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The Wolf: An Ecological Case Study

Steven Galipeau

The wolf, more than any other animal, profoundly reflects our conflict with our unconscious internal world, and our disavowal of our aggressive nature towards other people and the environment in which we and a host of other species live. Wolves have borne the burden of an intense hatred and misunderstanding that has brought their populations to near extinction. The drama of our relationship to wolves is being played out today in critical ways. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has delisted most wolves from the endangered species list, and the outcome of wolf recovery or extinction is once more in a very precarious place. This article reviews some of the psychological and ecological aspects of our relationships with wolves and their place in the natural world, an animal that is brutally assaulted by some and embraced and returned to its natural habitat by others.

Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf.

—Aldo Leopold (1949/1966, p. 137)

For over fifty years the Los Angeles and San Francisco Jung Institutes have shared a joint yearly conference. The theme announced for the 2012 conference was “Hanging by a Thread.” At the time I was moved to present a paper that I titled “Dancing with Wolves,” as our culture’s relationship with the wolf has fascinated me for years. Since that time there have been further developments in our views of, and orientation toward, the wolf, both encouraging and discouraging, that have spurred me to further amplify the material. My own immersion in the human conflict with the wolf that dates back many decades has deepened through synchronistic encounters with other sources related to this critical ecological drama—a drama that has an inner component and an external one as well.



Pamela Freundl Kirst, *Feathery Petals*, *Gossamer Petals*,
Dancing in the Wind, digital photograph, 2015.

This “dance” with the wolf has heated up in the United States recently, since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided to remove wolves from the endangered species list, one exception being Mexican wolves in the southwest part of the country. This decision was lauded by those who would just as soon continue to kill wolves, as if it were some sort of inalienable right, and deeply lamented by those who have worked for wolf reintroduction and a deeper understanding, not only of these magnificent, intelligent animals, but of the health and proper balance of ecosystems, of which the wolf has become an important symbol. Although in some states such as Oregon, wolf reintroduction continues in remarkable ways and offers good prospects for the return of wolves to California, in many states (e.g., Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Alaska) the killing and slaughter of wolves has resumed with little regard for the ecological issues at stake, or for the research of the wolf biologists who have spent lifetimes studying these remarkable animals.

Curiously the theme of the 2012 conference, “Hanging by a Thread,” was a familiar one to Jungians, yet the full context of this quote from Jung is not well known. The quote comes from the second of four one-hour interviews with Jung in 1957, called the *Houston Films*. The larger text in which the quote is found reads:

And as the world in general, particularly America, is as extraverted as hell, the introvert has no place, because he doesn't know that he beholds the world from within. And that gives him dignity, that gives him certainty, because nowadays, particularly, *the world hangs on a thin thread, and that thread is the psyche of man*. Suppose certain fellows in Moscow lost their nerve or their common sense for a bit, then the whole world is in fire and flames. Nowadays we are not threatened by elemental catastrophes. There is no such thing in nature as an H-bomb—that is all man's doing. We are the great danger. The psyche is the great danger. What if something goes wrong with the psyche? And so it is demonstrated in our day what the power of the psyche is, how important it is to know something about it. But we know nothing about it. Nobody would give credit to the idea that the psychic processes of the ordinary man have any importance whatever. (Jung, 1977, pp. 303–304)

One does not have to look far—be it various current international situations or the ever multiplying shootings and violent eruptions in this country occurring on a frighteningly regular basis—to grasp how relevant these remarks by Jung remain today. In the case of the wolf we also see clearly this

element of the destructiveness of “ordinary man.” And in Jungian terms we are confronted with our culture’s “wolf complex.” A moving example from naturalist Aldo Leopold helps put this ecological issue into a psychological perspective. Leopold was one of the first ecologists to articulate the need for a healthier attitude toward the wilderness, the land, and the wolf. In *A Sand County Almanac* (1949/1966) he writes:

Leopold’s encounter with the wolf as “other” moved him to reflect on the collective prejudice he was living out, and on the participation in our culture’s wolf complex.

My own conviction on this score dates from the day I saw a wolf die. We were eating lunch on a high rimrock, at the foot of which a turbulent river elbowed its way. We saw what we thought was a doe fording the torrent, her breast awash in white water. When she climbed the bank toward us and shook out her tail, we realized our error: it was a wolf. A half dozen others, evidently grown pups, sprang from the willows and all joined in a welcoming melee of wagging tails and playful maulings.

In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy: how to aim a steep downhill shot is always confusing. When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks.

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view. (pp. 138–139)

In a profound sense Leopold is describing what could be termed an ecological conversion experience, one that grew in him throughout his life. Jung used the term *enantiodromia* for such an experience (see C. G. Jung, 1921/1971, pars. 708–709).



