

Nonhuman Neighbours: Animals, Community, and Relationships
on the West Coast of British Columbia

by

Viara Gioreva
B.A., University of British Columbia, 2011

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (Political Science, CSPT)
Supervisor

Dr. Nicole Shukin (English, CSPT)
Outside Member

Abstract

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Supervisor

Dr. Nicole Shukin (English, CSPT)

Outside Member

This thesis argues that nonhuman animals are constructive of human societies by virtue of the complex relationships they form with humans, both at an individual and at a community level. This thesis also suggests that particular constructions of human/nonhuman animal relationships fail to account for animal agency, and that the transgressions of liminal animals highlight this agency. Specifically, this thesis uses two case studies – deer in Oak Bay and bears on the Central Coast – to show how nonhuman animals can be seen as actors and as active shapers of our mixed-species social orderings and communities. This thesis argues that, rather than being passive objects who are subject to government policy and human orderings, these nonhuman animals are shaping political processes in their communities through the relationships they have formed with the humans around them.

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Dedication

I dedicate this to my grandmother, who has always faced great injustice with strength, dignity, and poise. You are a constant inspiration and I can only hope to emulate your spirit and character. I love you.

Prologue

If I have learned anything recently, it is that the power of story telling can reshape your mind, shake the ground you stand on, and provide the strength and will necessary to act. I am not a storyteller, but my hope is that I can share part of my journey and adequately convey what is at stake when we fail to consider our relationships with nonhuman animals. Or perhaps worse yet, what is at stake when we, humans, continue to misunderstand these relationships as one-way power dynamics and frame them in the same conventional narratives that we are accustomed to.

In May of 2014 I had the incredible privilege of spending two weeks on British Columbia's Central Coast as part of a field course. The course is offered by the University of Victoria's Geography department, and centres on the idea of consilience – that evidence from different ways of knowing can come to the same conclusion, and ultimately, can strengthen and support each other – in regard to coastal resource management. I had no prerequisites, and very little idea of what exactly it was that I had signed up for, but I knew that I wanted to go up to the Central Coast. The instructors for the course – Dr. Chris Darimont and Jess Housty – are both involved in the Bears Forever campaign, which aims to end trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest, and I wanted access to them because I knew that this campaign would be central to one of my case studies.

But, perhaps more importantly, I was sick of sitting in my office late at night reading things that felt increasingly irrelevant. I wanted to be in the place that I was writing about, I wanted to use my body to walk on the land and paddle in the ocean and

climb the cliffs. I wanted to feel connected to this place that I had thought about for so long, and for once, I did not want that connection to come from books.

I packed my bag and felt uncertain, but also incredibly excited. And the coast certainly did not disappoint. We started our course in Bella Bella, but also spent time at the Hakai Beach Institute on Calvert Island, at Koeye on the mainland, and on Goose Island, one of the outer islands off the Central Coast. I have never spent time in a more beautiful place – the ocean I know so well from living in Vancouver and Victoria most of my life is different and wild, the beaches are white and endless and unspoiled, the trees are ancient and full of stories, and the cliffs are untamed and imposing. The wildlife is abundant – it is a rare sight to look up and not see eagles and ravens dancing in the sky. We had fires across the river from a pack of howling wolves, we slept in bear country, and we spent hours climbing through tide pools, meeting all sorts of creatures. I never could have imagined that leaving behind the comforts of the city I know so well would make my typical daily activities seem so trivial, that the further behind I left my comfort zone, the more at home and at peace I would feel. It has been months since I left, and I'm still processing exactly what I experienced. I still dream about this place, and my thoughts are always with the coast.

In our last days, I came face to face with a coastal wolf, which, I was told, is not supposed to happen – these animals have incredible hearing and it is difficult to just stumble across them in the forest, or, in my case, on the beach. Coastal wolves are genetically different from inland wolves, which is very unusual because the relatively short distance between the territories they occupy would usually result in interbreeding. Yet, coastal wolves are distinct – they are smaller and have different diets and

behaviours. They live on the network of islands off of BC's coast and thrive in this complex ecosystem. When I met this wolf, rather than feeling fear or shock, I felt comfort and ease. I was among friends.

It is no wonder that the people who come from this place are fiercely protective of it. This, I suppose, is the point of this story. I went to the Central Coast because I wanted to learn more about bears, and I come home having learned so much more about people, and about myself. We were mostly on Heiltsuk territory, but during our time at the Hakai Beach Institute we also got the opportunity to meet people from other Coastal Nations. I never felt anything but welcomed, and I was repeatedly told that now this place was mine, too. I am now responsible for it. And, to be honest, I don't know that I have ever been given a responsibility that I have welcomed so easily and so deeply. This is a place that touches your soul, whether you are ready for it or not, and it is impossible to know it and not do everything in your power to keep it whole.

I did, however, also learn plenty about bears. What initially sparked my interest in the Bears Forever campaign was the relentless assertion that tribal law matters, that relationships and respect matter, and that these bears matter in ways that a western resource management model simply cannot account for. They are part of the communities they live in, and thinking about them in that light challenges any conventional or western understandings of resource management.

Once I got to the Great Bear Rainforest and met people who have worked on this campaign, people who have lived with these bears their whole lives, I was able to see how much more there is to this issue. This is, ultimately, an issue of tribal law and culture. Coastal First Nations acknowledge the agency that bears have, and as such, treat

them in accordance to their laws and teachings, which are passed down from generation to generation. Trophy hunting – killing animals for sport, rather than for food – is in profound opposition to these teachings. Relations, connection to place, and understanding one's history are essential to flourishing as a human being. First Nations are standing up for bears on the Central Coast because these bears are their neighbours and they share their land and culture with them, and as such, First Nations have developed relationships with bears that involve responsibilities to protect them. This is not an issue of resource management, it is an assertion of place based authority and Indigenous law.

