however, are apocryphal anecdotes and folk tales treading a fine line between fiction and lived experience.

In 1826, in Skogsrud in Hedmark, a five-year-old girl was allegedly killed by a wolf when she went outside to use the privy at night, even though she was carrying a burning fatwood torch. Her parents could see the flame still burning from the torch in her hand as the wolf carried her away (Ingrid Nordahl Rautin, Løten Historielag, 1985, in Snerte 2000, 15–16). The year and place are given, and the girl’s parents are mentioned by name, suggesting some empirical basis for the story – even though wolves are afraid of fire and wouldn’t have carried off the girl unless she dropped the torch first – but Kardell and Dahlström have found that, in Sweden, a similar story persists as a legend, recognized as fictional (2013, 342). This is a recurring feature of

the stories compiled by Snerte, that they may appear to be true, and may be based on a grain of truth, but that closer inspection reveals subtle inconsistencies that call the entire sequence of events into question.

A stone memorial marks the spot on Korsmyra in Leksvik where one Anders Solli, a soldier, was allegedly killed by wolves on the night before Christmas in 1612. In 1899, the local teacher Christian Bernstorff Moholdt published a ballad in which the story is vividly summarized, along with some background information about the incident (Tømmeraas 2017, 68; Asbjørn Steen Leksvik, *Leksvik Bygdebok*, 1973, in Snerte 2000, 125–127). The soldier is attacked by a pack of wolves, kills one of them with his sabre, and escapes while the other wolves are occupied with eating their fallen pack member; when he is attacked a second time, he is unable to draw his blade because the blood has frozen in the scabbard, and is killed (Tømmeraas 2017, 53). The story contains several familiar hallmarks of a folk legend and is now widely recognized as such (Bevanger 2012, 32). As it has been passed down through the centuries it has, like most legends, undergone modifications to render it more compelling and to fit with local geographies, surfacing in slightly different versions in a range of locations. Tømmeraas has found a total of fifteen versions of the story in Scandinavia; the details vary, but the basic plot elements are the same (2017, 51–55).

One of the most widespread legends about wolves recurs in a supposed wolf encounter on Rødenessjøen in Østfold at an unspecified time during the eighteenth century (R. Elwin Myhrvold, *Rødenes Gårdshistorie*, 1962, in Snerte 2000, 11–12). An unidentified man from outside the local community had been visiting ‘relatives or friends’ and was traveling away by horse-drawn sledge across a frozen lake in moonlight with his wife and six children, including an infant. They heard howling, and saw about forty wolves up ahead, at which he whipped the horse and they charged straight through the pack as he fired his muzzle-loader, killing one of the wolves, who was immediately devoured by the others. When the wolves continued pursuit he fired again, killing another wolf who was also quickly eaten, but the pack was gaining on them, the horse getting tired, and he didn’t have time to get another shot in, perhaps needing time to reload. As a last resort, he threw their infant to the wolves, who got held up fighting over it while the rest of the family arrived safely at the shore where there were lights and men with rifles came running to help. He

thereby saved himself, his wife, and five of his children by sacrificing the youngest, an infant. At the end, the question of whether what he did was right or wrong is raised and left open (11–12).

The story replicates what Barry Lopez calls ‘the most oft-repeated wolf scene in literature, its apotheosis being the scene in Robert Browning’s “Ivan Ivanovitch” in *Dramatic Idylls*, where the mother throws her children to the wolves’ (Lopez 1978, 268). Browning’s source may have been *The Englishwoman in Russia*, an 1855 book by an anonymous author (Cohen 2009, 53). In Willy Cather’s *My Ántonia*, the driver throws ‘a bride and groom’ who are traveling with him to the wolves; again, the setting is at night in winter (Lopez 1978, 268). In 1911, the *New York Times* reported a story from Russia of a bride and groom being thrown from a sledge by members of their wedding party to be devoured by wolves (Marvin 2012, 72). A range of similar stories have been recorded among Russian or Russian-Germanic immigrants to the United States, though it has perhaps not entered into folklore as such (Cohen 2009, 54, 56–57). There is also another Norwegian version, about a sledge driver transporting a load of hay across the frozen lake Losna in Gudbrandsdalen; he takes his dog with him for protection and ends up throwing it to the wolves to save himself (Ivar Kleiven, *Ringebu*, 1928, in Snerte 2000, 63).

One of the most elaborate versions of the story is recounted by Edvard Elsrud in his 1980 book *Gråbein og gråbeintider*. It should be noted here that in contrast to Snerte and Furseth, Elsrud is sympathetic to the plight of wolves, that his approach is characterized by fascination rather than fear, and that he was writing at a time when wolves were functionally extinct in Norway. He cites one von Eymern, a German forester who worked as a forest inspector by the Altai Mountains in south-western Siberia during the 1920s. In this version, a mother throws two of her children to the wolves, but they nevertheless catch up and kill everyone except the coachman, who escapes on horseback. When the terrified coachman arrives in the nearest village, he finds help and returns to the scene, armed for a bloody showdown with the wolves (Elsrud 1980, 61–64).

Wherever this story – sometimes with a bride and groom, sometimes with children, always in winter at night – originated, the image of wolves chasing after terrified people on a sledge drawn by a tiring horse through cold and darkness is memorable, a worst-case scenario, ‘a description of the fears of wolf attacks at their

most nightmarish and monstrous' (Marvin 2012, 72). The wolves are portrayed as ravenous cannibals, but even though the story is completely implausible (Robisch 2009, 22–23), vaguely similar encounters may have occurred. Wolves have been known to chase after horses.

The main twist lies in the behaviour of people, who throw each other to the wolves. The moral question at the end is consistent with the story's status as a legend but unusual in that there is no straightforward answer to it. From a utilitarian point of view, some might argue that it is right to sacrifice one to save the many when no other courses of action are available, but nineteenth-century Christian deontology would have condemned such actions as a matter of principle. Traditional Western European wolf stories tend to be morally black-and-white: wolf as villain; sheep, children and women as victims; men as heroes, protective saviour-figures. This story is tragic in that there is nothing heroic about it, while the wolves are mere symbols of unbridled malevolence.

Anecdotal wolf stories from nineteenth-century Norway are often set at night in winter. The backdrop of cold and darkness renders encounters with wolves all the more frightening, but since wolves do tend to descend into populated valleys during extreme cold, the setting is probably rooted in actual experience to some extent. The typical situation is that someone is traveling through the forest or across a lake – on foot, on skis or snowshoes, on horseback or a sledge – and is pursued by wolves. The wolves are kept at a distance by dragging behind a branch, bush, or a rope with a colourful piece of cloth attached, or simply by shouting and waving or attacking the wolves with an axe, pole, or heavy stick (Snerte 2000, 18, 19, 49, 55). Sometimes the wolves howl while pursuing their prey (11, 52), underscoring the fictional quality of these stories, as it is now well-known that howling is mostly a social activity, rarely if ever done while hunting (Lopez 1978, 38).

As Snerte points out in his foreword, stories from Finnmark are conspicuously scarce due to a lack of written sources, even though wolves may have been more frequently encountered there than elsewhere in Norway (2000, 7). The one story from Finnmark he does include is an excerpt from the classic *Lajla* by Jens Andreas Friis, which he neglects to mention is a work of fiction (1956, in Snerte 2000, 144–148). Though Snerte acknowledges that he has not attempted to fact-check his sources, that his work has simply been that of compiling texts (2000, 7),

including fiction without labelling it as such in an anthology of allegedly historical accounts is deeply misleading. If he could use works of fiction as historical sources it makes one wonder why he didn't include more of them – it is in the nature of fictional stories to be driven by conflict, and this serves Snerte's purposes well.

Frightening stories tend to be remembered, and it is easy to forget that for each dramatic encounter with wolves there were untold numbers of mundane encounters. In a story from Voll in Møre og Romsdal, it is freely admitted that encounters with bears tended to be remembered because they were rare, while encounters with wolves were so frequent that they 'flowed together like the sighing of a river' (*Bygdaboka for Voll*, 1979, in Snerte 2000, 106–107, my translation). One Andreas Hansen from Østfold writes that he doesn't understand it when he reads about possible wolf attacks on people: he was a shepherd from the age of six, and even as a little boy he could chase off three wolves on his own; wolves would immediately attack the sheep if he went away, but there was never any risk of attack as long as he kept a careful eye on them (Andreas Hansen, *En Tidsbetragtning*, 1904, in Snerte 2000, 20–21).

Some are non-events: a story from Romsdal begins with a claim that wolves would terrorize horses and little boys, and that pregnant women had to avoid the forest because of the danger of carnivores.¹⁸ The setting – in winter at dusk – creates atmosphere, but the only thing that actually happens is that a little boy sees six wolves standing with their paws resting on a fence at the edge of a field where he is playing and swiftly runs inside (Romsdal Sogelag, *Årsskrift*, 1994, in Snerte 2000, 108). The narrator is merely dwelling on fear, and the experience could even be a false memory, the details added in retrospect. Similar stories where nothing happens except that someone was afraid to walk through the woods because there were wolves around are more indicative of boredom, of a lack of drama in everyday life, than of actual conflict (e.g. Ånen Årli, *Humor og folkeminne på det gamle Kvinesdal*, 1982, in Snerte 2000, 85).

There are accounts of two separate occasions when a wolf looked in through a living room window at children, its front paws pressed against the glass – scary, but

¹⁸ In Norway, there is a persistent belief that pregnant women are more likely than others to be attacked by bears (Furseth 2005, 30–31), but in Sami tradition it is believed that bears try to avoid attacking women; on encountering a bear, a woman supposedly only had to lift up her skirt in order to be safe from attack (Davidson 1986, 147).

not perceived as a real danger (Ola Tronsmoen, Alvdal, citing S. Nergård, in Snerte 2000, 56; Ånen Årli, *Humor og folkeminne på det gamle Kvinesdal*, 1982, in Snerte 2000, 86). In the event that these anecdotes are true, the wolves were probably attracted to the smell of food: when wolves approach human settlements it can signal competition for resources and risk of attack, but also potential for domestication.

Elsrud recounts a folk tale he heard as a child about how a pig stuck its snout out of a hatch in the barn wall and was mauled to death by wolves; while one wolf kept a tight grip around the pig's snout with its jaws, the others bit off chunks of it until nothing was left but bone fragments, at which the pig slumped dead on the floor (1980, 16). Mikkjel Fønhus includes a variation of this folk tale in his short story 'Ulveul ved Valesjå': here, the victim is not a pig but a goat, and the background is that exceptionally warm weather led the milkmaid to leave the hatch in the barn wall open overnight (1978b, 97). When she returned in the morning, she found a headless goat lying beside a pool of blood on the floor below the hatch. She called the farmer, and he found large pawprints and more blood in the snow on the ground outside. During the night, a wolf had approached the barn and the goat had stuck its head out of the hatch in curiosity, at which the wolf had ripped off its head and carried it away (98). There are similar stories from the eighteenth century of wolves grabbing sheep through ventilation hatches (Tømmeraas 2017, 41). Whether or not these stories have a common origin is unclear, and as is often the case with legends, one cannot absolutely rule out the possibility that events similar to these might have happened. Regardless of origin, these tales reflect how the wolf was constructed and perceived, as fit for the role of villain, which made for good stories.

Wolves have often been blamed for wiping out deer populations (Amtmann Tønder, 1744, in Snerte 2000, 109; Elsrud 1980, 52), but wolf hunting pressure – on red deer as well as moose – has been limited in comparison with the pressure exerted by people, who have hunted indiscriminately and used unsustainable methods such as pit traps. Moose were almost extinct in Sweden and Norway during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Müller 2018, 121; Elsrud 1980, 7). The same held true for nineteenth-century North America (Lopez 1978, 148). Moose populations have recovered in recent decades because restrictions have been placed on hunting (Müller 2018, 121–122), not because of the absence of wolves.

With little large game available, wolves would at times have depended on

anthropogenic food sources for survival. Apart from smaller prey such as badger and hare, wolves had to scavenge food remains and take livestock whenever possible. Having a wild wolf on one's property can be perceived as having a squatter, a free-loader, an opportunistic intruder who is not above helping himself to some livestock or even a pet if nothing else is available, but in an ecologically impoverished environment, wolves survived the best they could. It is likely that at least some of the wolves that feature in nineteenth-century narratives were starved. Stories of bold (*nærgående*) wolves passed down across generations might go some way towards explaining why people in places such as Slettås are afraid of them. The old stories still reverberate through culture, but the altered context, the fact that wolves now have access to abundant wild prey, is not necessarily taken into account.

As the Scandinavian wolf population has begun to recover in recent decades, wolf attacks on hunting dogs has become a particularly contentious issue (Bevanger 2012, 33). Vests have been developed to protect dogs from wolves: one type is made of Kevlar and has sharp spikes along the spine, another gives off an electric shock when a wolf bites into it, and these are becoming popular. The technology may be new, but the practice is not: considerable numbers of dogs were reported to have been killed by wolves during the early nineteenth-century when wolves were plentiful (Bevanger 2012, 33), and dogs that were around wolves were often equipped with spiked collars (Snerte 2000, 22, 25, 54). Protective clothing for dogs is a tradition that was lost but is now being revived, an older tradition than unsupervised sheep pasture. As wolves return, forgotten practices reassert themselves, even though the population of wolves today is a mere fraction of what it was during the early nineteenth century.

Construction of a symbol

There have been tragic encounters with wolves in Norway, but these have been few and far between. Nevertheless, wolves have been demonized, and it is a paradox that more dangerous animals have not. Dogs kill people all over the world every year, but fatal dog attacks receive less media attention than even mundane encounters with wolves. Bears have probably killed far more people than wolves have, but are generally better liked, perhaps because of their benign appearance, their neotenic features (Kragerud 2013, 36).

Elsrud suggests that people may be prejudiced against wolves because of their physical features, which he considers the likeness of a cowardly and sinister criminal, leaving wolves at a pitiable disadvantage (1980, 9–10). Today, however, wolves are often portrayed as beautiful, noble and awe-inspiring, and despite other differences in outlook, there is widespread agreement that wolves are impressive animals (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 77). This can be linked to increased scientific knowledge about wolves as well as cultural changes in our relationship with wild nature. At a time when wild nature was deeply feared, labelling the wolf a coward could have been an attempt at asserting dominance, but now that the wilderness has been mapped, and is thoroughly managed, we can afford to step back and see wolves as the socially intelligent animals they are.

When times are hard, having a nemesis can be a way of rationalizing the world. In a place like Norway – with a harsh climate and poor soils but a more or less egalitarian society, with limited oppression from above – the wolf could serve this purpose. People were entertained, inspired, and frightened by stories of supernatural creatures such as *huldra* and *nøkken*, and in the wolf they found an actual animal that could signify superstitions by analogy. Wolves served a moral purpose as a demonic other against which poor peasants could unite, an animal that was at once a threat to livelihoods, a reminder of the wildness out of which Norway was carved, and above all, an obligate carnivore and thereby morally condemnable.

Ricoeur argues that the mythology of evil is reliant on concrete and universal archetypes (1967, 170). It follows that the wolf had to be constructed in a consistent and unambiguous way. This contributes to explaining the near-uniformity in approach of nineteenth-century wolf stories: the archetypal wolf exhibits a fixed set of traits that descriptions of it conform to. It is the stuff of nightmares, of persecution dreams, a malevolent figure chasing down its terrified victim. Nightmarish associations are reinforced by the recurrent setting of a frozen lake in winter: open spaces from which there is no easy escape trigger feelings of agoraphobia; darkness – besides blocking visibility, providing cover for wolves – represents the unknown and can merge into the darkness of the dreamer's room, while sub-zero temperatures amplify the sense of danger and discomfort. If there are no lakes in the local area, dense forest or open steppe will do.

On the other hand, we have seen that wolves symbolize widely different

things for different cultures, that their association with evil is far from universal. The archetypal wolves of Jungian psychoanalysis are incongruent with the ecological wolf that has emerged in the Western imaginary in recent decades (Robisch 2009, 19). Rather than a primordial archetype, the wolf of the imagination is a dynamic symbol, and both humans and real wolves are agents in its construction (200). Symbols, in contrast to archetypes, are context-dependent, changing over time and across cultures.

In the construction of symbols, people draw on what is available in their physical and cultural surroundings. In nineteenth-century rural Europe, the wolf was an obvious candidate for being the symbol of evil, its corporeal carnivory making it a far more immediate and tangible presence than the biblical devil and supernatural creatures. Since wolves disappeared from most of Europe and North America, the void they left behind in the public psyche has partly been filled by the zombies and aliens of science fiction. As wolves return, emerging into an altered cultural context where they are received with a different set of preconceptions, they become an object of semiosis, charged with a range of context-dependent meanings.

The wolf's symbolic status can be clarified further by applying Yuri Lotman's concept of the semiosphere, which can basically be defined as 'the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages' (Lotman 1990, 123). Since the semiosphere of any given culture is held together by self-description, there is a limit to how much diversity it can contain. Dominant norms prevent disintegration, even if these norms only extend across some parts of the culture in question, and these norms are perceived as representative of the culture as a whole, especially in retrospect (128). Behaviour and beliefs that contradict or fall outside the scope of these norms are simply left unacknowledged, are rendered 'non-existent' (129). In nineteenth-century Norway, when the wolf was construed as a public enemy and a symbol of immorality, non-adversarial wolf encounters would have been irrelevant, incompatible with the narrative that was being collectively built, and therefore quickly dismissed, forgotten, or reinterpreted. What appears to us as a historical record is in fact the end result of a process of cultural selection and emphasis.

As the wolf became an object of biological study during the second half of the twentieth century, we now have some knowledge about wolf behaviour and ecology and recognize that nineteenth-century wolf stories tell us more about cultural

history than they do about wolves. Cultural values were shaped by a combination of Enlightened rationalism and self-righteous Christianity, and the wolf was cast as a threat to both the moral and the ecological order, to piety and to livestock. Seeing themselves as locked in a battle against the forces of evil, people created frightening narratives filled with violence and contrived plot devices. In retrospect, we can wonder what might have moved at the periphery.

Nineteenth-century Norway was ridden with poverty and hunger. Pious Christianity was partly a corrective to widespread alcoholism, while failure of crops or loss of livestock could be a matter of life and death when winter set in. Simmering conflicts among people were avoided by placing the burden of guilt elsewhere, and the wolf became a scapegoat for problems in human society. Today, however, hunger is not an issue, and though wolves can be an inconvenience they are not much of a threat. Nevertheless, echoes of nineteenth-century struggle persist in cultural memory and can be manipulated, for example to protect hunting interests.

3. The last Norwegian wilderness: Mikkjel Fønhus on Finnmarksvidda

Literature can be a means of exploring social thought if one takes an historical approach (Eco 1990, x). Works of fiction can often represent social realities with more clarity and precision than empirical studies. In this chapter, I will examine how Mikkjel Fønhus writes about wolves, focusing on his 1933 novella *Varg* (1976) but also drawing on other short stories and novellas of his that relate to wolves. Since the Sami people figure prominently in some of Fønhus's wolf stories, I will also draw on Johan Turi's account of the Sami (2012). Is the impression Fønhus gives of human–wolf relations in Norway during the first half of the twentieth century historically accurate? Are his descriptions of wolves realistic? Could his views about wilderness preservation and wildlife conservation still be relevant today?

Human–wolf relations in Mikkjel Fønhus's stories

Mikkjel Fønhus was a household name in Norway during the mid-twentieth century, but his popularity has waned somewhat since the seventies, perhaps because nature writing is not a well-established genre in Norway and thereby falls outside the literary canon. Fønhus was influenced by Jack London (Brandrud 1993, 102), romanticizing wild nature and anthropomorphising animals, which resulted in detailed and endearing portraits.¹⁹ He wrote novels and stories about moose, fox, lynx, marten, weasel, reindeer, beaver, goose, eagle-owl, even lion and leopard. London's influence is particularly striking in Fønhus's 1919 breakthrough, *Der villmarka suser* (1966), which is about a brown bear, but it is also evident in his many stories about wolves and dogs, which, like London's stories, are mostly set in

¹⁹ Jack London's classic American novels *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* (London 1993; originally published in 1903 and 1906 respectively) are staple wolf lore and have been widely analysed and critiqued (Marvin 2012; Ahne 2017; Jones 2015). They have been hugely influential, remain popular, and have contributed to shaping romantic perceptions of wolves and dogs. In London's novels, wolves and dogs are liminal animals capable of crossing the boundary between the tame and the wild. They can be trained but have the potential to revert to a wild state and survive in the wilderness without the aid of humans (Ahne 2017, 62; Derr 2011, 58).

wild northern nature.

Varg is set on Finnmarksvidda, a vast plateau in far Northern Norway which can be reminiscent of Jack London's Alaska. Wolves were scarce in southern parts of Norway by the end of the nineteenth century, but stable populations persisted in the north, especially in Finnmark. From the 1920s onward, however, heavy hunting pressure led to their decline, and they are now functionally extinct, despite the occasional disperser from Finland or Russia (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 177). Wolves in early twentieth-century Norway fed mostly on semi-domestic reindeer (Wabakken 2017, 7), leading to a high level of conflict with Sami reindeer herders. When reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Sami would add an extra line at the end: 'free us from Satan's dog' (Elsrud 1980, 33; Müller 2018, 192; my translation).

Fønhus describes how the Sami and the odd ethnic Norwegian in tiny scattered settlements struggle to protect their reindeer from wolves in the dark of winter. There are realistic descriptions of wolves hunting reindeer and Arctic fox, and numerous anecdotal stories, for instance an incident where wolves swam out to an island and killed all the sheep that had been left there to graze (Fønhus 1976, 60–61, 8–9, 71). Having almost died after feeding on a poisoned reindeer carcass, one of the wolves has learned that human tracks or human scent next to a carcass can mean poison, that it is safer to kill one's own meat than to scavenge, and Sami people in *Varg* don't eat reindeer that have been killed by wolves either (7–8, 18). Fønhus uses the herds of semi-domestic reindeer milling about in almost total darkness to evoke nostalgia for the disappearing wilderness (46).

There is beauty in Fønhus's nature descriptions, and the characters' rugged lifestyles would have induced romantic nostalgia in readers even during the first half of the twentieth century, but *Varg* is mostly a dark story, where people battle the elements and consider the wolf a demonic enemy. Whether Sami or Norwegian, the locals on Finnmarksvidda, in Fønhus's telling of it, see a live wolf as 'Satan's seed' but a dead wolf as 'a smile from our Lord' (17, 53, my translations).

Christianity had largely replaced the animism of traditional Sami religion by the beginning of the twentieth century, and economic attitudes to carnivores were dominant: carnivores had to be kept away from domestic animals yet could be a source of profit as bounties were collected and pelts sold. The fur trade has been economically important in Northern Norway, and taxes were at times even paid in

the form of wolf pelts (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 152). Various government bounty schemes were in place from 1730 onwards, and Sami villages often also had their own “wolf pot” (“*vargkasse*”) sponsored by reindeer owners to encourage wolf hunting (153). As Fønhus tells it, the appearance of wolves in the vicinity of reindeer herds – sometimes left untended for considerable lengths of time – was a moment of crisis, not a daily occurrence. The Sami battled wolves, but wolves were at the losing end. Before rifles became available, however, total extermination was not a realistic option.

The Sami have been keeping semi-domestic reindeer for centuries, and as we have seen, when people claim game animals for themselves, it leads to conflict with wolves. Reindeer husbandry seems never to have been compatible with free-roaming wolves. Through most of their history, however, Sami were hunters and fishermen, and would therefore probably have had a mutualistic, or at least commensal, relationship with wolves in the past. This seems to still be reflected in some of their cultural traditions, as there are a variety of wolf joiks (Juuso 2011).

