

Appendix D -

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVALName: Lisa JesseCollege: Arts & Sciences Department: EnglishFaculty Mentor: Dr. Thomas HeffernanPROJECT TITLE: Wolves in Western Literature

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Thomas Heffernan, Faculty MentorDate: April 26, 2000

Comments (Optional):

I have read this project and find it exemplary. It illustrates an ambitious goal to look at a contemporary problem that is largely the province of biologists and discern the subtle effects of history on present attitudes. It is a worthy essay and I believe should receive the grade of A.

Wolves in Western Literature

Lisa Jesse

Dr. Thomas Heffernan, advisor

Table of Contents

Introduction	page 3
Chapter 1 Historical Overview	page 5
Chapter 2 Wolves in Fables	page 17
Chapter 3 Wolves of Fairy Tales	page 24
Chapter 4 Explaining the Demonization of Wolves	page 30
Chapter 5 Linking the Fiction to the Reality	page 37
Bibliography	page 41

INTRODUCTION

Canis lupus has been much maligned in the literary tradition of the West much to the detriment of the animal's survival. Superstition and fear have created a fictional beast which consistently plays the villain in European stories. According to author Beryl Rowland: "The antiquity and continuity of the belief establishes the eminence of the wolf as a universal baleful beast and helps to account for the persistence of its pejorative symbolism" (162). This paper attempts to justify this statement by showing that continuity with evidence of continuing derisive representation of wolves through analysis of various forms of European literature in which the wolf has played a major part. Though the scope is limited to a Western context, much Eastern and especially Russian literature seems to concur with western opinions.

The first chapter, an Historical Overview, is a broad survey of the presence of wolves in Western myth, religion, and folklore. The major discussion of specific wolf characterizations is limited to two particular classes of literature in the next two chapters. The more detailed analysis of the role of wolves in fable and fairy tale uncovers a persistent image of wolves as ravenous, devilish, and greedy beasts with a tendency towards corruption and thievery. These classes of literature were selected because they contain the works which are still well-recognized today and have presumably the greatest impact on our present-day notions of the wolf. They relate the use of the wolf in these stories to those that proceeded them and also determine what their greatest influences were on later literature and on the European mind. The fables demonstrate the continuity in the most enduring Western characterizations of the wolf while the fairy tales show how humans manifested their fears of wolves through children's stories.

There is a section exploring some of the psychology behind human characterizations of the animals to discover why certain persistent images have been formed and maintained. One likely

explanation for the hatred of wolves is a fear of the beastly qualities in humans which are then projected onto the animal. This practice was evident in the medieval Christian church's associations of wolves with devils and persecution of so-called werewolves. Another association which had significant effects on the survival of wolves was that of the wolf as a representative of an unchristian wilderness. In America before the nineteenth century, progress was equated with the conquering of wilderness, and this was translated to the destruction of wolves -- animals of the wilderness. Extermination campaigns and wolf bounty hunters decimated populations in many areas of the country. The final chapter makes connections between the literature and more modern impressions of the wolf to discover how past images influence present ones. It questions whether some of the literary descriptions are justified by known behavior of wolves. Finally, the paper investigates changes in the most recent literature which takes a more sympathetic, and more scientifically accurate, approach towards wolves.

I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Storytellers, fabulists, and authors have employed the figure of the wolf in their tales for thousands of years. The wolf's reputation as a ravening beast was constructed in European stories, fables, tales, and myths dating from before Christ. The greatest deviations from the literature's consistent rendering of wolf characteristics appear primarily in the earliest images of the wolf. Sometimes contradictory in their characterizations, the early legends depict the wolf as a nurturing maternal figure and a giver of life in some stories while a bloodthirsty beast of prey in others. The legendary founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were suckled by a she-wolf in Plutarch's popular A.D. 70 version of the ancient legend that dates to the fourth century B.C. Also, many Native American belief places the wolf in a position of reverence and respect. The Nez Perces, for example, believed the wolf to be the ancestor of the human race (Rowland, 161). The wolf of the great majority of literature, however, differs greatly from this first nurturing figure as the contradictory characterizations resolved themselves.

A largely uniform characterization of the wolf as a symbol of rapacity and greed eventually formed as the wolf began to appear regularly in different forms of Western literature. The negative images have endured until today. The following sections briefly chronicle the wolf's presence in legends and literature from early mythology through fairy tales and fables of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Early Greek and other world legends did begin with conflicting opinions of wolves, but the fables and bestiaries followed by werewolf legends and fairy tales formed a solid literary consensus on the nature of the wolf. Thus, a recognizable picture of the wolf as a beast of destruction and greed emerged from common and consistent representations in literary works from antiquity until recent times.

critical of those who "been the develes wolves that stranglen the sheep of Jhesu Crist" (Parson's Tale, 767). Pardoners, who, like the one described by Chaucer, sold pardons to sinners, as well as heretical teachers were called wolves by medieval preachers (Rowland, 163). In Andrea de Firenze's fresco, *The Way to Salvation*, in the Spanish Chapel of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, attacking wolves signify heretics (Friedmann, 304-305). In a broad sense, the wolf came to represent clergy who misused their power, and this theme entered the literature in a particular set of tales of the wolf-monk.

THE WOLF-MONK & OTHER TALES

An important development in the role of wolves in Western literature came in the middle ages when wolves were cast as monks in ecclesiastical tales. As a comment on monks and monastic practices, these stories condemned those who became monks for material comfort rather than for spiritual reasons. It could also apply to the falsely repentant. The theme appears in the eleventh century "The Wolf" in which becomes a monk when it suited his convenience. "The Wolf by Ovid" and "The Wolf Goes to Hell" continued in this tradition as the wolf-monk became the "favorite character of Latin poetry" (Ziolkowski, 208). The presence of the wolf-monk in the tales enabled sharp criticism of the ecclesiastic hierarchy, by characterizing the wolf as a gluttonous, selfish, negligent, and greedy figure who meets his death as punishment for his sins.

The character type gained popularity until it was given a nickname, *Ysengrim*, in the twelfth century and grew into the literary animal epic, the *Ysengrimus* in 1150. The name has an uncertain etymology, possibly meaning "wolf-mask" from *isen-* ("iron") and *-grijm* (battlemask). The name may refer to the cult-animal worship of tribal warriors or to an evil spirit of Swiss folklore,

isengrind, who kidnapped children (Ziolkowski, 209). Regardless of the origin of the name, it was commonly used to designate wolves as clerics and was recognized as a wolf-monk by the time of the composition of the *Ysengrimus*. The longest of the medieval beast poems at 6600 lines, it was composed of a dozen stories in seven books, telling of the feud between the wolf and Reynard the fox. It was repeated in the French *Roman de Renart* dated from 1170 to 1250. The popular story quickly spread across Europe, and German, Flemish, and English versions built upon the Latin and French. Reynard the fox was cast in a friendly light as the peasant hero while the wolf was a more sinister character who represented an oppressive nobility. He was criminal and dimwitted and treacherous, forcing labor from the asses and cheating the old she-goats. In the Reynard cycle, animals represented different members of society, making it "one of the most powerful vehicles for satire in the later Middle Ages" as it was dangerous to condemn political and ecclesiastical abuses in terms more direct than animal parody (Klingender, 368).