These are diverse, abundant lands, and they sustain life in a rich, lush way. Those that live out their lives here are deeply connected to each other – each life depends on another. Never have the intricacies and connections between humans and nonhuman animals been so clear to me. Humans cannot live on this rugged coast without the life forms that sustain them, and their dependency on these life forms leads to a responsibility to the land, a responsibility to other lives with whom they share spaces. Of course, humans cannot live anywhere without the life forms that sustain us, but in the majority of our relationships with nonhuman animals, ideas of responsibility and reciprocity fail to enter the conversation.

This place has simultaneously given lightness and freedom to my soul and grounded my feet more firmly than I have ever felt. I am so incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to be in this place and to meet and interact with these people.

Nonhuman Animals in Western Political Thought and Animal Geographies

They're us, we're them. This is ours, we share it. It's just that way. We've been living so close to them for years we feel like they're family.

- Frank Hanuse, Wuikinuxv, *Bear Witness*

The aim of the \$12,500 [cull] initiative is to reduce the number of deer and calm annoyed residents who have long complained about the deer taking over backyards, munching on garden shrubs and devouring home-grown vegetables.

- Sandra McCulloch, *Times Colonist*

Introduction

Human interaction with and dependence on animals for food, clothing, and companionship not only has a long history, but has also existed across human cultures in some form or another. These relationships – which range considerably from kinship to exploitation – not only continue to exist today, but are also intensifying in volatile ways. As forces such as globalization and global capitalism continue to gain momentum, the demand for animal-based foods and clothing also rises, subsequently increasing the number of animals who are bred for these purposes, as well as exacerbating the adverse conditions in which they are kept. Further, swells in the human population continue to encroach on ever shrinking habitat and wilderness, threatening many wild animals' survival. In recent decades animal-related issues have come to the forefront in the public sphere due to complex and dynamic series of events. British Columbia is arguably a microcosm of activism that reflects trends all over the western world. It is not uncommon to see people on the streets of Vancouver and Victoria protesting issues such as whale captivity in the Vancouver Aquarium (CBC News 2015), the sale of fur clothing in stores

on Davie Street (Meiszner 2014), and the breeding and slaughter of food animals such as pigs, chickens, and cows (Liberation BC 2015).

Perhaps because of the nearness and ease of access to wilderness even for those living in cities, British Columbians are also faced with constant debates regarding wild animals and their status. Wilderness organizations and activists are not only concerned with the health of our forests, rivers, and ocean, but also with the wellbeing and flourishing of the nonhuman individuals who inhabit these spaces. More broadly, the general public is likely to have a stake in the status of wild animals because many people are likely to encounter them even a short distance outside of the city – the wild animals we speak about are often our direct neighbours, not seemingly abstract species who live in far away lands. Therefore, British Columbia is a compelling case study for multiple reasons. For starters, the type of charismatic mega fauna humans live among in BC lends itself to complex relationships between humans and nonhuman animals, both on an individual basis and at the community level, which results in complex management decisions. Further, as a colonial state, Canada is often confronted with competing narratives about animals and their significance. This is important because Indigenous cultural practices on BC's coast offer a way of relating to nonhuman animals that dramatically differs from ideas prevalent in settler cultures. Finally, since British Columbia has been my personal geography for almost two decades, I wanted to focus on spaces and communities I not only have tangible access to, but can also have a situated relationship with.

Here in British Columbia, the line between wild animals and 'liminal' animals is fluid and difficult to define. I borrow this distinction from Sue Donaldson and Will

Kymlicka's recent text on animal rights and citizenship, but unlike the authors, I am much more interested in the fluidity between these concepts, especially in the context of places like British Columbia. According to the authors, wild animals are those who live their lives out in the deep wilderness and are "human-independent" (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 62), while liminal animals are those who inhabit spaces that are also used by humans, especially for settlement (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 63). Therefore, it seems that there are two significant differences between wild and liminal animals according to Donaldson and Kymlicka: the extent to which they depend on human settlements for survival, and the relationships that they form with humans. However, just as it is difficult to draw a clear and distinct line between wild and liminal animals, it is also problematic to suggest that there is a clear distinction between human-occupied spaces and deep wilderness. In British Columbia, for example, this false dichotomy ignores both the cultures and peoples who still exist in what might be understood as deep wilderness, as well as the ongoing development and destruction of such places.

According to Donaldson and Kymlicka, humans have different obligations to wild and liminal animals because we have different relationships with them. However, in many parts of British Columbia, the line between wild and liminal animals is unclear. Dense metropolitan areas like Vancouver boast a wide range of traditionally liminal animals such as raccoons, crows, squirrels, seagulls, rats, pigeons, and skunks, to name a few. Slightly less dense areas are home to even larger animals, such as deer in Victoria and black bears in North Vancouver. Those in smaller communities, like Bella Bella on the Central Coast, live in close proximity to animals who would be considered even

wilder by the authors, such as grizzlies, cougars, and wolves. In other words, other animals who would normally be considered wild and who would not be in a position to interact with human communities on a regular basis – like deer and bears – often do in this part of the world, resulting in complex human/ nonhuman relationships, which often include an element of governmental management. The distinction between wild and liminal animals is further contested by scholars who complicate and problematize traditional notions of nature by suggesting that all nature is, in fact, social (Castree and Braun 2001). Thus, while we may have different relationships with different species or individual nonhuman animals, the notion of a pristine wilderness filled with animals who are not affected by humans is problematic.

Further, while the bears around Bella Bella can be seen as human-independent in terms of their survival, they often form relationships with humans and are also impacted by human activities such as pollution to air, water, and soil, as well as human impacts on salmon populations. This is important because it means that the animals with whom British Columbians routinely share spaces are often larger and more dangerous than species who regularly occupy human spaces. Consequently, the human inhabitants of British Columbia live and form relationships with a wide range of other animals, and thus, have a vested interest in the ways that these animal populations are framed and managed. Because of the sheer size and complexity of many of British Columbia's liminal animals, human relationships and government management programs of these species are contested and multifaceted.

