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RESTORYING THE WILD: SHARED HISTORIES OF WOMEN AND WOLVES IN  
SELECTED NORTH AMERICAN MEMOIRS

**SUMMARY**

This study discusses the role of more-than-human agency in selected works of North American literature authored by women who shared part of their lives with wolves. Each of the analyzed narratives offers a different perspective on living with, alongside, or in partial connections with wolves both wild and captive, all of them tied by a common thread of making the animal others visible as individuals and agents. Chronologically, the texts also represent the ever-changing human-wolf relations, forming a context for the examined stories in which the authors challenged how wolves were perceived, studied, and written about during their time. In effect, such narratives played an important role in redefining our relationships with wolves, an essential step toward coexistence.

The intricacies of such relationships, as evidenced in the analyzed works, call for methods that would be open to various theories, concepts, and viewpoints, whose common focus is recognizing nonhuman animals as individuals and agents in literary and embodied encounters. With this in mind, I engage with multiple notions, with a particular focus on the concepts of companion species as described by Donna Haraway and that of companion-agents as outlined by Vinciane Despret.

Chapter One introduces both the historical and literary context of human-wolf relations in North America and, in greater detail, the theories I engage with, examining the role of nonhuman individuality, subjectivity, and agency in the creation of animal biographies as well as autobiographical accounts that describe more-than-human connections. I suggest that the latter narratives in particular can be recognized as co-created by the authors as well as wolves. This section also provides an overview of such literature and the recent state of publications on the subject, justifying my selection of works and specifying the methods that are used in their analyses.

Chapter Two and Three explore literature written between the 1890s and 1940s in which the authors wrote about wolves in ways that challenged the dominant narratives of their time—specifically, the ones portraying these animals as outlaws and pests with whom no relationship other than that of the hunter and the hunted was possible. Thus, Chapter Two broadens the context outlined in the previous section while focusing on Evelyn Cameron's diaries, in which she described her life with two wolves she raised during the era of wolf eradication. Cameron's account was markedly different from others at the time, writing about wolves in a way that made their individuality and agency visible. The subject of Chapter Three is Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher's *Driftwood Valley* (1946), which similarly challenged how studying, relating to, and living alongside wolves could look like. The co-produced space and co-shaped meanings of the study formed the basis of their becoming as companion species.

Chapters Four and Five address the narratives that had a significant impact on how the wolf was perceived, for the authors described their interactions with individual animals in a manner that welcomed questions such as *who* wolves are and how they might respond to human others. One of those authors is Lois Crisler, whose memoir *Arctic Wild* (1958) is the focus of Chapter Four. In it, I look at the role that embodied communication, as defined by

Barbara Smuts, played in both Crisler's relationship with wolves and the creation of the memoir. Here, I demonstrate how crucial such personal narratives are to changing the public's perception of wolves. Just as important in promoting coexistence were Diane Boyd's essays and Renée Askins's *Shadow Mountain* (2002), which are discussed in Chapter Five. In this part, I consider the values and costs of partial connections formed with wolves during the recolonization of and reintroduction to their former habitats and propose that the entanglements, such as the ones narrated by Boyd and Askins, resulted in a wider recognition of wolves as companion-agents.

In concluding the study, I bring attention to the way the discussed works influenced how wolves are perceived. At the same time, I emphasize the importance of looking at this literature from a perspective that welcomes animal others as co-creators of such narratives.

Keywords: wolves, nonhuman agency, animal biographies, women's autobiographical narratives, companion species