The Eyes of a Wolf (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Although Jung's experience, as described in *The Red Book* (2009), was primarily internal, it too moved him to consider more deeply our relationship to nature. The old attitudes of the ego must be let go, so that a larger, more inclusive view and experience of life can unfold. Leopold's encounter with the wolf as "other" moved him to reflect on the collective prejudice he was living out, and on his participation in our culture's wolf complex. After this meeting with the wolf, he began to awaken to a new vision of our relationship to the land, our place in it, as well as that of keystone predators such as the wolf:

Since then I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves. I have watched the face of many a newly wolfless mountain . . . I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddle

horn. Such a mountain looks as if someone had given God a new pruning shears, and forbidden Him all other exercise.

I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades.

Perhaps this is behind Thoreau's dictum: In wildness is the salvation of the world. Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived among men. (pp. 139–141)

Leopold realized that there was a part of himself that he was unconsciously moved to act upon but that violated a much deeper sense of life. He had awakened to the reality of our collective situation and how deeply he had been affected by it. Like Jung, there were two elements to his personal awakening, one personal and one cultural. In his autobiography Jung (1973) wrote:

It is difficult to determine whether these questions are more of a personal or more of a general (collective) nature. It seems to me that the latter is the case. A collective problem, if not recognized as such, always appears as a personal problem, and in individual cases may give the impression that something is out of order in the realm of the personal psyche. The personal sphere is indeed disturbed, but such disturbances need not be primary; they may be secondary, the consequence of an insupportable change in the social atmosphere. The cause of disturbance is, therefore, not to be sought in the personal surrounding, but rather in the collective situation. Psychotherapy has hitherto taken this matter far too little into account. (pp. 233–234)

What Leopold reports from his experience is a good example of a person realizing he or she is in the grip of a collective problem. Our culture's negative regard of predators in general and wolves in particular reflects this disturbance. It is ordinary people who are out there shooting wolves and not realizing the repercussions of their actions, nor bothering to consider their broader consequences.

JUNGIANS AND THE WOLF

The wolf is a major figure in our inner and outer worlds, and has had an effect on Jungians much as it has on the writers, photographers, and wolf biologists moved by it. For instance, Clarissa Pinkola Estés credits the wolf for her work on the wild woman archetype expressed through the many stories in her well-known book. She writes, “The title of this book, *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*, came from my study of wildlife biology, wolves in particular” (Estés, 1992, p. 4). Her work suggests the important connection between inner and outer and underscores how the fate of animals such as the wolf is intimately related to our relationship to our souls and the stories we tell about them.

When I began speaking about the wolf, I was surprised to see that many colleagues resonated in a variety of ways. No other subject I’ve ever spoken or written about has stirred so many further associations and amplifications as material concerning the wolf. The Jungian “family” responds as if in sync with the wolf family, what author S. K. Robisch (2009) calls “the World Wolf.” For instance, in my first presentation (Galipeau, 2013a) I discussed several wolf dreams from Jungian literature, beginning with a dream of a young girl that Jung reports in his article “The Theory of Psychoanalysis” (Jung, 1961/1985, par. 475). During the discussion, analyst Sam Naifeh of San Francisco mentioned that Freud had a patient with a wolf phobia that was of such intensity that Freud referred to him as the “Wolf Man,” and the moniker has continued to influence the psychoanalytic discussion of that case ever since. Freud first reported the man’s dream a few years after Jung had reported his case. At age 4 Freud’s patient dreamt:

It was night and I was lying in my bed. (My bed stood with its foot towards the window; in front of the window there was a row of old walnut trees. I know it was winter when I had the dream, and night-time.) Suddenly the window opened of its own accord, and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white, and looked more like foxes or sheep-dogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked like dogs when they pay attention to something. In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I screamed and woke up. (Gardiner, 1991, p. 173)

Freud links the appearance of the wolves in the dream to fairytales that the boy would have known, much as Jung does when discussing his patient’s dream—in Freud’s case, the Grimm’s fairytales of Little Red Riding

Hood and The Seven Little Goats. The young girl Jung discusses associated the wolf that bit her in her dream to her father when he was angry. In a similar vein Freud discusses his patient's "infantile fear of the father" (Gardiner, 1991, p. 177). Muriel Gardner compiled a book of Freud's description of the case, the patient's own writing, and those of a later analyst of the patient. She titled it *The Wolf Man by the Wolf Man*. Clearly, the ghost wolf has had a strong impact on psychoanalysis as well. The wolf has been a living figure in psychoanalysis as well as in analytical psychology. Although I have been perplexed by the paucity of understanding of the dream by Freud and others commenting on it, at least from my Jungian perspective, it is very striking that at one point the patient was moved to paint his dream and Gardner used it as the cover of her book. What was sadly missed, in my view, was the compensatory nature of the dream, its efforts to *remythologize* the wolf of which the man as a young boy had become so fearful. The wolves in the tree do not seem frightening in his painting. Was this an attempt of the unconscious to unite the World Wolf with the World Tree? Whereas Jung did not have much to say about wolf symbolism, he wrote extensively on tree symbolism (see "The Philosophical Tree"; Jung, 1967). As we will see shortly, the return of wolves to places from which they had been eliminated had a beneficial effect on several tree species.