In addition, our collective relationships with nonhuman animals are complicated by the fact that the overwhelming majority of British Columbia is unceded territory, and

portions of BC, which are understood as ceded by the state, remain contested by First Nations. As First Nations all over the province continue to fight to preserve their languages, cultures, and legal authority over their traditional lands, settlers are faced with competing narratives around how we can and should relate to nonhuman animals. This is further complicated by the fact that some settlers live in rural Indigenous communities and many Indigenous people, especially those whose traditional territories have been covered by cityscapes, live in urban centres. While this means that these competing narratives are then able to interact with and challenge each other, the majority, or those who contribute to the dominant voice in their given community, often dictates and shapes management decisions and customs. Thus, management executed by a collective of First Nations is likely to differ significantly from management implemented by any level of government of the Canadian state. Further, these conversations are happening in the realm of politics – these are no longer debates that focus on ethics, but rather, the focus is shifting to demands for local management and stewardship. For First Nations, stewardship is informed by tribal law, meaning that bears are already political in these communities. Thus, when Coastal First Nations collaborate to protect bears in their traditional territories, they are not only making ethical claims about how humans ought to treat bears, they are also asserting their right to be stewards over their own traditional territories and their right to preserve their historical, cultural, and spiritual relationships with bears.

This thesis will use two case studies – deer management in the Capital Regional District of Oak Bay and bear management on the Central Coast of British Columbia – in order to analyze the types of relationships that different community members form with

these species by looking at the way that their populations are managed by various levels of government and the local responses to these policies. This approach is important because it incorporates various stakeholders, and as such, allows me to take into account a multitude of discourses. For example, focusing on population management requires analysis of government management plans, relevant nongovernmental organizations' positions, as well as a consideration of the views of human community members. In the case of Oak Bay, I consider resident responses to deer population management options in order to assess how people in the region view deer, and in the case of the Great Bear, I consider statements made by local Indigenous people regarding their ongoing relationships with bears. While deer and bears are both subject to policy decisions, they are not passive recipients of human power and orderings – nonhuman animals have the capacities to engage in dynamic, multifaceted relationships with each other and with humans. Thus, by using a case study of species conservation and animal management in British Columbia, I will assess the ways nonhuman animals are constructive of human societies, through the relationships they form with us on both individual and community levels.

Some western settlers in British Columbia might consider deer and bears to be wild animals who do not, and should not, live among humans. However, both deer in Oak Bay and bears on the Central Coast are challenging this dynamic by often interacting with humans and sharing human occupied spaces. This means that, according to Donaldson and Kymlicka's classifications, these specific deer and bears are liminal rather than wild because they are living among humans, forming relationships with humans, and impacting the cultural and social relationships that humans have with them. Both deer in

Oak Bay and bears on the Central Coast are transgressing the spatial orderings that western settlers have imposed on them, and because of these spatial transgressions, they are drawing attention to themselves and forcing us to have ongoing conversations about our communities and who belongs to them. Importantly, these conversations are taking place at various levels of government in the form of management attempts, but they are also taking place in communities between neighbours.

Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that for many modern societies, “certain spaces – cities, suburbs, industrial and agricultural zones – are defined as ‘human’ rather than ‘animal’, as ‘cultural’ rather than ‘natural’, or as ‘developed’ rather than ‘wilderness’” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 67). The authors further argue that when nonhuman animals do not occupy the spaces humans have deemed acceptable, their presence is often problematized and they are viewed as pests. Liminal animals are particularly susceptible to this as they are “visible when they become a problem, but invisible as ubiquitous members of the community” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 68). In the context of my two case studies, this is arguably the case for urban deer in Oak Bay – a perceived growth in the deer population has made them visible to those who deem them out of place, yet their ongoing presence as community members has been dismissed. However, bears in the Great Bear have always been viewed as part of the community. Origins stories for many nations on the Central Coast include bears, and as such, people have relationships and obligations to the bears around them. This is not to suggest that nonhuman animals and humans are routinely engaging in power-balanced relationships. On the contrary, nonhuman animals are overwhelmingly subject to human power structures and political decisions and regulations, because even on the Central Coast, the bear bodies are subject

to Provincial trophy hunts. However, nonhuman animals are often characterized as passive objects who simply absorb these human regulatory powers – I want to suggest that nonhuman animals can in fact be active participants in their relationships with humans.

By focusing on charismatic mega fauna like deer and bears, I am able to explore the relationships that members of these species have formed with the humans around them by looking at first person statements from local residents regarding deer in Oak Bay and bears in the Great Bear. In the case of urban deer management, one of the largest difficulties identified by the provincial government is public opinion – the biological and spatial management of growing deer populations is not nearly as complicated as managing the strong opinions of the people who live in communities with deer (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a) because of the complex relationships that humans and deer form. Thus, these relationships impact the way that local political processes occur – deer interact with humans, and both the negative and positive components of these interactions impact the responses citizens have to various forms of population management. On the Central Coast, Coastal First Nations have collaborated to challenge the provincial government's management of bears because of the legal and cultural relationships these Coastal Nations have with bears – their traditional teachings emphasize respect and conservation, and not taking more than what you need. For Coastal First Nations, protecting bears from trophy hunters is important in large part because of these historic and ongoing relationships.

Research Question & Methodology

According to Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, “humans are always, and have always been, enmeshed in social relations with animals to the extent that the latter, the animals, are undoubtedly constructive of human societies in all sorts of ways” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 2). Using case studies of species conservation and animal management in British Columbia, this thesis asks, in what ways are nonhuman animals constructive of human societies? Theoretically, I will assess the roles nonhuman animals play in our mixed-species societies by considering how animal welfare, animal rights, and animal geographies understand and frame nonhuman animals. Empirically, I will evaluate the ways in which both municipal and provincial levels of government frame deer in Oak Bay and bears in the Great Bear, and how these framings contribute to management decisions. I will also consult relevant nongovernmental organizations, such as the BCSPCA in Oak Bay and Bears Forever in the Great Bear Rainforest, and will also consider the views of residents in both cases. In Oak Bay, I will refer to citizen responses collected by the Capital Regional District (CRD), and on the Central Coast I will consider interviews from *Bear Witness*, a documentary made by Bears Forever in 2013. Each of these case studies involves communities attempting to manage liminal species with whom they share communal spaces. My first case study focuses on the District of Oak Bay’s management plan for urban deer. The deer population in Oak Bay has seen a recent increase, and due to some citizen complaints and public safety concerns, including an increase in the number of vehicular accidents involving deer and damages to private properties and farms, city council has adopted a cull strategy to manage the population. My second case study is the Great Bear Rainforest and First Nations’ efforts to stop the provincial government from issuing bear hunting licenses. The provincial government

issues hunting licenses for both grizzly and black bears, and Coastal First Nations are challenging this practice in order to protect the bears on their traditional territories, largely because their relationships with bears are understood through their traditional teachings and practices.