In Sami mythology, joik (*vuolle* in Sami) is a primary force that can be used as magic to either cause or cure disease (Fosmark and Moe 1998, 178–179). It is a form of traditional song in which the singer does not imitate but identifies with, in a sense becomes, the subject of the joik, whether this is a place or a person, human or non-human. Direct identification with the non-human is related to animism and shapeshifting, to sets of beliefs that were largely lost with the separation of culture from nature that followed in the wake of the agricultural revolution. Such spiritual intimacy with wild animals is typical of societies based on hunting, such as the Pawnee and the Cheyenne of North America (Lopez 1978, 112, 118).

Traditionally, wolf joiks were performed during religious rituals, but could also take the form of a ‘nidjoik’, expressing anger or haughty contempt (Juuso 2011). Sami experience with wolves mostly centred on their role as predators of reindeer. The wolf was imagined as hungry, searching for food (Hætta 1995), and a recurring story is that he has to run across nine valleys to find it (Turi 2012, 117; Fønhus 1976, 102). The howling and yipping of a wolf might be especially suited to the joik form: wild, high-pitched, tremulous and spontaneous.

Sami had several names for wolves, which they believed had magical powers, and hunters had to know them all in order to succeed (Turi 2012, 117–118).

Translation and standardization tend to reduce the diversity of wolves known to the Sami to the symbolic wolf of Western culture (Frandy 2011, 566). In Norwegian, too, the wolf (*ulv*) has been referred to with many different euphemisms – *gråbein*, *gråtass*, *varg*, *skrubb* – as it was believed that using its real name would provoke its wrath (Bevanger 2012, 30). In the Valdres valley, the wolf was known as ‘*ufre’n*’, ‘the disturber of the peace’, and wolves have even been referred to as trolls (‘*gråtroll*’); areas with a lot of wolves were ‘*trøllut*’, hairy with trolls (Knut Hermundstad, *Gamal Valdreskultur VIII*, 1967, in Snerte 2000, 69–70, my translations). The wolves of Norse mythology were also referred to with euphemisms (Tømmeraas 2017, 23).

When setting out on a wolf hunt, a Sami hunter would have to think of nine different methods for catching the wolf, ending with the method he was planning to use (Turi 2012, 118). Similarly, Nunamiut hunters in Alaska believe it unlucky to speak badly of wolves or to announce a wolf hunt (Fritts et al. 2003, 292), while Batwa hunter-gatherers in the Congo (DRC) believe that mentioning the name of the animal one is looking for will make it impossible to find (Schaller 1964, 62). These traditions reflect the belief that, in order to succeed as a hunter, it is essential to avoid *hubris*, to approach one’s prey with a respectful attitude. Such traditional values have largely been lost as hunting practices have been mechanized. Even though Christianity has long been hegemonic, traces of animism in Sami culture may be remnants of a hunter-gatherer past.²⁰

Schleidt and Shalter suggest that ancient reindeer hunting involved an intimate level of cooperation between humans and wolves (2003, 66). The transition from hunting to herding may have been gradual, and wolves may have influenced human hunting strategies even more than humans influenced wolves. Wolves would single out very young, old, or sick reindeer, which were the easiest to chase down, while humans, hunting with spears, had the best reindeer mostly to themselves. Modern bounties and fur trading, as well as government interference in the form of compensation schemes, taxes and predator control, undermined such mutually

²⁰ At the beginning of the twentieth century, Johan Turi was well aware that Sami shamanism (*noaidevuohta*) and traditional religious rituals were strictly illegal, that even discussing them openly could lead to punishment or ostracism (Frandy 2011, 556). He poignantly – though perhaps inadvertently – captures the contradictions inherent in the transition from animism to Christianity: ‘And in the olden times all the animals and trees and rocks and everything found on earth was able to talk. And they will be able to talk again at the Last Judgement’ (Turi 2012, 123).

beneficial relationships. Cooperative relationships between ancient hunters and wolves bear similarities to the relationship between modern shepherds and livestock guarding dogs, though there has not been drawn any direct connection (66).

Such theories tend to be dismissed as speculative due to lack of evidence, but interpreting the fossil record is generally a speculative practice. Fossils are few and far between, and every decade brings new discoveries that lead to paradigm shifts in our understanding of prehistory. Since wolf societies are characterised by so-called humane ethics – cooperation rather than competition, appeasement rather than aggression – that have few counterparts in the animal world, it is not unthinkable that humans learned as much from wolves as wolves did from humans (Schleidt and Shalter 2003, 57, 59, 62; Derr 2011, 125). Rather than asking how humans domesticated wolves it may be more useful to ask how humans and wolves coevolved (Schleidt and Shalter 2003, 66). Wolves were not tamed, they were socialized (Derr 2011, 19).

Prior to the advent of rifles, Sami engaged in a form of long-distance pursuit hunting in which wolves were tracked and pursued by a team of hunters, sometimes for days. The hunters would stop to rest at times, but so would the wolves, and hunters sometimes took turns being in the lead. Porters followed behind, picking up the clothes the hunters would take off and drop as they got warm. Wolves were chased until they were exhausted and couldn't run anymore. When the hunters caught up with a wolf they would stab it to death with a 'spear pole' (*spydstav*), a ski pole reinforced with iron, with a spear sheathed in the tip. Wolves can easily outrun people on foot, but over long distances, good skiers can chase down wolves, provided the snow is deep, or the snow crust is hard enough to support skis but not a wolf's paws (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 152).

Fønhus describes such a pursuit hunt, centring on the character Nils Harre, an ethnic Norwegian, former cross-country ski champion, and seasoned wolf hunter. He does not carry a rifle, believing it will slow him down, preferring a spear-tipped ski pole; his Sami companion, too, prefers to use a ski pole, as he and most Sami allegedly believe that killing a wolf with a gun brings bad luck (Fønhus 1976, 86). As the two of them gain on the wolves and see that one has regurgitated some half-digested reindeer meat beside the trail, they feel emboldened, happy and proud; the Sami laughs 'as in childish joy' yet with cruelty, while Harre becomes 'a predator

that has shed its human skin' (88, my translations). When they finally catch up with a wolf, Harre stabs it with his pole while the Sami beats it furiously, relieving himself of pent-up hatred, even though the wolf is rapidly dying from a stab to the heart (90).

In writing *Varg*, Fønhus may have been influenced by Jens Andreas Friis, who describes a similar wolf hunt in *Lajla* (Friis 1890, 27–34), but perhaps even more by Johan Turi, whose general account of Sami culture was originally published in 1910 (Turi 2012). Turi describes how wolf hunters who had caught a wolf would curse it while striking and stabbing it repeatedly (102). Significantly, however, Turi adds that

the wolf hunter who often kills wolves does not taunt the wolf or curse. He knows that the wolf is just doing that which is its lot in life. Nor does it kill any more than it is allotted [*sic*], just as there are limits to the waves of the sea, how high they can rise. (Turi 2012, 102)

The above paragraph was omitted in early printings of Turi's book – removed at some stage during the process of transcription or editing – but was reincluded in a 1987 edition (Frandy 2011, 566). This is not to say that Turi had a romanticized or even particularly positive attitude to wolves – on the contrary, he was well aware of the threat they posed to reindeer and was a wolf hunter himself – but it was a balanced and sober view, and the omission of this paragraph makes Turi's narrative conform more closely to the Western perspective (Frandy 2011, 566–567). Reading early editions of Turi, Fønhus would have been unaware of this omission.

In *Varg*, the character Nils Harre recalls the story of how his grandfather chased down a wolf. Struggling to kill it, he had to blind it by gouging its eyes out with his folding knife before he could finish it off with his ski poles (Fønhus 1976, 83). There is an oral tradition that in times past, when Sami found wolf pups, they would gouge their eyes out instead of killing them, believing this would lead the mother to take the pups with her and leave the area instead of seeking revenge (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 153).

Hunters' attitudes to wolves are at times not only aggressive but perverse and psychopathic; in addition to killing wolves comes a desire to inflict as much pain as possible (Lopez 1978, 139–140). Revenge can also play a role (Fønhus 1976, 19). In Snerte's *Ulvehistorier*, one Tore Nordtjennmoen skinned a wolf pup alive and left it tied to the trunk of a spruce tree as a warning to other wolves; its mother found it, and from then on, wolves avoided the area (Lars M. Fjellstad, *I grendom. Folkeminne frå Eidskog*, 1966, in Snerte 2000, 25). Similarly, in *Varg*, a Swede and a

Sami dig six pups out of a den, kill five of them and tie the last one to a birch tree, then settle down to wait for the mother to respond to the pup's cries; when finally, on the third night, they see her watching them from the crest of a hill in the distance, they kill the pup (Fønhus 1976, 27).

This bloodthirsty hatred runs deeper and is more violent than the frustrations of living around problem animals can account for; at times cold and calculating, at others raging and uncontrollable, it is reminiscent of the collective outbreaks of sadistic madness of the Holocaust or the Rwandan genocide. Having a scapegoat, a demonized Other onto which people can project the evil in themselves, facilitates the acting out of impulses that would not otherwise be tolerated. It is a refusal to acknowledge or tolerate otherness, which at bottom may be rooted in fear (Lopez 1978, 140).

As he expresses sympathy for carnivores that get trapped or shot, Fønhus is sensitive to the dilemmas of hunting. In his short story 'Storvargen', a blacksmith catches untold numbers of foxes in iron leghold traps – sometimes resulting in the fox chewing off its leg and escaping (Fønhus 1978a, 115) – until he begins getting flu-like symptoms each time a fox gets caught. Only when he finds the injured fox and shoots it, releasing it from its pain, do the symptoms abate. He sees this as a form of punishment, and eventually quits using leghold traps (116). As for strychnine, he stops using it after two dogs accidentally consume the poisoned bait. When wolves appear in the reindeer herding areas near his home, however, he decides to try these methods again, and when he gets sick, he knows a wolf has been trapped (117). After he shoots the wolf, the sickness lets up: 'when he had freed the animal from its affliction, he was also rid of his own' (122, my translation).

Fønhus's knowledge of natural history is vast, and much of it seems to be based on personal experience. In the short autobiographical piece 'Stor-Hans i Femundsmarka', he recalls reading newspaper reports of Sami losing reindeer to wolves and subsequently – in early 1924 – travelling up to Rørøs and east towards the Swedish border to do field research. Fønhus spent three winters with the Sami – also traveling further north and into Sweden – helping them herd reindeer to protect them from wolves, but the latter were rarely seen (Fønhus 1986b, 32).

Considering that biological research on wolves only really began in the aftermath of World War II and remained riddled with myths and misinterpretations

until the late twentieth century, Fønhus's descriptions of wolf behaviour are strikingly accurate. He knows that a wolf pack is a family group (1976, 6), that wolves usually walk against the wind to approach their prey undetected (8), and that wolves test their prey and rarely complete a charge unless their prey turns and flees (32). He sees through popular myths, recounting the Sami belief that when a wolf is threatened by people it can sink into a mountain lake and hide there, with only its snout poking out of the water, until the danger has passed – supposedly the reason why wolves are rarely seen in summer – but makes it clear that this is superstition (26). Informed by science, traditional knowledge, and superstition, Fønhus's narrative is detailed and nuanced.

Nevertheless, scientific inaccuracies typical of the time do creep in. Anti-wolf sentiments were stronger at Fønhus's time than today, and as many still do, Fønhus describes the wolf as a *lystmorder*, one who kills for fun, on the grounds that reindeer carcasses are left uneaten or only partly eaten (1976, 17–18). Though it is not unusual for wolves to kill more reindeer than necessary (Fritts et al. 2003, 306), they do so at the risk of serious injury – a kick of a hoof can be deadly – and will return for more if left undisturbed, while other species such as Arctic fox and wolverine are also dependent on carcasses left by wolves (Kvalvaag 2006, 9; May et al. 2008, 3). Even during the early twentieth century, the Sami had some awareness of this; Turi writes that

[w]hen the wolf and the reindeer are in the same place, there is plenty of food for all the wild animals, and all the wild animals came together: wolverines, foxes, ravens, eagles, and dogs. (Turi 2012, 122)

Fønhus narrates how a young wolf wounded by gunshot breaks away from the pack because he fears what the other wolves will do if they smell his blood (1976, 77). Again, as we have seen in the previous chapter, wolves are considered incorrigible cannibals. This is a recurrent claim in legends and anecdotes (Elsrud 1980, 15), but even though it is true that wolves can eat other wolves, they don't turn on their own family members, at least not because of the smell of blood. On the contrary, they're more likely to try to help their injured pack mate. His jaw is broken, his tongue injured, and he is unable to eat. For days he lies slowly dying beside the remains of a reindeer carcass, his jaw resting on the reindeer's head to keep it in place while the northern lights play across the sky (Fønhus 1976, 78–79). Though the human

characters in the story hate wolves, there is empathy in Fønhus's description, for wolf, reindeer and people alike. 'Death reconciles', and then the ravens return to feed (79, my translation). Ravens or other corvids figure as 'supporting character' in most ecological studies of wolves; where wolves are apex predators, ravens are scavengers, each playing a vital role in maintaining the health of the ecosystem (Robisch 2009, 37).

Describing a wolf's first encounter with a railroad, Fønhus uses defamiliarization to present the scene from the wolf's perspective:

Alongside ran two black stripes, always with the same distance between them, like two narrow strips of black, flowing water. And all at once the ladder led into a huge, dark hole in the mountainside, the strangest thing ... as if the night had crept in and lay there staring out. It sounded like a waterfall had started roaring inside the mountain, or as if the mountain itself had begun to rumble darkly ... Out of the mountain, following the ladder, came a ridiculously gigantic animal, black as a raven, so short of breath that it puffed like a storm, its breath blowing a blizzard of snow in the frosty air, the hole in the mountain behind it filled with the animal's smoky breath. (Fønhus 1976, 119–120, my translation)

She flees when she sees the train but wants to go south and finds her way blocked by the fenceposts that line the railroad like 'some kind of limbless tree stumps', the barbwire between them 'like the threads of a spiderweb but extremely coarse, and shiny' (119). She comes upon a reindeer trail and follows it, intoxicated by the thought of making a kill and satisfying her hunger but finds that it disappears under the railroad. This turns out to be an underground crossing-place, and she makes it through to the other side (120). Turi notes that a wolf will never cross a railroad, unless 'it is a very bold wolf and there is much snow cover and snow storms, and there is a stoppage of train service or a strike so that trains do not come that way very often' (2012, 124).

For wolf biologist Norman Bishop, growing up by a railroad track, the huffing and puffing of steam engines brought associations to the Big Bad Wolf of the fairy tale *The Three Pigs* and kept him up at night (Robisch 2009, xi). Like the Big Bad Wolf of the imagination, trains can appear monstrous. In nineteenth-century North America, when the frontier was being opened for industrial expansion, the sound of an approaching train – shrieking whistle and roaring engine – appeared as a literary trope in Thoreau, Hawthorne, Emerson and countless others, intruding upon pastoral idylls, signalling the arrival of commerce and modern technology, representing the 'machine in the garden' (Marx 1964, 13–17). As trains are the very

embodiment of industrial expansion, these associations are perhaps inevitable. At Fønhus's time, Northern Norway was more akin to a rugged wilderness than the pastoral idylls of New England, but regardless of local geography, railroads are harbingers of "progress", of the mechanization of nature Fønhus would later warn against (Fønhus in Stensrud 1985, 112).

The meeting of a wild wolf and a railroad track symbolizes the clash between wilderness and civilization, as well as ecological degradation. Not only are railroads barriers to migration and dispersal, they make wild areas accessible to everything from prospectors to hunters to tourists, facilitating infrastructure construction and exploitation of natural resources. Southern Norway (*Sørlandet*) was thought to be emptied of wolves when an elusive "outlaw" wolf suspected of killing considerable numbers of sheep was shot in Vegårshei in early 1984; over the course of the following years, reports of wolf sightings kept trickling in but were met with scepticism until 1992, when a wolf was hit by a train (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 168–169). Traffic accidents account for a significant proportion of wolf mortalities in Scandinavia, perhaps around twelve percent (Liberg et al. 2008, 16–17).

Fønhus anthropomorphizes animals, imbues them with personalities and thought processes that are almost human, making them easy to identify with. Anthropomorphism has often been met with criticism, but if we want to understand animals it is counterintuitive to avoid anthropomorphism altogether (Schaller 1965, 194–195). As Karen Jones points out, '[b]iologists in Montana in the early 1980s even found evidence of wolves burying dead pups – a supposition that would certainly have been scoffed at by the professional wildlife community in the early 1900s' (2015, 181). The alternative to anthropomorphism is objectification, which – besides being unethical – is of little use in trying to understand animals.

Like Jack London, Fønhus romanticizes wolves and dogs as heroic characters expressing their primal and authentic selves in the untamed wilderness. For London, the wild was characterized by adventure, but also fear and competition, bringing out his canine protagonists' 'loyalty, courage, strength and resourcefulness' (Jones 2015, 183), virtues the Cheyenne recognized in wolves (Lopez 1978, 233). London's canine characters were heavily anthropomorphised, but modern research has shown that these traits may indeed be characteristic of wolves (Ahne 2017, 88). Biology alone is insufficient to explain wolf behaviour, and even conservation itself comes

with the inherent ethical value judgement that wolves are worthy of conservation (Hermans 2015, 268). On the other hand, when animals are assigned undesirable human qualities, anthropomorphism can contribute to demonization. Dominant discourse among hunters and ranchers in the United States, for instance, labels the wolf an unethical hunter; wolves are judged according to human ethical standards, yet their predatory behaviour is seen as unnatural (Bell 2015, 290–291). Romanticization and demonization are two radically opposed categories of anthropomorphism that compete with each other for power (290).

Though Fønhus portrays the wolf as a ferocious hunter, it is a consistent thread that wolves flee from people and don't think of people as prey. There is for instance a story of a wealthy speculator in reindeer who went to sleep drunk beneath his overturned *pulk* with his draft reindeer tied to a nearby pine tree. While he slept, an old and desperately hungry wolf killed and fed on the reindeer. This is presented as an example of exceptional boldness on the part of the wolf, who was too old to chase down wild game, and a laughing matter for the speculator, who was rich enough not to care about the loss of one reindeer (Fønhus 1976, 138). Here we should also keep in mind that *Varg* is a work of fiction, that Fønhus had the freedom to exaggerate yet did not write of wolves attacking people, probably because it would have been unrealistic. Fønhus's descriptions of animal behaviour are based more on their natural than their cultural history.

Times may have been hard throughout Norway during the nineteenth century, but life on Finnmarksvidda – cold, dark and remote – probably involved more physical hardship and risk than elsewhere. In the southern half of Norway, where encounters with wolves were less dramatic, people may have been more prone to exaggeration: in Snerte's *Ulvehistorier*, a simple trip through the woods becomes a drama if there are wolves in the area, but in *Varg*, the drama of hunting wolves and trying to protect reindeer is interesting enough in itself and doesn't beg for exaggeration.

Fønhus's environmentalism in the light of recent developments

As early as 1937, Fønhus advocated the conservation of large carnivores, arguing that the damage they do to livestock is almost negligible, and that the government can well afford to pay compensation to the farmers who are affected. He was also

strongly opposed to modern technology, seeing it as a tool of mathematization and mechanization of nature and ultimately of the human soul. Fønhus argued that wilderness had to be protected, true wilderness where brown bears roam, where no roads lead and no planes fly overhead, that something indispensable would otherwise be lost (Fønhus in Stensrud 1985, 112). His main concern, however, was for brown bears, not for wolves. In Sweden, too, the symbol of wilderness during the interwar period was the brown bear. Concern for the wolf – which was perceived as a more serious threat to livestock – only came later, when it was almost extinct (Kardell and Dahlström 2013, 343).

For Fønhus the wilderness was holy, and he hoped the right to wilderness would someday be made inalienable:

When technology has made all people in the land restless, outlawed, nervous; when barely a square kilometre in the land has been left in peace from machines, hotels, power lines, phone- and telegraph wires – then Finnmarksvidda shall lie there as the very temple of the untouched, of peace; there the people can seek shelter and meet Our Lord (Fønhus in Stensrud 1985, 106, my translation).

Christianity has often served to demonize wild nature, but Fønhus uses Christianity to argue for its protection.

Fønhus's fears were well-founded. In Norway today, no wilderness is sheltered from the noise of helicopters and planes passing overhead, and the road network has been extended to the remotest of cabins. In recent years, remaining fragments of wild nature have been converted into wind farms, where turbines and other infrastructure disrupt reindeer migration routes, disturb large carnivores, kill birds and dominate the landscape (NVE 2019, 35–36, 41–42, 43, 49). At the time of writing, even more wind farms are being built, and several are at the planning stage, most of them in relatively undisturbed natural landscapes, one inside the wolf zone (194). The wilderness is under more threat than ever before.

During the early twentieth century, attempts at hunting down wolves on Finnmarksvidda were often unsuccessful, involving days of tracking, but from 1949 into the fifties, wolves were decimated, systematically hunted from light aircraft in an official campaign (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 178). When snowmobiles became affordable, they became a popular vehicle for wolf hunting in Northern Norway; wolves were declared a protected species in 1971, and laws have been passed to

regulate the use of motor vehicles on uncultivated land (*utmark*), but snowmobiles have made poaching easier (183). Since Northern Norway is remote and sparsely populated, the risk of getting caught is low.

Today, the Norwegian Nature Inspectorate uses helicopters to shoot wolves that wander into Northern Norway from neighbouring countries.²¹ As for semi-domestic reindeer, they now rarely encounter wolves. Lynx and wolverine prey on reindeer in some areas, but as reindeer populations have increased beyond carrying capacity, lack of food is a far more significant cause of mortality than carnivore attack (Tveraa et al. 2013, 5–6, 31).²²

Summary and conclusion

Fønhus's wolf stories are packed with adventure in the tradition of Jack London but also with ethnographical information and folklore. He tries to understand the Sami on their own terms, and his descriptions of human–wolf relations are mostly consistent with the attitudes of the time. Fønhus anthropomorphizes wolves but strives towards realism, grounding his narratives in natural history.

The Sami persecuted wolves but were also victims of persecution themselves; while Christians demonized Sami culture, the Sami demonized wolves. Tradition is significantly weaker in Northern Norway today than it was at Fønhus's time, but reindeer populations have increased while herding has been mechanized with snowmobiles and helicopters. Despite the rise of environmentalist movements, the attitudes to wolves that Fønhus describe remain prevalent. Almost without exception, wolves that enter the reindeer herding areas get shot.

²¹ During the late nineties there was talk of translocating dispersing wolves from the north and releasing them in Akershus or Østfold, where wolves were thought to be breeding at the time (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 205). The idea is still raised occasionally, but since wolves need to be soft-released – kept in a fenced enclosure for several weeks after release – to prevent them from homing towards the location where they were captured, translocation can be a problematic management strategy (Linnell et al. 1997, 1250–1251). Translocation of wolves is also controversial in Norway due to the widespread conspiracy theories about illegal wolf reintroduction. Nevertheless, there is no practical reason why a fenced enclosure for soft release can't be constructed within the wolf zone. The wolves that appear in Finnmark are often from Russia or Finland and can assuage inbreeding depression in the Scandinavian wolf population; in theory, these 'genetically important' wolves enjoy some level of protection, but in practise, they get shot.

²² Starvation leads to increased vulnerability to climatic factors and reduced reproductive success; since loss of reindeer to carnivores is mostly compensatory, its effect on population dynamics is limited (Tveraa et al. 2013, 5–6, 31).

4. Wolf–dog hybrids in popular literature: Gard Erik Sandbakken and Lars Lenth

Gard Erik Sandbakken's *Bastarder* (2006) and Lars Lenth's *Menn som hater ulver* (2017) are suspense-driven page-turners, combining thriller and satire, directly addressing the ongoing conflicts about wolves in Norway. Interested parties such as hunters, sheep farmers, environmental activists, biologists, politicians and local families are played up against each other. Since wolf–dog hybrids – technically crossbreeds, “bastards” – play a central role, some scientific and cultural background about hybrids will be useful in analysing these novels. My aim in this chapter is thereby twofold: to explore social and literary constructions of hybrids, and to analyse these two novels to see how they relate to the current situation with wolves in Norway. I will begin with a discussion of the cultural and natural history of hybrids before moving on to narrative analysis.