The wolf also gets a few mentions in Dante's *Divine Comedy* as a she-wolf "laden with the craving of her greed" (Canto I, line 50) and later as a "cursed wolf of Hell" (Canto VII, line 8). According to Thomas Bergin the she-wolf was a sign of the Papal Court and corruption within the church (Friedmann, 304). Those condemned for the "sins of the wolf" including magic, hypocrisy, thievery, and seduction reside in the eighth circle of Hell, one of the lowest and most horrible regions in Hell (Lopez, 205). As in the Reynard cycle, abused positions of power in the secular realm might also earn one the title of wolf. A notable wolf story is found in another class of tales in which saints tame wild animals, signifying the redemption of heretics and outlaws by the saints. The theme of beastly characters as the embodiment of the bestial nature of man will be further investigated in Chapter four. Fears of wolves built through the literature contributed to an

extensive collection of superstitions and folklore whose tangible outcome was the centuries-long persecution of wolves whose beginnings are described in the next section.

WEREWOLF & WOLF FOLKLORE

Various medieval laws encouraged the persecution of wolves. Authorization to hunt wolves from Christmas to March 25th was granted under forest law, but the animals were probably hunted throughout the year (Rowland, 164). A tenth century English King, "Edgar the Peaceful", accepted tax payments in the form of wolf heads (Busch, 87), and payments in lieu of imprisonment was a set number of wolves' tongues (Lopez, 208). Welch law permitted the killing of animals which "only did mischief" including foxes and wolves (Rowland, 164). In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare wrote, "Thy desires are wolvis, bloody, starved, and ravenous" (iv.I.138). Shakespeare also calls appetite a "universal wolf" and peasants in the Middle Ages called famine "the wolf". Feudal lords were also wolves. Continuing the symbolism set down in earlier myth, analogies were made between the inharmonious wolf and sheep relationship and discordant musical tones. In fact, the symbolism stretched so far as to conclude that strings from sheep entrails would produce discord when placed on an instrument with a single string of wolfgut. An untrue note can still be described as a wolf string (Rowland, 166). A similar and widespread belief held that wolves hated music. T. H. White's translation of a Latin bestiary explained that wolves were "allergic to noises like singing or the clashing of cymbals" (60). In the bestiaries, one could chase off a wolf by clapping stones together.

Many cultures have some variety of were-creature, but none is so famous as the werewolf of medieval Europe (Busch, 90). Werewolf belief was popular across Russia and into Europe, in

Germany, Greece, Italy, Serbia, and especially France where many were burned at the stake for their werewolfry. The werewolf existed in ancient legend. In the fifth century B.C. Herodotus expressed his disbelief in the ability of men to transform into wolves, and Pliny discounted the notion as a "fabulous untruth". Under Canute law, criminals were designated *verevulf*, as a man who transformed into a beast by his antisocial behavior (Rowland, 164). The werewolves as half-man, half-wolf inspire many questions of why humans attributed human qualities to wolves. These issues will be further explored in chapter four.

FAIRY TALES & LATER STORIES

According to modern scholarship, the wolves of fairy tales can be representative of sexual predation -- a curious association considering the centuries-old role of these tales as moral instructions for children. This relationship was not a new one; *Lupa* and she-wolf did refer to prostitutes since ancient times. Chaucer's Manciple characterizes the wolf thus:

A she-wolf hath also a vileyns kynde.
The lewedest wolf that she may fynde,
Or leest of reputacioun, wol she take.
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.

(Manciple's Tale, 183-186).

In recent centuries *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and Willa Cather's *My Antonia* have described wolves as ravenous and vicious creatures. The children's fairy tales of "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Three Little Pigs", "The Seven Little Billy Goats", and "Peter and the Wolf" feature a wolf who is diabolical and rapacious. These descriptions of wolves from childhood still enjoy great

recognition and have presumably the greatest impact on our present-day notions of the wolf. Fables and Fairy tales bookend the history of the wolf in Western literature. They have been continually created and recreated into various versions and they demonstrate the continuity in the wolf's role. For this reason, the next two chapters focus on how the wolf is depicted in these specific types of stories.

II. FABLES

Fables have been written in a particular tradition that has continued through many centuries. Some of the more well known fabulists include Aesop, Aristophanes (448-388 B.C.), Horace (68-8 B.C.), Marie de France (1160-1190), William Caxton (1422-1491), Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695), John Dryden (1631-1700), John Gay (1685-1732), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), William Blake (1757-1827), Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), Franz Kafka (1883-1924), and James Thurber (1894-1961) (Kennerly). Fables by Aesop and those in the manner of Aesop by later authors have a recognizable format: a short fictional tale with a moral in which animals take on particular ethical types representative of human characteristics. One attraction that has drawn authors to the form of the fable is its universal form and simplicity which can convey moral lessons to readers with a wide range of educational backgrounds.

Like most other fiction in which animals play a major role, fables project human qualities in the animals to make the stories relevant to readers. For example, sheep are generally innocent types, foxes are crafty, and the wolves are cruel. Sometimes the animals represent certain classes of society. In such fables, wolves most often play the oppressors and lambs, again, are the innocents. The reader of a fable knows these figures beforehand and expects which character traits will be moralized, by simply reading the title. Thus, "The Wolf and the Lamb" will certainly present a tale of innocence (lamb) versus greed (wolf), and "The Fox and the Wolf" will tell a tale of cleverness (fox) tricking the fool (wolf). That the author need not introduce each animal at the beginning of a tale contributes to the convenient brevity of fables. However, the particular characterization of wolves which fables have created and maintained have slandered their

reputations until readers attribute the human morality to the natures of animals -- even outside of the context of the fable.

Moral instruction is usually understood to be the purpose of fables and the identification of ethical types aids this purpose. One popular collection edited by Samuel Richardson in 1740 demonstrates this point with its lengthy title: "Aesop's Fables. With Instructive Morals and Reflections, Abstracted from all Party Considerations, Adapted To All Capacities; And designed to promote Religion, Morality, and Universal Benevolence". As was fashionable at his time, he wrote fables for a general audience rather than for a juvenile one since the genre enjoyed a great deal of interest and respect in the eighteenth century. Unlike today, when fables are generally limited to children's literature, the tales were regarded to possess literary merit during Richardson's day (Noel, 2). His successful collection went through several editions and was translated into German by another popular fabulist, Gotthold Lessing (Noel, 114).

Robert Dodsley was a popular eighteenth-century English author, associated with Samuel Johnson and Alexander Pope. He also collected and published a selection of Aesopic fables which enjoyed notable success; it was printed at least thirty-two different times, from 1761 through 1824, plus recent editions in 1976, 1983 and 1993. Like Richardson's collection, it is notable because it demonstrates the popularity of the fable form, but it also remarkable because of its presentation of an eighteenth-century opinion on the nature of animals. In a series of essays which introduce the collection titled *Select Fables of Esop and other Fabulists*, Dodsley clearly articulates the perception that animals' natures are accurately represented by the fabular ethical types. His introduction begins with "A New Life of Esop. Collected from Ancient Writers. By a Learned Friend". In "An Essay on Fable", this learned author put forth the following notion:

"The truth is, when Moral actions are, with judgment, attributed to the brute creation, we scarce perceive that Nature is at all violated by the Fabulist. He appears, at most, to have only translated their language. His Lions, Wolves, and Foxes, behave and argue as those creatures would, had they originally been endowed with the human faculties of speech and reason." (Dodsley, lvi).