I argue that nonhuman animals form complex relationships with each other and with humans. These relationships operate in multiple ways – between individuals, and between communities and groups, for example – and as such, can be characterized in various ways. The goal of this project is to understand nonhuman animals as actors, as shapers of our mixed-species social orderings and not merely as passive ‘objects’ of policy or government. Further, particular constructions of human/ nonhuman animal relationships fail to account for this animal agency, and this absence shows how agentic animals are as they transgress our special and social orderings. In other words, the ways in which relationships between humans and nonhumans are perceived in my two case studies varies significantly. This is important because it suggests that human spaces, societies, cultures, and relationships are not only shaped by the humans who participate in them, but also by the nonhuman animals who are in our midst.

The two case studies that I survey also show examples of different understandings of animal agency on behalf of human residents and relevant governmental and nongovernmental organizations. While people in Oak Bay have a wide range of responses to deer, none of the responses I encountered seemed to recognize deer as agentic. In the Great Bear, on the other hand, bears are already seen as community members who are able to act beyond human expectations and orderings. As a result, the ways in which people in Oak Bay and people on the Central Coast relate to deer and

bears respectively are very different, leading to opposing understandings of species management, to the point where the very idea of managing bears as a resource runs counter to how Indigenous people understand their relationships with bears. In other words, a recognition of animal agency is disruptive to politics insofar as it challenges our relationships with animals in personal and political ways. By a recognition of nonhuman animal agency I mean whether or not humans who live in the midst of nonhuman animals recognize the capacity of nonhuman animals to challenge and disrupt human orderings, and if recognized, how these disruptions are understood.

Further, it is important to note the significance that human-constructed narratives can have on these processes. The stories that we tell about nonhuman animals can shape the relationships we have with them. However, while this can be constructed as a process that empowers humans and takes agency away from nonhuman animals – humans possess speech, while other animals do not – narratives about nonhuman animals are a reflection of human relationships with them. The fact that nonhuman animals feature heavily in the stories, songs, and cultures of people all over the world is an indicator of the many relationships we form with nonhuman animals, rather than a stripping of their agency. As is the case with all relationships, they are multifaceted and often both challenging and rewarding. For example, the deer in Oak Bay are seen as neighbours by some, and as pests who need to be controlled by others. The bears in the Great Bear Rainforest are seen as family members by First Nations, and as trophies by trophy hunters. These competing narratives frame the political discourse about these species, and in turn impact the animals and our relationships to them.

Chapter Outline

For the remainder of this chapter, I provide an overview of approaches that have thus far been used to analyze human/ nonhuman animal relations. I begin with Aristotle's articulation of the human/ nonhuman divide, and suggest that this divide has been so naturalized in western thinking that it rarely allows the space necessary to reimagine our relationships with other species. I then briefly trace the ways that Aristotle's ideas have influenced theorists historically to show how the division between humans and nonhuman animals has been naturalized in western political thought, finally turning to modern conceptions of biopower. Next, I turn to two of the main approaches used to situate nonhuman animals – animal welfare and animal rights – and identify the issues embedded in each approach which do not allow for the politicization of nonhuman animals and the consideration of their agency. Finally, I turn to new animal geographies, and suggest that a politicized account of this approach can in fact create a political space for nonhuman animals. By political space, I mean a space in which humans recognize nonhuman animals as agents who have a role in the construction of social and political life, and most importantly, as members of mixed species communities who form complex relationships with both humans and other animals.

In Chapter Two I introduce my first case study, which focuses on the recent debate regarding the management of urban deer in the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Oak Bay on Vancouver Island. First, I provide a broad overview of the provincial government's "British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis", which focuses on urban deer, and discuss the Province's focus on deer management based on public opinion. Then, I turn to the CRD's management strategy, and specifically focus on the CRD's urban ungulate management plan in Oak Bay. Finally, since the Province suggests

that one of the most significant factors in urban ungulate management is public opinion, I focus on citizen responses and complaints in addition to opposition from the BCSPCA, as well as the subsequent management decisions, which emerged from public consultation.

In Chapter Three I introduce my second case study and present the positions held by local Indigenous people, relevant nongovernmental organizations such as Bears Forever, and the Provincial government, regarding the continued trophy hunt of grizzly and black bears in the Great Bear Rainforest on British Columbia's Central Coast. I begin by outlining the position of Coastal First Nations, an organization of First Nations whose territory roughly encompasses the Great Bear Rainforest, and outline their Bears Forever campaign, which aims to protect bears from trophy hunting. I show how this campaign is built upon traditional teachings, tribal law, and ongoing relationships between Coastal First Nations and bears. Next, I turn to the provincial government's position – I explore their rationale and policy, and consider the data on which they base their quotas. I then turn to the way Coastal First Nations have responded to the province-led management of bears by outlining various tactics they use to challenge the government's policy, such as partnering with scientists to dispute the government's data, arguing that the bear trophy hunt does not contribute economically to local communities, and citing province-wide opinion polls which do not support the hunt.

Both of these case studies are important because each shows different types of relations between humans and nonhuman animals. In each case study I consider similar human actors – provincial and local levels of government, wildlife experts, and human residents. However, by examining resident responses to management options in Oak Bay and statements made by Coastal First Nations in *Bear Witness*, I find that especially in

the context of human residents, the ways in which people relate to nonhuman animals varies dramatically, which has an impact on how governments may choose to regulate these species. Specifically, in my case studies, deer and bears are understood very differently as settler conceptions of human/ nonhuman animal relationships often fail to adequately account for nonhuman agency, whereas Coastal First Nations' relationships with bears are based on the assertion that bears are active agents. In both case studies, the nonhuman animals in question transgress both spatially, and socially, however, these transgressions are met with very different reactions by human locals. Further, this work contributes to a growing body of literature that focuses on human/ nonhuman relationships. Like Rosemary-Claire Collard's work on humans and cougars coexisting in Sooke on Vancouver Island (Collard 2012), this thesis explores the liminality of nonhuman animals who are neither domesticated nor far removed from human communities. I contribute to this growing body of literature by focusing my analysis on the importance of relationships between humans and nonhuman animals in regard to species management.