Robisch, author of *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature*, notes that neither Freud nor the Wolf Man probably ever saw a wolf in their lives. However, in his later writing Freud did discuss the powerful reality of the malevolent ghost wolf and how it gripped the Western psyche. After reading a second lecture version of my initial paper, Ladson Hinton, a Jungian friend and colleague in Seattle, called my attention to this passage by Freud, found in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In 1930 Freud wrote:

The element of truth behind this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that men are not gentle creatures, who want to be loved, who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus*. ['Man is a wolf to man.' Derived from Plautus, *Asinaria* II, iv, 88.]. Who in the face of all his experience of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion? As a rule this cruel

aggressiveness waits for some provocation or puts itself at the service of some other purpose, whose goal might also have been reached by milder measures. In circumstances that are favorable to it, when the mental counter-forces which ordinarily inhibit it are out of action, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals man as a savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien. (Freud, 1961/2010, pp. 94–95)

This passage is a remarkable description of the ghost wolf that lurks unintegrated in the modern human psyche. Considering, as we saw earlier, Jung's growing awareness of the important cultural dimension of the psyche, I have wondered how much Freud and Jung might have found in common later in their lives, as they each seriously contemplated the psychological consequences of the development of modern civilization and the destructive paths it often takes.

A friend and colleague, Brad TePaske, a concerned Jungian environmentalist, shared this experience during a summer trip he took to Wyoming to visit his sister and her "NRA elk-shootin' former paratrooper spouse." He asked this man if he knew anything about the health and census of the elk population in that area. The reply, "It's down, way down." So Brad asked him what might be the reason. His answer: "Why, it's the wolves!!!" the man responded in utmost gravity. The next evening, with his Earth Watch group in the area, Brad asked Don Morris, a ranger with 30 years experience with the National Park Service, the same question. Morris's response: "Little Red Riding Hood." So Brad told him what his brother-in-law had said and asked him to say more. "That's complete nonsense, of course. The whole thing about wolves is simply folklore—mythology!" The veteran ranger went on to talk about old ungulates, ill stragglers, and so on. The split in attitudes was very evident.

In reality, most action that is taken destructively towards wolves is an unconscious attempt to eliminate a *psychological phantasm*, not a problem predator.

From Jungian Robert Johnson we get a glimpse of the wilderness before wolves were exterminated, one very similar to that of Aldo Leopold when he heard wolves howl in the Mexican wilderness. In his memoir, *Balancing Heaven and Earth*, Johnson writes about his time in 1944 serving in a Forest Service lookout tower

on Burley Mountain in the state of Washington, at 6,410 feet above sea level, about midway between Mt. Rainier and Mt. St. Helens:

I was about to roll into a major panic when something glorious happened to rescue me: the sun began to set into the Pacific Ocean, and as the quality of the light changed a wolf pack began to howl somewhere off in the distance. I was used to the howls of coyotes, but I had never heard a wolf howl before. It was the most eerie, mournful sound I had ever encountered.

Watching the sun set was a magnificent experience in which I felt something akin to what our ancestors must have felt living at the mercy of nature but also close to its grandeur.

I had the luxury most days of investing hours watching the sun set and listening to the performance of the wolf symphony. (Johnson, 1998, pp. 41–42)

Johnson captures the essence of the connection to the wild that we are on the cusp of losing.

THE WOLF IN LITERATURE

Our situation with the outer wolf has its roots in our relationship to the wolf of fantasy and imagination, what author and scholar S. K. Robisch calls the “ghost wolf.” In *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature* (2009), Robisch reviews all literature up until that time—particularly from this country—around wolves. At stake is what he calls the *World-Wolf*, which has two components. One of these is the ghost wolf that has two sides: the malevolent ghost wolf is the “half of the ghost wolf that casts the animal as a demon, a scourge” (p. 17). This aspect has its roots in the European psyche but has traveled to North America where it has dominated the collective American consciousness. On the other side is the benevolent ghost wolf that “has of late won a collective psychic battle with the malevolent ghost in America” (p. 18). To compensate for this split in the imagination, we have a need for the inclusion of wolf literature that describes what Robisch calls the “corporeal wolf”: “Think of corporeality as the attempt of an author to ‘get it right’” (p. 18). Those familiar with Jung’s work should be quite aware of this dilemma, since much of Jungian psychology concerns sorting out our relationships to the “objective” other as opposed to our “subjective” fantasies that become activated around that other, which can be both positive and negative in nature. In the case of the wolf, the imagined wolf—malevolent or benevolent—has to be contrasted with its counterpart: the wolf as it exists in

nature. In reality, most action that is taken destructively towards wolves is an unconscious attempt to eliminate a *psychological phantasm*, not a problem predator.

In typological terms, the more we develop externally in our accelerated, extraverted world, the more we leave behind internally; what is inside is neglected, and we unconsciously seek ways to get rid of it. Such one-sidedness in the advance of Western civilization was of grave concern to Jung. As our external achievements escalate, we become more disconnected from the unconscious, ultimately believing it doesn't exist, and we become more disengaged from nature in the process. This split in the Western psyche was an important component of Jung's typology that has become neglected. As we further develop certain functions, others get left in the unconscious and become tainted with it; animals, indigenous peoples, members of other ethnicities, and in general those who are different from us often come to represent the undeveloped parts of our own psyches. Thus, although we continually improve our scientific and technological efforts and advances, the unconscious erupts, and, especially in our so-called scientific world, unconscious fantasies are treated as if they are facts. The wolf conflict is an important case study of this phenomenon. Fantasies about wolves carry more weight with most people than do the facts gathered about them. These dynamics are being recognized not only in psychology, but by those deeply involved with ecological issues involving wolves.