Cultural history of wolf–dog hybrids: a comparative overview

Known by derogatory terms such as ‘bastard’, ‘mongrel’ and ‘cur’, crossbred dogs have often been ill-treated, victims of racism. In early twentieth-century North America this was especially the case if the dog's owner was an immigrant (Derr 2011, 259). A century earlier, slave-owners in the American South would train bloodhounds for the specific purpose of instilling fear in their slaves (253). In Norway, *finnehunder* and *taterbikkjer*, mixed-blood dogs owned by Forest Finns and Romani Travellers respectively, have been contrasted against purebreds (Elsrud 1980, 39).

In South Africa, whites have tended to favour purebreds, referring to dogs owned by blacks as ‘kaffir dogs’ (Baderoon 2017, 347). During apartheid, dog breeds favoured by whites became national symbols, while alleged mongrels – actually a distinct breed or type, *Africanis* – owned by blacks were associated with ‘degeneracy and wildness’ (348). Here, wildness was understood in a pejorative sense, analogous with the perceptions of wildness among Western frontiersmen, as primitive, chaotic,

“uncivilized”. Conversely, black people learned to fear the ferocious ‘white’ guard and police dogs that functioned as tools of oppression (351). Racism against dogs was extended to their owners, while racism against people also had consequences for their dogs (347–348). Mark Derr points out that

[n]ative dogs from anywhere south of Europe are classed with pariahs and curs – creatures of no breeding fit only for shepherds and poachers and other low-class people ... in keeping with the tradition of breed formation, the native dog was stripped of all its virtues and coated with all its vices (Derr 2011, 177).

The only competitive advantage purebred dogs have over crossbreeds appears to be human favouritism. The *Africanis* mentioned above, for example, has in recent years been reconstructed as a symbol of indigeneity and authenticity (Baderoon 2017, 352), demonstrating the enormous influence cultural prejudices can have on our perceptions of canids.

Crossbreeds possess a generous admixture of genetic traits and are subject to natural selection, choosing their own partners and, in some cases, as with village and stray dogs, fending for themselves. They tend to be more physically and psychologically fit than purebreds, who are subject to selective breeding controlled by humans, resulting in traits that may be pleasing to their owners but are of little other survival value. Dogs are often bred to be ‘biddable’, resulting in infantilizing traits such as bracycephaly and mesocephaly (Derr 2011, 57):

a more tractable or trainable dog in contemporary terms is not necessarily smarter; it is just more malleable to human desire, more subject to having its behavior shaped by its human companion (Derr 2011, 55).

Selection for neoteny – for juvenile traits that persist in adults – in dogs reflect a drive to remove all signs of wildness that might threaten the vulnerable stability of ‘civilization’, a tendency that also extends to humans (165). The artificial genetic diversity caused by the advent of selective breeding exceeds the original difference between wolves and early dogs and has led to a range of breed-specific diseases and disorders (260). A purebred dog may serve some specific function well but suffer from poor general fitness. With increasing urbanization, more and more dogs are reduced to ‘biological dolls’ selected for submissiveness, devotion, and small size, with little purpose other than to provide light entertainment for their owners (260).

As domestic dogs are frustrated because they lack the opportunities for self-realization and communication that wolves have (Lopez 1978, 52), modern people are frustrated because society provides nothing but therapeutic outlets for their hunter-gatherer traits (Leopold 1953, 226–227; 1949, 176).

The difference between wolves and dogs is ultimately one of degree, not of kind, yet we insist on drawing rigid boundaries where the lines are actually diffuse, drifting and overlapping. Once we recognize the loss of genetic diversity selective dog-breeding entails, it also casts wolf management in a new light. Wolf–dog bastardization – usually termed hybridization, even though wolves and dogs are considered the same species – is a recurring issue. The thought of bastards or hybrids challenges our notions of ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’, breaks down the categories we use to contain them, suggesting that the species concept we operate with is a construct. Hybrids don’t belong, and their existence undermines the social structure by threatening to destroy the divide between the wild and tame (Skogen, Krangle and Figari 2013, 93). If applied to primates, the notion that species boundaries are imaginary, and can be crossed, can even be a threat to human exceptionalism (97).

Wolf sceptics tend to consider hybrids exceptionally dangerous, since they may lack fear of humans. There was recently a case in Belarus where a female stray dog mated with a male wolf, and the two ended up defending a territory together. When researchers approached their den, the dog defended it aggressively, driving off the researchers, who kept her at bay with an axe and a stick as they backed away (Sidorovich 2017). Wolves, however, tend to flee from their den at the approach of humans, even if there are pups inside (Linnell and Bjerke 2002, 47). It is possible that a dog such as this could pass on her lack of fear of humans to her hybrid pups.

Theories that wolves in Norway are actually wolf–dog hybrids have circulated since the late nineties but been refuted by both scientific research and police investigations (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 189–190; Skage et al. 2016, 16). Near Moss in 2000 a female wolf mated with a dog and produced a litter of hybrid pups; these pups were shot, but one is rumoured to have survived (Skogen, Krangle and Figari 2013, 93, 155). Hybrids are generally put down, as they are seen as sources of genetic pollution. It is true that hybridization can have adverse effects on wild populations, altering reproductive cycles and increasing vulnerability to disease, but this is not always the case (Caniglia et al. 2013, 553). The practice of euthanizing

hybrids has been criticized from an animal welfare perspective, but also from an ecological perspective, on the grounds that hybridization is a “natural” evolutionary process that can even result in increased fitness (von Essen and Allen 2016, 86). Throughout history, there have been rare cases where dogs and wolves have interbred, so most – if not all – wolves have some trace of dog in them, however slight (Skage et al. 2016, 3–4).

There is no obvious ethical reason why a hybrid would have any less intrinsic value than a dog or a wolf, but as it stands, it is more practical to maintain a clear divide between domestic animals and wildlife than to take the interests of individual hybrids into consideration. After all, conservation is fraught with enough controversy already. Conservation, focused on ecosystems and species, has long been considered incompatible with welfare for individual animals, though this may change with a shift towards compassionate conservation (Ramp and Bekoff 2015, 323). There are always dilemmas to be faced and trade-offs to be considered when individual interests conflict with ecosystem health, but an empathetic and ethically informed approach can help to minimize harm (324–325). It could for instance be more humane to sterilize hybrids than to kill them. This would involve less harm to the individual and be less disruptive to the social integrity of the pack.

Related to the question of how to deal with biological hybrids is the controversy surrounding feral dogs and tame wolves. These are, in a sense, social hybrids, animals that have crossed the line between the tame and the wild without any genetic exchange being involved. Dingoes that roam free in Australia can be considered feral dogs (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 14), but they share more traits with wolves than with modern dogs (Derr 2011, 61). They are neither dogs nor wolves, but something in between, yet they function as a distinct population of wild animals, and the difficulty in pinpointing their affiliation makes them more controversial than they would otherwise have been. In Kazakhstan tame wolves adopted by humans in infancy are used as guards against wild wolves (Hays 2008), while in North America they become objects of scientific study (Dutcher and Dutcher 2013) or ambassadors for their species (Wolf Conservation Center 2018).

Two novels about the Norwegian “wolf debate”

Gard Erik Sandbakken’s *Bastarder* is set during the dark cold of winter in a small rural community in Rendalen, at the heart of Norwegian wolf conflicts, in an area that is technically outside the wolf zone yet has experienced problems with wolves preying on livestock. The title suggests liminality, the possibility of crossing boundaries, between wolf and dog or between wolf and man. ‘Bastard’ is a loaded word in both English and Norwegian that can serve as a general term of abuse, or otherwise refer to hybrids, to an inferior copy, or to children born to unmarried parents. In *Bastarder*, one of two stepsons who compete for the right (*odelsrett*) to inherit the farm Rambraut is “illegitimate”, and family relations between characters are tangled. The title also brings to mind one of Jack London’s bleakest short stories, ‘Bâtard’, about an aggressive wolf–husky hybrid and his sadistic owner who spend their lives tirelessly trying to kill each other until they eventually die a violent death together (London 1993, 21–37).

As he mentions in the foreword, Sandbakken was influenced by Bergljot Børresen’s *Den ensomme apen : instinkt på avveie* (2003), where she shows how patriarchal Christianity led humans to think of themselves as fundamentally different from other animals (Sandbakken 2006, 5). Børresen uses evolutionary psychology to explore the possibility of ecological coexistence based on empathy. She argues that empathy for others can be switched off instinctively, for example during hunting or in times of war, and that the illusion of human exceptionalism is maintained by people whose misguided belief that “reason” should operate independently of “feelings” shuts them off from empathy for non-human animals (Børresen 2003, 181). Sandbakken is a hunter, familiar with this instinct, and in *Bastarder* he explores how it can lead to murder (2006, 6).

Initially there seem to be too many characters, most of them vaguely sketched, but eventually they all serve their purpose in the plot. The characters have known each other from childhood, which makes the secrets and hidden intentions that are revealed over the course of the novel all the more shocking. The main character is named Sjur, perhaps a nod to Mikkjel Fønhus’s novel *Gråbeinstad* [*Wolfplace*] where the protagonist has the same name (Fønhus 1993). In contrast to most of Fønhus’s books, *Gråbeinstad* is focused not on animals but on people; influenced by Freud, it is a family saga of madness and silence on an isolated farm,

and parallels can be drawn to *Bastarder*.²³

The seemingly peaceful community is rife with hidden violence: domestic violence, fights, hunting and poaching. Sandbakken plays on aspects of the wolf controversies as portrayed in the media as well as by sociologists, the us-against-them rhetoric with hunters and sheep farmers on one side and environmentalists from the city on the other (Sandbakken 2006, 78–79). Wolves may be subjects of the conflict, but as we see time and time again, wolf conflicts are in fact mostly conflicts between people (Skogen, Krangle and Figari 2013, 15). While some of the characters are determined to exterminate the wolves, construing them as the enemy – a *lystmorder* who kills for pleasure (Sandbakken 2006, 79, 164) – human characters commit atrocious acts of violence. A murder is committed, allegedly on account of the wolf conflicts but actually to avenge rape and adultery (165–166).

Sandbakken shows how people project the violent sides of themselves onto the wolf, perceiving it as an unassimilated other, using it as a scapegoat and a symbol of everything they reject. Like in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2003) – where human violence is disguised as predatory animal behaviour through most of the story – human brutality appears all the more disturbing when juxtaposed with the brutality of nature. Humans appear no less – perhaps more – violent than wild animals, but human exceptionalism predisposes us to deny this. In *Bastarder*, parallels are drawn between the territoriality of wolves and the territoriality of people; aggressively seeking either control over land or political power, the human characters have more in common with wolves than they imagine (Sandbakken 2006, 106). In addition to the plot, Sandbakken portrays the biological wolf in a vivid scene where a pack of wolves attack a moose cow and her calf, killing the calf with coordinated precision and proceeding to wolf it down with impressive efficiency (85–87).

The mentally disturbed wolf researcher Haldor, the villain in *Bastarder*, breeds a pack of exceptionally powerful and aggressive hybrids for the purpose of killing his rival Sjur. He seeks to transcend the limitations of species, to move beyond the merely human to something higher, which he sees in his highly disciplined hybrids (173). To him, a human is an animal like any another, an animal that can be improved through controlled breeding. In an almost Nietzschean twist, he

²³ *Gråbeinstad* was written in 1925, rejected by Fønhus's publishers who wanted animal stories of wilderness and adventure, and published posthumously in 1993 (Brandrud 1993, 104).

imagines that

in our world the human animal creates evil. I've trained myself for this. To become a human outside feeling, outside evil ... I have no feelings available, and therefore no evil. As a wolf can lick its offspring lovingly, only to go out and kill a leveret remorselessly. The only pure way to kill. (Sandbakken 2006, 173, my translation)

Haldor uses artificial insemination to breed his hybrids. When Sandbakken was working on *Bastarder*, the wolf population in Norway was so low and inbred that artificial insemination was being discussed as a means of increasing their reproductive rate and improving their genetic fitness (Unsgård and Vigerstøl 1998, 199). By the time Lenth was working on *Menn som hater ulver* a decade later, however, artificial insemination was no longer on the agenda, and Lenth doesn't mention it; as wolf numbers had increased naturally, and new individuals from Russia or Finland had wandered in and contributed to the gene pool, the situation was no longer as desperate (Kardos et al. 2017, 6). The Norwegian wolf population remains critically endangered, but not so much that it can be wiped out overnight; the population is still severely, but a little bit less, inbred.

Towards the end, *Bastarder* spirals down into a contrived series of action scenes involving narrow escapes and vicious fights between wolves, hybrids, and people on foot or on snowmobiles. It becomes clear that coexisting with wild wolves was a minor problem all along, that what had to be overcome were a series of conflicts between the people in the small community. As one of the hunters says at the end: 'There are many mad dogs among us' (Sandbakken 2006, 226, my translation).

Lars Lenth's *Menn som hater ulver* – 'Men who hate wolves' – is set in Elverum, inside the wolf zone, but in the same county as Rendalen – Hedmark. On one side is a team of wolf researchers, wolf proponents from various organizations, and Rino Gulliksen, a goon turned direct activist who has been involved in sabotaging salmon farms and now dedicates himself to the cause of saving the wolf. On the other side are the 'wolf haters', as Rino calls them (Lenth 2017, 37): the mayor Trym Kojedal and his deputy Viggo Henum, both power-hungry, corrupt politicians; a sociopathic mercenary who goes under the false name Erik Svendsbråten; and a Swedish dog trainer and car breaker who raised the aggressive hybrids that kill a woman at the beginning of the novel (185, 187).

Rino identifies with the wolf, seeing it as ‘our primary symbol of wild and untamed nature’ (37, my translation). He stays in a carefully camouflaged camp in the woods, living on sheep that he hunts with a bow and arrow, as well as plants and magic mushroom tea (102–104). When in town, he visits the library to explore all the different Facebook groups about wolves in Norway, finding out as much as he can about the various interested parties (115, 85). Having been a goon much of his life, he is not well-read, but is now coming to grips with Peter Singer and Martin Heidegger (115). Inspired by Singer’s utilitarianism, Rino believes that the ends justify the means, that consequences matter more than intentions. To get the better of the wolf haters, he relies on ‘old hunting traditions’ from the nineteenth century: a three-metre deep pit and a rusty old leghold trap (213, 158, 179–180).

Asked what he’s doing in Elverum, Rino answers that Elverum is the battleground, for ‘the battle about the wolf, the king of the forest, nature’s most accomplished hunter, the most impressive creature on Earth’ (37, my translation). In the words of the aging wolf researcher Gilbert, a stoner and womanizer, the area is ‘full of macho idiots who want to shoot wolves. They brag about it too. On Facebook ... They want ... to feel part of a secret resistance movement that saves the countryside from the evil intruders’ (75, my translation). The mayor, Trym Kojedal, admits that ‘the people of Elverum need a common enemy’ (135, my translation), even though he toys with the idea of selling wolf hunts to foreigners (136).

Menn som hater ulver is a work of fiction, but the choice of setting is consistent with the way Norwegian wolf conflicts have played out in recent years. In 2015, a much-publicized court case where five men were convicted of organized wolf poaching was held in Elverum. The town is home to the anti-wolf forest owner organization Glommen Skog, and the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, where some of the leading wolf researchers are based, is also nearby.²⁴ Elverum, an unassuming crossroad town, once a centre of trade, perhaps best known for a battle that was fought there during World War II, has now become a centre of wolf conflicts.

Lenth mocks both sides of the debate, casts wolf proponents and opponents as equally corrupt, but subtle nuances and the inclusion of certain facts allow for a

²⁴ Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences has a campus in Elverum town, but the wolf researchers are based at Evenstad campus, seventy kilometres to the north.

slightly more precise interpretation. The novel is titled ‘Men who *hate* wolves’, a striking title which suggests that hatred of wolves, not love for them, is the deeper root of the conflict and controversy. Rino Gulliksen is no angel, but he empathizes with and is liked by other characters and can be seen as an almost noble anti-hero. The mercenary Svendsbråten, on the other hand, is an obvious villain, dangerous and unstable, with little or no empathy for others. At the end, Svendsbråten is found dead on the steps in front of Elverum city hall, his mouth propped open with the Swede’s flute, his corpse arranged in a similar pose to that of the legendary wolf that was shot in Vegårshei in Southern Norway in 1984 (298), the photograph of which circulated widely in the media. It is a poignant image of poetic justice. *Menn som hater ulver* is a comedy, also in the Aristotelian sense that it has a happy ending. The author’s intention shines through in the text, and it is clear that Lenth is at least open to the idea of maintaining a population of wild wolves in Norway, though he cracks enough jokes at the expense of wolf proponents to render this interpretation ambiguous.

In *Menn som hater ulver* and *Bastarder* alike, environmentalists and hunters are played up against each other, and the local community is destabilized as a result, while “wolf attacks” on people turn out to have been made by hybrids trained to kill. Even the characters are similar; both novels feature a senior wolf researcher and his young female assistant, and a tense dynamic between them (Lenth 2017, 32–33, 198–199; Sandbakken 2006, 134–137). There is a minor character, an enthusiastic journalist with a sense of irony, who appears in both novels, though in *Bastarder* the journalist is female, in *Menn som hater ulver*, male (Sandbakken 2006, 105–106; Lenth 2017, 55).

Lars Lenth must surely have read *Bastarder*, and probably had it in the back of his mind while writing, but that is not necessarily to say that *Menn som hater ulver* is derivative of it. The motifs that appear in these novels also appear regularly in the Norwegian media and are characteristic of the wolf debate, discussed ceaselessly in the comment sections. Though the setting and plot of the two novels are similar, *Menn som hater ulver* is more humorous, more of a parody, caricaturing familiar types. It is also broader in scope and more up to date, as Norwegian wolf conflicts deepened and intensified over the course of the decade since *Bastarder* was published.

In both novels, wolf researchers are directly involved in illegally releasing

wolves into the wild; in *Bastarder*, these wolves comes from Russia, in *Menn som hater ulver* from Estonia (Sandbakken 2006, 134–135; Lenth 2017, 55, 200). This is consistent with the persistent conspiracy theories propagated by the organization *Naturen for alle* and Lars Toverud (2001), among others. These theories have no scientific basis and are contradicted by genetic evidence (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 170) but nevertheless also appear in other Western countries where wolves have returned after having gone locally extinct, such as France (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 149) and Germany (von Ruschkowski 2016, 12). Rumours and conspiracy theories are alternative narratives that wolf sceptics rely on to rationalize the situation, mount resistance against dominant power structures, and challenge dominant discourse – in this case scientific discourse in the service of environmentalism (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 172–173).

Sandbakken and Lenth both include a scene where hunters, environmentalists and politicians gather for debate in a public building with local and foreign media present (Sandbakken 2006, 103–108; Lenth 2017, 87–97). In *Bastarder*, it is an intense and polarized but also grim and brief affair, Sjur trying to hide his intention of selling wolf hunts to foreign trophy hunters, Haldor successfully hiding his hybrid breeding program (Sandbakken 2006, 104, 107). In the less sombre *Menn som hater ulver*, the situation escalates. A middle-aged man in a *Folkeaksjonen ny rovdyrpolitikk* t-shirt suggests building a wall on the border – a reference to Trump’s recent election victory – arguing that this will stop both wolves and asylum seekers: ‘two birds with one stone’ (Lenth 2017, 91, my translation). Another man in the audience argues that it’s better to ‘help them where they are’, in this case Russia, which has a high population of wolves, again pointing out the parallels between debates about wolves and about immigrants (93, my translation). When an environmental activist rises to speak, he is booed while a rain of bottles, coins, cups and cans is thrown at him (91–93). Eventually any possibility of reasoned discussion is drowned out by a group of anti-wolf extremists chanting the slogan ‘S-G-T’ over and over again like a bunch of hooligans (95). ‘S-G-T’ is shorthand for ‘*skyt, grav, ti*’, ‘shoot, shovel and shut up’, a motto for Norwegian wolf poachers (Lenth 2017 75, 95; Liberg et al. 2012, 910).

The above scenarios are reminiscent of a nonfictional scene from the village Sørskogbygda in Elverum municipality described in the introduction to the

sociological book *Ulvekonflikter* (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 7–8). In a recent article in *The Atlantic* about Norwegian wolf conflicts, yet another similar public meeting is described, this one also in Elverum, in the Norwegian Forest Museum, organized by Gunnar Gundersen of Glommen Skog and *Naturbruksalliansen* [the Nature use alliance]²⁵ (Nijhuis 2019). Public meetings in Elverum provide a telling glimpse into the dynamic behind Norwegian wolf conflicts. In rural Norwegian settings, the public venue – *forsamlingshus*, *samfunnshus* or *storstue* – is a focal point, an important arena for discussion. For outsiders, the discourse here offers insight into the things that matter to the community. In Elverum and Rendalen alike, one’s attitude to wolves can be a marker of identity; hostility to wolves can be interpreted as sympathy for farmers and hunters, while appreciation of wolves can signify a more cosmopolitan orientation, though these generalisations don’t necessarily apply on the individual level. When all agree, the wolf issue can be unifying, but the topic tends to be deeply divisive.

Summary and conclusion

Risk of hybridization is frequently cited as an argument against wolf conservation. Hybrids, tame wolves and feral dogs readily interact with wild wolves and domestic dogs on a more or less equal footing, and not all humans are prejudiced against them, but they are generally relegated to the bottom of a hierarchy. Falling between social categories, defying the species construct, buried and barraged by derogatory terms, they are not even demonized but simply dismissed as pollutants, stains that must be removed, even though there are no firm ethical or ecological grounds for this.

Menn som hater ulver and *Bastarder* play out as if all the conspiracy theories that circulate in the Norwegian wolf debate are true, wolf proponents conspiring to release wolves illegally, opponents to hunt them illegally. Both sides of the debate are caricatured and ridiculed, and though criticism is implicit, neither author explicitly takes a side. They both lace the debate with irony, using stereotypes to expose hypocrisy, power relations and hidden assumptions. A central point in these novels is that the wolf conflicts are not really about predation on livestock or even about fear of wolves, but about commercial hunting interests, cultural prejudices, and populist politicians who exploit the wolf for their own gain. The wolf itself only

²⁵ An anti-wolf alliance consisting mostly of farmer and forest owner organizations.

plays a minor role, and the true culprits are not wolves but people, who breed and train wolf–dog hybrids to serve their own purposes.

5. Crossing the threshold: transformation, liminality, and wildness

In this chapter I will discuss how wolves have been used as symbols in constructions of wildness, fear, liminality, gender, initiation rites, and Christian ideology. Charlotte F. Otten suggests that ‘film and fantasy fiction’ are the modern counterpart of ‘the legends and myths of antiquity’ (1986, 4). Having considered myths, legends, short stories and novels in previous chapters, I will now consider music and film.

I will begin by analysing the Norwegian band Ulver’s 1997 black metal album *Nattens Madrigal*,²⁶ then move on to contrast it with Neil Jordan’s 1984 film *The Company of Wolves*. I use the latter as a British counterpart of the former, as there are significant parallels as well as oppositions. *The Company of Wolves* is also relevant to this thesis in that it is one of the most obviously symbolic of wolf narratives, toying with a wide range of possibilities inherent in wolf symbolism without committing to a consistent interpretation, thereby offering a rich window on wolf symbolism generally. Though modern, these narratives are both set mostly during the eighteenth or nineteenth century, fictionalizing the past in ways that are at once romantic and subversive.

Taking a multilevel theoretical approach, I will draw on Nietzsche and ecological thinkers such as Paul Shepard and Timothy Morton to discuss how fascination with transformation and liminality reflect longing to reconnect with wildness we have been alienated from. Finally, I will touch on the significance of wildness for contemporary political and environmental movements.