This thesis also traces some of the connections between two well established and connected dichotomies in western thought – the human/ nonhuman and the nature/ culture divides – and shows how a recognition of nonhuman animal agency disrupts them. Later in this chapter, I take up the human/ nonhuman dichotomy and show how it has been established and maintained in western political thought. This dichotomy is then picked up in Chapter Two, where I discuss the relationships between deer and humans in Oak Bay. In this case study, my aim is to show a relatively typical response to nonhuman animals transgressing human orderings and expectations. The deer are identified as a

nuisance, and as such, the public calls for governmental intervention in the form of population management. In these processes, deer agency does not appear to be recognized – most human residents who responded to the CRD’s management options questionnaire had strong positive and negative associations with deer, but neither of these types of responses recognized deer as agentic. In Chapter Three, my focus on bears in the Great Bear challenges this lack of recognition of nonhuman agency by showing how communities on the Central Coast relate to and understand bears as community members and as relatives. In this chapter I also show how the nature/ culture divide is operationalized by focusing on relatively remote Indigenous communities on BC’s coast. While these dichotomies are not the same, they are inherently related as they support and reinforce each other. However, animal agency, particularly when it comes from liminal animals, disrupts and challenges these dichotomies.

Oak Bay’s urban deer can be seen casually strolling along manicured side streets, grazing on garden vegetables. In turn, their presence has sparked both outrage and a desire to protect them, which has made government-mandated population control complicated to enact. In the Great Bear, First Nations are choosing to stand up for and protect the bears in their traditional territories from trophy hunters. This is simultaneously an argument for the ethical treatment of bears, a demand for local stewardship, and an enactment of their Indigenous laws, which lay out responsibilities and obligations to bears. Thus, while both of these case studies feature similar human actors, the Oak Bay case is largely characterized by relations between western settlers who are generally dismissive of nonhuman agency, which can be seen in the ways in which deer are framed as problematic and out of place, and ultimately managed. The Great Bear case, on the

other hand, is an assertion of Indigenous law rooted in and expressed through culture and tradition, as well as a call for local management of territories and resources. Oak Bay represents an urban, predominantly white settler population on unceded land, with significant disagreements and internal differences regarding the appropriate management of urban deer. The Central Coast, on the other hand, is predominantly comprised of Indigenous Nations in a rural setting who have partnered together to show a unified front regarding how they expect bears to be treated on their territories.

In my conclusion, I revisit my central claim – that nonhuman animals are constructive of the societies they inhabit by virtue of the complex social relationships they share with humans and other nonhuman animals – in the context of these two case studies. By constructive, I mean that they are not merely passive recipients of human orderings and power – nonhuman animals transgress, shape, and alter their surroundings in ways that directly impact human social and political structures. I suggest that this claim has both theoretical implications for how we understand nonhuman animals in the context of politics, as well as policy implications for how we manage wildlife. Perhaps most importantly, thinking about nonhuman animals as actors who impact not only our personal lives, but also our social order, has implications for how we relate to the nonhuman animals who are in our midst every day.

I began this chapter with two quotes, and each is part of the way these two case studies are currently framed and understood in various public consciousnesses. In an interview in *Bear Witness*, Frank Hanuse, a Wuikinuxv man who has lived his whole life in Rivers Inlet in the heart of bear country explains that he has lived so close to bears for so long he sees them as family. In contrast, Sandra McCulloch's *Times Colonist* article

explains that Oak Bay is planning a deer cull in order to placate annoyed residents whose gardens are being eaten by deer. I chose these two framings for two reasons: first, in the context of the wide range of ways in which humans relate to nonhuman animals, they showcase two very different perspectives; and second, they are general characterizations of the differences between western settler views, and traditional Indigenous ways of relating to nonhuman animals.

Context

Aristotle & Western Political Thought

Traditionally, western political thought has operated upon the base assumption that there is a divide between the human and the nonhuman. Some humans have historically been grouped with nonhuman animals, and the divide has often been operationalized in order to separate those who have access to and can participate in politics from those who cannot and should not. The dichotomy of the human and nonhuman is mirrored in the dichotomy of culture and nature – in the Aristotelian view, humans create culture and participate in politics while nonhuman animals are ostensibly incapable of these activities because they reside in the natural realm, which is wild and uncivilized.

I recognize that the western political tradition is extensive and impossible to trace in several paragraphs, so my aim here is not to provide an all-encompassing overview, but rather, to briefly trace some of the ways that western theorists have regarded nonhuman animals. Political thought has a history of writing off nonhuman animals as apolitical, and as inherently different from the human. According to Alasdair Cochrane, “most political theorists have said, and continue to say, almost nothing on what political communities owe to animals” (Cochrane 2010, 4). Further, he notes that when political

theorists do discuss animals in their work, it is often done in order to show how different and exemplary humans are as the political animal par excellence. This is important because it results in a naturalization of the division between humans and nonhuman animals. Cochrane himself, while researching the role that nonhuman animals play in political communities, risks excluding nonhuman animals from these communities by asking what we, *human* political communities, may owe animals. For him, animals are not a part of these communities – they are not a part of political processes. Since this division is often ignored, the nonhuman is always used to constitute the human in opposition to something, thus rendering the nonhuman politically invisible. As a result, the dichotomy between the human and the nonhuman is seldom questioned or problematized because it is so deeply embedded in the western worldview. In fact, this way of thinking goes back to the roots of western political thought. While some ancient Greek thinkers of the time, such as Pythagoras, considered the importance of nonhuman animals, their voices were neither dominant, nor considered in the context of political theory (Cochrane 2010, 12). Because these arguments were not linked to politics and governance, the hegemonic political distinction between humans and nonhuman animals remains largely unchallenged.