From this statement, it can be reasoned that the author sees the nature of wild wolves as accurately illustrated by the behaviors of fabular wolves. That is to say, that if humans understood the language of the "brute" creatures of nature, the wolf in nature would exhibit the same moral actions as are regularly assigned to it in the fables. Concerning the specific properties of the animals in fables, the author understands as fact that "'Twere a very obvious instance of absurdity, to paint an Hare, cruel; or a Wolf, compassionate" with the clear indication that the wolf's nature is defined by deliberate cruelty.

To Dodsley and his contemporaries, the wolf represents an element in the human race, and almost invariably, it embodies the worst inclinations of human nature. Animals are in many respects so near to humans that "we need only lend them speech, in order to produce a striking resemblance" (Dodsley, liv). "Animals in their native characters, without the advantages of speech and reason, which are assigned them by Fabulists, may, in regard to Morals, as well as Arts, become examples of the human race" (Dodsley, liv). He wrote towards the end of the tradition of fables in Western literature, so it is fair to say that his words summarize those ideas that were already well established in the history of fables. One of the ideas he perpetuated was that animals did have certain "known characteristics". In an essay called, "Of the Action and Incidents proper for a Fable", Dodsley instructs fabulists not to ascribe animals "appetites and passions that are not consistent with their known characteristics" (lii). Since these characteristics were gathered from

earlier fables and myth in the literature, rather than from natural observations, they continued sinister images of wolves. This fact is significant when educated and well-read authors, like Dodsley, assign a "moral action" like cruelty to wolves as a "known characteristic". Robert Dodsley was not alone in marking the cruelty of wolves. Thomas Bewick published a collection of Aesop in England in 1818 which showed a no more enlightened view of wolves than earlier authors. In his moral of "The Wolf and the Lamb", Bewick states, "men of wolfish disposition and envious and rapacious tempers cannot bear to see honest industry raise its head" (Lopez, 256). Evil, corruption, and lack of intelligence are attributable to the creature's natural disposition. According to this thinking, the killing of lambs can be blamed on wolves' innate brutishness.

The regular assignment of human qualities to representative animals often staged the wolf as an oppressive, greedy, and cruel figure. The wolf has tended to represent the villain, sometimes cunning, but usually dim-witted, and rarely lucky or successful in his pursuits. He often tries to deceive but fails in deception and then sulks indignantly or is even killed. He is brutish and tyrannical, while at the same time, playing the coward. Certain phrases frequently appear with the wolf. For example, they are very often described as starved, half-starved, or famished, and they are almost always engaged in the pursuit of food. He often does what he does out of his brutish hunger, but fails because of his greediness. The wolf is described as an "injurious beast" in "The Wolf and the Lamb" characterized by cruelty, injustice, and oppression. He often fails to recognize his own greed which he readily notices in other animals. In the popular fable of "The Wolf and the Crane" the wolf beseeches a crane to remove a bone stuck in his throat, promising the crane a reward. After the obliging Crane has performed the dangerous deed, wolf finds it unreasonable that the crane wants more reward than not having had his head bitten off. This is a typical representation of wolves as greedy and ungrateful.

In almost every fable in which they appear, wolves play the brute or ogre, making them among the most abused and mischaracterized creatures of the fables. One author has called wolves "most unloved in the pantheon of animals" (Kennerly, 6). She also notes that the wolf, as the "bully" and the "Bestiary creature of fang and paw, unbeautiful and all too fathomable", is the creature most like humans (Kennerly, 6). The various authors and versions have generally made few alterations to the classic stories because they demonstrate human nature which does not change. Like all animals of the fable, the wolf is incapable of knowing the consequences of his actions until after they have been made, and that is what makes them so appealing to readers. The wolf is the "irreconcilability between instinct and rational thought" (Kennerly, 6). Because of the constancy in the personality of wolves, it is possible to look at typical fables and draw a singular picture of the wolf as is not possible with other types of literature.

In the following two fables, the wolf is used to represent the dumb thief or the villain who represents moral flaws in humans. The first fable is titled "Wolf Robbed", and it is attributed to Valerius Babrius, a Greek fabulist from the second century A.D. The second fable is an equally ancient fable from the collection of Robert Dodsley, called, "The Wolf in Disguise".

Wolf Robbed

Once a wolf was carrying home a sheep which he had plundered from the midst of a flock, when a lion met him and took it away from him. Standing at a safe distance, the wolf bawled out: "You're unjust! You've robbed me of property that was mine." The lion was delighted with this and said to the wolf in mockery: "No doubt you came by it honestly, as a present given by friends."

-- Babrius, translated by Ben Edwin Perry

(Kennerly, 121)

The Wolf in Disguise

Moral: Designing hypocrites frequently lay themselves open to discovery by overacting their parts.

A Wolf, who by frequent visits to a flock of sheep in the neighborhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more successfully carrying on his depredations, to appear in a new character. To this end he disguised himself in a shepherd's habit; and resting his fore-feet upon a stick, which served him by way of crook, he softly made his approaches towards the fold. It happened that the shepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the grass, fast asleep; so that he certainly would have succeeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the shepherd's voice. The horrid noise wakened them both: When the Wolf, encumbered with his disguise, and finding it improbable either to resist or to flee, yielded up his life an easy prey to the shepherd's dog. (Dodsley, 56-7).

An analysis of the two fables reproduced here reveals that in each fable, the wolf plays a dependable character: a cowardly, morally corrupt, greedy, and dim-witted thief, following the patterns set by other wolf fables. The first fable shows the wolf to be a plunderer, and in the second, he is caught in the act of plundering. The wolf is a fool who is mocked by the lion in "Wolf Robbed". He is often depicted in disguise as in the second fable. The phrase "a wolf in sheep's clothing" gained popularity through these familiar fables. At other times, the wolf is in hiding or sneaking about according to his cowardly nature. When the lion appears, the wolf makes certain that he is at a "safe distance" from the fierce lion before he insults him. Similarly, when the wolf in "The Wolf in Disguise" realizes he has no chance against the dog, he yields himself up as easy prey to the dog.

In truth, if the wild wolf of had the same kind of luck as the fabular one, he would never have a meal, and wolves would simply disappear. In the fables, catching prey is always equated with robbery, or is characterized as a deliberate act of cruelty. If this were the case, then every natural predator would be a thief. One fable in particular, "The Wolf and the Shepherds", seems to address this fact when a wolf finds men joyously feasting on a banquet of mutton. The moral of the fable is, "How apt are men to condemn in others, what they practice themselves without scruple". This fable shows that men fail to recognize the same wolfish greed in themselves which they criticize in wolves, just as they fail to see the projection of human traits onto animals.

The inaccurate descriptions arise from a necessity to have a recognizable character. Misconceptions of the animals proceed from the belief that the morals of storybook wolves also apply in nature. The problem for the reputation of wolves is that the adults who learned these tales as children often fail to rethink their perceptions. The fact is that characterizations of animals cannot be lifted from the pages of the storybook and applied to modern understanding of them. Such a practice projects a negative and anthropomorphic image onto wild animals. It is far easier to fear a species whose image frightened one in his childhood. It is simple to hate the creatures who, as a thief in the fable, got what he deserved when he was left empty-handed. Almost every child is familiar with a version of Aesop's fable because it is a convenient mode of imparting lessons. While the principle intention of fables may be for moral edification, the secondary result is that children learn to fear and resent wolves. Without rethinking these antique and consistent characterizations from childhood, a distorted picture of the wolf, as drawn by fables, persists. In chapter five we will discuss how some of the popular images from fable still thrive in modern society.