Reinventing Romanticism: Ulver’s *Madrigal of the Night*

Released in 1997, *Nattens Madrigal* is the only Ulver album that can unequivocally be described as black metal. The band name, ‘*Ulver*’, means ‘wolves’. Frontman Kristoffer Rygg uses the pseudonym Garm, after the hound or wolf that guarded the

²⁶ The full title is *Nattens Madrigal: Aatte Hymne Til Ulven I Manden*, in English *The Madrigal Of The Night: Eight Hymnes To The Wolf In Man* (Ulver 1997).

entrance to Hel and would break free and attack the God Týr at Ragnarok in Norse mythology, possibly the same wolf better known as Fenris (Davidson 1982, 54).²⁷ The bass player, Hugh Steven James Minday, uses the pseudonym Skoll, after one of Fenris's sons, who swallowed the sun and initiated Ragnarok (Guerber 1909). The front cover features a painting of a wolf silhouetted against the full moon, its head raised in a howl, on a snow-covered hillside where icicles hang down over a ledge towards a ravine below (Ulver 1997). From the outset, associations are drawn to Norse mythology, primal nature, and winter night.

Nattens Madrigal is a challenging listen. The sound is harsh, the production very rough, but on closer inspection the songs are complex and tightly focused. There is a guitar solo and an acoustic section on the first track, and a touch of piano on the last, but the album is dominated by loud and distorted electric guitars, frenetic drumming, and typical black metal vocals. The raw sound suits the album's themes of fear, hatred, and passion (Ulver 1997). In 2014, a remaster with clearer sound was released, making the album more accessible (Ulver 2014).

The madrigal is a secular music genre that originated in Italy during the sixteenth century and was popular into the seventeenth. It is hard to draw any direct connection with black metal, but madrigals are through-composed, the music and words working together rather than one being superimposed on the other (Roche 1981, 119); to some extent this is also true of *Nattens Madrigal*, as rather than following a verse-refrain structure the music and lyrics are constantly changing, though there is not always an obvious correlation between music and words. The only place on the album where a stanza is repeated is on "Hymne III – Wolf And The Night",²⁸ but it can hardly be considered a refrain (Ulver 1997).

The lyrics, which are included in the album booklet, can be read separately from the music, as poetry. They echo European Romanticism and are written in the archaic Danish that functioned as the written language in Norway during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, set in the Gothic or blackletter script of the time, accompanied by translations to early modern English (Ulver 1997). The

²⁷ The name Fenris was already in use – modified as 'Fenriz' – by a member of the black metal band Darkthrone, while the name 'Varg' had been claimed by Varg Vikernes of Burzum. The fact that the frontmen of Darkthrone, Burzum, and Ulver – three of the most influential Norwegian black metal bands – are all named after wolves is testament to the significance of wolf symbolism in the genre.

²⁸ The penultimate stanza of words is repeated after the end of the text as printed in the album booklet (Ulver 1997).

translations are far from literal; nuances are lost or added, and it's hard to decide which are better – the originals or the translations. There are echoes of William Blake in the lyrics, and after this album Ulver would go on to record a double concept album based on Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (Ulver 1998).

Though its influence was mostly aesthetic rather than political, the Romantic Movement expressed early stirrings of a revaluation of nature in both Europe and North America (Masius and Sprenger 2015, 3). The Romantics idealized nature as a harmonious refuge, but Ulver romanticize nature as chaos, an interpretation of nature that has more in common with Nietzsche than with the Romantics (Drenthen 2005, 327, 330). *Nattens Madrigal* can be considered a revaluation of Romanticism, seeking connection with nature, but identifying with the wolf rather than the lamb, finding refuge in a winter night rather than a summer day. It has little to do with pastoral idylls, but the image of the wild wolf functions as a vision of the sublime, at once beautiful and threatening, awe-inspiring.

Nattens Madrigal is characterized by fear and dread, with traces of Gothic horror, and the wolf is presented as sinister: 'O Wanderer in this infernal Night / Believe not his Hate will spare thee' (Ulver 1997). In early modern Scandinavia, wolves were variously believed to be possessed by anthropogenic demons or ghosts, to be witches who had shapeshifted, or death demons themselves (Rheinheimer 2015, 39, 43–44). Belief in and fascination with werewolves reflects human–wolf relations, as well as the broader nature–culture divide, and belief in werewolves provided justification for the persecution of real wolves. Lycanthropy was linked to witchcraft and the devil, and wolves were used to explain inhumane behaviour in humans: 'The images of Wolf once served / The Pride of Witch and Devil' (Ulver 1997). Fenris of Norse mythology has been interpreted as a Satanic figure (Robisch 2009, 224).

Nattens Madrigal was influenced by Ken Russell's 1980 film *Altered States* (Rosenthal 2017), which explores non-human perspectives through a process of transformation. In a scientific experiment, using an isolation tank and a Native American potion, Eddie Jessup (William Hurt) in *Altered States* temporarily 'de-evolves', reverts to a primitive state, becomes an 'utterly primal' hunter-gathering ape, and later describes it as 'the most supremely satisfying time of my life'. Transformed, he is stronger and more agile than a human being, killing with his bare hands and eating raw meat, free of the doubt and self-reflection that can be crippling

in modern people. The experiment is physically dangerous, and almost kills him, but he eventually manages to pull back from the brink, to come to terms with and regain a foothold in the personal life he almost abandoned (Russell 1980). Like *Altered States*, *Nattens Madrigal* is a transformation story where the main character switches back and forth between human and non-human form.

Like most intimidating wolf narratives, *Nattens Madrigal* is set in darkest winter. The album is divided into eight “hymnes”, all of which clock in at roughly five or six minutes, each of them dealing with a topic related to cultural constructions of wolves. The protagonist is ‘[a] man in Wolfskin clad’, apparently a werewolf, who turns to Satan to escape from Christianity, and to hatred to avenge lost love. He became an ‘animal shadow crawling’, and people objectified him with labels – ‘Werewolf & Phantom, Daemon & Beast’ – as he filled their hearts with fear of the wild nature they had renounced (Ulver 1997). In “Hymne IV – Wolf And Man”, his alienation from the monotony of human life, and his longing to transcend it is, accounted for:

Dishearten'd he was
As he wander'd with men
On the surface of life – no change
No change as the beast within (Ulver 1997)

A passage from “Hymne VI – Wolf And Passion” illustrates his perspective after he has turned into a wolf:

On he hunts with sorrow none
For what hath passed is gone
His sole regret the absence
Of desires worthie his teares (Ulver 1997)

He becomes wolf at night when the moon is full, and his peers remain unaware of the wildness that lurks among them. Werewolves are often associated with the full moon, but in this case it is an anachronism: the idea that werewolves turn into wolves when the moon is full was introduced in the 1935 film *Werewolf of London* (Walker), long after the period *Nattens Madrigal* is set in.²⁹ He howls ecstatically, praising the

²⁹ Similarly, the notion that one who is bitten by a werewolf becomes a werewolf is an analogy to vampires that was popularized by the 1941 film *The Wolf Man* (Waggner). It is striking how entrenched motifs from twentieth century films have become: the full moon and the infectious bite are

moon, affirming his bond with the night, imagining his reign will be eternal (Ulver 1997).

To howl like a wolf is to assert something primal, the life-force. It can be a triumphant celebration of victory, as in *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese 2013), a film about remorseless capitalists, or *The East* (Batmanglij 2013), where a group of ecoterrorists howl like wolves out of their car windows after having poisoned the executives of a pharmaceutical company with their own drug. In *Blade Runner* (Scott 2007), on the other hand, the replicant Roy begins to howl when he realizes he will soon die, bewailing the years that have been denied him. A howl is a spontaneous release of passionate emotion, whether of joy or sorrow; honest, direct, and immediate, it often stands as a contrast to subdued and controlled surroundings.

Over the course of the last three “hymnes” on the album, a human relationship is introduced into the plot, and a tragic love story unfolds. Lonely and lost, she took pity on him, and he was blinded by her light. The sequence of events is unclear, but it seems he was already a werewolf before the relationship began, and that he may have permanently transformed into a wolf after it ended. In “Hymne VI – Wolf And Passion” it is implied, though not altogether clear, that his love for her led him to want to return to the world of humans, to leave his existence as wolf behind, but that he was unable to do so:

He takes her heart in his
But dark & dead is her light
Evil took her fire’s breath
Her embers were by him devour’d
And inside of him a fire buildes
Of Hate & Love & Hope so sad (Ulver 1997)

Even though his love leads to her death, she is grateful as she dies in his arms:

Thou, messenger of the Devil,
Who brings fear into lovers’ hearts
Thou, elixir to the hatred of men
And air to my Soule, now dying;
Leave me not, O shadow,
Before I give myself away
To these long denied desires,
Thy gift to my dying heart (Ulver 1997)

now so essential to werewolf mythology that it is easy to assume this was also the case in centuries past.

The details are unclear, but she died, and it could well be that he killed her.

The colour red is potently symbolic, the strongest colour, at the top of the spectrum, the colour of powerful passion, of love but also rage. These are the lyrics to “Hymne VII – Wolf And Destiny”:

No more he wore his costume
Red as bloode & wine
For wine & bloode was on his hands
As he stooode by her bed and corpse
When the two of them were found (Ulver 1997)

As man, he wore a red costume, an intriguing reference which is not elaborated on. He might have been a soldier, wearing a military uniform, but this is speculation. The motif of a red costume also brings Red Riding Hood to mind. Either way, as wolf, wearing his ‘wolfskin’, he no longer needs his costume.

Wine and blood are not only bright in colour, they tend to leave a stain, as the protagonist’s soul is stained by what he has done. The reference to wine suggests intoxication, but in Christianity wine also plays a sacramental role, becoming the blood of Christ through transubstantiation. Wine stains, but in ritual it can have a cleansing function, such as in a rite of passage marking transition to a different life stage.

Her lamb-like nature
Left him not untouch’d
By Magick she was bound
To the Beast within him (Ulver 1997)

Literally or figuratively, she lives on within him, travels with him as he roams. She is compared to a lamb, and though it does not come across in the translation, in the Norwegian lyrics she is described as ‘a girl holy’ (Ulver 1997, my translation). Possibly influenced by William Blake, Ulver describe a union of oppositions – good and evil, passive and active, female and male. The union of lamb and wolf calls to mind the dance of death, the eternal chase of predator and prey.

There appears to be a Nietzschean streak to *Nattens Madrigal*. The image of the wolf as an evil creature is largely a biblical figure, and the high esteem in which the wolf is held on *Nattens Madrigal* may be rooted in Nietzschean contempt for the

passive herd mentality associated with Christianity: ‘evil’ attains positive value because ‘good’ (‘god’) is decadent. In the words of William Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, set to music by Ulver: ‘Good is the passive that obeys reason / Evil is the active springing from energy’ (Blake quoted in Ulver 1998). The wild and intelligent wolf, labelled evil, can represent the creative individual who comes into conflict with the passive, tame and obedient herd of sheep.

“Hymne IV” especially lends itself to Nietzschean readings. He became wolf to escape ‘the small ones’ (Nietzsche 1964, 55, 185), the pettiness of sheep-like yet ‘all-too-human’ (Nietzsche 1910) existence:

They fear him, these fooles
A power pure, nature unveil’d
Perception sans delusion
...
In his heart: An abyss unfathomable
As the blacken’d sea
Which loves its deeps (Ulver 1997)

The flock fears what it doesn’t understand, is terrified of the depths, where it could drown. In order to escape the herd mentality of the docile flock he must become a ‘beast of prey’ (Nietzsche 1990, 258).

For Nietzsche, ‘[m]orality is herd-instinct in the individual’ (2001, 115). It is derived from whatever benefits the community as a whole, and as such, it is useful for collective survival, but involves reducing the individual to a ‘function of the herd’ (115). Individuals who threaten the moral order are potentially dangerous, and will always be met with suspicion, but morality is constantly evolving, and sudden shifts can only occur as a result of individual initiative. Morality is for sheep, but sheep need shepherds; without “free spirits”, culture stagnates, and begins to decay. The association of wolves with opposition and destruction is analogous to the devil’s role in Christianity, but even Jesus was a dissident in his time. In order to flourish, societies must seek safety in numbers and rely on a shared set of values, but also allow for experimentation with new ideas, which are always met with resistance; like ecosystems, societies are dynamic and characterized by tension, without which they become exceedingly vulnerable.

The werewolf’s yearning ‘[t]owards a winter’s night’ (Ulver 1997) can be interpreted as the death drive, but in the light of Nietzsche’s concept of the eternal

recurrence, the ability to not only tolerate and accept but even long for the bitter cold of a dark winter night is characteristic of the overman (Nietzsche 1964, 244; 2001, 194–195). From this perspective he is no longer a victim but one who has successfully overcome the delusions of society and the weight of existential despair. He may wander through the darkness, hungry and thirsty, bitter and disillusioned, but at least he has come to terms with and even learned to love the truth. While the populace intoxicates itself with cheap delusions, the wolf reigns in his fiercely defended territory. His fate is tragic, but so is the human condition.

In *Nattens Madrigal*, acknowledging the wolf is akin to acknowledging the dark and dangerous sides of (hu)man(kind). Assuming these would otherwise be suppressed, and find expression in other no less harmful forms, this raises our consciousness and deepens our understanding, so we can better deal with the sides of ourselves that are problematic. Humans have taken pride in subduing external nature, exercising control over landscapes that once presented a challenge, but civilization remains plagued by crime and war. Martin Drenthen argues that ‘the resurgence of the wolf confronts us with our desire for control, not only control over nature, but also control over nature within us’ (2015, 331).

The attempt at mapping both nature and the human soul with unambiguous symbols reflects a naïve hope that we can overcome the fear of all that escapes our grasp. It is the same kind of mechanization that Fønhus warned about (Fønhus in Stensrud 1985, 111–112). Fear of the unknown leads to hope that instrumental reason can illuminate all aspects of nature and bring them under control. Horkheimer and Adorno are instructive here:

Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization, of enlightenment, which equates the living with the nonliving as myth had equated the nonliving with the living. Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized. The pure immanence of positivism, its ultimate product, is nothing other than a form of universal taboo. Nothing is allowed to remain outside, since the mere idea of the “outside” is the real source of fear. (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 11)

The dangers of mechanization, of positivism, primarily lie in the urge for total control, which is rooted in fear. When people demand complete freedom from fear, domestication is almost total. Fear is a reminder of a past we imagined we had left behind, and due to its strong emotional resonance, it can become a political tool.

Instead of repressing or trying to escape from fear, Ulver confront it, romanticizing the wolf as mysterious and dangerous, anti-Christian, but also a tragic figure, which affirms the beast within in order to overcome alienation. Interpretation itself is of necessity a form of demythologization to the extent that it tends towards accuracy, peeling away all that is nonessential, but paradoxically, by revealing the essence of primordial symbols, it can also be a means of rejuvenating them, of revitalizing symbolic thinking (Ricoeur 1967, 352–353). Demythologization does not have to result in disenchantment. By anthropomorphising the wolf as a symbol of the dark sides of humanity, Ulver transcend the limitations of the current wolf debate.

Nattens Madrigal can also be interpreted as subversive mimesis, as criticizing the object it identifies with (Cahn 1984, 31). Identification can signal criticism, even if only implicitly, and confronting fear can be a means of overcoming or at least learning to master it: ‘He hath heart who knoweth fear, but *vanquisheth* it; who seeth the abyss, but with *pride*’ (Nietzsche 1964, 322). The werewolf’s hatred may be an inversion of the hatred Christians have felt for wolves through much of the religion’s history; inverted symbolism is widely used in rock, not only in metal but also in punk and associated genres. In the liner notes to *Nattens Madrigal*, however, Ulver make it clear that they are primarily interested in the werewolf because it appeals to their ‘aesthetical Sense’ and reflects the ‘Triumph of Evil’ (Ulver 1997). Despite being offensive to Christian morality, *Nattens Madrigal* is not a political project, and though a range of interpretations are possible, the meaning was probably not meant to be fixed. It can be interpreted as either glorification or catharsis, depending on the listener.

Ulver present the wolf as a danger to both the individual and the social order. Some might argue that this could have an adverse effect on attitudes to wolves, but it seems unlikely that anyone would take it literally; attempting to give the lyrics an educational or political dimension would undermine the album’s artistic integrity and have an even more negative effect by exposing pro-wolf sentiments to ridicule. The lyrics are thought-provoking and likely to trigger an emotional response of one kind or another in most listeners. As Timothy Morton (2016) suggests, raising one’s ecological consciousness involves going through a depressive stage before one is able to cope with the situation and move ahead towards a plausible vision of coexistence; when ‘happy nihilism’ and its illusory hope has turned out to be

counterproductive, ‘dark nihilism’ is more promising, as it enables us to face the truly difficult questions about our relations to our surroundings (116–117).

Constructing the wolf the way Ulver do has the potential to frighten or alienate, but seems more likely to inspire awe, encouraging respect for the wild, for that which refuses to bend to human rules. Demonization can be a form of romanticization.

At the end of the album, the wolf is left ‘[w]andering alone’ (Ulver 1997). The ‘lone wolf’ is a widely used motif and everyday expression but has little to do with actual wolves. Lone wolves are usually dispersers in search of a mate and a territory; they are rarely alone for very long, but when they are, they can behave unpredictably, as they tend to be inexperienced and desperate, struggling to catch sufficient prey to feed themselves, lacking the guidance the social structure of a pack provides. As a rule, however, wolves are social, looking out for each other, the organization of the pack providing security, each wolf aware of its role. According to Lopez, ‘[t]here are no stories among Indians of lone wolves’ (Lopez 1978, 105). The dangerous insecurity of solitary wolves is reflected in contemporary references to ‘lone-wolf terrorists’ (Tønnessen 2011, 58).

Despite being written in the language of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Norway, *Nattens Madrigal* does not represent Norwegian literature of the time. It may have been influenced by the English – and perhaps the German – Romantics, but the strong emotion, spirituality, ‘formal experimentation’ and ‘fascination with evil’ that typified European Romanticism fell on barren ground in Norway and were anathema to most Norwegian writers of the time, who had a far more pragmatic and rational mindset (Witoszek 2016, 213). In *Nattens Madrigal*, history is romanticized in a way that can be offensive to tradition, and nineteenth-century Norway is imbued with an exaggeratedly grandiose imaginary.

Then again, the character of the wolf in *Nattens Madrigal* is reminiscent of the way the wolf is presented in some of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century stories compiled by Snerte (2000, 23, 36), and is consistent with the way the Sami describe wolves in Fønhus’s fictional but realistic stories (1976, 17, 24, 107). Its function is fundamentally different, however, as Ulver’s narrative lacks the defensive and moralistic perspective characteristic of nineteenth-century anecdotes, taking a confrontational approach that embraces chaos instead.

Nature in *Nattens Madrigal* is not that of *Sanctum* but of *Sacrum*, a nature that seethes with primeval energy, a source of wonder and fear far beyond the control or even understanding of Enlightened rationalism and pious Christianity. It is dangerous, yet it is also the life-force; it can lead to totalitarianism and tyranny but is also the wellspring of love and devotion (Witoszek 2011, 152). It may seem prudent to banish it, but this is impossible; sacred nature is ambiguous, but also foundational.

We render wolves scary by ascribing human characteristics to them, projecting onto wolves what we fear most in ourselves, a form of selective anthropomorphism that contributes to maintaining the divide between the tame and the wild. By constructing wolves as demonic others, we assign them a status we do not reserve for other animals, as if wolves are moral agents capable of distinguishing between human concepts of good and evil. *Nattens Madrigal* has little to do with real wolves but much to do with cultural prejudices. By playing on these prejudices, pushing them to their logical conclusion, Ulver subvert them.

A fairy tale turned on its head: *The Company of Wolves*

Neil Jordan's 1984 film *The Company of Wolves* is densely layered, loosely based on a short story by Angela Carter (1979), Jordan and Carter having written the screenplay together. Like *Nattens Madrigal*, it combines horror with romance, and Christianity symbolizes conformity and oppression while the wolf appears as an anti-Christian figure. There are, however, striking oppositions between the two narratives: where the protagonist of *Nattens Madrigal* represents the 'wolf in man', the protagonist of *The Company of Wolves* is a teenage girl. Gender plays a prominent role, and the wolf is closely associated with initiation into adulthood.

The Company of Wolves consists of a number of separate episodes within an overarching narrative and is loosely themed around the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood", which it plays on in various ways. It begins and ends in the present day, with the protagonist Rosaleen (Sarah Patterson) asleep in her room, while the bulk of the film plays out in the form of a dream seemingly set somewhere in rural Britain during the nineteenth century.

There are numerous inconsistencies, as is fitting in a dream, and some of the scenes verge on the surreal.³⁰ Wolves were extinct in Ireland by the late eighteenth century and much earlier in Scotland and England. The setting of is not specified: the director is Irish, but *The Company of Wolves* was filmed in England, with mostly English and some Irish actors. As the stage sets – including the forest – are constructed, with little or no natural scenery showing, the time of year is not obvious through most of the film, but towards the end we realize it's autumn, and the final scenes play out in winter.³¹ As Rosaleen's mother says, consistent with other narratives we have looked at, 'a hard winter brings out the wolves' (Jordan 1984). Having the plot unfold as a dream allows for borrowing imagery from different periods, and the significance of the symbols is more obvious when we know they are imagined.

In the dream, Rosaleen's older sister gets killed by wolves. 'Your only sister, all alone in the wood, and nobody there to save her. Poor little lamb,' their grandmother (Angela Lansbury) laments. 'Why couldn't she save herself?' replies Rosaleen (Jordan 1984). Granny tells Rosaleen frightening stories intended to teach her how to behave morally and decently, but Rosaleen suspects she is not being told the whole truth. The antipode of the lamb is the wolf, and when Rosaleen hears wolves howling at night, her reaction is not of fear, but of interest.

One of Granny's stories is about a wedding party that is transformed into wolves by a girl the groom – son of a vicar – has made pregnant and then abandoned. The story plays out in the luxurious manor house Rosaleen and her family live in in real life, which appears at the beginning and end of the film, contrasting sharply with their humble home in the dream. Before they turn into wolves, the members of the wedding party are grotesque and gluttonous, chewing voraciously on legs of chicken, with huge portions of cold meats on their plates. Some of them are drunk, and their humour is crude and cold, as they wallow in luxury while a string band plays and

³⁰ The film is a visual feast, with elaborate props and costumes, but some of the special effects – notably in the transformation scenes – seem too exaggerated. The fact that many of the wolves featured are obviously dogs makes for confusion – in the opening scene, the first question that comes to mind is whether that shepherd dog is meant to be a wolf or not (Jordan 1984). Nevertheless, as the film progresses, story takes over, and the conspicuous inaccuracy of the special effects contributes to drawing our attention to symbolism (Robisch 2009, 207–208).

³¹ The setting is reminiscent of that of *The Wolf Man*, which is set in a vaguely defined location in Britain, supposedly in Wales, but actually filmed in Hollywood. The fact that the forest is a built stage set, rather than a real forest, is also reminiscent of *The Wolf Man* (Waggner 1941).

waiters stand by. The bride and groom make little attempt to conceal that they don't love each other, and the wedding cake is an elaborate tower, like a palace, symbolizing wealth. The wronged girl storms in, visibly pregnant, and magically transforms the wedding party into a pack of wolves; they keep feeding for a while until they upset the table and run off into the wood. Since then, the wolves come to serenade her and her baby every night as she sits in the top of a tree out in the wood, laughing maniacally (Jordan 1984). Here, wolves symbolize greed and gluttony, as well as cruelty, and the members of the wedding party are turned into wolves for their wolfish behaviour.³² It is a moral tale, but a dark one, as the girl who inflicts the punishment is obviously deranged, and her residence in a tree in the woods suggests that she – like the transformed wedding party – no longer belongs in society. Rosaleen comments that the pleasure in hearing the wolves howl 'would come from knowing the power that she had' (Jordan 1984). This suggests that Rosaleen has begun to reflect on power relations, that she is sceptical of piety and appreciates the girl's desire for revenge.