Aristotle famously makes the claim that humans are naturally *zōon politikon*, or political animals, a claim that I will interrogate further at the end of this section. For him, the state is also natural because it promotes what he deems ‘the good life’ – since humans are at their best in a political state, this shows their natural inclination towards politics (Aristotle 1992, 59). However, the stark division between the capacities of humans and nonhuman animals is never fully interrogated, nor is the supposed superiority of the

human traits – speech, in particular – that we have arbitrarily elevated to signal a capacity for politics.

Aristotle suggests that “obviously, man is a political animal in a sense in which a bee is not, nor any other gregarious animal” (Aristotle 1992, 60). The translator of one edition, T.A. Sinclair, includes a footnote to clarify this idea; according to him, what Aristotle is getting at is an understanding of “the state as an *association*” (Aristotle 1992, 60). Aristotle, then, fails to consider whether or not gregarious nonhuman animals can, indeed, form associations with other members of their own species, or with members of another species altogether. The idea that the human possesses special qualities that are not shared by any other species is accepted as naturalized fact and western political thought has too often built upon this assumption without interrogating it.

Aristotle goes on to further solidify the human/ nonhuman dichotomy in his discussion of speech. He says that while many animals make sounds to show their pleasure and displeasure, only humans have speech which “serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so what is just and unjust” (Aristotle 1992, 60). The fact that speech is shown as necessary to communicate complex thoughts and emotions is another notion that has been taken as natural in western thought, and is therefore rarely interrogated, especially in the context of nonhuman animals. Thus, where humans are seen as *zōon politikon*, nonhuman animals are seen as lacking the capacity to participate in politics. Further, because the category of the nonhuman has historically been used as the basis for the political exclusion of some humans, it occupies a significant role in our understanding of what it means to be a political actor, and who has access to this position.

The way in which Aristotle frames the role of nonhuman animals has deeply influenced western political thought and what theorists have had to say about the role of nonhuman animals in politics. Aristotle's initial notion that humans are inherently other to nonhuman animals is supported by two of the most influential Christian thinkers, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, both of whom deny that justice should be applied to nonhuman animals (Cochrane 2010, 17). Both suggest that humans have no obligations to animals, and that animals exist for human use – therefore, preventing cruelty to animals is rooted in the idea that such actions may lead to cruelty towards humans (Cochrane 2010, 17). Cochrane argues that both thinkers contribute to the entrenchment of two key ideas in western political thought: firstly, that human reason is a prerequisite for justice; and secondly, that duties to nonhuman animals are in fact owed to humankind, not to animals themselves (Cochrane 2010, 17). In the 17th century, Rene Descartes further solidifies the divide between humans and nonhuman animals by suggesting that animals' lack of speech means that they have no souls or mental capacities, meaning that they were seen as reactive machines rather than sentient beings (Cochrane 2010, 21). The Enlightenment also saw a number of influential contract theorists such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. For these theorists, animals' lack of reason and inability to enter into a contract would have rendered them outside of the political community. Contract based theories require members of a community to give up or restrain certain behaviours in order to gain membership in the social order. Since nonhuman animals are ostensibly not capable of entering into this type of contract, they would remain outside of the domain of justice for these thinkers. Further, while at the time of their writing these thinkers also left groups of humans outside of their respective social contracts, the

exclusion of nonhuman animals is different insofar as nonhuman animals do not have access to human speech, so their exclusion must be challenged in an entirely different way than the exclusion of particular human groups.

The human/ nonhuman dichotomy put into motion by Aristotle remains firmly intact during the Enlightenment – nonhuman animals continue to be excluded from understandings of politics and from political communities based on their perceived lack of speech and reason. However, in the 18th century, utilitarian thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham began to emphasize the link between sentience and justice. Bentham argues that human communities do, in fact, owe animals justice on the basis of sentience (Bentham 1907). This idea is perhaps most notably taken up again by Peter Singer in the 20th century. Singer argues that all sentient beings must be given equal consideration, and that the needs of one group cannot be prioritized over another (Singer 1975).

I want to now return to Aristotle's assertion that humans are naturally and uniquely *zōon politikon*. The Greeks had two words that expressed what we mean by 'life', and Giorgio Agamben takes up the distinction between *zoē* and *bios* – *zoē* being the "simple fact of living common to all living beings", or bare life, and *bios* being the "way of living proper to an individual or group", a qualified life (Agamben 1998, 1). He notes that for the Greeks, the distinction between these two words for life would have been clear, so when Plato and Aristotle discuss different forms of life the fact that neither uses *zoē* is to be expected because "what was at issue for both thinkers was not at all simple natural life but rather a qualified life, a particular way of life" (Agamben 1998, 1). While all living beings are *zoē*, not everyone, including not all humans, have access to *bios*. In other words, in its infancy, the western tradition was only concerned with the lives of

those it deemed capable of politics, those who had access to *bios*. While at its core, this is not a human/ nonhuman distinction, but rather, a social distinction, nonhuman animals are a part of the excluded group, and because of their lack of human speech, their exclusion is different than the exclusion of other (human) groups. Thus, the classical world excludes simple natural life from the *polis* and confines it to the domain of the home, or the *oikos*. This distinction is important because it focuses western thought on particular, political lives, when in fact, those lives are only able to access their *bios* because of the bodies of those who are denied this privilege. In a way, *bios* is a rejection of *zoē*, but a body's *zoē* needs to be met nonetheless, so cities are built by and on top of those who are denied *bios* – women, slaves, and animals are responsible for meeting the *zoē* needs of everyone in the city state, putting *zoē*, as both Foucault and Agamben will argue, at the centre of sovereign power.