III. FAIRY TALES

Fairy tales as a class of literature share a certain number of characteristics, but they are less definable or uniform than fables. There is much more variety in the fairy tales both among the different tales and within the many versions of a particular tale. Each fairy tale has its own history with a number of versions, and translations, sometimes originating from an oral history, and many of the characteristics of fairy tales have greatly changed over time. On the whole, they have become milder in very recent times. There are important distinctions between the original tales of authors, like the Brothers Grimm and the Disney versions of "once upon a time's," and "happily ever after's" which enjoy popularity today. Those stories by Disney which have the same titles as the much older fairy tales are more gentle, longer, and more musical with predictably happy endings. Conversely, typical fairy tales from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be extremely brutal, even ending with death of the main character. More recent retellings have developed elaborate ways to rescue the title characters, with the heroes often being liberated alive from the belly of the villain wolf. A small number of retellings from the past decade have begun to question the evil characterizations of wolves in fairy tales.

Fairy tales traditionally depict the wolf as an ogre, as in fable, but in the tales he takes on a more sinister and threatening persona. With many more humans in fairy tales than there were in fables, wolves become greater enemies of people in particular, rather than predators of the flock. Even in the tales in which wolves encounter other animals, the animals are civilized and live quite as people do. The wolf emerges from the forest to invade houses and their inhabitants -- be they goats or little pigs or grandmothers. He is no longer merely a thief of sheep in the field; the wolf is

now an intruder into the most private spaces of the home, even taking the place of the grandmother in her own bed. In the fairy tales, the wolf is a personally threatening beast.

Though authors of fairy tales, like fabulists, write primarily for a juvenile audience, they themselves write from an adult experience. Thus, elements from an adult imagination become a part of the children's stories, and both types of tales can be more complex than they may appear on the surface. An example of this hidden complexity is the possible sexual overtones in "Little Red Riding Hood". Another consideration is that the children taught the stories rarely reevaluate the childhood impressions made upon them once they reach adulthood. Very negative impressions of wolves are constructed in fairy tales, and images of the "Big Bad Wolf", for example, can remain in the back of the mind of anyone who learned the tale of "The Three Little Pigs" as a child.

As one of the best known fairy tales, "The Three Little Pigs" and the title characters' enemy, the Big Bad Wolf, are familiar to most anyone acquainted with fairy tales. The story is of three pigs, each of whom ventures out on his own to build a house as protection against the Big Bad Wolf. The first pig constructs his home of straw, the second, of sticks, and the third builds a brick house. The wolf "huffs and puffs" and blows down the first two houses, eating their inhabitants. He fails to destroy the brick house, and instead is tricked by the third little pig and boiled to death. The intent of the story is most likely a lesson in preparedness, by the secondary effect is the encouragement of a fear of wolves. The phrase "Big Bad Wolf" has a solid position in the English vocabulary -- to the detriment of wolves.

Peter and the Wolf is a unique tale, providing a contrast to the traditional fairy tale wolf. Written and set to music by Russian composer Serge Prokofiev to introduce children to the orchestra, it is one of the most successful of children's symphonies. A different instrument represents each character with young Peter portrayed by a violin and the part of the wolf sounded

by a French horn. Peter, against the warnings from his grandfather, ventures outside of the gate into the dangerous meadow where he and his animal friends encounter a wolf. The wolf catches the duck and swallows her. Then Peter bravely captures the wolf by the tail and insists that the wolf go to the zoo instead of being shot by hunters. While the wolf is still depicted as the real threat in the wilderness, he gets a friendlier than normal treatment in this musical tale. In this eastern story, the wolf does not represent the beastly qualities of people as a speaking creature with human characteristics. Rather, the wolf is a wild animal of the forest who is shown compassion by the young boy. Similar themes enter western literature with Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, which describes the social life of the wolf pack. This more realistic view of wolves in literature is revisited in chapter five.

Perhaps the least familiar of the wolf fairy tales, is "The Seven Little Goats" in which the wolf again is the evil and cunning predator lurking outside the door. The wolf villain tries to gain entrance into the goats' house while the mother goat is away by imitating her. The seven goat children inside ask the wolf to prove himself by showing his white hoofs in the window, which he does after dusting his paws with flour. The goats are fooled and let him in, only to be eaten by the wolf. Only the youngest escapes to tell mother what happens. She and the huntsmen discover the wolf sleeping by a stream, and they slice open his belly to release the goats, replacing them with rocks. The stones weigh the wolf down so much that he drowns in the stream upon waking. The use of stones, which is repeated in some versions of "Little Red Riding Hood", recalls the mythic use of stones in the bestiaries. In T. H. White's bestiary, a man could make the wolf lose his "courage and convictions" and run away by clapping two stones together which would "reverberate the saints of God". Stones were representative of the "apostles or other saints of Our Lord" since

"all prophets have been called stones of adamant" (60). The wolf of fairy tales certainly possesses devilish qualities.

The story of "Little Red Riding Hood" first appeared in Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du temps passe* in 1697, and first appeared in English in 1729 (Opie, 93). This original version seems to be a brutal lesson on the consequences of dallying ending with the "wicked Wolfe" falling upon Little Red Riding Hood and devouring her. In the version by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the wolf eats the heroine, known as Little Red Cap, and then falls asleep. He snores loudly enough to bring the huntsman, who opens the wolf's belly to find the girl and her grandmother still alive inside, replacing them with stones. Then the wolf falls down dead with the weight of the stones. The lesson at the end of the story is "Never again in your life will you wander alone off the path into the forest when your mother has told you not to". The simplicity of such a valuable lesson has contributed to the popularity of the tale, but the tale has also contributed to a negative perception of wolves expressed by Charles Dickens when he humorously remarked that Little Red Riding Hood was his first love. He said that he deplored "the cruelty and treachery of that dissembling wolf who ate her, after making that ferocious joke about his teeth" (Opie, 93).

The wolf of fables can be seen to represent the observations of the conscious mind while the fairy tale wolf has, in recent analysis, come to represent fantasies of unconscious thought (Lopez, 251). Modern psycholanalists have paid particular attention to the potential sexual undercurrent flowing through "Little Red Riding Hood" in which the wolf to represents a sexual predator of the young maiden. According to some theories, the red color of the hood represents the menstruation of sexual maturity of the female. She is punished for leaving the path of virtue. Fromm suggests that the wolf's devouring of the girl represents his desire to play the female by having live beings in his belly. Then he is killed by the stones in his belly, which represent sterility (Rowland, 166-7).

Modern authors have used the narrative to frame adult literature with feminist themes like Angela Carter's *The Company of Wolves*. Bruno Bettelheim explains in *The Uses of Enchantment* that the little girl struggles with the two personalities of males: the id, represented by the wolf, and the ego in the identity of the huntsman (Lopez, 266). The lack of consensus among these theories tends to diminish the influence of any one of them.

Others dismiss the view of the tale as a seduction scene. Lopez suggests another metaphor in the tale. The actions which huntsmen take against the wolves in the fairy tales is violent and socially acceptable just as the actions of cattlemen and sheep herders against predator wolves have been understood as revenge for wolf-killed livestock. Little girls play the role of sheep and cows while the wolf represents the predator, whether a sexual predator or an animal one (Lopez, 266). Iona and Peter Opie point out that it is "improbable" that the term "wolf" to describe a predatory male originated from "Little Red Riding Hood" as some have suggested, since it did not acquire that particular meaning in 1930 in the United States (94).