There is an abundance of anthropomorphic animals in *The Company of Wolves*. These are typical of fairy tales, fables, and children's fiction generally, and give an uncanny dimension to the film, which is about the transition into adulthood, into letting childish dreams go. The presence of the animals also indicates that the dream unfolds in a romanticized time and place which is fully animated, inhabited, brimming with life, before Enlightenment, before industrialism. Eagle-owls and barn owls appear at the edge of the frame, but the call that is heard in some of the film's night scenes is that of a tawny owl. While the owls and crows appear as omens or harbingers, the white doves symbolize peace and purity. The white storks are associated with fertility and childbirth, and the white goose can bring associations to cleanliness and safety.

³² In Russian folklore, weddings are often targets of sorcery, and in one widespread and cautionary folk tale this involves turning the members of the party into wolves (Cohen 2009, 57). As in Russian folk belief, the story Granny tells in *The Company of Wolves* is a cautionary one, a warning about what can happen to those who behave badly. In contrast to the bride, groom, and wedding guests, the waiters and the string band are not affected by the magic (Jordan 1984).

Granny's story is also reminiscent of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the tyrant Lycaon is turned into a wolf as punishment for serving his guest human flesh (1998, 28–29). The association of wolves with gluttony follows logically from their natural behaviour, as wolves regularly 'wolf down' large quantities of meat very quickly. Nevertheless, rabies has also played a significant role in the construction of wolves as voracious monsters: 'About his lips the gathered foam he churns' (Ovid 1998, 29).

The white rabbits that appear repeatedly bring to mind the song “White Rabbit” by Jefferson Airplane (1967), a classic of the sixties counterculture, inspired by Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s adventures in wonderland* (2015). The massive mushrooms that appear early in the dream reinforce this association, and the forest Rosaleen wanders through, with all its strange and anthropomorphized creatures, is not altogether unlike the landscape of *Alice’s adventures in wonderland* and its sequel *Through the looking glass* (Carroll 2015). Alice and Rosaleen are both young girls who are too curious and bold for their own safety, who take foolish risks yet are crafty enough to make it through their adventures unharmed. Even though Rosaleen’s older sister lacks this adventurous spirit, she is named Alice (Jordan 1984).

A large frog appears in the opening scene, knocked off a fallen log by a running dog, then appears again on Alice’s coffin in the open grave, hopping away as dirt is shovelled onto it; it appears three more times after this, the last two times in winter snow, an amphibian out of its normal environment (Jordan 1984). Amphibians are among the most liminal of animals, breathing water and air alike, neither aquatic nor terrestrial but something in between. In Europe, frogs are associated with witchcraft, and toads excrete dangerous and psychoactive toxins – potential ingredients in witches’ brews – from their parotoid glands, which are often wrongly referred to as ‘warts’, recalling the large warts on the faces of the witches of folklore. Like werewolves and real wolves, witches were victims of persecution during the early modern period, but in Western culture they are now romanticized as much as they are demonized. There is something mysterious about the frog, but from Rosaleen’s perspective it is probably an intriguing figure, if not a benign one.

A python is briefly seen crawling along an overhanging branch, suggesting a parallel between the forest and the Garden of Eden, with the python as the snake that brings sin into Paradise, tempting the innocent with knowledge and experience.³³ This motif is used so frequently that it has lost much of its effect, but, in Christianity, the snake and the wolf are exceptional in that they have turned away from their creator and towards the devil. Both are considered evil; where the snake leads people

³³ The python is a creature of the tropics, at home in the lush and fertile landscape we imagine the Garden of Eden to be, but it looks out of place in a British setting. A European adder would have been a more obvious choice, but if the studio happened to have a python available, the temptation to use such an impressive snake is understandable.

into temptation, the wolf stands in opposition to the innocent lamb (Tømmeraas 2017, 17).

During a sermon, spiders fall out of the cobwebs under the church ceiling onto the pages of Rosaleen's open prayer book (Jordan 1984). Like snakes, spiders can sometimes be dangerous, and many people have phobic reactions to them, perceiving them as sinister and alien. The cobwebs are suggestive of haunted houses, of poorly kept and little used places where spiders can spin their webs undisturbed. This suggests that Christianity is musty, outdated and uninteresting, irrelevant to Rosaleen's situation, and can be read as criticism of organized religion as well as a rejection of group mentality.

The wolves are heard howling, but are mostly hidden from sight, except when they attack. They are feared by the villagers, especially because they prey on livestock, but Rosaleen is curious about them. While most of the animals are part of the set, almost blending into the scenery rather than participating in the action, the wolves constitute a society all their own, separate from yet analogous to the human. In *The Company of Wolves*, werewolves regain their human form in death: a werewolf's head is cut off, lands in a bucket of milk, and surfaces face up, its human features restored; when the villagers catch a wolf in a pit trap and shoot it, Rosaleen's father cuts off its forepaw and it transforms into a human hand (Jordan 1984).

As in *Nattens Madrigal*, the colour red plays a conspicuous role, symbolizing life and blood – blood shed through violence, but perhaps especially menstrual blood – and contrasting sharply with the surroundings, which are mostly of dull brownish hues. The name 'Rosaleen' can refer to the colours red and pink, or to a flower. Rosaleen experiments with putting on lipstick, and in some of the later scenes, she wears a red shawl. 'Red as a berry,' says Granny as she hands Rosaleen the shawl she has made for her. 'Red as blood,' says Rosaleen. The transformations from human to wolf are bloody and gruesome, but when the huntsman/werewolf knocks Granny's head off and it crashes into the mantelpiece, it shatters into shards like porcelain, hollow and bloodless, suggesting she has no blood left in her (Jordan 1984).

In *The Company of Wolves*, the wolf is a polysemous concept, its symbolism context-dependent; wolves symbolize gluttony and savagery but also sexuality and self-determination. When Rosaleen encounters the huntsman in the wood, she is

apprehensive at first, but instead of panicking or fleeing she engages with him and rises to his challenges. Eventually, despite the fact that he turns out to be a werewolf and eats her grandmother, she becomes a wolf herself. The villagers come searching for her, and when they arrive at Granny's cabin, they see a wolf leaping through the window, disappearing into the darkness as the hunters open fire. Inside the cabin, they find a second wolf, this one wearing the cross necklace Rosaleen was given by her mother. The wolf flees, and as Rosaleen's mother shouts for the hunters to hold their fire, escapes into the night (Jordan 1984).

The setting then shifts back to the present, and we find Rosaleen asleep in her room again, shifting uneasily in her bed as a huge pack of wolves comes pouring into the house; while some are approaching her door, another bursts through the glass window (even though her room is upstairs, high off the ground). Waking up, she starts screaming, terrified now, no longer as brave as she was in the nineteenth-century dreamscape. Her toys fall on the floor, shattering into little pieces, and as the credits begin to roll, an excerpt from Charles Perrault's "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge", the late seventeenth-century version of "Little Red Riding Hood" in which the red cap was first introduced, is recited in a voice-over.

Facing fear: freedom and security

The Company of Wolves builds on – and modifies – the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood", a prototypical narrative that reflects moralistic attempts at instilling values in children (Østerås and Halmrast 2015, 285).³⁴ The moral of the Brothers Grimm version (2002), dating from the nineteenth century, is that children should avoid straying from the path when walking in the woods – useful advice that helped our ancestors survive – but the original moral, as in Perrault's version (1912) from 1697, was that young girls should be wary of strange men. In early versions, there was no happy ending – the young girl simply went to bed with the wolf and got eaten – but the fairy tale has become more family-friendly and socially palatable, perhaps more Christian, over time (Østerås and Halmrast 2015, 285).

The characters in "Little Red Riding Hood" are a little girl, an old woman, a wolf, and – in later versions – a hunter, all of them archetypes. It is implicit that vulnerable children and old women need the brave hunter's protection from the evil

³⁴ See Appendix 2.

wolf. In *The Company of Wolves*, this is turned on its head. Where the original Red Riding Hood belongs to a type of fairy tale protagonist described by Vladimir Propp as a “victimized hero”, Rosaleen is a “seeker”, and these categories are linked to gender, girls tending to fall within the former category, boys within the latter (Kiil and Tønnessen 2013). The wolf has long functioned as an ‘image of violation’ but is now increasingly seen as a ‘totem of empowerment’ (Robisch 2009, 368). In *The Company of Wolves*, it is both.

In Grimm, the hunter is a hero and the wolf a villain, but in Carter and Jordan’s script, the huntsman and the wolf are the same. When Rosaleen first encounters the huntsman/werewolf, we suspect – in line with the stories Rosaleen has been told by Granny – that he might be a villain, but eventually we realize he is merely an anti-hero. He is charming but vain, dangerous but vulnerable, and heroic only in that he saves Rosaleen from the boring and miserable fate of marrying a boy within the narrow circle of the village.

Granny is a stalwart bedrock, an upright member of her community. She has lived a life of security, and as an elder, she perceives it as her duty to instil her values in her granddaughter. Rosaleen, on the other hand, rebels by choosing the path of freedom, not only putting herself in danger but also disrupting the stability of the community. There is something Nietzschean about this, as, for Nietzsche, seeking security, imposing limitations on oneself in order to survive, is symptomatic of fear and distress (2001, 207). Healthy lifeforms do not seek security, but power and growth, even if this involves risks that threaten one’s personal safety (208).

Rosaleen’s apparent carelessness might be an expression of the will to power, a sign that she does not feel the need to be careful. She is not prone to victim mentality, and rather than marrying a man who would ‘have his way with her’ only to later neglect and beat her, she chooses the life of a wolf, discovers that she prefers the company of wolves (Jordan 1984). She overcomes fear by facing it, proving herself to be a Nietzschean beast of prey, in charge of her own destiny and capable of embracing it, rather than a sheep, one of the flock, a helpless victim. Like the protagonist of *Nattens Madrigal*, she rejects the boring and domesticated life that is laid out for her, even though she is likely to suffer for it. They are both Nietzschean “free spirits” who rebel against sheepish conformity: ‘he who is hated by the people, as the wolf by the dogs – is the free spirit, the enemy of fetters, the non-adorer, the

dweller in the woods' (Nietzsche 1964, 110). Ironically, the community is likely to draw a moral lesson from Rosaleen's disappearance, reinforcing its own values by concluding that her carelessness led to misfortune.

In contrast to current debate, where fear of wolves is an argument against their conservation, in *The Company of Wolves*, fear is a restrictive limitation to be cast off, not a legitimate position to hide behind. When life is circumscribed by fear, one is always on the defensive, reduced to insisting on the validity and importance of one's own feelings, often at the expense of others. For those trapped by fear, overcoming it is liberating, but there are considerable challenges involved. Fear cannot simply be brushed aside and can in some cases be pathological. It has had, and sometimes still has, enormous survival value, and can be healthy, but becomes crippling when left unchallenged, and is insufficient – even irrelevant – as a guideline for conservation or environmental policy. Besides, an animal – human or non-human – that goes through life without ever feeling fear becomes a docile, solipsistic creature, both averse to challenge and neurotically frustrated by the lack of it. Though it may be irrational, and can be overcome, 'fear of wolves is an essential part of our fascination with them' (Drenthen 2015, 330).

More important than mastering fear – face-to-face encounters with wolves are, after all, infrequent even within wolf territories, and very rarely dangerous – is ecological awareness. Wolves remove sick and weak individuals from moose populations (Zimmermann et al. 2014, 232), provide carrion for scavengers (238), and control populations of smaller carnivores such as red fox (Glorvigen 2008, 5, 12). Once the wolf's ecological importance is recognized, the assuagement of fear seems less important. Even if the fear is real, and must be dealt with, it is selfish to insist that one's personal experience of fear should have priority over ecological integrity.

In Carter's short story with the same title as the film, she describes the wolf as 'carnivore incarnate' (2013, 72, 78, 80). Wolves have become symbols of wild nature, of wildness.³⁵ Openness to wolves, and to wild nature in its widest sense, is

³⁵ Aldo Leopold once argued that 'the crane is wildness incarnate' (1953, 107), perhaps partly because sandhill cranes were endangered in Wisconsin when he lived there, but the population has since recovered (Brower 2001, 11), and even though cranes are beautiful and fascinating, the wolf is arguably more representative of what we generally mean by 'wildness'. This is not to say that other species are any less wild, but there is something about wolves that strikes us as quintessentially wild,

not only a means of learning to tolerate potentially dangerous animals – it can also be life-enriching. It can lead to awe and wonder, as virtue and aesthetic experience, as well as humility, not the humiliating kind but the humble recognition that one is part of something greater than oneself (Hursthouse 2007, 161).

Of wolves and gender

Rosaleen challenges patriarchal and conservative norms. She conquers and wounds the wolf, turns out to be strong and free-spirited, and her sympathy for wolves is linked to sexual awakening. Even though some critics have taken *The Company of Wolves* to be sexist, claiming that Rosaleen avoids getting killed by sleeping with the wolf (Ahne 2017, 25), it is a feminist narrative in that it challenges traditional gender roles. Rosaleen's mother, a stronger character than Granny, tells Rosaleen that 'if there's a beast in men, it meets its match in women too' (Jordan 1984). In *Nattens Madrigal*, on the other hand, the protagonist is male. Like the huntsman/werewolf in *The Company of Wolves*, he is overwhelmed by a female character, but in this case, he kills her; in both cases, however, the attraction is mutual and powerful and there is no sense of victimization.

To the extent that gender plays a role in current wolf debates, this is mostly linked to what Jessica Bell refers to as 'retro frontier masculinity', in which male hunters think of themselves as 'paternalist protectors' while feminizing wolf proponents (Bell 2015, 286). Bell's study is focused on North America, but her argument holds true for Europe as well; even though the North American tradition of the 'frontiersman' is lacking, Scandinavian and British hunting cultures are based on roughly equivalent ideas of nature as something that has to be subdued in order to make the landscape habitable for humans. 'Real men shoot wolves' – '*Ekte mannfolk skyter ulv*' – has become a slogan for Norwegian wolf hunters and wolf opponents. Traditional ways of thinking are used to justify hunting practices and legitimate the social norms that surround them. 'Retro frontier masculinity' reflects Christianity's hierarchical view of nature (287), seeing 'man' as the designated ruler over the rest of creation. Since most hunters are male, masculine ideals are easy to indulge in, and since most have day jobs, only hunting in their free time, these values can even be

probably a combination of factors such as their physical appearance, strength, resilience, adaptability, and the myths that surround them.

perceived as threatened. At the opposite pole, animal rights activists are often associated with femininity.³⁶

These gender perspectives don't apply to the protagonist of *Nattens Madrigal*. On the contrary, he is uncontrollable and wild, far removed from paternalist ideals. Whatever masculinity is expressed is of a different kind than the conservative masculinity of Western hunting culture, though there may be echoes of Viking warrior ideals. In *The Company of Wolves* and *Nattens Madrigal* alike, gender-based restrictions imposed on the individual by society are discarded as archaic and irrelevant. The wolf rules the realm of instinct, of uncontrolled passion and sexual longing, of dominance, but also submission and immersion. In interpreting these narratives, wildness may be more useful guideline than gender. The wolf as an 'Image of the Beast in Man' (Ulver 1997) offers hope that some measure of wildness still remains in the human spirit.

Of wolves and initiation

For Native Americans, wolf rituals served as initiation into adulthood. Through confrontation, young people learnt the ways of the wolf, to be (like) wolf, which would help them survive (Lopez 1978, 112, 128, 179). Familiarity with wolves led to loss of innocence and gaining of wisdom.

Native American explanatory models were evolved adaptations to local conditions, and served societies well for millennia, providing meaning and structure, but these have now largely been replaced by Christianity and capitalism. Where Native Americans respected wolves, frontiersmen – casting themselves as 'God's agent[s]' – considered them cowards, in a complete reversal (Lopez 1978, 147–148). Though they despised wolves for killing “defenceless” prey (148), frontiersmen were unable or unwilling to reflect on the fact that they themselves were involved in the systematic killing of defenceless animals on a far greater scale. Hunters who fail to acknowledge their prey's intrinsic and ecological value can be considered immature individuals whose initiation process remains incomplete.

In today's popular culture, the wolf is still associated with initiation. It seems

³⁶ A study from Canada shows that women have a more positive attitude to wolves than men do; hunting interests, level of education, and whether one lives in a rural or an urban area are significant factors that might contribute to explaining this gender difference (Fritts et al. 2003, 296).

to be an exceptionally potent symbol of liminality, transition, the crossing of thresholds. In *The Company of Wolves*, as well as the teen horror film *Ginger Snaps* (Fawcett 2000), the wolf is linked to sexual awakening and – analogously to the Native American traditions – a young girl becomes a wolf. Even the transformation from man to werewolf in *The Wolf Man* (Waggner 1941) has been read as a metaphor for the transformations of puberty (Auster 2017, 174).

In today's globalized world, where cultures mix, and individualism is encouraged, traditional initiation rites play a limited role, and the individual can only attain a mature identity through a process of self-reflection (Kiil and Tønnessen 2013). Rosaleen's mother and grandmother are caring role models who try to teach her how to look out for herself, instilling her with a socially defensible set of values, but the wolf is finally the one who initiates her into adulthood. The border zone between tradition and modernity can be envisaged as a liminal space, a 'position between tradition and self-realization', where identity is negotiated, and new traditions are established through individual choices and processes of hybridization (Kiil and Tønnessen 2013).

The wolf as a boundary animal: liminality and transformation

The wolf is a liminal animal, a boundary animal, potentially dangerous yet socially advanced and capable of empathetic engagement with humans. It can be seen as wildness incarnate but also as a potential companion animal and hunting partner. As a result, attitudes to the wolf swing wildly from romanticization to demonization, the two interpretations unable to communicate with each other, romanticization mistaken for ecology and demonization for instrumental reason.

Adaptable and opportunistic, flexible in its choice of habitat, the wolf is capable of taking down large ungulates such as moose and reindeer yet able to survive on scavenged offal when necessary. As much at home in cultural landscapes as in the wild, it challenges 'the kind of environmental identity that relies on the neat separation of both domains' (Drenthen 2015, 325). It does not conform to mythical visions of it as a creature of the wilderness, and its appearance in humanized landscapes can be disturbing to those who value 'cultural heritage' over 'wildness' (321). In Norway, wolf ranges are not confined to protected areas but span managed

areas that include both forest and human settlements. The wolf appears on the threshold between the tame and the wild.

In *The Company of Wolves* and *Nattens Madrigal*, fear of the wild is overcome through identification with it, and motifs usually linked to demonization of wolves are turned on their head. In *The Company of Wolves*, Rosaleen's Granny and older sister are both killed by wolves, the same species Rosaleen identifies with and eventually transforms into (Jordan 1984). In *Nattens Madrigal*, the protagonist witnesses, and may have caused, the death of the woman he loves, yet she accepts her fate willingly (Ulver 1997). There is a clear association of wolves with outlaws: by sympathizing with wolves, the protagonists transgress social norms and find themselves on the wrong side of the law. Empowerment and individual responsibility appear to result in tragedy; these narratives are almost nihilistic, but in both cases the ending is open: we are left unsure whether or not redemption is possible.

In both narratives, wolves are feared by the general public, but for the protagonists, wolves symbolize hope and freedom; instead of labelling the wolf as 'Other', they identify with it, not as an act of surrender but as an assertion that causes otherness to lose its threatening aspects. The wolf is a remaining glimpse of the numinous, and the transformation from tame human to wild non-human is the ultimate form of mimetic identification, transcending the human–nature divide altogether, undermining human exceptionalism. Awakening identification with what we have been alienated from, this can also be a creative expression of personal rewilding, a small step away from the dominant paradigm of anthropocentrism towards biocentrism or even ecocentrism. The intrinsic value of non-human organisms is recognized, their sentience acknowledged and respected, raising the possibility that their awareness and sensitivity might even surpass ours in some ways.

Alienated from what we once knew as nature, we seek to reconnect with something primal, and the most comprehensive form this can take is that of transformation, of not only empathizing or interacting with the non-human (or the pre-human) but actually embodying it physically, despite the pain and danger this entails. While the artificial divide between nature and culture reflects a loss of wildness, transformation involves losing control in the hope that this will allow for return to a wild state. Thought-experiments can provide insights, but these can hardly

compare with the visceral, sensuous, transcendent experience of literally becoming the Other.

Nietzschean wildness: transgressing culture and reason

We have seen that wolves often function as symbols of wild nature, as icons of wildness. It follows that there is often a direct connection between attitudes to wolves and attitudes to wild nature generally. In this section I will critique Martin Drenthen's (2005) concept of Nietzschean 'wildness', explore how it relates to *Nattens Madrigal* and *The Company of Wolves* and whether or not it is a useful concept in current wolf debates.

Initially, Drenthen's focus is on wilderness restoration, but he also uses the concept of 'wildness' in discussion of wolf recolonization (2015). Building on Nietzsche, he argues that wildness is a border concept that eludes categorization, a remnant that has not been appropriated by the will to power through interpretation (Drenthen 2005, 327, 333). As different interpretations continuously compete, there is always something that remains unassimilated, an element of 'wildness' beyond our control (329). The shock value of narratives such as *Nattens Madrigal* and *The Company of Wolves* may be rooted in that they defy rational explanation; primal forces are unleashed, and control is lost.

Wild nature is indifferent to human morality, but we nevertheless ascribe moral value to it (Drenthen 2005, 327, 317). Its indifference may be part of the reason why we seek to reconnect with it: functioning as a 'neutral' ground, it offers us a 'rest from morality', and reminds us that there is still an "outside" that escapes normative appropriation (329). As appreciation inevitably leads to interpretation, this reprieve from the all-too-human is always temporary, but in recognizing our limitations, we can try to foster 'an openness toward the otherness of nature' (329–330). Despite its indifference to moral concerns, wildness is heavily value-laden: it can signify danger and desolation, and many consider it a hindrance to economic progress, but today it is also linked to certain desirable aesthetic and ecological qualities. Since its realization relies on 'subjective experience', attempting to objectify or quantify it, as academics are wont to do, might not only be difficult but futile (Tønnessen 2011, 7).

Our inability to fully understand or control the wild may be one of the reasons why we tend to romanticize it. At Nietzsche's time, 'the woods' were mostly considered a place of danger, a variety of the Christian conception of wilderness. Today, the woods and the wilderness have been reinterpreted as healthy and stimulating environments, but there remains a 'transcendental' element to wildness in that it resists control and thereby challenges us, confronts us with our limitations (Drenthen 2015, 330).

In *Nattens Madrigal* and *The Company of Wolves*, the line between positive and negative depictions of wolves is blurred. This can be disorienting, but it also suggests that the cultural fear of wolves can be transcended. Wolves are presented as dangerous, but also impressive and worthy of sympathy; wildness, represented by wolves, is feared but also embraced. Wildness is a problematic and ambiguous concept; it can mean unspoiled nature, but it can also mean war. Romantic notions of wildness can swing in all kinds of directions.

Though wolves generally symbolize primal instincts – and are often associated with a return to a simpler life – the transformations in *Nattens Madrigal* and *The Company of Wolves* are suggestive of transcendence, an overcoming of human limitations not altogether unlike the Nietzschean concept of the overman. The protagonists can be considered 'great despisers', seeking to overcome 'man' – humanity – and striving for something higher (Nietzsche 1964, 298), while the tragedy that ensues is analogous to contemporary ecological disasters and the impacts they have on human societies. In seeking to halt ecological destruction and escape artificial habitats created by humankind through technocentric capitalism, the rewilding movement can be seen as a logical and forward-looking outcome of recent ecological and psychological findings. Though rewilding involves relinquishing control over nature – at least to some extent – its goal is improvement, not regression.³⁷

Wildness is a construct, of course, an inversion of civilization that civilization creates for itself in the process of self-description. Wildness can be considered a semiosphere – in Lotman's terms (1990, 142) – the language and organization of which has not been assimilated into but remains at the threshold of our own. It

³⁷ This is controversial, and subject to intense debate. As discussed in the first chapter, there are a range of rewilding strategies that sometimes conflict with each other.

appears as an affront because it is unpredictable and irreducible, in sharp contrast to cultural landscapes. If wild nature were to be assimilated into human culture, it would no longer be wild nature. To be completely integrated with each other, both would have to speak the same “language”; the border zone would have to disappear. This seems extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, and ultimately unnecessary, as tolerance and openness can be sufficient grounds for coexistence.