WOLF TYPOLOGY: TRACKING THE MALEVOLENT GHOST WOLF

Our cultural orientation toward the wolf reflects an interesting typological case study. Jung lamented how one-sided we had become with the advent of modern science and its predominantly extraverted emphasis. Much of his work was intended to demonstrate that we could also be "empirical" about the life of the soul as well. The experience of the unconscious has an objective quality and is an equally important aspect of human experience. In our scientific age, particularly with certain environmental issues, it is quite significant how much many people will let fantasies of fear and distrust dictate how they relate to the world around them. For instance, just as in earlier centuries many refused to believe that the world was round or that the earth was not at the center of the universe, now many people do not "believe" that global warming is a reality, or that there is a general environmental crisis that entails not only how we relate to the land, but also how we relate to each other and to the other species with whom we share this planet.

Our orientation toward the wolf is a particularly relevant case study in this regard. In this light, the work of Carter Niemeyer (2010) in wolf recovery deserves our attention. His involvement with wolves and other predators

is documented in his book *Wolfer: A Memoir*. Especially significant for understanding our cultural psychology with the wolf was his time working for Animal Damage Control in several Western states before wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone. In his capacity as a federal trapper in the late 1980s, Niemeyer's job essentially entailed killing problem predators. His work came from a long tradition of trappers who had been part of the efforts of settlers, ranchers, states, and the federal government to exterminate wolves. This tradition and the challenge for us today is summed up by Robisch (2009):

If we knew only one fact from one wolf book about what has been done to wolves in the United States—one item that would stand as the deal-breaker of the millennium, demanding that we re-think ourselves, our literature, and our mythology in earnest—it might be this: Ben Corbin, one of the famous wolf trappers of the turn of the century and author of *Corbin's Advice; or, The Wolf Hunter's Guide*, baited fishhooks, strung them on lines, tossed them into wolf dens, waited for pups to swallow them, then yanked the pups out of the dens and killed them.

Literature can save our minds from becoming Ben Corbin's, but not if we're only conscious of ourselves and our own cultures. Out of ourselves and our cultures in isolation from the nonhuman world, we become Ben Corbin. (p. 405)



Wolf Pups (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife)

Robisch describes how such trappers at the time often had mythical status, as did some of the wolves they hunted. Because it took a certain knowledge of wolves to trap and kill them, many trappers believed that they were the most knowledgeable about wolves, more so than Native Americans had been and the wildlife biologists who were studying them. As author Peter Steinhart describes it:

There was something both colorful and tragic about the era of wolf control—colorful because the stories the bounty hunters told romanticized the wolf and lent to the country a deeper mystery and moral import, but tragic because the policy eradicated the wolf and damaged whole ecosystems. (Steinhart, 1995, p. 40)

In his book *The Company of Wolves* Steinhart includes discussions with Dan Gish, one of the last wolfers of the southwest. He notes that although Gish worked for wolf haters, he respected the animal, “and when the last wolf vanished, he lost something more precious than he knew. It cut his bond to the earth and severed connections between eye and heart. There is lesson in this for us all” (Steinhart, 1995, p. 48).

As wolves migrated down into Montana from Canada, Niemeyer, who had developed taxidermy skills growing up and also completed graduate work in biology, found himself facing a most challenging educational task. Residents imagined that any livestock death must be due to wolves. Niemeyer’s investigations proved otherwise. “It is a fact that wolves kill so few livestock that the predators barely register on the pie chart of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Statistics Service. I wasn’t finding that wolves were as evil as everyone thought” (Niemeyer, 2010, p. 178). Furthermore:

Animal Damage Control managers didn’t like my conclusions about what killed most of the dead cows and sheep in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. In their estimation, the truth about what killed these animals wasn’t as important as upholding the opinions and attitudes of ranchers, many of whom were eager to think that, from here on out, wolves surely must be responsible for anything dead. (p. 201)

In our so-called scientific age Niemeyer was faced with the ethically questionable choice of supporting the irrational beliefs of those he worked for rather than taking actions based on the tangible facts of his investigations. Those who ran these departments were most interested in supporting these

old, unfounded beliefs. As for the ranchers he actually became engaged with, Niemeyer came across a different reality:

Many ranchers told me privately that they didn't object to wolves being around as long as the beasts didn't kill their livestock. But if I repeated this remark to anyone, especially a group of their peers, the ranchers promised to call me a damn liar . . . but knowing that these attitudes prevailed helped me work more easily with both sides of the wolf recovery issue. (p. 208)

When Niemeyer presented his evidence to the ranchers as to what actually had been the cause of death, they were ready to believe him. And, they admitted they were only concerned about their livestock and not any kind of wolf vendetta, but they would not say so openly.