As described earlier in chapter one, "wolf" has also been used in literature to describe seductive women. The bestiaries explain that prostitutes are called wolves because they are also ravishers which rapaciously "devastate the possessions of their lovers" (White, 56). *Lupa* did mean both "she-wolf" and "prostitute" (Rowland, 164). The connection was so prevalent in ancient Rome that the Lupercal temple became a brothel. In the Elizabethan age, Topsell questioned whether Romulus and Remus were actually raised by a she-wolf suggesting the mother was a harlot instead (Rowland, 164). Boccaccio brings together two wolf metaphors in Day III of the *Decameron* when Nefile refers to the female members of the group as "sheep", but Filostrato maintains that, due to their lascivious narratives, they have really behaved as "wolves" (Brownlee, 262).

While adult authors may have subconsciously infused complex psychological details into children's literature like fairy tales, the children are still the primary consumers of such stories. They first understand the wolves simply to be the "big bad wolf" from fairy tales of youth, regardless of any possible presence of mature themes in fairy tales. More important is what the young listeners and readers do perceive from fairy tales: wolves are evil beasts who prey on people. Children grow into adulthood with these same perceptions, largely unchanged by adult reinterpretations. Through this process, fairy tales help construct much of the hate and fear aimed at wolves.

In recent years, some classic children's stories have been rewritten to reverse the traditional wolf roles but in the end, they all serve to reaffirm the ancient notions. One book called *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, 1993, by Eugene Travizas retells the classic tale with the pig as the villain. It is not an uncommon trend. Joseph Robinette wrote about a reevaluation of the wolf in *The Trial of the Big Bad Wolf* in which the misunderstood wolf is vindicated. James Thurber also retold fairy tales in the 1930's. The most famous is "Little Red Riding Hood" in which the little girl saves herself by drawing a gun that was hidden in her basket. Such retellings may question the traditional characterizations, but the most common perception of the wolf is still that of an ogre. In fact, it is from their absurd role reversals that these recent stories derive their interest and humor. They testify to the permanence and popularity of the wolf's bad reputation.

IV. EXPLAINING THE DEMONIZATION OF WOLVES

That wolves have been consistently and lastingly singled out as villains and plunderers in the literature is clear. Less obvious is the reason why Western culture has paired the wolf with negative qualities with such consistency and persistence. A host of speculations have been made, but no one theory fully explains the human psychology behind these prevalent fears and superstitions concerning wolves. The overall negative image of the wolf has specific associations which have co-evolved with the pervading cultural theme of a certain time. As illustrated in the Historical Overview, the concerns of society dictated how wolves were represented in the literature with the general outcome that wolves are portrayed as a force against human goals.

The literature does not show the wolf to be merely a natural predator. More than an actual thief of livestock, wolves became symbols of less tangible human fears. They have been linked to the devil in the medieval bestiaries or even immorality in the stories of the wolfmonk. Wolves were associated with famine by Shakespeare or with the dangers of the wilderness in fairy tales like "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Peter and the Wolf". Another association of the wolf as a representative of the wilderness emerged in American culture when wolves became symbolic of the wilderness as a barrier to progress. Beastly human qualities were represented in animal form in werewolf tales, while the wolf of fables represented less sinister human flaws. It is useful to establish what created and supported the notion of the wolf as a malevolent or even an evil force. As men first began to keep domestic animals, they displaced wild game, and wolves came to predate on livestock. They became real threats to the farmers' economic interests and so began the rivalry between man and wolf. This is the best justification for the persecution of wolves because it is based on a genuine threat. It is much like the characterization of a volcano or a storm as a mythological figure possessing an evil nature. As Barry Lopez explains in *Of Wolves and Men*,

this role of the wolf as enemy to the herders is not sufficient to explain the extent of the literature against wolves (139). The roots of the fear and hate of the beast is a concern for the safety of domestic animals but the full explanation lies deeper in man's psychology.

The Historical Overview showed the strong role of the wolf in religious literature which was popular under the strong influence of the medieval church. The Roman Church used the image of the wolf as a devil lurking among the Christian flock in the real world to give the devil a physical presence on earth (Lopez, 208). One image of the wolf in medieval literature that resulted from this type of thinking was that of the heretic. During the Inquisition, heresy became the ultimate enemy to the goals of the church which could be rooted out by destroying witches, sorcerers, and werewolves. Thus wolves and werewolves came to represent heretics, and those accused of werewolfry were regularly burned at the stake during the Inquisition. Simply not believing in the existence of werewolves as the incarnation of the Devil was a heretical act. One piece of literature defended the Church's persecution of wolves as a holy act against evil. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, Hammer of Witches, published in 1487, attempted to prove that werewolves existed as agents of the Devil (Lopez, 238-9).

The wolf was chosen because it was the beast most hated by man, and the associations of the wolf with the Devil only served to deepen fears of wolves. The idea that men transformed into wolves to commit the Devil's work shows how the wolf became a symbol of man's bestial nature. The destruction of the wolf or werewolf could free a man from his sins, and wolves were indeed put to death both in the literature and in the real world. Lopez suggests that the projection of beastly human qualities onto the animal represents a kind of self-hate in humans for man's own savagery and lust (227). Taming the bestial natures of man was the role of the Church as represented in symbolic story of the Wolf of Gubbio (Klingender, 456). The wolf in the story,

which is identified with heretics and other sinners, placed its paw in the hand of St. Francis of Assisi in a promise never to bother man or beast again in exchange for a peaceful life inside the city walls. The wolf is depicted as a ravaging beast before its religious transformation symbolizing the bestial nature of man redeemed by the saint. As St. Francis redeems the savage wolf, so could the Church transform the uncontrolled, bestial tendencies of man.

As Kennerly describes in *Hesitant Wolf and Scrupulous Fox*, the wolves of fable are the animals most like humans, while at the same time, they are the beasts most unloved by humans (6). Again, this, like the religious literature, is representative of man's hate of his own bestial instincts. Such thinking has been called "Theriophobia", a fear of the beast in one's self. In an essay on the philosophical debate over the nature of animal's souls, called "The Dolphin Papers", John Redman described some of the popular views on the fear of the beast and offers the "rapacious potential in legends of men who turn into ferocious wolves" as an example of man's projection of self-fear and self-hate onto beasts (17). Redman explains that the source of theriophobia is "fear of self and its central mechanism is projection". Theriophobia is common in Western thought and is defined by Hobbes as the state of nature where "man is a wolf to man". The result of this fear is the annihilation of the beasts and of bestial men which was "carried on as part of God's war against Satan. The behaviors associated with bestial or animalistic traits are in fact entirely human in nature and quite unrelated to the animal world. For example, insatiable greed, lust, and cruelty are brute qualities not found in the animal world, yet they are quite common to human nature (Redman, 20).

Human qualities were projected onto animals in legal trials and in the philosophical literature of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A number of animals were criminally prosecuted during that time including murderous pigs thought to be possessed by devils

and dogs found guilty stealing. Swarms of flies found guilty of bothering worshippers were excommunicated. Other punishments included various kinds of torture and it was not uncommon for animals to be executed (Evans, 235-46). Domestic animals were understood to be innately good, while wolves were by nature evil. It was popular in the Middle Ages to distinguish between *beastes dulce*, the sweet beasts who served man, and *beastes puantes*, the stenchy beasts who caused him grief, which fostered the notion that it was morally right to kill wolves (Lopez, 146). The popular characterization of wolves as cowards familiar in the bestiaries and fables associated the killing of wolves with the correction of nature's imperfections. Lopez points out that the perception that wolves killed "defenseless" animals like sheep and deer may have encouraged man to eliminate wolves for the protection of weak and good animals (148).