Agamben then shows how Foucault traces the modern inclusion of bare life in calculations of state power, turning politics into biopolitics – “for a millennia man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question” (Foucault qtd. in Agamben 1998, 3). In other words, this modern move towards biopolitics explicitly politicizes *zoē*, exposing “the original – if concealed – nucleus of sovereign power” (Agamben 1998, 6). Further, Agamben suggests that “at once excluding bare life from and capturing it within the political order, the state of exception actually constituted, in its very separateness, the hidden foundation on which the entire political system rested” (Agamben 1998, 9).

Agamben's analysis focuses on human bodies who are deemed exclusively capable of *bios*, but it can also be extended to nonhuman animals, especially those who have been domesticated by humans, and those who live in close proximity to human occupied spaces. Nonhuman animals are systematically denied access to *bios*, however, while their bodies and labour do not qualify them as political, they are at the very centre of the *polis* because of these contributions – the *polis* cannot exist as it is without them. In Aristotle's time, nonhuman bodies would have been used for transportation, to wage war, to work fields, to build cities, and to feed human populations. Today, many humans still depend on the physical labour of animals, and even more humans depend on the farmed bodies of nonhuman animals for sustenance. Agamben suggests that by excluding *zoē* from the *polis*, "the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power" (Agamben 1998, 6), placing *zoē*, or those deemed capable of only bare life, at the very foundation of power.

Finally, while I have given a brief trajectory of western political thought, questions concerning nonhuman animals are inherently interdisciplinary, and as such, it is important to also consider the work being done in other fields. Despite a growing number of contributions to theories relating to nonhuman animals and human relationships with them, I have chosen to use animal geographies because of the way in which understandings of space, power and relationships are operationalized. Further, I focus on analyzing animal welfare and animal rights because I am interested in how these frameworks have influenced public debate, activism, and public policy. While some notable contributions to the role of animals in society, such as offerings from Bruno Latour (2004), Donna Haraway (2008), Cary Wolfe (2003), and Jacques Derrida (2002),

among others, may appear underutilized in this thesis, it is important to note that these texts are, in many ways, foundational for the rapidly growing shifts in how we understand nonhuman animals today. However, because relationships are so central to my understanding of animals' roles in society, my aim has been to ground this work in both understandings of how space is operationalized, and in ideas that have permeated public understandings of nonhuman human animals in more concrete ways.

Animal Welfare

When animal-related issues, such as the use of animal bodies for food or science, are discussed in the public sphere it is often within the scope of animal welfare concepts. Proponents of animal welfare generally disagree with the needless suffering of nonhuman animals, but most will concede that nonhuman animals can and should be used in order to further what is often framed as human progress (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 3). Thus, activities such as breeding animals for food and medical experiments would often be condoned, and the focus is not necessarily on eliminating such practices, but rather, on limiting the suffering experienced by the animals in question (Fraser 2008).

Further, animal welfare practices are generally applied to domesticated nonhuman animals. David Fraser traces some competing notions of the role of animal welfare in industries that use animal bodies, such as farming. He shows how different people in the field understand and approach animal welfare differently, and as such what constitutes appropriate care for animals is sometimes contested (Fraser 2008). He traces three different approaches to animal welfare – focusing on the affective states of animals, on their basic health and functioning, and on natural living – and argues that the most effective solutions are likely to consider all three approaches. Finally, he argues that

while animal welfare can be studied and applied scientifically, it is “influenced by the value-based ideas about what is important or desirable for animals to have a good life” (Fraser 2008, 6).

In addition to a scientific component, animal welfare has two other significant parts: a theoretical history in utilitarianism and an activist history that is responsible for much of the animal welfare legislation in the world today. Jeremy Bentham was one of the first thinkers to suggest that at least some nonhuman animals matter based on their ability to suffer (Bentham 1907, 226). This thought has been further developed in the twentieth century by thinkers such as Peter Singer (Singer 1975) and Jacques Derrida (Derrida 2002), and is the basis for animal welfare activism. As a result, many of the legal protections available to nonhuman animals were proposed and passed based on animal welfare concepts. For example, when 52 dogs were culled in Whistler in 2011 after a slump in sled dog tours after the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, the British Columbia government responded by increasing penalties for those found guilty of animal cruelty (CBC News 2012). However, the government was responding to public pressure based on the idea that the suffering and deaths of the dogs in question were unnecessary, but there were few, if any, challenges to the dog sled industry as a whole. Human societies continue to largely depend on the explicit use of animal bodies for food, science, entertainment, and goods – claims that nonhuman animals have a right to natural life runs counter to industries that we are all directly invested in and benefit from.

While animal welfare has resulted in legal protection for some animals, the idea that nonhuman animals are inherently inferior to humans persists, and results in the basic needs of other animals being sacrificed for the perceived needs of humans. Animal

welfare operates under the assumption that humans should try to limit the suffering of other animals, but that there are times when the use of nonhuman bodies is necessary. For example, none of the three approaches to animal welfare Fraser outlines challenge the actual use of animal bodies, they instead disagree about which type of welfare improvements are most important. Thus, the human/ nonhuman dichotomy, and the subsequent exclusion of nonhuman animals from public life, arguably cannot be disrupted using animal welfare concepts because humans are still perceived as different and more significant, which continues to warrant human use of nonhuman bodies. Under this framework, humans still exert dominance over nonhuman animals. Rather than trying to reconfigure how we understand human/ nonhuman relationships, animal welfare seeks to protect nonhuman animals in ways that ultimately reinforce human dominance and continue to perpetuate the idea that nonhuman animals are not actors. As Donaldson and Kymlicka argue, the “concern for animal welfare operates within a framework that takes for granted – in a largely unquestioned way – that animals can be used within limits for the benefit of humans” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 3). So long as this dichotomy remains intact and the superiority of the human is not questioned, the complex relationships nonhuman animals develop, and the subsequent social and political impacts of those relationships cannot be exposed in any meaningful ways. Further, gains made by animal welfare movements, while beneficial to the specific animals who are affected by the policies in question, can prevent more substantial change from taking place. When laws are passed to improve the conditions in which farm animals are kept, for example, attention is drawn away from considering whether or not farm animals should be raised for food in the first place. For example, Fraser details a controversy within animal

welfare science regarding the condition of intensely kept pigs. He shows how an animal welfare committee in the European Union reviewed literature focusing on gestation stalls, “where animals are unable to walk, socialize, or perform most other natural behaviour during pregnancy” (Fraser 2008, 1), and decided that this method of housing pigs raised serious welfare concerns, and as a result the EU banned gestation stalls in 2013. Not long after, Australian scientists reviewed the same literature and concluded that gestation stalls do not, in fact, pose welfare concerns (Fraser 2008). However, while these two groups of animal welfare scientists were considering the impacts of gestation stalls on sow welfare, the issue of whether or not pigs should be raised in intensive farming conditions, or any farming conditions for that matter, was not broached. Therefore, while animal welfare can make strides towards improving the lives of animals on farms, in labs, and in other domesticated spaces, it does not adequately question whether or not humans should use animal bodies for our means and advancement. Thus, some animal welfare policies may in fact slow down the process of disrupting the human/ nonhuman dichotomy.