By the spring of 1994, I had cut open more than 100 sheep and cattle, four horses, one foal and a mule. All were reportedly killed or injured by wolves. Of that number, I found that only five—four calves and a lamb—were legitimate wolf kills. My findings weren't popular with my agency, but few ranchers disputed them. (p. 208)

Thus Niemeyer was hit with the reality, in a somewhat different vein than Aldo Leopold, that "The challenge wasn't the wolves, it was the people" (p. 224).

But wolves seemed to trigger a base hatred among some of my co-workers and friends, and it split us apart. There are people who still won't talk to me because of wolves. But in my simple mind, wolves weren't anything but another majestic predator to behold and I believed they belonged back with us. (p. 238)

My principal goal [in Idaho] was wolf recovery, but I was having the most trouble with people. At least with wolves I could predict their behavior. (p. 316)

It wasn't the wolves that made me more inclined to be on the wolf's side, it was the macho swagger of people. (p. 322)

And so he concluded:

... the reintroduction of wolves reaffirmed a collective neurosis among residents that the federal government was out to get them. (p. 322)

I could count on one hand the number of folks with real wolf trouble. They were quiet and shunned publicity, and they were too busy with ranch life to join anti-wolf groups. (p. 326)

With these specifics from Niemeyer's work we can return to Aldo Leopold to gauge, as Jung often did, the broader ecological ramifications suggested by such experiences:

The truth is, that in spite of all religion and philosophy, mankind has never acquired any real respect for the one thing in the Universe that is worth most to mankind—namely Life. He has not even respect for himself, as witness the thousand wars in which he has jovially slain the earth's best. Still less has he any respect for other species of animals. . . . The trouble is that man's intellect has developed much faster than his morals. (Lorbiecki, 2005, pp. 79–81)

Leopold, much like Jung, defines the "thin thread" by which we hang ecologically, one that is based on the typological splits of thinking verses feeling, the rational verses the nonrational, fantasy versus fact.

THE WOLF IN FILM

In a previous article, I wrote about Jack London's approach to the wolf in his novels *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*. The author was wrestling with the issues early in the twentieth century as to who was truly the more violent animal: wolf or human. Often literature can be a guide to what is happening in the unconscious, before the issue is discussed by psychology. A classic case in this regard is Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. When Stevenson wrote this story, Jung was an infant, and it would be decades before Jung discussed the problem of the shadow from a psychological point of view. Robisch has shown the wide prevalence of the wolf in American literature. Along with this literature, our cinema also offers similar depictions of the wolf, the malevolent ghost wolf, as well as other representations of the wolf.

A few recent films show how much the malevolent ghost wolf still wants to make its appearance. The 2011 film *The Grey*, with Liam Neeson playing a huntsman hired to defend an oil crew from wolves, is a good example. In this

movie of survival after a plane crash in the Alaskan wilderness, wolves are depicted as adversarial creatures in a way that does not fit our knowledge and experience of the corporeal wolf. But what filmgoer, Jung's "ordinary man," would understand that this is the ghost wolf being depicted, not the animal that lives in the wilderness?

In a different way, just the title of the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street* demonstrates this ghost wolf element of our collective psyche. But the insatiable appetites and out-of-control aggression depicted in the film are human qualities, the "hungers" of the human psyche gone unfulfilled. These are not attributes found in wolves. No one who has actually observed wolves or spent time with them would attribute such behavior to them. This is the insatiable, malevolent ghost wolf of the human psyche, *Homo homini lupus*.

And in a different vein, with its connection to our Western fairytale tradition, the touching and entertaining story of Anna and Elsa in the popular movie *Frozen* also depicts wolves in their malevolent ghost wolf form. By depicting wolves in this way, many purveyors of Western art keep this notion of the wolf as a demonic creature alive in our culture.

Fortunately, some current films also show another imaginative understanding in regard to animals like wolves and to nature in general. The 2010 film *How to Train Your Dragon* could easily be about our attitudes towards wolves, if we were talking about actual animals, but since it is the ghost wolf that is the problem in the human psyche, then dragons make an excellent foil in this regard. The young hero Hiccup has an Aldo Leopold-type experience, though in his case when he has felled the dragon and looks into its eyes, he cannot kill it. He begins a relationship with it instead. Such an approach, "relationship *with*," rather than perpetuating "antagonism *against*," has broad consequences for everyone. The core of this connection is emotional, for when asked why he didn't kill Toothless, the dragon, the young Hiccup replies that he could sense that the dragon was as scared as he, Hiccup, was. Similarly those who have contact with wolves also marvel at the depth of their emotional bonding (Haber & Holleman, 2013; Dutcher & Dutcher, 2013).

The story at the heart of the 2009 film *Avatar* profoundly touches on the broader ecological issues we face: the conflict between the corporate types seeking the aptly named "unobtainium," which they pursue at all cost, and the effects of their efforts on the planet and the indigenous people who live there. Two totally different worldviews exist: the destruction of nature at whatever cost, versus an interest in understanding it and our place in it. Jake Sully, a warrior, makes the transition from one world to the other. He is the Aldo Leopold figure, the one who has a conversion experience whereby he embraces our connection to nature.