Redman argues that the volume of literature of the time related to the contemplation of the animal soul suggests that it was the great issue French thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (18-19). It was also a popular topic of debate throughout Europe, and there were many differing opinions on the subject. The popularity of a particular philosophy had strong implications for animals including wolves. Killing a wolf could be considered morally right or wrong depending on whether the animal possessed a soul or not. The prevailing philosophy impacted man's likelihood of killing wolves in both literature and life. Unfortunately for wolves, a kinder or more "theriophilic" approach to animals was "largely absent in the Christian era" (Redman, 19). This thinking regained popularity in the Renaissance in the writings of Montaigne and in the enlightenment by Hume and Rousseau. It was thought by these philosophers that rely on natural instincts more than man does and thus, deviate from God's natural laws to a lesser degree and were more moral than man (Redman, 19). In quite another vein, St. Thomas Aquinas believed that creatures were no more than tools of Satan "instigated by the powers of Hell" (Redman, 21).

Rene Descartes argued that animals were put on earth for man's use as irrational and insensible machines. To think that animals were on the same plain as man threatened his faith in Christian immortality, so Descartes' strict distinction between man and beast affirmed man's belief in the existence of God (22). This desensitizing of nature removed any moral restraint from the killing of animals, especially wolves. Fabulist Jean de la Fontaine disagreed with Descartes' image of wolves as beastly machines which is evident in his fables which depicted wolves favorably, giving them souls and rational thought (Lopez, 258). As Lopez argues, this type of thinking was rare, and the themes of Descartes still have an impact on man's understanding of nature by allowing an irresponsible approach to the machines of nature.

Another important image associated with wolves is that of the "howling wilderness". The wilderness has been described as both a secular threat and as a vacuum of Christianity. The wolf exists on the border between civilization and wilderness in nature and in literature as well. He inhabits the forest surrounding Little Red Riding Hood's home, and he lives just beyond the gates in "Peter and the Wolf". The Greek gods most often associated with wolves are Mars, who is associated to the land between forest and open country, and Apollo, who has connections to twilight, the temporal border between light and darkness (Lopez, 209). Lurking between wilderness and civilization, the wolf is situated at the border between the bestial and the "human" qualities of man. This association echoes the popular image of the werewolf as half-man, half-beast.

These European notions carried over into the American wilderness to create a unique situation which ended in the destruction of wolves by the government, ranchers, and bounty hunters in the second part of the nineteenth century. Nash provides some insight into the subject in his book, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. In it, he describes wilderness as the opposite of

Christian paradise. The secular beasts of the wilderness in *Beowulf* represent the peril of the wilderness and fostered a fear of the unknown threats of dark forests (12). These kinds of fears were later applied to wolves, the representative beasts of wilderness. Medieval Christianity made a connection of wilderness as a place without God. In a literal sense, missionary efforts were deemed successful when the wild forests in which pagan rites were performed were destroyed. In a more general sense, dangers inherent to the wilderness were as the sins inherent in the material world. Seeking God and clearing the world of the evils of sin would deliver one to paradise (Nash, 17-18).

Alexis De Tocqueville remarked on the American attitude towards the wilderness upon a 1831 trip to the new country, saying that Americans' only concern is the "march across these wilds, draining swamps, turning the course of rivers, peopling solitudes, and subduing nature" (Nash, 23). Destruction of wolves became a part of this subjugation of the wilderness. When William Bradford stepped off the Mayflower into a "hideous and desolate wilderness" he helped create what Nash calls a "defiant hatred" of the wilderness which was present in America at that time and which still remains today (24). Wilderness provided both a physical barrier and a symbolic barrier of moral darkness to the American pioneer. Cotton Mather and Nathaniel Hawthorne expressed and contributed to the impression of the wilderness as unchristian. Hawthorne created a wilderness that was "black" and "howling" with references to nightmarish images of the devil in the wilderness. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne wanders through the "moral wilderness" of Salem where the forest represented temptation to evil (Nash, 40).

There was a real, but exaggerated, fear of wolves at the time that was used to frighten Christians to godly behavior. The Puritan leader Cotton Mather warned that "the Evening Wolves, the rabid and howling Wolves of the Wilderness would make ... Havock among you, and not leave your Bones till the morning" (29). The civilization of wild country was seen as evidence of God's

blessing. It follows, then, that westward expansion would be hailed by the Puritans as one of their greatest achievements. They had transformed "hideous thickets" where "Wolfes and Bears nurst up their young" into inhabitable Christian towns (37). Puritan authors celebrated that God "hath been pleased to turn one of the most Hideous, boundless, and unknown wildernesses in the world ... to a well-ordered commonwealth" (37). The specific references to wolves always describe them as agents of the wilderness. The progress across the country, which entailed the destruction of the places of wolves, was believed to be in accordance with the will of God. Nash describes the situation like this: "In the morality play of westward expansion, wilderness was the villain, and the pioneer, as hero, relished in its destruction" (24). This could also describe the attitudes of American Bounty hunters of the wolf.

These notions were remnants of centuries of European fears and folklore constructed around wolves that perhaps reached back even further in man's memory of his primitive origins in the wilderness. Wilderness formed a barrier to prosperity, progress, and godliness into the nineteenth century when America's Manifest Destiny made clear that "Progress is God" in the words of one proponent of the movement west. Later Americans perpetuated the perception of wilderness and translated it to wolves in devastating campaigns of wolf extermination in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Theodore Roosevelt expressed the feelings of a nation when he spoke of wolf predation and the threat it posed to progress when he called the wolf "the beast of waste and desolation" (Lopez, 142). Both Nash and Lopez agree that the prejudice against the wilderness and its representative, the wolf, continued as an influence to American opinion and are only recently starting to change shape.

V. LINKING THE FICTION WITH THE REALITY

The previous chapters have surveyed the wolf's role in Western literature to find many deep and lasting human perceptions of wolves. A comparison of those works with the scientific literature compiled through the observation of nature reveals few similarities. Even after scientific study developed and zoology began to be studied as a branch of science, the wolf characters of popular culture remained locked in myth and fiction. Only recently has Western literature recognized the value of portraying wolves as animals in the natural world. Modern wolf stories like those of Jack London and movies like *Dances with Wolves* portray wolves more realistically in their natural environments.

Certain literary elements have gained a place in the zoological understanding of wolves, while some of the science is observed in the literature. For example, a remnant of Greek myth survives in the classification of a subspecies of wolves. The mythological character Lycaon lent his name to the scientific name of the eastern timber wolf, *Canis lupus lycaon*. Descartes' discussions on the souls of animals perhaps contributed to a modern mechanistic and scientific disregard for animals (Lopez, 258). The common association of wolves with the borders between wild forest and cities attests to the reality of habitat loss of the animals. As human civilization affected the distribution and food habits of wolves by killing their natural prey and replacing their natural ranges with ranches, wolves were forced into populated areas (Lopez, 14).