There is an uncanny parallel between wildness and witchcraft. Like wildness, witchcraft has been perceived as threatening yet intangible, fascinating but dangerous. For church and state, witch hunts were a way of pacifying communities; the burning of witches – like the hanging of wolves – was a purging, a cleansing, public catharsis, that would assuage rebellious tendencies. It is widely held that witch hunts during the early modern period were mostly a means ‘to attack certain social groups’ (Estes 1986, 200), but the reality may have been more complex. The primary motivation for witch hunts may have been the wish to eradicate diseases that could not be explained medicinally and were therefore assumed to have been caused through witchcraft (205). As the scientific revolution gained momentum, symptoms that fell outside the paradigms of medical thought were automatically associated with the supernatural. This can also be extended to behavioural and mental states which fell outside social norms. In short, the remnants that had not been assimilated by dominant paradigms were deemed inimical to civilization.

Wildness may be a useful theoretical and aesthetic concept, but its usefulness in framing modern wolf narratives or in analysing the motivations behind attitudes to wolves is questionable. Any meaningful discussion about wolves must begin with the biological animal before it moves on to social and psychological interpretations. As Drenthen implies, fascination with wildness can be a motivating factor behind the romanticization of wolves, which leads to concern for them. Nonetheless, it can also be the exact opposite: hostility to wildness leads to hostility to wolves, to the urge to either exterminate the Other or assimilate it into the dominant regime. Bringing the concept of ‘wildness’ into the wolf debate – or ecological dilemmas generally – is likely to add confusion to conversations that are already heavily laden with misinformation and unfounded prejudices.

Quantitative studies are needed to assess whether environmentalism is primarily inspired by romantic or scientific perspectives. It is probably a combination

of the two, but fascination with the behaviour of real wolves may well be a stronger driver for wolf conservation than fascination with ‘wildness’. There are those who see ‘nature as chaos’ in the wilderness and romanticize it as such, but there are perhaps more who value wilderness for its biodiversity and ecological integrity. The latter stance is far more relevant in the face of current environmental challenges.

Domestication, Christianity, and capitalism

Through most of its history, Western civilization has been based on pastoralism and agriculture with a resultant nature–culture divide that is central to both Christianity and the scientific worldview that emerged from the Enlightenment. Today, however, the nature–culture divide is being challenged, and has been discredited by science, though it remains entrenched in culture.

Paul Shepard argues that the association of wildness with evil is rooted in the separation from wild nature that began with the agricultural revolution (1998, 35). It can be linked to ecological degradation in Mesopotamia, where agricultural practices on the fringes of the first cities led to floods and ultimately desertification: ‘Nothing so clearly identifies the West as the distrust of the powers of the earth, focused at last upon the undomesticatable wildness within’ (87). Since wolves are a threat to livestock, they are also a threat to humans, and ultimately civilization: ‘[i]n the ideology of farming, wild things are enemies of the tame; the wild Other is not the context but the opponent of “my” domain’ (35). Dependence on crops and livestock led to a sharp increase in human population with attendant vulnerability to famine, and wildness was construed as an enemy that had to be kept at bay.

The change to a settled agricultural lifestyle led to neuroses that were absent in hunter-gatherer societies, and as agriculture allowed human populations to multiply – despite reduced quality of life – these were unavoidable (Shepard 1998, 42–44). Irrational fear of wild animals is arguably one of these cultural neuroses, a result of being divorced from wild nature. On the other hand, fear also has some basis in biology. Fear can be essential to keeping a respectful distance and can also be part of what constitutes our awe and awareness of wild nature (Kellert 2013, 34, 46–47).

With the spread of Christianity, wildness became synonymous with godlessness, a characteristic of infidels who ought to be either converted or

destroyed. Jesus warned his disciples about false prophets that would come to them as ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’ (Ahne 2017, 37). During the witch trials, the myth of the wolf as the devil’s accomplice was self-reinforcing (36); the persecution of wolves in Western Europe was directly linked to Christianity. In a broad sense, the wolf was a metaphor for the beastly sides of human nature: ‘[t]o have compassion for the wolf, whom man saw as enslaved by the same base drives as himself, was to yearn for self-forgiveness’ (Lopez 1978, 213). To be able to forgive, and to love one’s neighbour, is essential to Christianity, and the Roman Church could be either forgiving or unforgiving – its ambivalence was central to its authority – but it invariably cast the wolf as a symbol, never as a biological animal (213).

Over the course of the past two centuries, capitalism has largely replaced Christianity as an organizing principle for our relations with non-human nature. The motivation behind wolf persecution is no longer primarily religious but economic. As Western societies made the transition to a liberal capitalist economy, where efficiency was crucial to sustaining growth, the wolf appeared as an inconvenient hindrance from another era, a remnant that refused to be assimilated into the new regime. Not only did it prey on livestock, it was a reminder that control was not yet total. Wolves were hard to eradicate, crafty and resilient; whenever extermination campaigns were locally successful, wolves tended to wander in from neighbouring regions and recolonize, but as mass-produced, high-quality weapons became affordable, along with new poisons and traps, the wolf became an easier target than before.

In scientific secularism, humans have been considered exceptional due to their ability to reason, and reason has been privileged over other faculties. For the protagonists of *The Company of Wolves* and *Nattens Madrigal*, however, sensual and physical experiences are privileged over reason. Wolves’ capacity for abstract thought may be limited, but their senses of smell and hearing are far superior to ours; we imagine wolves as more in tune with their surroundings than we are. Wolves are also physically impressive, sleek and strong, embodying physical ideals that have been watered-down and underappreciated through Christian emphasis on the immortal soul and Enlightenment speculation about a disembodied mind. Willingness to understand nature on its own terms can in some cases be linked with

renewed interest in the physical, in phenomenology and the nature of consciousness, and these narratives can be considered radicalized visions of this shift.

Crossing the threshold

With Timothy Morton we can affirm that the ecological thought manifests a radical openness that challenges our personal boundaries as well as our imaginations (Morton 2010, 11, 15–17). In *The Company of Wolves* and *Nattens Madrigal*, boundaries are transgressed, illusions of exceptionalism destroyed, with transformations manifested in shape-shifting. These are early stirrings of the aesthetics Morton would come to refer to as dark ecology; there is no “objective” external perspective to stabilize the narratives and no attempt at concealing or refuting problematic aspects: ‘Ugliness and horror are important, because they compel our compassionate coexistence to go beyond condescending pity’ (16–17). There is compassion in *The Company of Wolves* and *Nattens Madrigal*, but there is also brutality, and the ethical perspectives that emerge are ambiguous. Nature can be horrifying, and failure to acknowledge this can be a hindrance to meaningful coexistence and a cause of conflict in itself. Trying to repress the violence in nature only leads to displacement of the problem, and openness to nature’s dark, weird, or liminal aspects is essential.

Too much is unwittingly – even carelessly – lost for these narratives to serve as any kind of political guideline, but they represent a social challenge, pushing the ideology of rewilding to the extreme: radical openness to the “other”, rejection of sexism and speciesism, scepticism about domesticity and tradition, willingness to dismantle barriers between the tame and the wild. They are not so much immoral as amoral, beyond the concerns of human morality.

In pre-industrial – and even more so in pre-agricultural – societies, the experience of and interaction with nature were immediate; rather than demonizing or romanticizing nature we were focused on the practicalities of eking out an existence on nature’s terms while attempting to come to terms with its mystery (Shepard 1998, 6; 2002, 53). Now that wild nature is no longer a significant threat, narratives such as these reflect longing back for a less rigidly mapped and controlled world.

During the nineteenth-century, Norwegian families would gather around the hearth to listen to their elders recounting legends and anecdotes about wolves and

werewolves; today, we watch horror films about werewolves and documentaries about real wolves. In centuries past, werewolves were thought to be real, signifying psychological problems and criminal behaviour, but fictional accounts of lycanthropy tended to increase in popularity whenever the perceived threat from werewolves was low (Otten 1986, 4). Now that wolf populations are under human control, and belief in werewolves has disappeared (at least in the West), we derive vicarious pleasure from wolf behaviour and werewolf mythology alike.

Indulgence in fantasies about werewolves is a form of escapism rooted in alienation (Otten 1986, xiii), and fascination with Nietzschean wildness is symptomatic of a lack of contact with wild nature. If alienation from nature is overcome, wildness will become integral to culture, not external to it. As for wolves functioning as representatives of wildness, a balanced view acknowledges that they represent potential for domestication too; liminality renders their status ambiguous, our perspectives about them ambivalent. Their position in the borderland between wildness and tamedness, nature and culture, can be interpreted as either a threat or a promise (Ahne 2017, 62).

Now that much of the wilderness has been destroyed, people have begun to mourn for the loss of it. Identifying with, seeking to protect, and drawing inspiration from the wild have become forms of protest against the growth economy, consumerism, and techno-optimism. Concern for the well-being of domestic animals has been extended to also include wild animals, and empathy and compassion have become central to rewilding (Bekoff 2014, 5). Today we can identify and analyse component parts of ecosystems and recognize that the so-called balance of nature is delicate, that the wild has now become so scarce that it is fragile. During the Middle Ages, there was no expectation that we would ever conquer the wilderness completely, but today it seems like a possibility, and it is widely acknowledged that we'll probably end up destroying ourselves in the process. Having unwilded, we recognize the need to rewild (33–34).

6. Untangling semiotic knots in wolf symbolism

Throughout this thesis, we have seen that the wolf, as a symbol, is entangled in sociocultural conflicts between people, and that this has direct consequences for real wolves. In this chapter, I will delve deeper into wolf symbolism, exploring tensions and contradictions between – and within – wolf representations. I will begin by summarizing some key aspects of wolf symbolism, discuss how representations of wolves and dogs are reinforced through language, and finally use semiotics (Lotman 1990) and narratology (Bruner 1990) to analyse how wolf symbolism is maintained, how it has changed and is still changing.

Wolf as symbol: an overview

Policies are often driven by symbols, centred on symbolic causes, and few symbols are more divisive than the wolf. To environmentalists, the wolf is a wilderness icon – ‘the ultimate symbol of wilderness and environmental completeness’ – but to sheep farmers and hunters in small rural communities that feel threatened by centralization, it can be a scapegoat, a symptom of ‘nature out of control’, a representative of everything that’s perceived as wrong with modern society (Fritts et al. 2003, 290). For some rural people, the wolf is not an icon of wildness at all but its polar opposite, ‘an icon of urbanity’, due to its association with environmentalists and wildlife managers based in the city (Skogen and Krange 2003, 320).

Wolves have become symbols of nature itself, of animalism, and of large carnivores in general (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 102). It is recognized as the most emblematic – but also the most problematic – of the carnivores in Europe and North America. There is a widespread assumption that if wolves are tolerated, so are all the other carnivores, in a free-for-all.³⁸

Those who romanticize wolves are often sceptical of civilization and science (Drenthen 2015, 326), in contrast to wolf opponents, who tend to rely on

³⁸ Wolves only feed on sheep occasionally, in exceptional circumstances, in contrast to wolverines, which often do so habitually (May et al. 2008, 3). Nevertheless, depredations by wolverines fail to arouse the same knee-jerk reactions as those by wolves do.

instrumental reason to extract instrumental value from nature. Then again, wolf opponents, too, are sceptical of science in the sense that they tend to be critical of wolf researchers and base their views on conspiracy theories and rumours rather than empirical data. Nevertheless, the farming practices wolf opponents defend are based on science, their hunting methods on modern technology, and whatever scepticism they have about science is generally not indicative of a politically radical perspective. For wolf proponents, on the other hand, the wolf is a flagship species for conservation (Foreman 1999, 547); it is not only a subject of rewilding projects, but also a symbol of social rewilding ideologies.

The association of wolves with outlaws and thieves is ambiguous; wolves are linked to crime but also to freedom. Like wolves, outlaws are predators and scavengers – often with a price on their head – but they are also free from the constraints of civilized society, operating beyond the law, and are not necessarily malevolent. Outlaws such as Jesse James, the Kelly Gang and Robin Hood became heroes because commoners could identify with them. The association of wolves with outlaws can bring associations to roving bands and even terrorists, but also to rebels, political dissidents and grassroots movements. Paradoxically, the wolf symbolizes positive concepts such as authenticity, freedom, and strength (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 102) but also misfortune and disease (Dirke 2015, 115). At bottom, perhaps, it symbolizes vitality, while the moral qualities we project onto it are secondary.

Jack London at times signed his name as “Wolf”, but so did Hitler (Ahne 2017, 62, 67), who argued the wolf was going to save the people from ‘seducers and deceivers’ (Marvin 2012, 76). Several nationalist and white supremacist groups use wolves in their iconography (78–79). The wolf can symbolize aggression or compassion depending on one’s perspective. People use the wolf for their own purposes, to symbolize whatever they identify with or reject.

Thinking of the wolf in symbolic terms has often had damaging consequences, leading to irrational management regimes and whipping up unfounded fears. Appropriating symbolic wolves for exclusively human purposes is exploitative (Robisch 2009, 357, 365), and even positive depictions can be detrimental when they are completely divorced from the real animal. Projecting artificial human constructs such as gender, race and class onto wolves can even be considered a form of

greenwashing (365). On the other hand, reducing the wolf to a biological object might be even more detrimental; besides, the tendency to attach symbolic value to animals is probably innate – we do the same when we attach labels to human groups or individuals. Monitoring and controlling wolves while trying to reduce human fear of them may be important in conflict mitigation, in creating a *habitus* in which humans and wolves can coexist,³⁹ but also seeks to belittle the wolf’s free and predatory character and thereby part of what it means to us (Drenthen 2015, 330–331). There are countless myths about wolves, many of which have worked against them, but their mystique remains essential to the way we perceive them. This is not necessarily romanticization: as Christian-capitalist Europeans had reasons to demonize wolves, Native Americans had reasons to identify with them – there is something about wolves that awakens these feelings in people.

When Christianity was hegemonic, the wolf functioned as a symbol of evil. Christianity is no longer a pervasive moral guideline, but the myths it once encompassed remain in force. Ricoeur points out that ‘criticism of the pseudo-rational is fatal not to myth, but to gnosis’; once myth has been disentangled from gnosis, it can emerge unscathed – as myth – within discourses based on reason (Ricoeur 1967, 164–165). Science and reason have rendered Christian moral symbolism implausible, but myths about wolves persist in secular form, exercising considerable influence on the Western imaginary. As myths about wolves have been disentangled from gnosis and appropriated by reason (whether as science or lay knowledge), they have lived on within competing discourses, but are no longer veiled by religious morality; instead, they are now used directly to defend material and commercial interests such as sheep farming and trophy hunting.

The wolf has been demonized as both a moral and an economic threat. These are two separate symbols, conceived of in different circumstances. One is rooted in Christianity, the other in capitalism and the Enlightenment, but they are mutually reinforcing and can be difficult to distinguish as they are frequently conflated with

³⁹ It is often argued that legal hunting is a means of maintaining wolves’ fear of humans, that shooting wolves ensures they remain wary. This holds true to some extent, but management through violence is a symptom of the unwilding that led to alienation from nature in the first place (Bekoff 2014, 35). Wolves’ fear of humans – like human fear of wolves – is cultural, passed down across generations, and maintaining this fear is essential to avoiding conflict, but where there are high levels of hunting and poaching – as in Scandinavia – it is extremely unlikely that wolves will become unafraid. Intrusive management practices such as darting and collaring and inspecting dens also contribute to keeping wolves afraid of humans.

each other (Robisch 2009, 224). During the second half of the twentieth century, yet another symbol has emerged in the Western imaginary, the wolf as a social, intelligent and noble victim of human persecution. Rather than a subversion of demonic wolves, this romanticized wolf is yet another symbol with a different origin.

Wolves and dogs: ethical implications of language usage

We have seen that there are close associations between wolves and dogs, that they are closely related and can interbreed, but that wolf–dog encounters are often adversarial, and that there are significant biological and social differences between them. In this section I will discuss social constructions of wolves and dogs and how they relate to each other.

Language usage has ethical implications. The words ‘wolf’ and ‘dog’ are related but distinct, like the animals they refer to. Both are polysemes with a range of meanings, some of which are contradictory. ‘Dog’ often functions as a derogatory term for people at the bottom of a hierarchy (Baderoon 2017, 357), while ‘wolf’ tends to refer to people who don’t comply with social norms. Dogs can be associated with faithfulness, wolves with power and intelligence, but both terms can connote lowly behaviour. ‘Wolf’ can be a euphemism for a vicious or “predatory” person. It can imply sexual aggression, promiscuity or prowess, and has functioned as a euphemism for both prostitute and womaniser (Tønnessen 2011, 57).

In Norwegian, the wolf is often described as sly (*slu*) and insidious (*lumsk*).⁴⁰ These are negative terms related to cowardice and criminality which are used to emphasize that the wolf is not to be trusted. If the wolf was an obvious threat, there would be no need to describe it as sly and insidious – the wolf is feared not for its brutishness but for its treacherousness. In reality, the wolf is mostly a pursuit predator, chasing down its prey, and there are plenty of stories about people or animals being chased by wolves, but it is also often described as a shy animal that goes lurking around the cabin walls (*luskende rundt husveggene*) looking for easy prey.⁴¹ A wolf is a dog that doesn’t play by our rules, a wild animal that sometimes has the appearance of being tame, and the grey area can be disturbing to those who

⁴⁰ The red fox, on the other hand, is generally described as *lur* (clever, cunning); like the coyote in Native American mythology, the red fox is a trickster figure.

⁴¹ This is true of Western Europe generally; instead of attacking Little Red Riding Hood directly, the wolf ingratiates himself with her.

seek to maintain a clear divide between the two. The distinctions between wolves and dogs are emphasized because they are unclear.

A wolf or wolves are often referred to as *'the wolf'*, *'ulven'*, different specimens functioning as signs for the species as a whole (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 90). This gives the impression that wolves are a unified and homogenous entity rather than a range of communities and individuals. The connotations are not altogether negative, however, as the use of a definite rather than indefinite article, referring to the specific rather than the general, suggests respect – *'the wolf'* sounds more impressive than the generic *'a wolf'*. Instead of the ordinary *'bitch'*, which is a derogatory term when applied to humans, a female wolf is often referred to as a *'she-wolf'*, a term that suggests elegance and power, an honour not bestowed upon dogs. Wolves may be feared and maligned, but this is often tempered by an underlying respect, even if only grudgingly. Then again, the coyote is often considered the wolf's cowardly cousin; all these terms serve to reinforce hierarchical thinking, intentionally or not.

Sheep farmers often describe wolf attacks on sheep as *'murder'*, while animal rights activists use the same term to describe the hunting of wolves by humans.⁴² The way wolves hunt has been described as *'merciless'* (Bekoff 2014, 88), and there is a widespread misconception that they kill for fun, but those who consider wolf behaviour morally reprehensible are often involved in the hunting, slaughter or at least consumption of animals themselves. Rather than hypocrisy, this is perhaps mostly due to prejudice based on belief in human exceptionalism; the arguments behind this line of thinking crumble in the face of ecology and ethology.

The common practice of referring to animals as *'it'* rather than *'she'* or *'he'* is a means of objectification (Bekoff 2014, 104). "Dog-owners" tend to think of their dog as a person, and the intensity with which some hunters despise wolves is the dark side of the affection they feel for their dogs. The risk of wolves attacking hunting dogs is frequently used as an argument against wolf conservation, even though hunting dogs may be just as likely to attack wolves, and wolves and dogs can

⁴² A related rhetorical trick used by both sides, in Norway and abroad, is to replace the term *'carcass'* (*kadaver*) with *'corpse'* (*lik*). Whether sheep or wolf, the designation *'corpse'* is an indirect way of comparing its death to that of a human, provoking moral outrage, attracting sympathy by appealing to the emotions. This is problematic when it is done selectively but can represent a challenge to anthropocentrism.

interbreed. It is implicit that hunting dogs have more intrinsic value than wolves do, but this distinction between domestic and wild animals is solely based on a personal bond between a companion animal and its “owner”, not a difference in kind (86).

Wolves in the semiosphere

When the real wolf is out of sight, the symbol remains. By the time wolves began to re-establish themselves in Norway during the mid-seventies – having been absent from large parts of the country for almost a century – the symbol had changed.

People had begun to appreciate nature for its intrinsic rather than its instrumental value, and mass die-offs of wildlife caused by pesticides and acid rain had resulted in increased environmental concern. As wolves returned to areas where they had gone extinct, they came to symbolize the resilience of nature under adverse conditions and hope that damaged ecosystems could be restored. According to Lotman, ‘a symbol actively correlates with its cultural context, transforms it and is transformed by it’ (1990, 104). The way we interpret wolves is context-dependent, and sociocultural changes have led to changes in the way we relate to them.

Increased public support for carnivore conservation can be attributed to a cultural shift where hostility to wild nature has given way to tolerance (Drenthen 2015, 332). Nevertheless, hostility to wolves remains entrenched in certain parts of Norwegian culture, especially among people engaged in traditional land use practices in rural areas. In the absence of wolves, shepherding was largely discontinued, and when wolves began to return, sheep farmers found themselves at the cutting edge of cultural change, clinging to traditional cultural constructs despite the altered context. Not only have wolves returned, they now have easy pickings, as sheep no longer have shepherds to protect them.

Opposed sets of symbols contribute to reinforcing boundaries between different cultural areas (Lotman 1990, 104). By exemplifying disagreements, the symbolic wolf magnifies them. At one extreme, the staunchest anti-wolf activists and conspiracy theorists have little tolerance for large carnivores generally, and none for wolves; at the other, animal rights activists seek to abolish sheep farming and hunting, while the rewilding movement which is beginning to emerge questions the value of the cultural landscape and argues for wilderness restoration. Mainstream culture is torn by these extremes but lies somewhere in between, in a space where not

only wolves, sheep and humans but also these competing cultural codes with their opposed sets of values tenuously coexist, remaining in dialogue, striving for hegemony. Divides are drawn between rural and urban, traditional and modern, and these differences are exploited politically, even though there are plentiful exceptions within each cultural area, as well as cases that straddle the boundaries between them. As a surrogate and scapegoat for conflicts between people, the wolf is ultimately a victim of these conflicts.

Wolf conflicts reflect struggles for self-description, conflicting norms that clash within the semiosphere of Norwegian culture (Lotman 1990, 128). Cultural myths can be hard to relinquish, even when the arguments against them are sound. Attitudes to wolves are shaped by implicit assumptions and cultural prejudices, and dominant perspectives in a peer group are rarely challenged unless there is something to be directly gained from doing so. Conflicts are intense, but there are areas of overlap: sheep farmers who adapt to the presence of wolves by changing their practices and forest owners who focus on photographic wildlife tourism instead of trophy hunting are instances of what Lotman refers to as ‘hybrids, or ‘creolizations’’, which appear when contrasting cultural codes meet (Eco 1990, xii).

The notion that nature solely possesses instrumental value remains widespread and is a major obstacle to human–wolf coexistence. In Norway there are two cultural codes that espouse this instrumentalist view: traditional peasant culture and neoliberalism. Paradoxically, hostility to so-called “unproductive” animals such as large carnivores is itself a hindrance to the realization of instrumental value as it overlooks the role of ecology. The influence wolves have on ecosystem dynamics is a form of instrumental value – improving the quality and thereby increasing the value of their habitat – even though private landowners might not recognize it as such. Wolves also have instrumental value in that they can generate revenue through photographic wildlife tourism, an alternative to trophy hunting.⁴³ There are landowners and tour operators who recognize this, but these are exceptions, not the norm. Nonetheless, the ecological role of wolves is highly context-dependent, their local impact difficult to predict, and wildlife tourism may not be feasible

⁴³ Public opinion appears to be turning against trophy hunting – as smartphones and social media have made it more visible, hunters are now often shamed when they pose with their trophy – but this is likely to be a slow process, and as the standard of living increases, trophy hunting could increase in popularity as more people are able to afford it.

everywhere. Instrumental value alone provides insufficient justification for conservation.