And of course, just as there are books considering the nature and experience of the corporeal wolf, there are films that try to do so. Some are commercial, such as Carroll Ballard's *Never Cry Wolf* (based on the Farley Mowat book), and many are produced by organizations such as the National Geographic Society.

The 1990 movie *Dances with Wolves* is the story of a soldier, Lieutenant John Dunbar, who has become overwhelmed with the carnage and atrocities of the Civil War and is reassigned to a remote frontier outpost in Indian country. There he encounters a wolf who is curious about his activities. The local Native American tribe he befriends gives him the name Dances with Wolves because of the nature of his peaceful coexistence with the wolf.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE CORPOREAL WOLF

Many dedicated biologists have spent years observing and studying wolves—not an easy task, given that most wolves had been exterminated from the lower 48 states and the prevailing collective fear of these animals. One wolf video that is a favorite in my family, *White Wolf*, came out in the late 1980s and was made by National Geographic (2009, DVD) photographer Jim Brandenburg in partnership with renowned wolf biologist L. David Mech. They observed wolves in Ellesmere Island in Canada where they had not been hunted down, and could be viewed in open territory.

Another place that wolves could be more readily seen and studied was the state of Alaska. Adolph Murie studied wolves for many years in Denali National Park. His book *The Wolves of Mount McKinley* was one of the first extensive publications on wolves. Biologist Gordon Haber picked up on Murie's work and continued to study wolves in Denali for some 43 years. Together their research spans over 70 years. Haber's ongoing study, particularly of one group of wolves, the Tolkat Group, is the second longest ongoing study of a large mammal social group in the wild after that of Jane Goodall's study of chimpanzees.

Yet during his life and work and despite his years of dedication, Haber struggled to have his observations accepted, particularly by those making wildlife management decisions in the state of Alaska. In visiting parks such as Denali National Park in Alaska and Yellowstone National Park (primarily in Wyoming) to see wolves, one of the elements of wildlife management that became clear to me was that whereas federal agencies make the decisions regarding wildlife within the parks, the states surrounding the parks make the determination for hunting practices outside of the parks. Ironically, this is the case even though the parks are generally surrounded by federal lands, usually national forests, lands that are considered publicly owned. Unfortunately, wolves do not know when they have left a park, and, more

unfortunately, there are hunters who will lie in wait just outside park boundaries, and illegally leave carcasses there to lure wolves away so that they can kill them. On one side of the boundary is some form of preservation, and on the other side the same annihilating practices that have occurred since Europeans first began to colonize this continent.

Haber continually advocated for a buffer zone around parks, so that the purposes of the parks could be fulfilled. State game management would not hear of it. In one case Haber found a wolf in an illegal trap outside the Denali, and freed it. The hunter sued and won (the case was tried in the hunter's hometown). The objective of the management plan for Denali "is to preserve the range of natural behavior, patterns, changes, and processes of all park wildlife. Yet astonishingly, not one of the groups of wolves that use the Denali area is protected from hunting and trapping" (Haber & Holleman, 2013, p. 192).

After his years observing wolves, it became clear to Haber that *family* was a much more accurate designation for a group of wolves than *pack*. And management policies missed the fact that wolves, due to their cooperative breeding and hunting practices, may do a better job of managing wolf populations in their various territories than humans do. For instance, if there are low food resources, a wolf group may not reproduce. Quite significant

in Haber's findings was that current wolf management policies missed the critical importance of preserving the familial systems of wolves. The wolf most likely to wander off and kill a domestic sheep, for example, might be a juvenile that no longer had the alpha wolves around to teach it how to hunt the wild game on which wolves usually subsist. Now they had to fend for themselves, and not very wisely from both wolf and human points of view. Looking at wolf numbers as a guide to the management of their population discounted "the biological features and primary functional units that most define this species and set it apart" (Haber & Holleman, 2013, p. 230).

Like Niemeyer and others who knew about wolves through experience, Haber was also profoundly struck by how much the fantasies about wolves were so contrary to the facts. "More people, by far, are attacked, injured,

Probably the most important cultural and psychological element of Haber's work that came from the opportunity to study wolves as closely as he did is that we humans might very well learn from wolves about managing aggression.

or killed in Alaska by moose, bears, goshawks, dogs, and other people, for example, than by wolves” (Haber & Holleman, 2013, p. 184).

Probably the most important cultural and psychological element of Haber’s work that came from the opportunity to study wolves as closely as he did is that we humans might very well learn from wolves about managing aggression. Killing them off and reducing their numbers so that they can’t live more naturally in appropriate environments would not only destroy wolves, but the opportunity to better understand ourselves:

There is immensely more worth to wolves than what is derived from fur money or their value as a trophy. For example, the close parallels in any aspects of social behavior between wolves and primitive man offer us an opportunity to learn more about ourselves. We know remarkably little about the origins of human aggression and how it is or isn’t controlled in some societies. . . . By studying wolves and other advanced social creatures, we stand to learn something about the more complex variations of the same patterns found in humans.