While the primary purpose of bestiaries was teaching Christian lessons and not describing animal behavior, there is evidence that they represented natural observations to some degree. For example, the text quoting Solinus often accurately describe the appearance and behavior of wolves (George & Yapp, 50). The bestiary translated by T.H White notes that wolves only mate twelve days out of the year, and in fact, the female wolf is in estrus only once per year, usually lasting

from five to seven days in February or March (Busch, 66). The bestiary also claims that females do not give birth in any month other than May, and pups *are* commonly born in April or May. In *Historia Animalium*, Aristotle recorded the wolf gestation period lasting from fifty-nine to sixty-three days, and scientists know it to last typically sixty-three days. There may have been some zoological basis for the association of wolves with prostitutes according to *Rowland's Animals with Human Faces* (165). Also, the text mentions Ethiopian lupus, a multi-colored and maned wolf, which fits the description of the striped hyena of Northern Africa (George Yapp, 51).

Sincere attempts at understanding animals for the sake of learning rather than for moral education began in the sixteenth century, but zoology did not become a separate branch of study until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It diverged from myth after Francis Bacon made public his ideas on the scientific method in the sixteenth century. With Carolus Linnaeus's classification system, Charles Darwin's evolution theories, and James Audubon's scientific drawings of birds, most animals began to be understood through the science of natural history (Lopez, 223). Wolves did not get their own descriptions of scientific reality until the 1940's, and even these were a mix of truth and folklore (Lopez, 224).

Literature pursuits slowly followed the trend towards a more accurate portrayal of wolves. Jack London's *Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* signified a great shift in the Western attitude towards wolves. The wolf pack which was left undescribed by the pseudoscientific bestiaries has a place in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, written in 1894. It features the boy Mowgli who was adopted by wolves, described favorably as "The Free People" (Busch, 90). This story bears some resemblance to the myth of Romulus and Remus who were raised by a nurturing she-wolf. These stories offer a more benevolent representation of wolves that is also more accurate than most of the traditional literature. The body of native American literature and oral tradition often represent the

wolf with a greater understanding. The traits that were admired by a hunter society like the Cheyenne Indians built great respect for wolves while those same traits caused Europeans who practiced animal husbandry or who lived in cities to hate wolves (Lopez, 233).

In general, it has only been in the past two decades that humans have become more accepting of predators and their rightful place in ecological systems, according to Robert Busch (85). *Dances with Wolves* is an example of a new attitude towards wolves that emerged in recent American cinematic culture. The hero leaves his American pioneer's society for an Indian tribe and many of his positive connection to wolves borrows from the native American tradition. The hero's close relationship with the wolf, Two Socks, demonstrates an enlightened attitude towards the animals and towards wilderness. The 1992 film illustrates a great change in popular notions of wolves. Peter Coates claims that the wolf's value lies in its symbolism of wilderness and that its shift in the "Euro-American Mind from the most hated and feared of all wild beasts into a valuable and upright member of the natural community is one of the most radical shifts in status undergone by any animal" (241).

While there have been truths in some of the characterizations of the wolf, many of the natural behaviors of wolves are left unexplained and underrepresented in the literature and thus in the human mind. The folklore and literature of the West has confused the line between the rapacious wolves in fable and fairy tale with the wolf in the forest of the natural world, until the big bad wolf and the wild wolf become one creature in the mind of the reader. Consequently, the plight of wolves becomes unimportant in an atmosphere of fear and prejudice. In a 1930 U.S. Senate debate on a ten million dollar wolf extermination program – which was signed into law in 1931, one senator describes the way wolves caught their prey as "the most barbarous thing imaginable"

and the program was "one form of retribution" (Lopez, 148-9). Such negative images weigh heavily on the survival of the wolf.

Wolves have been much maligned by the symbolism surrounding them in Western literature. Naturalist and author Robert Busch says, "probably no other animal in history has suffered the amount of misplaced animosity as has the wolf" (85). This is the view that conservation groups are now left to fight. In the literature of the organization Defenders of Wildlife, which works towards wolf preservation, the authors include such statements as, "These are not killers of children" and that wolves are "animals struggling to retain a place in this world". The group recognizes that "probably no other animal has been so badly treated and misunderstood as the proud and majestic wolf". Environmental awareness has begun a recent trend towards understanding the wolf as a positive representative of the wilderness, and modern views of wolves are more enlightened and more in step with the native American representations. Nevertheless, the ancient images of the beast from Western literature have not been erased.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brownlee, Marina Scordilis. "Wolves and Sheep: Symmetrical Undermining in Day III of the Decameron." Romance Notes 24:3 Spring (1984): 262-266.
- Busch, Robert H. The Wolf Almanac. New York: Lyons Press, 1995.
- Coates, Peter. "Chances with Wolves: Renaturing Western History." Journal of American Studies 28:2 (1994): 241-254.
- Dodsley, Robert, ed. Selected Fables of Esop and other Fabulists. (Reprint of the 1781 ed. printed for J. Dodsley, London.) New York: AMS Press, 1976.
- Evans, E.P. "Bugs and Beasts before the Law." Atlantic Monthly 54 August (1884): 235-246.
- Friedmann, Herbert. A Bestiary for Saint Jerome: Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980.
- George, Wilma, and Brunsdon Yapp. The Naming of the Beasts: Natural history in the medieval bestiary. London: Duckworth & Co, 1991.
- Kennerly, Karen, ed. Hesitant Wolf and Scrupulous Fox: Fables Selected from World Literature. New York: Random House, 1973.
- Klingender, Francis. Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1971.
- Lopez, Barry H. Of Wolves and Men. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978.
- McColloch, Florence. Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960.
- Nash, Roderick. Wilderness and the American Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Noel, Thomas. Theories of the Fable in the Eighteenth Century. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

- Opie, Iona & Peter. The Classic Fairy Tales. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Richardson, Samuel, ed. Aesop's Fables, 1740. (Reprint of the 1740? ed. published by J. F. and C. Rivington, London.) New York: Garland Publishing, 1975.
- Rodman, John. "The Dolphin Papers." *The North American Review* Spring 1974: 13- 26.
- Rowland, Beryl. *Animals with Human Faces: A guide to Animal Symbolism*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973.
- White, T. H. *The Book of the Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*. London: W. S. Cowell Ltd, 1969.
- Ziolkowski, Jan M. *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750-1150*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

EARLY WESTERN MYTHOLOGY & LEGEND

Greek, Egyptian, Celtic, and Norse legends often included the wolf figure as a symbol of power and destruction, but, as the wolf played many parts in these myths -- from noble gods to fierce enemies and helpless victims of gods, no clear consensus concerning the nature of the wolf as either good or evil emerges from these stories. In Greek myth, the wolf was associated with both Apollo and Zeus. Apollo, as the patron of shepherds and the slayer of wolves, was once worshipped in the building which now bears the name of the wolf, the Lyceum (Lopez, 21). He was the son of Zeus, and his mother was Leto who disguised herself as a wolf to elude Zeus's jealous wife, Hera. Zeus transformed Lycaon into a wolf as punishment for brutal behavior, and the name Lycaon exists today in the scientific name of the subspecies eastern timber wolf, *Canis lupus lycaon* (Busch, 86). Mars, god of war, was depicted into the Middle Ages in the company of a wolf (Rowland, 162) and is supposed to be the father of Romulus and Remus. As the god of the lands separating cultivated fields from wild woods, the association seems appropriate. Autolykos whose name means "he who is a wolf" appears in Book Ten of Homer's *Odyssey* as the grandfather of hero Odysseus. Egyptians worshipped the wolf as Apollo at Lycopolis and Osiris returned from the dead in the form of a wolf to seek vengeance on Set (Rowland, 161). The goddess Ishtar from the epic of Gilgamesh possessed the power to punish enemies by transforming them into wolves. In Celtic myth, Loh was the destructive power of the universe in the form of a wolf. Nordic myth told the story of Fenris, a monstrous wolf whose destiny it was to destroy the sun (Rowland, 162). He was the son of Loki, the Teutonic god of dawn. Wolves accompanied the Teutonic fates, called

Norns. The god Odin traveled into battle with two huge wolves (Busch, 88). The Finns called wolves Rutu's hounds -- dogs of the death spirit.