The emerging cultural shift is reliant not on recognizing instrumental value but on moving beyond it, to valuing wolves for themselves, as a keystone species. As environmentalism and ecological knowledge gradually become integral to culture – even in remote areas – they become norms that are socially (and legally) enforced by the culture as a whole. Recognizing this, wolf opponents – feeling threatened – are reluctant to adapt or negotiate, hoping to preserve the norms they identify with. Since exceptions are a threat to dominant culture, and diversity leads to conflict, at least initially, traditional norms are maintained out of necessity (Lotman 1990, 128). Culture is shifting, but the process is gradual, and a radical break is unlikely.

When society changes, a period of conflict leads to the formation through self-description of a new dominant cultural *mythos* as the old becomes obsolete (Lotman 1990, 128). Even though demonization of wolves persists, and the mentality forged by superstition and extermination policies remains a force to contend with, it is being challenged. Where Norwegians of the nineteenth century liked to think of themselves as good Christians carrying the light of civilization into the darkness of wild nature represented by wolves, today more and more people are self-described “greens”.

Anti-wolf rhetoric is mostly backward-looking, on the defensive, claiming legitimacy with reference to the past, while pro-wolf movements are future-oriented, drawing support from the strength of the ideal they strive towards. Both are mechanisms of self-description, continuously vying for normative control over the semiosphere, and in retrospect the norms that prevail will come to appear representative of the culture as a whole (Lotman 1990, 128–129).

Wolves in folk psychology

Folk psychology – in Jerome Bruner’s terms – reflects ‘beliefs, desires, and commitments’ that are constitutive of culture; even though it resists allegedly objective perspectives which come from outside the culture, it is constantly changing along with the norms and institutions it is rooted in (Bruner 1990, 14). When, for instance, laws or curricula change, this can in turn change folk psychology. As institutional changes are implemented by those in power, which in our case are

concentrated in urban areas, resistance to change may lead to a period of intense conflict, but the status quo is never maintained indefinitely. Bruner mentions the examples of Marx, Freud, and Darwin, whose ideas conflicted radically with entrenched cultural beliefs yet made their way into folk psychology (14).

Conflicts over wolves are often about values and power. As values are rooted in culture, which forms a basis for commitment and self-identity, advocating wolf conservation based on scientific evidence alone may be futile – culture needs to change before the individuals who identify with and value it do (Bruner 1990, 29–30). As there is a multitude of competing sets of values, cultural change can be disorienting – especially to those at its fringes – and is unpredictable. Tensions are therefore likely to remain, at least for the foreseeable future, but recognition of differences in worldview allows for the possibility of negotiation (29–30).

The idea that wolves have no place in the cultural landscape is firmly entrenched in certain segments of Norwegian culture, and resistance is amplified when wolf proponents can be labelled as belonging to an urban sphere associated with modernization and centralization. As we have seen, this is also an epistemological conflict between science, which has become hegemonic, and lay knowledge or “common sense”, which has been marginalized (Skogen, Krange and Figari 2013, 144; Linnell and Bjerke 2002, 8).

“Common sense” is ingrained in culture (Bruner 1990, 35). In Norway it manifests itself as *sunne fornuft* (literally ‘healthy reason’) and *sunne bondevett* (‘healthy farmer’s sense’), terms that carry normative weight and are socially unacceptable to challenge. To the members of a given culture, folk psychology can be perceived as almost static, as shifts are subtle and rarely sudden, but if we take a diachronous perspective, we see that the meanings of these terms change, sometimes radically and over short periods of time. *Sunn fornuft* has led to the tragedy of the commons – to deforestation and the decimation of wildlife – but in the wake of ecological crises we have learnt that this tragedy can be averted through legislation, which in turn results in a change of social norms. As for *sunne bondevett*, practices of spraying fields with glyphosate and using Brazilian soy as animal feed are evidence that the growth economy is inimical to health and sense; though the term remains in currency, its meaning has changed and is still being renegotiated. During the nineteenth century, it was *sunne bondevett* to guard one’s sheep – and shoot wolves –

but today the standard practice is to appeal to government for support and compensation instead.

Society changes, but tradition persists in cultural memory and is frequently invoked as an argument in the wolf debate even when practices no longer conform to it. In rural communities where tradition is strong, entrenched prejudices can persist for generations. Their maintenance is not necessarily even a conscious process, but rather a resistance to change, which is always threatening to some extent, especially when it tugs at the root of long-held convictions. Injunctions to protect the wolf endorsed by an “urban elite” that has lost touch with tradition can be perceived as an attack. Against such a background, disseminating information is not enough; cultural change can be a slow process, and prejudices persist even if they become marginal.

Norwegian attitudes to wolves were shaped by Christian dogma and Enlightenment values and reinforced by the government-funded, almost universally supported extermination campaigns of the nineteenth century. Today, however, attitudes have begun to change, reflecting an ongoing cultural shift in the direction of holistic ecology, which can be discerned in both science and politics. As urban areas are centres of education, research and policymaking, as well as transport hubs, cultural change has been more rapid there than in remote rural areas, though well underway in the latter too.

As ecology and environmental concern loom ever larger in everyday life, they enter into folk psychology. This is not to say that human–wolf coexistence is bound to be harmonious, but over the course of recent decades the balance has been shifting in favor of perspectives where the ecological importance and intrinsic value of wolves is acknowledged. The environmental movement has gained momentum, and the attendant cultural shift may only be beginning to make itself felt. This is also reflected in policy: even though Norwegian wolf management practices are extremely controversial and subject to criticism at an international level, policy changes towards a more biodiversity-oriented regime have been accumulating little by little since wolves were first declared a protected species during the early seventies.⁴⁴ Ecology and sustainability have entered school curricula, and this is likely to have a considerable impact on the next generation. Young people tend to

⁴⁴ Similar patterns can be seen in forestry, where increased ecological awareness is fostering a gradual shift towards more sustainable logging practices enforced through legislation.

have more positive attitudes to large carnivores than older people do, and these more positive attitudes might be linked to higher education (Skogen and Krangle 2003, 317). “Common sense” is frequently invoked in anti-wolf rhetoric, but as folk psychology changes – and with it our perceptions of wolves – we begin to realize that it might just be “common sense” to protect them.

7. Conclusions

Wolves display a wide spectrum of supposedly human traits. As there are those who project their ideals – empathy, courage, endurance, independence – onto wolves, there are also those who smear them with what they despise in others or refuse to acknowledge in themselves – cowardice, brutality, greed and gluttony. Where some see a demonic beast and an unwanted intruder, others see a kindred spirit and a keystone species. Skilful hunter, cooperative pack member, compassionate carer, loyal companion – wolves are all these things; like humans, they are multifaceted and have personalities; how we perceive them depends on what we focus on. Different people see different wolves, and so-called wolfish behaviour is often merely human behaviour projected onto wolves. The stories we spin about wolves reflect back on us in ways that stories about animals we have less in common with rarely do.

During the early twentieth century, wolves were extinct across much of their historical range, but they are now returning, and considering that extermination campaigns had strong popular support, it is no surprise that this is controversial. Their fate is closely bound up with our culture; who would have thought that a culture hell-bent on their destruction would later welcome them back and willingly adapt to their presence? Compassion and concern for fellow humans has gradually been extended also to non-humans, and remaining hierarchies are being challenged. The wolf's association with the devil and witchcraft was its undoing through the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, but today, many celebrate it as a remnant of unspoiled nature. There are now many who not only tolerate but like wolves.

There has been a broad cultural shift towards more positive attitudes in recent decades, but there is no getting around the fact that attitudes to wolves have been overwhelmingly negative – with some ambiguous exceptions – through most of Norway's recorded history. Traditionally, these attitudes have mostly been rooted in pastoralism, but are now also rooted in hunting interests. The idea that humans should have exclusive rights to game meat, that wolves are not entitled to a prey base, is symptomatic of entrenched anthropocentrism and lack of ecological knowledge. If we could coexist with wolves during the eighteenth century, we can do

so today, especially considering that we now have the technology at our disposal to monitor and control them.

As an apex predator, the wolf is arguably the most ecologically important of the four large carnivore species in Norway, and in the public sphere it is not only a keystone species but a key symbol, touching countless people's lives directly and indirectly. Attitudes to wolves have implications for other carnivores and for wild nature in general. If wolves can be tolerated, chances are that all wild species can be tolerated, which opens for the possibility of wilderness restoration. Nevertheless, the concept of rewilding falls on barren ground among a large segment of the Norwegian population because it threatens the integrity of the cultural landscape many consider emblematic of the country.

Finding ways to coexist with wolves must begin with acknowledging and accepting that they are predators who need meat to survive, and that this will inevitably lead to some level of conflict (Bekoff 2014, 88–89). If we are to share our habitat with large carnivores, we must learn to accept their wildness and their predatory nature, whether we find it disquieting or fascinating, and this requires tolerance (Drenthen 2015, 331).

Environmental education plays an important role in recasting the wolf as an integral part of the Norwegian landscape, but since the conflict is rooted as much in cultural tradition as in practical concerns, education alone is insufficient. If there is a solution to the wolf conflicts in Norway, it might lie in somehow disentangling the wolf from its symbolic association with centralization, but this is a complex task and may take generations.

Since environmental policies soon outlive their usefulness unless they are based on a firm and consistent set of values, Norwegian wolf management is not only a matter of finding pragmatic solutions but also of formulating norms and ideals, negotiating the grounds for coexistence. It is futile to imagine that we can escape symbolic thinking. The best we can hope for is to maintain awareness of what our symbols signify and what their purpose is, using science and reason as correctives when symbolic thinking leads us astray. Research suggests that fear of wolves decreases with time as people get used to them (Linnell and Bjerke 2002, 8). Perhaps wolf opponents will eventually learn to accept wolves as a fact of life, but as it stands, the process seems painstakingly slow.

Afterword

On the first of January 2019, in the Slettås area, inside the wolf zone, 130 hunters set out at dawn, despite the presence of the activist group Hunt Saboteurs Sweden. By noon they had shot two wolves, a former breeding pair too old to reproduce, the only wolves that were left of the Slettås pack.

The hunting quota was reduced from 43 to 29, and the rest of the packs inside the wolf zone – including the Hobøl and Mangen packs – were spared. Elvestuen made a political compromise – perhaps the most practicable compromise he could make, given the circumstances – to save two packs by sacrificing one, like the father who threw his infant to the wolves to save the rest of his children.⁴⁵ The wolves in Slettås were old and had been a subject of bitter controversy for years; utilitarian calculation might lead us to conclude that they were worth sacrificing so that the others could live. The animal rights organization NOAH sued the government for allowing the cull to go through and demanded the hunt be postponed until a legal decision had been made, but this was waived.

Wolf opponents and proponents staged separate demonstrations in front of the Norwegian parliament, the former demanding that more wolves be shot, the latter that they be spared. Though they generated plentiful media coverage and a series of heated public debates, it is doubtful whether these demonstrations had any impact on policy.

By the third of January, the quota for hunting outside the wolf zone had been filled. *Rovviltnemndene* [the Wild Predator Committees] in Hedmark, Oslo, Akershus and Østfold counties then decided to increase the quota by an additional four wolves, arguing that the quota had been filled unexpectedly early and that this had led to an increased risk of dispersing wolves wandering into areas prioritized for pasture. *Rovviltnemndene* might have seen this coming, but most of the members of these committees seem determined to kill as many wolves as possible – regardless of whether or not they constitute a threat to sheep – and if the quota hadn't been filled early they wouldn't have had grounds for expanding it.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See pages 24–26.

⁴⁶ Soon after this decision was made, the Ministry of Climate and Environment shifted the season for wolf hunting outside the wolf zone forward by two full months so that it includes the whole of May,

Environmental organizations filed complaints against the decision while the forest owner organization Glommen Skog complained that the quota should be increased still further, by eight instead of four. *Rovviltnemndene* upheld the decision, and the Ministry of Climate and Environment did not challenge it.⁴⁷ In the meantime, two more wolves had already been shot in Hedmark county, one in Rendalen, the other in Stor-Elvdal. As I put the finishing touches to this thesis, I learn that another wolf has been shot in Rendalen. Wolf hunting season ends in two weeks, and there is now only one wolf remaining on the quota.

The decision to allow wolf hunting inside the wolf zone sets a precedent for future interventions, as does the granting of authority to *Rovviltnemndene* to increase the wolf quota in the middle of hunting season, but despite some minor adjustments to the Norwegian wolf management regime, the situation remains largely unchanged. Debate remains polarized, poaching remains a significant problem, and the cultural struggle between “wolf lovers” and “wolf haters” continues unabated. It remains to be seen whether the contradictions in Norway’s policies will be resolved when WWF’s appeal against the government comes up in December 2019. As for the wolves themselves – unwitting subjects of a conflict they can’t understand, unaware that they are being closely monitored as they roam through the woods – the only conclusion they can reasonably be expected to draw from all the agitation around them is that it’s best to try to avoid contact with humans.

which will allow for taking out wolves that appear in the vicinity of sheep while they are being let out to pasture. This is a boon to sheep farmers, but May is also the month when wolf pups are born. As for the Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers (NJFF), they would rather have shifted wolf season back towards autumn to coincide with the moose hunt. It remains to be seen what effect this change of hunting season will have.

⁴⁷ *Rovviltnemnda* in Buskerud, Vestfold, Telemark and Aust-Agder made a similar move, adding two more wolves to their original quota, which had been filled. NOAH complained, and in this case the Ministry of Climate and Environment concurred, putting the decision to increase the quota on hold.

References

- Aarbø, Maria Sjaavaag. 2014. 'Bevegelsesmønsteret til ulv i Slettås – Effekten av hus og hunder'. Bachelor thesis. Høgskolen i Hedmark, Evenstad.
- Ahne, Petra. 2017 (2016). *Ulv*. Edited by Judith Schalansky. Translated from German to Norwegian by Eivind Lilleskjæret. Oslo: Forlaget Press.
- Anker, Peder and Nina Witoszek. 1998. 'The Dream of the Biocentric Community and the Structure of Utopias'. *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 2: 239-56. Cambridge, UK: The White Horse Press.
- Auster, Paul. 2017. *4 3 2 1*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Baderon, Gabeba. 2017. 'Animal likenesses: dogs and the boundary of the human in South Africa'. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 29 (3): 345–361. doi:10.1080/13696815.2016.1255599.
- Batmanglij, Zal. 2013. *The East*. DVD. Fox Searchlight Pictures.
- Bekoff, Marc. 2014. *Rewilding Our Hearts*. Novato, California: New World Library.
- Bell, Jessica. 2015. 'Hierarchy, Intrusion and the Anthropomorphism of Nature: Hunter and Rancher Discourse on North American Wolves'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana Sprenger (eds.), 282–303. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Bergström, Roger, Karin Dirke and Kjell Danell. 2015. 'The Wolf War in Sweden during the Eighteenth Century – Strategies, Measures and Leaders'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana Sprenger (eds.), 57-78. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Bevanger, Kjetil. 2012. *Norske rovdyr*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm.
- Bradley, Elizabeth H., Daniel H. Pletscher, Edward E. Bangs, Kyran E. Kunkel, Douglas W. Smith, Curt M. Mack, Thomas J. Meier, Joseph A. Fontaine, Carter C. Niemeyer and Michael D. Jimenez. 'Evaluating Wolf Translocation as a Nonlethal Method to Reduce Livestock Conflicts in the North-western United States'. *Conservation Biology*, 19 (5), October 2005: 1498–1508. Wiley for Society for Conservation Biology. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3591118>.
- Brandrud, Rolf. 1993. 'Etterord'. In Mikkel Fønhus, *Gråbeinstad*, 101–107. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Brower, Kenneth. 2001. 'Introduction'. In Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac : with essays on conservation*, 9–19. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brownlow, Alec. 2000. 'A wolf in the garden: ideology and change in the Adirondack landscape'. In *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations*, Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert (eds.), 141–158. London: Routledge.
- Bruner, Jerome. 1990. *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Børresen, Bergljot. 2003. *Den ensomme apen : instinkt på avveie*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Cafaro, Philip. 'Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson: Toward an Environmental Virtue Ethics'. *Environmental Ethics*, 22: 3–17. Spring 2001.
- Cahn, Michael. 1984. 'Subversive Mimesis: T. W. Adorno and the Modern Impasse

- of Critique'. In *Mimesis in contemporary theory: an interdisciplinary approach. I. The Literary and Philosophical Debate*, Mihai Spariosu (ed.), 27–64. Philadelphia/Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Caniglia, Romolo, Elena Fabbri, Claudia Greco, Marco Galaverni, Lorenzo Mangho, Luigi Boitani, Andrea Sforzi and Ettore Randi. 2013. 'Black coats in an admixed wolf × dog pack is melanism an indicator of hybridization in wolves?' *European Journal of Wildlife Research*, 59: 543–555. Berlin: Springer. doi:10.1007/s10344-013-0703-1.
- Carroll, Lewis. 2015 (1865; 1871). *Alice's adventures in wonderland ; and Through the looking glass and what Alice found there*. London: Bounty Books.
- Carter, Angela. 2013 (1979). 'The Company of Wolves'. *Ecotone*, 9 (1), Winter 2013: 72–80. Published by University of North Carolina, Wilmington. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ect.2013.0030>.
- Carson, Rachel. 2000 (1962). *Silent Spring*. London: Penguin Books.
- Christiansen, Reidar Th. 1958. '4005. The Werewolf Husband'. In *The migratory legends : a proposed list of types with a systematic catalogue of the Norwegian variants*, 58–60. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- Cohen, Robin. 2009. 'Jim, Antonia, and the Wolves Displacement in Cather's My Antonia'. *Great Plains Quarterly* 29: 51–60.
- Davidson, H. R. Ellis. 1982 (1969). *Scandinavian Mythology*. London: Hamlyn.
- . 1986 (1978). 'Shape-changing in the Old Norse Sagas'. In *A Lycanthropy Reader*, Charlotte F. Otten (ed.), 142–160. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Derr, Mark. 2011. *How the Dog Became the Dog*. New York: The Overlook Press.
- Dirke, Karin. 2015. 'Where is the Big Bad Wolf? Notes and Narratives on Wolves in Swedish Newspapers during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana Sprenger (eds.), 101–118. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Drenthen, Martin. 2005. 'Wildness as a Critical Border Concept: Nietzsche and the Debate On Wilderness Restoration'. *Environmental Values*, 14: 317–37. Winwick, Cambridgeshire: The White Horse Press.
- . 2015. 'The return of the wild in the Anthropocene. Wolf resurgence in the Netherlands'. *Ethics, Policy & Environment*, 18 (3): 318–337, doi:10.1080/21550085.2015.1111615.
- Dutcher, Jim and Jamie Dutcher, with James Manfull. 2013. *Ulvens Skjulte Liv [The Hidden Life of Wolves]*. Translated by John W Henriksen. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society (Norwegian edition by JW Henriksen Forlag).
- Eco, Umberto. 1990. 'Introduction'. In Yuri M. Lotman, *Universe of the mind: a semiotic theory of culture*, vii–xiii. Translated by Ann Shukman. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Estes, Leland L. 1986 (1983). 'The Medical Origins of the European Witch Craze: A Hypothesis'. In *A Lycanthropy Reader*, Charlotte F. Otten (ed.), 200–219. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Elsrud, Edvard. 1980. *Gråbein og gråbeintider*. Oslo: Grøndahl & Søn Forlag A.s.
- Emberland, Ivan and Øyvind Sveen. 2017. *Grønnhette*. Oslo: WWF Verdens naturfond.
- Fawcett, John. 2007 (2000). *Ginger Snaps*. DVD. Scanbox Entertainment.
- Foreman, Dave. 1999. 'The Wildlands Project and the Rewilding of North America'. *Denver University Law Review*, 76 (2): 535–553.

- Fosmark, Kjellrun and Åse Moe. 1998. *Guder, Volver og Sjamaner : En sammenlignende reise i gresk, norrøn og samisk mytologi*. Oslo: C. Huitfeldt Forlag A.S.
- Frandy, Tim. 'Skiing Down the Demon Wolf: Redefinition of the Predator in Johan Turi's Sápmi'. *Scandinavian Studies*, 83 (4), Winter 2011: 545–572. University of Illinois Press on behalf of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23343099>.
- Friis, Jens Andreas. 1890 (1881). *Lajla*. Second edition of *Fra Finnmarken : skildringer*. Oslo (Kristiania) and Copenhagen: Alb. Cammermeyers Forlag.
- Fritts, Steven H. et al. 2003. 'Wolves and Humans'. In *Wolves : behaviour, ecology, and conservation*, David L. Mech and Luigi Boitani (eds.), 289–316. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Furseth, Astor. 2005. *Drept av bjørn og ulv – en historisk oversikt over mennesker drept og skadet av rovdyr i Norge de siste 400 år*. Oslo: Landbruksforlaget.
- Fønhus, Mikkjel. 1966 (1919). *Der villmarka suser*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- . 1976 (1933). *Varg*. In *Løvene i Kilimatui ; Varg*, 1–143 (inconsistent pagination). Oslo: Aschehoug.
- . 1978a. 'Storvargen'. In *Villmannshytta ved Glesa elv; Storvargen (Nye romaner og fortellinger 5)*, 103–139. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- . 1978b. 'Ulveål ved Valesjø'. In *Storskogen faller; Ulveul ved Valesjø; Hard fjellferd (Nye romaner og fortellinger 11)*, 94–107. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- . 1986a. 'En nattevakt på vidda'. In *Rein og varg*, 101–110. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- . 1986b. 'Stor-Hans i Femundsmarka'. In *Rein og varg*, 32–38. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- . 1993. *Gråbeinstad*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Ghosal, Sunetro, Ketil Skogen and Siddhartha Krishnan. 2015. 'Locating Human-Wildlife Interactions: Landscape Constructions and Responses to Large Carnivore Conservation in India and Norway'. *Conservation and Society*, 13 (3): 265–274.
- Glorvigen, Petter. 2008. 'The relative effect of intraguild predation and carcass availability on red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) abundance by a re-colonizing wolf (*Canis lupus*) population'. Master thesis in applied ecology. Høgskolen i Hedmark, Evenstad.
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. 2002. 'Rødhette og ulven'. In *Brødrene Grimms eventyr*. Edited by Monica Wegling. Oslo: Kagge.
- Guerber, H. A. 1909. *Myths of the Norsemen : From the Eddas and Sagas*. London: George G. Harrap & Company. Released as 'The Project Gutenberg Ebook of Myths of the Norsemen, by H. A. Guerber' on April 4th 2009 [Ebook #28497]. No pagination.
- Hale, Charles R. 2008. 'Introduction'. In *Engaging Contradictions : Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Hays, Jeffrey. 2008. 'Wolves in Kazakhstan'. [factsanddetails.com](http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Kazakhstan/sub8_4f/entry-4686.html). Updated April 2016. http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Kazakhstan/sub8_4f/entry-4686.html.
- Hermans, Adam Pérou. 2015. 'If You Wander in Winter, They Will Eat You: Local Knowledge, Wolves and Justice in Central Asia'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana Sprenger (eds.), 259–281. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Hjorteviltportalen (Hjortevilt). 'Bestandsovervåking'. Accessed October 25, 2018.