We also know it is not necessary to possess an animal and materially do something with it in order to enjoy it and use it. Many derive an immeasurable thrill at the sight of a wolf track or of wolves, upon hearing the singing of a group, or just from knowing that out there somewhere in the wilderness another intelligent society lives unmolested by humans. These uses of wolves and wilderness are legitimate.

In a world of limited resources but increasing human numbers and demands, non consumptive uses such as watching and photographing may, in fact, have the greatest validity. Viewed in this perspective, we can at the very least insist that the days of aerial gunning, snaring, denning, poisoning, and other types of wolf slaughter—whether called predator control or not—and the resulting degradation of wilderness must remain in our past. (p. 221)

Haber died tragically in a plane crash before he had finished writing up his work. Using his extensive notes, Marybeth Holleman completed it and summarized Haber’s findings in their book *Among Wolves*. No follow-up to Haber’s work has occurred, and the numbers of the wolves he studied have declined: “It’s clear that park visitors now have much less chance of seeing wolves. In fact, wolf-viewing success for the four hundred thousand people who visit Denali each summer has decreased by more than 70 percent in

just three years—since the [Alaska] Board of Game abolished the protective buffer in March 2010” (Haber & Holleman, 2013, p. 256).

Reading about Haber’s work after having been to Denali was enlightening on many levels, but I found his death and the fate of wolves in Denali to be quite sad. I’ve come to learn that loss is a familiar emotion of those working with wolves in the wild.

Another book brought to my attention this past year was *The Hidden Life of Wolves*, the most recent publication of wolf photographers Jim and Jamie Dutcher. Their knowledge of wolves is based on spending several years with a family of wolves, the Sawtooth Pack, in Idaho. The pictures are well complemented by the text, which includes an excellent summary of Haber’s work as well as a good overview of our current wolf situation. As filmmakers, they continue to work towards educating the public about wolves and keeping that thin thread strong.

KEYSTONE PREDATORS, TROPHIC CASCADES, AND BIODIVERSITY

The reintroduction of wolves to the Northern Rockies, beginning in the mid-1990s, opened the field of wolf study and observation further—in particular, the impact on ecosystems when a keystone predator is returned. In Yellowstone National Park wolves have been studied in a way that was not previously available. Doug Smith, the leader of the Yellowstone Wolf Project, and Gary Ferguson have written a comprehensive summary of the effects of wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone, *Decade of the Wolf* (2005), after the first 10 years. Chapter 7, “The Wolf Effect,” surveys the various repercussions of their presence, which have even been given a broader name, *trophic cascade*, referring to the impact of keystone predators on a variety of environments (see “How Wolves Change Rivers,” <http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/how-wolves-change-rivers/>, for an overview of trophic cascades in Yellowstone).

What we have learned through wolf reintroduction is that “wolves touch everything in an ecosystem, from trees to butterflies to songbirds, because of how they influence their prey’s behavior and presence, and how that in turn affects the way their prey eat and use a landscape” (Eisenberg, 2010, p. 3). Remarkably, this phenomenon is quite extensive: “This doesn’t apply just to wolves; it applies to many other predators—animals such as sharks and sea otters—in other types of ecosystems” (pp. 3–4).

Trophic cascades were first observed by scientists in the marine environments. For instance, when sea otters were hunted to near extinction, their absence had a negative effect on kelp forests. Sea urchins would devour

these forests in the absence of the sea otter, a keystone predator in these ecosystems, and with their elimination a downward cascade effect could be observed (p. 30). Curiously, the term *trophic cascade* refers to the movement of energy through the community food web; when predators are either eliminated or restored, the flow of energy in an ecosystem is affected. Jung saw our internal psychological landscape in similar terms, as having to do with the flow of energy (1948/1960, "On Psychic Energy"). Trophic cascades suggest that the same can be said about ecosystems.

The ecology of fear is an element of trophic cascades that is particularly pertinent to wolves and ungulates such as elk. With no wolves, elk graze freely and intensely. As Leopold observed, the vegetation suffers. When wolves are reintroduced, the elk graze quite differently and more alertly.

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Trees such as aspens are not eaten so far down, and this change in the tree life has a trickledown effect as well. "Upon closer inspection the browse pattern here suggested that rather than standing around eating aspen sprouts to the ground, the elk had exercised restraint, perhaps taking one bite or two, looking up to scan for wolves, moving on and then stopping to browse some more" (Eisenberg, 2010, p. 17). When wolves were reintroduced to areas where elk browsed, hunters complained that there were fewer elk.

Researchers found, however, that the elk numbers were often the same, but the elk were now harder to hunt because they were more alert. In a sense, they were more like elk and less like cows.

Most of us have probably observed the ecology of fear in nature. One simple example is activity around bird feeders. The closer one sits to the feeder, the less the birds come in, and the more hesitant they are to feed. If one were to leave, the birds would help themselves with far fewer reservations.