The legends agree in their characterizations of the wolf to a surprising degree, considering that they originated in distinct and distant regions. Nevertheless, there is difficulty in deriving a single picture of the wolf from them. Confusion resulted from the word "wolf" itself in the early interpretations of ancient myth in connection with light and twilight. The Greek for wolf, *lukos*, resembles the word for light, *leukos*, and the words were sometimes confused in translations. This may perhaps explain the association of the sun god Apollo with the wolf (Lopez, 272). In Latin, the similarities of *lupus* (wolf), *lucis* (light), and Lucifer seem to suggest an association, which may account for early connections between wolves and devils (Lopez, 209-10).

FABLES

One early and lasting form of literature which perpetuated a perception of the wolf as a sinister creature was the fable. Fables come from a long oral tradition which has used the wolf as a character of low intelligence, moral corruption, and ravenous appetite. The long list of fables which used the wolf to moralize includes: "The Wolf and the Crane", "The Wolf and the Lamb", and "The Dog and the Wolf". Most of these tales are attributed to Aesop, and, although most scholars agree that Aesop did exist, it is likely that some of the stories attributed to him originated from other authors. Later fabulists continued the tradition past the Middle Ages, preserving the wolf's reputation through twenty-five hundred years of storytelling and moralizing. Parents continue to share some of the more popular fables with children and many of the principle wolf

tales are now quite familiar. Due to the durable popularity of fables, they have had a special impact on the reputation of the wolf. This topic will be addressed in detail in the next chapter.

ANCIENT AUTHORITIES & MEDIEVAL BESTIARIES

The Christian Middle Ages were times of great imagination and superstition and little empirical science. Animals were popular as images and symbols, but there was almost no interest in a scientific understanding, and fact and fiction flowed together into the popular literature. When relating the characteristics of an animal in the medieval bestiaries, for example, the author relied on previous descriptions, church teachings, and imagination, rather than on observations of the natural world to arrive at the final description. This is evidenced by the presence of the phoenix and the unicorn alongside the wolf in the bestiary literature. Thus, the description of the wolf as a ravening devil-beast came from a need to have a character play the devil in order to communicate the moral rather than from observations of wolves in the wild. One of the early representations of animals in literature was the Greek *Physiologus*, which translates to "The Naturalist". What began as a fanciful natural history of animals became a vehicle for allegorical interpretations. As its popularity grew, it became a convenient way to conduct moral instruction, and each version had less and less to do with zoology and more to do with moral lessons.

Early versions of the *Physiologus* date to the second century from Alexandria and were built from an oral tradition, counting Pliny, Aristotle, and Solinus, among their sources. The Latin *Physiologus* was first translated around four hundred A.D., and it grew into later medieval Latin and French Bestiaries -- popular into the fifteenth century and widely read, second only to the Bible by some estimations. The basic characterizations and morals related to wolves are quite similar

across the many existing versions of the *Physiologus*, but the wolf did not appear on a consistent basis until the seventh century when it was added by the bestiary authors and became a particularly popular character (George & Yapp). In fact, the favorite animal to present as a religious figure was the wolf the early religious literature in Western Europe in the Middle Ages (Ziolkowski, 124). According to Lopez, medieval Europeans were "obsessed" with images of the wolf (206).

The claims set forth in the medieval bestiaries, both about the nature of wolves and about etymology, frequently have little foundation in truth. To the modern reader, many of their explanations seem absurd, nevertheless, the general characterizations and associations formed through them remain. According to one version, the Greeks call the wolf *lycos*, which derives from *lux*, "morning light", which is a fitting derivation for such plunderers (McCulloch, 188). In T. H. White's translation of a twelfth century Latin Bestiary, the eyes of the wolf shine like lamps in the night. Another says the Greeks call it *Licus* for the Greek word for "bites" because, "wolves massacre anybody who passes by with a fury of greediness" (White, 56). Others maintained that the name arose from *leo-pos*, Lion-paws, because "whatever they pounce on, dies". If a twig should make a noise when the wolf's foot presses it, he takes his foot in his mouth as a punishment. For this reason, in the illustrated manuscripts, the wolf was often depicted biting its own paw. The wolf of the bestiaries is a "rapacious beast, hankering for gore" (White, 56). Towards the end of the entry on wolves in White's translation, the text suggests how one is to interpret the characteristics of the wolf allegorically. One claim from Pliny's account in Natural History, 77 A.D., which is repeated in twelfth century bestiaries, is that the gaze of a wolf can cause a man to lose his voice if the wolf saw the man first. Like the enemy who causes man to lose the ability to cry out to God, the wolf could strike a man dumb. One belief was that the wolf was never able to

turn its neck backward from a lack of joints in the neck, symbolic of the Devil who never turns back to repent. The analogy was unambiguous:

The devil bears the similitude of a wolf: he who is always looking over the human race with his evil eye, and darkly prowling round the sheepfolds of the faithful so that he may afflict and ruin their souls (59).

Clearly, many of these notions were false, but the numerous entries in medieval bestiaries demonstrate the growing hostility toward wolves built upon fear, unfamiliarity, and a lack of concern for scientific accuracy.

THE CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

The likely source for the devilish characterizations of wolves found in the bestiaries and later religious stories was the Bible. The Bible makes several references to the predator wolf, beginning in the Old Testament: "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil" (Genesis 49.27). Wolves in the Bible are frightening, even devilish, creatures: predatory men are "like wolves tearing the prey, by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get dishonest gain" (Ezekiel 22.27). They are used as a threat of punishment for Godlessness in Isaiah 5.6:

Therefore a lion from the forest shall slay them, A wolf of the deserts shall destroy them, a leopard is watching their cities. Every one who goes out of them shall be torn to pieces, because their transgressions are many, their apostasies are numerous.

The normal behavior of wolves is equated with harm and evil in two more passages in which Christ describes the conditions on His "holy mountain": "'The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,' says the Lord" (Isaiah 65.25). The idea is repeated in Isaiah 11.6. "the wolf shall graze with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid". Since the wolf does not graze as a domestic farm animal and the lion does not subsist on straw, then the natural behaviors of these carnivores is associated with "evil" and "harm". The wolf's predatory aggression characterizes it as a naturally evil beast in these passages.

The New Testament makes metaphoric use of the wolf as the predator of the Christian flock of sheep. Christ warned his apostles that He was sending out his sheep or lambs "in the midst of wolves" (Matthew 10:16, Luke 10.3). In Matthew 7:15, Christ says, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves". In John 10:12, Christ says, "He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them". Wolves are likened to heretics in Acts 20.29: "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock." The lesson from these biblical metaphors and similes was that the good Christian leaders are the shepherds of the faithful flock, guarding them from the demonic predation of wolves.

The imagery created in the Bible of the wolf preying on the Christian flock later inspired other texts (Ziolkowski, 204). Delinquent priests were denounced for letting their flocks fall into the clutches of wolves. Monks were called wolves when they seized land for the purpose of entertainment (Rowland, 163). References to the negligent pastor as wolf appear in the literature of many popular beast poets. (Ziolkowski, 205). Chaucer's Parson from *The Canterbury Tales* was