- <http://www.hjortevilt.no/overvakingsprogrammet-for-hjortevilt/>. Trondheim: NINA and Miljødirektoratet.
- Holm, André. 'Osloulvene 2012–2018'. Lecture at Litteraturhuset in Oslo, December 3, 2018. Friluftsmannen André Holm.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. 2002. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Hursthouse, Rosalind. 2007. 'Environmental Virtue Ethics'. In *Working Virtue. Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems*, Rebecca L. Walker and Philip J. Ivanhoe (eds.), 155–171. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hætta, Per. 1995 (1960). "Gumpe (Ulvejoik)". Track 24 on *Folkemusikk frå Nord-Noreg og Sameland (Folk Music from Northern Norway and Sameland)*. Produced and edited by Leiv Solberg. CD. Oslo: Grappa/NRK.
- Høyersten, Jon Geir. 2004. 'Berserkene – hva gikk det av dem?' *Tidsskrift for Den norske legeförening*, 124 (24): 3247–3250.
- Jacobi, John. 'Taking Rewilding Seriously'. *The Dark Mountain Project* (the online edition: 'Dark Thoughts'), July 31, 2017. <https://dark-mountain.net/taking-rewilding-seriously/>.
- Jefferson Airplane. 2003 (1967). "White Rabbit". Track 10 on *Surrealistic Pillow*. Written by Grace Slick. CD. RCA Victor.
- Jones, Karen. 2015. 'Writing the wolf: Canine Tales and North American Environmental-Literary Tradition'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana Sprenger (eds.), 175–202. Cambridge: The White Horse Press. Originally published in *Environment and History* 17 (2) (2011): 201–228.
- Jordan, Neil. 2002 (1984). *The Company of Wolves*. DVD. Hen's Tooth Video.
- Juuso, Inga (joik) and Harald Skullerud (percussion). 2011. Liner notes to "Gumpe", Track 3 on *Juusk*. CD. Lomen, Norway: ta:lik.
- Jørgensen, Dolly. 2014. 'Rethinking rewilding'. *Geoforum* 65 (2015): 482–488. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.11.016>.
- Kaltenborn, Bjørn P. and Scott M. Brainerd. 'Can poaching inadvertently contribute to increased public acceptance of wolves in Scandinavia?'. *European Journal of Wildlife Research*, April 2016, 62 (2): 179–188. doi:10.1007/s10344-016-0991-3.
- Kardell, Örjan and Anna Dahlström. 2013. 'Wolves in the Early Nineteenth-Century County of Jönköping, Sweden'. *Environment and History*, 19: 339–370. The White Horse Press. doi:10.3197/096734013X13690716950145.
- Kardos, Marty, Mikael Åkesson, Toby Fountain, Øystein Flagstad, Olof Liberg, Pall Olason, Håkan Sand, Petter Wabakken, Camilla Wikenros and Hans Ellegren. 2017. 'Genomic consequences of intensive inbreeding in an isolated wolf population'. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*. Macmillan Publishers Limited, part of Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-017-0375-4>.
- Kellert, Stephen R. 2012. *Birthright: People and Nature in the Modern World*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Ketcham, Christopher. 'Wolves to the Slaughter'. *The American Prospect*, March 13, 2012. <http://prospect.org/article/wolves-slaughter>.
- Kiil, Hanne and Elise Seip Tønnessen. 2013. 'Dagens Rødhette i en flerkulturell kontekst – mulighet for en ny identitet?'. *Barnboken - tidsskrift för barnlitteraturforskning/Journal of Children's Literature Research*, 36: 1–17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/clr.v36i0.21830>.

- Koninx, Felix. 2018. 'Ecotourism and rewilding: the case of Swedish Lapland'. *Journal of Ecotourism*. doi:10.1080/14724049.2018.1538227.
- Kragerud, Heidi Marie. 2013. 'Ulven og bjørnens plass i terreng og tanke'. Master thesis in cultural history. University of Oslo.
- Krange, Olve, Ketil Skogen and Håvard Helland. 2017. 'Nordmenns holdninger til store rovdyr – endringer fra 2010 til 2017'. NINA Rapport 1386. Oslo: Norsk institutt for naturforskning.
- Kvalvaag, Hilde K. 2006. 'Fatale revestreker'. *Hubro*, 13 (1): 8–9. University of Bergen.
- Latour, Bruno. 2017 (2015). *Facing Gaia : eight lectures on the new climatic regime*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lenth, Lars. 2017. *Menn som hater ulver*. Oslo: Kagge Forlag.
- Lenth, Lars, Petter Bøckman and Morten Tønnessen. 2017. *Ulvetider*. Oslo: Vega Forlag.
- Leopold, Aldo. 1989 (1949). *A Sand County Almanac, and sketches here and there*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1966 (1953). *A Sand County Almanac : with essays on conservation from Round River*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Liberg, Olof, Guillaume Chapron, Petter Wabakken, Hans Christian Pedersen, N. Thompson Hobbs and Håkan Sand. 2011. 'Shoot, shovel and shut up: cryptic poaching slows restoration of a large carnivore in Europe'. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* (2012) 279: 910–915. doi:10.1098/rspb.2011.1275.
- Liberg, Olof, Håkan Sand, Hans Christian Pedersen and Petter Wabakken. 2008. 'Dödlighet och illegal jakt i den skandinaviska vargstammen'. Rapport från Grimsö forskningsstation och Viltskadecenter.
- Lindenbaum, Pija. 2001. *Gitte og gråulvene*. Oslo: Damm.
- Linnell, John D.C., Ronny Aanes and Jon E. Swenson. 1997. 'Translocation of carnivores as a method for controlling problem animals: a review'. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 6: 1245–1257. Chapman & Hall.
- Linnell, John D.C. and Julien Alleau. 2016. 'Chapter 17. Predators That Kill Humans: Myth, Reality, Context and the Politics of Wolf Attacks on People'. In *Problematic Wildlife : A Cross-Disciplinary Approach*, Francesco M. Angelici (ed.), 357–371. Springer International Publishing Switzerland.
- Linnell, John D.C. and Tore Bjerke (eds.). 2002. 'Fear of wolves: an interdisciplinary study'. NINA Oppdragsmelding 722, 1–110. Trondheim: NINA/NIKU.
- London, Jack. 1993. *The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and Other Stories*. London: Penguin.
- Lopez, Barry Holstun. 1978. *Of Wolves and Men*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Lotman, Yuri M. 1990. *Universe of the mind: a semiotic theory of culture*. Translated by Ann Shukman. Introduction by Umberto Eco. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Martel, Yann. 2003 (2001). *Life of Pi*. Edinburgh: Canongate.
- Marvin, Garry. 2012. *Wolf*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Marx, Leo. 1964. 'Sleepy Hollow, 1844'. In *The machine in the garden : technology and the pastoral ideal in America*, 3–33. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Masius, Patrick and Dana Sprenger. 2015. 'Introduction: Wolves and Humans in History'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana Sprenger (eds.), 1–18. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.

- May, Roel, Jiska van Dijk, Roy Andersen and Arild Landa. 2008. 'Wolverines in a Changing World. Final report of the Norwegian Wolverine Project 2003–2007'. NINA Report 434. Trondheim: Norwegian Institute for Nature Research.
- Mech, L. David and Luigi Boitani. 2003. 'Wolf Social Ecology'. In *Wolves : behaviour, ecology, and conservation*, David L. Mech and Luigi Boitani (eds.), 1–34. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Monbiot, George. 2013. *Feral*. London: Allen Lane (an imprint of Penguin Books).
- Morton, Timothy. 2010. *The Ecological Thought*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press.
- . 2016. *Dark ecology: for a logic of future coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Müller, Reidar. 2018. *Skogens historie : og den besværlige trangen til å spore ulv*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1910. *Human, all-too-Human*. Translated by Helen Zimmer. Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis.
- . 1964 (1909). *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Translated by Thomas Common. New York: The Modern Library (Random House).
- . 1990 (1956). *The Genealogy of Morals*. In *The Birth of Tragedy; and, The Genealogy of Morals*, 147–299. Translated by Francis Golffing. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday.
- . 2001. *The Gay Science*. Edited by Bernard Williams. Translated by Josefine Nauckhoff. Poems translated by Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nijhuis, Michelle. 'The Most Political Animal'. *The Atlantic*, April 17, 2019. The Atlantic Monthly Group.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/04/norway-divided-over-countrys-wolves/587302/>.
- Otten, Charlotte F. 1986. 'Preface'. In *A Lycanthropy Reader*, Charlotte F. Otten (ed.), xiii–xiv. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- . 1986. 'Introduction'. In *A Lycanthropy Reader*, Charlotte F. Otten (ed.), 1–17. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Ovidius Naso, Publius. 1998. Excerpt from Book 1 of *Metamorphoses*. In *Ovid*, 25–34. Selected and edited by David Hopkins. London: J. M. Dent.
- Paton, Bernadette. 2017. 'The dog: man's best friend?' In *OED: Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. Accessed January 16, 2018.
<http://public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/word-stories/dog/>.
- Perrault, Charles. 1912 (1697). "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge". Translated by S. R. Littlewood. Quoted in Neil Jordan, 2002 (1984), *The Company of Wolves*, DVD, Hen's Tooth Video.
- Rewilding Europe. 2015. 'Rewilding Lapland'. Brochure written by Magnus Sylvé. Nijmegen, the Netherlands: Rewilding Europe.
<https://rewildingeuropa.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Rewilding-Lapland-EN.pdf>.
- . 'The compromises of rewilding'. Interview with Julia Rouet-Leduc, September 27, 2017. Nijmegen, the Netherlands: Rewilding Europe.
<https://rewildingeuropa.com/blog/the-compromises-of-rewilding/>.
- Rheinheimer, Martin. 2015. 'The Belief in Werewolves and the Extermination of Real Wolves in Schleswig-Holstein'. In *A Fairytale in Question: Historical Interactions between Humans and Wolves*, Patrick Masius and Dana

- Sprenger (eds.), 39–56. Cambridge: The White Horse Press. Originally published in *The Scandinavian Journal of History* 20 (4): 281–94, Taylor and Francis.
- Richardsen, Karl Martin. 2012. ‘Den store rovviltkrigen’. Master thesis in history. University of Tromsø.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1972 (1967). *The Symbolism of Evil*. Translated by Emerson Buchanan. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1981. *Hermeneutics and the human sciences*. Edited, translated and introduced by John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robisch, S. K. 2009. *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature*. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press.
- Roche, Jerome and Elizabeth Roche. 1981. *A Dictionary of Early Music*. London: Faber Music Limited in association with Faber and Faber Limited.
- Rosenthal, Jon. ‘Of Wolf and The Past: Ulver Reflects on 20 Years of “Nattens Madrigal”’. *Invisible Oranges*, March 10, 2017. <http://www.invisibleoranges.com/of-wolf-and-the-past-ulver-reflects-on-20-years-of-nattens-madrigal/>.
- Rovviltnemnda i Oslo og Akershus. 2018. ‘Innkomne klager (samlet)’. Oslo: Fylkesmannen i Oslo og Akershus. Accessed November 29, 2018. <https://prosjekt.fylkesmannen.no/Rovviltnemnda-i-Oslo-Akershus-og-Ostfold/Moteplan/Felles-nemndsmote-22-august-2018/>.
- Russell, Ken. 2010 (1980). *Altered States*. DVD. Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
- Sandbakken, Gard Erik. 2006. *Bastarder*. Varg Forlag.
- Schaller, George B. 1964. *The Year of the Gorilla*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Scorsese, Martin. 2013. *The Wolf of Wall Street*. DVD. Paramount Pictures.
- Scott, Ridley. 2007 (1982). *Blade Runner : the final cut*. DVD. Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
- Shay, Jonathan. 1994. *Achilles in Vietnam*. New York: Scribner.
- Shepard, Paul. 1998 (1982). *Nature and Madness*. Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press.
- . 2002 (1967). *Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Esthetics of Nature*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Sidorovich, Vadim. ‘Information on the hybridization of wolves and stray dogs in Belarus’. *Zoology by Vadim Sidorovich*, December 14, 2017. Blog at WordPress.com. Accessed October 24 2018. <https://sidorovich.blog/2017/12/14/information-on-the-hybridization-of-wolves-and-stray-dogs-in-belarus/#more-3258>.
- Skage, Morten, Julia M.I. Barth, Sissel Jentoft, Øyvind Øverli and Kjetill S. Jakobsen. ‘Genetisk bakgrunn hos ulv (*Canis lupus*) i Norge og Skandinavia’. Oslo: University of Oslo; Ås: Norwegian University of Life Sciences. https://www.njff.no/nyheter/Documents/rapport%202016%20genetisk_bakgrunn%20ulv.pdf.
- Skogen, Ketil. 2001. ‘Who’s Afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf? Young People’s Responses to the Conflicts Over Large Carnivores in Eastern Norway’. *Rural Sociology*, 66 (2): 203–226. Rural Sociological Society.
- Skogen, Ketil and Helene Figari. ‘Ulv på trappa’. *forskning.no*. Originally published in *Morgenbladet*, February 24, 2017. Oslo. <http://forskning.no/blogg/rovdyrbloggen/ulv-pa-trappe-mary-douglas-og-ulven>.

- Skogen, Ketil and Olve Krange. 'A Wolf at the Gate: The Anti-Carnivore Alliance and the Symbolic Construction of Community'. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 43 (3), July 2003: 309–325. European Society for Rural Sociology. Oxford, UK and Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Skogen, Ketil, Olve Krange and Helene Figari. 2013. *Ulvekonflikter. En sosiologisk studie*. Oslo: Akademika.
- Snerte, Kjell (ed.). 2000. *Ulvehistorier*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget.
- Sollund, Ragnhild. 2017. 'Perceptions and law enforcement of illegal and legal wolf killing in Norway: organized crime or folk crime?'. *Palgrave Communications*, 3: 17059. doi:10.1057/palcomms.2017.59.
- Soulé, Michael and Reed Noss. 'Rewilding and Biodiversity : Complementary Goals for Continental Conservation'. *Wild Earth*, Fall 1998: 18–28. Richmond, Vermont: Wild Earth.
- SSB (Statistics Norway). 2004. 'Fra skuddpremier til fredning og irregulær avgang'. Written by Espen Søbye, Madli Irene Judin and Terje Olav Rundtom. <https://www.ssb.no/jord-skog-jakt-og-fiskeri/artikler-og-publikasjoner/fra-skuddpremier-til-fredning-og-irregulaer-avgang>.
- Stensrud, Gudbjørg Fønhus. 1985. *Mikkjel – far min*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Stokland, Håkon B. 2015. *Towards a New Approach for Studies of Endangered Species Management : Technologies of government in Norwegian wolf management (1960s–2010s)*. PhD diss. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).
- Suutarinen, Johanna and Ilpo Kojola. 2017. 'Poaching regulates the legally hunted wolf population in Finland.' *Biological Conservation* 215: 11–18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2017.08.031>.
- Syse, Karen Lykke. 2013. 'The Ebb and Flow of Trees and Farmland: Symbols of Nationhood in Scotland and Norway'. *Journal of the North Atlantic*, Special Volume 4: 219–228. Eagle Hill Institute. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3721/037.004.sp413>.
- Toverud, Lars. 2001. *Utsetting av ulv i Norge og Sverige 1976–2001*. Bjørkelangen: Lars Toverud (self-published). http://rovdyr.org/arkiv/toverud_bok.pdf.
- Turi, Johan. 2012. *An Account of the Sámi : A translation of Muitalus sámiid birra, based on the Sámi original*. Translated and edited by Thomas A. Dubois. Karasjok, Norway: ČálliidLágáduš.
- Tveraa, Torkild, Manuel Ballesteros, Bård-Jørgen Bårdsen, Per Fauchald, Madeleine Lagergren, Knut Langeland, Elisabeth Pedersen and Audun Stien. 2013. 'Beregning av produksjon og tap i reindriften'. NINA Report 938. Trondheim: Norwegian Institute for Nature Research.
- Tømmeraas, Per J. 2017. *Ulveblod på sabelen. Lexviken*. Bygdehistorisk samling fra Leksvik nr. 4. Trondheim.
- Tønnessen, Morten. 2010. 'Wolf Land'. *Biosemitotics* 3: 289–297. doi:10.1007/s12304-010-9077-x. Springer Science+Business Media B.V.
- . 2011. *Umwelt transition and Uexküllian phenomenology : An ecosemiotic analysis of Norwegian wolf management*. PhD diss. Tartu, Estonia: University of Tartu. Tartu University Press.
- Ulver. 1997. *Nattens Madrigal*. CD. Dortmund: Century Black.
- . 1998. *Themes From William Blake's The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell*. CD. Oslo: Jester.
- . 2014. *Trolsk Skortmetall 1993-1997*. CD. Century Media Records.
- Unsgård, John and Nils Petter Vigerstøl. 1998. *Ulv i Norge*. Landbruksforlaget.

- von Essen, Erica and Michael Allen. 'Wild, but Not Too-Wild Animals: Challenging Goldilocks Standards in Rewilding'. *Between the Species*, 19 (1), August 2016: 80-108. <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/bts/>.
- von Ruschkowski, Eick. 'Wolves Welcome!? Lessons Learned from 15 Years of Wolf Recovery in Germany'. *International Wolf*, 26 (1), Spring 2016: 12–13. Minneapolis: International Wolf Center.
- Waggner, George. 2010 (1941). *The Wolf Man (Special Edition)*. DVD. Universal Pictures.
- Walker, Stuart. 2004 (1935). *Werewolf of London*. In *The Wolf Man: The Legacy Collection*. DVD. Universal Pictures.
- Wallach, Arian D, Euan G. Ritchie, John Read and Adam J. O'Neill. 2009. 'More Than Mere Numbers: The Impact of Lethal Control on the Social Stability of a Top-Order Predator,' *PLoS ONE*, 4 (9): e6861. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0006861.
- Witoszek, Nina. 2011. 'Nature as Sacrum: the Case of Vigeland'. In *The Origins of the "Regime of Goodness": Remapping the Cultural History of Norway*, 145–165. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- . 'The anti-Romantic Romantics: nature, knowledge and identity in nineteenth-century Norway'. 2016. In *Nature and society in historical context*, Mikuláš Teich, Roy Porter and Bo Gustafsson (eds.), 209-227. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf Conservation Center. 2018. Wolf Conservation Center. New York. Accessed October 10 2018. <https://nywolf.org/>.
- Ystad, Åsmund and Nils Solberg (eds.). 2018. *www.ROVDYR.org*. Steinkjer: Folkeaksjonen ny rovdyrpolitikk. Accessed November 29, 2018. <http://rovdyr.org/arkiv/blad.php>.
- Wabakken, Petter. 2017. 'Forord'. In 'Atferdsstudier på ulv i Slettås- og Osdalsreviret: Foreløpige resultater fra feltperioden januar–februar 2017', Barbara Zimmermann, Petter Wabakken, Ane Eriksen, Erling Maartmann, Frode Holen, Espen R. Dahl, Kristoffer Nordli, Malin Teräväinen, Boris Fuchs, Ingvild B. Svarstad, Øyvind Fredriksson, Håkan Sand and Camilla Wikenros, 7. Oppdragsrapport nr. 1 – 2017. Elverum: Høgskolen i Innlandet.
- Zimmermann, Barbara, Håkan Sand, Petter Wabakken, Camilla Wikenros, Ane Eriksen, Tomas H. Strømseth, Frode Gjerløv Holen, Erling Maartmann, Per Ahlqvist, Jon Martin Arnemo, Cyril Milleret, Olof Liberg and Hans Christian Pedersen. 2014. 'Ulven som rovdyr på klauvvilt i Skandinavia'. In *Ikkje berre ulv og bly – glimt frå forskinga på Evenstad*, T. Storaas and K. Langdal (eds.), 221–245. Høgskolen i Hedmark: Opplandske bokforlag.
- Østerås, Bergljot and Gudrun Sælen Halmrast. 2015. 'Nye møter med Rødhette og ulven'. *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning*, 39 (3–4): 282–292. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Appendix 1: Wolf persecution in North America as compared with Scandinavia

European wolf extermination campaigns had their counterpart in North America, where Euro-Americans systematically persecuted wolves, initially to protect their livestock. As in Europe, extermination was largely driven by '[b]ounties and community 'wolf drives'', beginning in the eighteenth century and reaching its peak during the nineteenth, after which wolves were no longer a significant force to contend with (Brownlow 2000, 145–146). Antagonism between European settlers and wolves were evident in the United States from the beginning, but extermination reached its peak between 1865 and 1885, echoing the wolf wars of Sweden and Norway (Lopez 1978, 139).

As regions that had previously been constructed as dangerous wilderness were reconstructed either as pastoral landscapes dominated by domestic livestock and frequented by tourists or as playgrounds providing leisure for deer hunters from urban areas, the wolf was no longer just a threat to economic viability but also a 'heretical' character at odds with the meaning of the landscape (Brownlow 2000, 147–149). As new lands were cleared, wolf extermination was an integral part of the domestication process that would replace the godforsaken wilderness with a thoroughly humanized cultural landscape.

Wolves had previously shared their habitat with Native Americans, but as Euro-Americans poured in en masse, wolves and Native Americans alike were cast as not only threats to livestock but representatives of the 'wild' – as they could not be subdued, they were destroyed (Brownlow 2000, 149). Frontiersmen in the American West tended to place wolves and Native Americans in the same category: mistaking their curiosity for hostility, they responded with strychnine and bullets (Lopez 1978, 170). Native Americans recognized the virtues of courage, strength and cooperation in wolves, but for Europeans, afraid of wolves and seeking control over nature, these same qualities were seen as vices.

As in Sweden and Norway, wolves were scarce or locally extinct in the United States by the end of the nineteenth century. As wolves have been granted protection over the past half-century and have recolonized or been reintroduced to

some of their former ranges, old conflicts have flared up again, ancestral prejudices among farmers and hunters proving just as resilient as the highly adaptable wolves. Longstanding wolf conflicts in Alaska are mostly about securing profits from moose hunting, playing out as a conflict between local hunters and environmentalists from other states (Lopez 1978, 143), showing clear similarities with the current situation in Scandinavia.

During the late nineteenth century, when bounty hunting for wolves was at its peak in the United States, it was not unusual for hunters to raid dens and take the pups but leave the mother alive in the hope that she would breed again the following year, thus producing more pups for bounty (Lopez 1978, 185); like the arms industry, which needs war to justify its existence, bounty hunters needed wolves to justify theirs. The persecution of wolves also echoes the war on terror; wolf hunters – so-called ‘wolfers’ – saw themselves as heroes set to save the nation from evil in its midst, their efforts becoming more focused, the danger posed by wolves increasingly exaggerated, as wolves declined dramatically in number (Lopez 1978, 186). As wolf numbers have risen again in the United States in recent years, due to both reintroduction and recolonization, wolf opponents have taken to comparing wolves with terrorists (Ketcham 2012).

Appendix 2: Wolves in Norwegian children's literature

Stories can have a socializing effect on children. Some parents are sceptical of wolves on the grounds that their children have nightmares about them, while others insist their children play outdoors despite the presence of wolves. These opposite poles are related to how parents construct the wolf: if they perceive it as a threat, their children are likely to do the same, but if they situate it in its context as an essential part of the ecosystem, children will have a more positive perception. Respect for the wolf can swing either towards the positive or the negative depending on values.

From the eighteenth into the early twentieth century, schools in Scandinavia followed the Danish-Norwegian bishop Erik Pontoppidan's teaching that the wolf is violent and immoral, an enemy of God and civilization (Lenth, Bøckman and Tønnessen 2017, 92). Today, however, children are being instilled with a different set of values. In *Gitte og gråulvene* [*Gitte and the grey wolves*] (Lindebaum 2001), a young girl encounters a pack of wolves and ends up making friends with them (Østerås and Halmrast 2015, 286).

WWF Norway recently published the children's book *Grønnhette* [*Little Green Riding Hood*], where the protagonist is a wolf cub whose grandmother lives outside the designated wolf zone. The hunter is cast as the villain, and the wolf cub eats the hunter's poodle (Emberland and Sveen 2017). *Grønnhette* tries to be a positive influence on children's attitudes to wolves and has additional moral appeal in that the profits from its sales go towards carnivore conservation, but parents who are sceptical of wolves will dismiss it as propaganda. Stories written with the intention of changing attitudes rarely become classics, but narratives such as *Gitte og gråulvene* and *Grønnhette* reflect that the concept of a friendly wolf is no longer unfamiliar.