In the environments where they thrive, wolves are considered keystone predators because they are at the top of the food chain, but even as such,

they compete with other keystone predators for the carcasses they either kill or find. Recent studies also indicate that the grizzlies benefit in other ways from the presence of wolves, as the change in grazing behavior of elk allows grizzlies more access to berries, which is particularly critical in the fall as they fatten up for the winter (Boxall, 2013, p. AA2).

One does not have to travel to Yellowstone to see and experience trophic cascades, and depending on the ecosystem, the cast of characters may be quite different. For instance, in Yellowstone coyotes would be considered mesopredators; their numbers are severely limited by the presence of wolves, though most of the coyote prey in such an area would fare much better. In Southern California coyotes are keystone predators, and their presence has a positive impact on such species as birds, who benefit because coyotes eat cats, a common mesopredator of birds (Eisenberg, 2010, p. 45).

What the presence of the wolf and other predators reflects is the need to rebalance a host of ecosystems. In Eisenberg's (2010) words: "Ecosystems have been truncated or decapitated by the loss of larger animals. Beyond evolutionary entanglements, when one views these extinctions through trophic cascades glasses the profound ecological wreckage humans have inadvertently wrought on this planet begins to become apparent" (p. 48). This situation parallels that of our relationship, as Jung suggests, to the psyche. We've lost our connection to it and thus to a fuller understanding of our place in the scheme of life.

CONTINUING TO TRACK THE WOLF

In *The Red Book* Jung writes, "If no outer adventure happens to you, then no inner adventure happens to you either" (Jung, 2009, p. 263). In June of 2011 my wife and I and one of our sons went on a trip to Alaska to see wildlife. In particular, I hoped to see wolves. Although we did see the big four animals of Denali National Park—moose, caribou, grizzly bear, and Dall sheep—we missed seeing wolves. On a hike along a dirt road, I did find wolf tracks. That fall I began gathering material for my first presentation on the wolf, and had a important wolf dream (Galipeau, 2013a, p. 43).

In June 2013 my wife and I went on a trip to Yellowstone. Since I had learned that hunters had lured the two alpha females off Denali National Park with a horse carcass to shoot them, I didn't feel good about our chances if we returned to Alaska. With the return of wolves to Yellowstone, I felt the chances to see them were better. I found a group led by two wildlife biologists who had been involved in the wolf recovery efforts and who offered trips and served as guides. We did see wolves in the Lamar Valley, as well as other impressive wildlife sightings.



Wolves in the Lamar Valley (Steven Galipeau, June, 2013)

The experience provided a profound sense that the park was doing now what it was meant to do: offer an experience of wildlife in a relatively natural habitat. This visit to Yellowstone contrasted with a visit during a post college trek years before (1970) when I toured the country with three friends and found Yellowstone—which back then still gave bears access to human food—more akin to Disneyland than a living wilderness. The change in the opportunity to see wildlife was enormous, and deeply moving. Seeing herds of buffalo on the move, moose, and the pronghorn that have thrived since wolf recovery began was truly numinous for me. Pictures I took of all of these animals now hang in my office.

Also striking in a different way was the number of people deeply connected to wildlife both in the park and outside of it. The states surrounding the park, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, carry a reputation from those of us living elsewhere based on their aggressive mismanagement of wolves. Visiting such states—on this trip, Montana, and previously Alaska—I was struck by how the attitudes of state officials determining hunting regulations did not reflect the attitudes of many of its citizens, especially those working in and around the park, and other areas of ecotourism. The work of such groups was attracting enthusiastic young people to work there. The second week after returning from Yellowstone I had the following dream:

I'm in Montana or Yellowstone visiting with Nathan Varley, the biologist who co-led our trip. We go out early morning on this bumpy rural road, like a neighborhood road in a town like Gardiner. We see a big animal. It looks at first like a moose to me, as I thought it had big ears, but Nathan says it's a wolf. Now it is up close lying on the ground nearby, like a big dog. It's amazing. I go back to get my camera, but when I get back, it's gone. It was

wonderful to see this animal. I had wanted to touch it. We will hang out in the town for a while before leaving.

Reflecting on this dream, I could feel part of the dilemma presented by my dream from a few years past: how to connect to the “spirit” of the wolf, as well as how to engage the corporeal wolf. I believe this quote from Doug Smith, the leader of the Yellowstone Wolf Project, sums up our current psychological and ecological dilemma quite well:

The stirring beauty offered by any of the more than two dozen wolves I touch with my own hands every year—[was] less important than the simple sense of wonder that had been kindled by even the most fleeting encounters. Held within a wolf’s gaze has been everything I’ve needed to keep alive my sense of connection to the earth. The fact that I live in a time when these sorts of opportunities are increasingly rare has on one hand left me with a profound feeling of gratitude for being able to do the work I do. On the other hand, that very same rarity—the fact that it’s become unusual for people to have any sort of regular dose of nature, let alone trading stares with wolves—leaves me acutely aware of how much the culture has lost. Gone from most people’s lives are the simple, wondrous prompts of nature, triggers that once sparked in us not just a sense of beauty, but the pleasures of place. Therein sits the weight, the burden of these times. (Smith & Ferguson, 2005, p. 188)

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