Animal Rights

The idea of animal rights varies from welfare in that proponents suggest that nonhuman animals have certain basic inviolable rights, including the right to life (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 4). In other words, no matter the benefit to human society, there are certain things that simply should not be done to other animals because they exist for their own purposes, not to meet human ends. Animal rights, however, has not garnered much public support and has thus remained a fairly fringe activist movement with many rights groups, such as the Animal Liberation Front, being framed as radical or terrorist organizations (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 5). Donaldson and

Kymlicka argue that while animal welfare arguments have resonated with many members of the public, animal rights has remained a “political nonstarter”, and as a result, many animal rights organizations have used welfarist ideas in order to generate public support (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 5).

Thus, in their book, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka build onto traditional ideas of animal rights, and offer a citizenship model for existing animal rights theory. While animal rights theory traditionally focuses on negative rights, Donaldson and Kymlicka consider the importance of positive rights, especially in the context of domesticated and liminal animals with whom we often interact (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 9). They choose to embed animal rights in liberal democratic theory and traditional human rights theory because, they argue, these are the existing dominant frameworks in the world. Animal rights theory, traditionally, has focused on negative rights and the idea that human/nonhuman relationships are inherently oppressive, so the only possible ethical position is to leave animals alone and live in human only societies. Donaldson and Kymlicka take issue with this position and argue that this is not feasible for several reasons. First, they think that the extinction of most domesticated animals, which would be the likely result of ending all contact with animals, is unethical. Secondly, they do not think it is possible to create human only societies as we already share so many spaces with other species involuntarily – one simply has to look outside to see a multitude of birds, critters and other species and try to imagine removing them to see the difficulty of the task. Finally, they acknowledge that ceasing contact will perhaps be easiest with animals who live in

very wild and distant places, but they also consider the impacts that humans have on these animals and their habitats, such as causing pollution or clear-cutting forests.

Ultimately, Donaldson and Kymlicka claim that while negative inviolable rights are important, what is missing from animal rights theory is a sense of positive relational rights. They suggest giving nonhuman animals different rights based on association, relation and historical context (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 13). They note that this will vary as different societies have different relations with different species, but generally, they propose that we give citizenship status to domesticated animals since we have brought them into our societies, denizen status to liminal animals who live in human settlements and sovereignty to wild animals.

While animal rights theory moves closer to disrupting the human/ nonhuman dichotomy because it allows nonhuman animals some of the same rights and privileges as humans, it does not fully succeed in breaking down this barrier. Challenging this dichotomy is important because it allows us to see how we relate to other animals and how they relate to each other and to us without necessarily evaluating nonhuman animals based on human standards and qualities. In other words, disrupting the human/ nonhuman dichotomy allows us to reimagine our relationships with the nonhumans around us, which is, ultimately, one of the aims of this thesis. Animal rights, however, by virtue of its grounding in western liberalism, continues to operate within well-established western narratives which fail to reimagine nonhuman animals as active participants who shape the social relations in which they engage. While western liberalism and rights based discourses make claims towards accepting difference, they do not disrupt the overall framework; rather, they simply attempt to cast a wider net. Similarly, animal rights is

often an extension of human rights as proposed by liberalism (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). Therefore, embedding animal rights in ideas of western liberal democracy does not provide the necessary space to disrupt the human as a category – instead of challenging this historic division, animal rights simply moves the line further down to include some species but continues to exclude others who are not deemed to be similar enough to humans. In other words, the extent to which animals ‘deserve’ rights is based on the similarities they share with humans, which means that animal rights is generally centred around humans.

As Cary Wolfe suggests, the problem with animal rights is that it is too humanist – nonhuman animals are valued in relation to their capacity to express human characteristics (Wolfe 2003, 26). As such, rights discourses “reduce individuals to that atomistic bundle of interests that the justice tradition recognizes as the basis for moral considerableness. In effect, animals are represented as beings with the *kind of capacity* that human beings most fully possess and deem valuable for living a full *human* life” (Zak qtd. in Wolfe 2003, 36). In other words, nonhuman animals are given rights based on their similarities to humans, not based on their inherent value.

New Animal Geographies

The limitations of the above approaches in breaking down the human/ nonhuman animal binary require students of politics to go beyond traditional and marginal frames. In particular, I utilize the theoretical approaches developed under the rubric of new animal geographies. New animal geographies is a subfield of human geography which emerged in the 1990s. Prior to this, issues pertaining to space and nonhuman animals were typically analyzed by physical geographers as nonhuman animals were seen as part

of the natural environment. New animal geographies, however, situates nonhuman animals in the context of human geography because “humans are always, and have always been, enmeshed in social relations with animals to the extent that the latter, the animals, are undoubtedly constructive of human societies in all sorts of ways” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 2). Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emel further argue that “animals have been so indispensable to the structure of human affairs and so tied up with our visions of progress and the good life that we have been unable to (even try to) fully see them” (Wolch and Emel 1998, xi). In other words, nonhuman animals have been central to the development of western social, economic, and cultural practices, and this very centrality has prevented humans from seeing their contributions.

Human/ nonhuman relations are embedded in power dynamics, which often involve humanity’s triumph over other beings. Because our lives are so dependent on these power structures, Philo and Wilbert argue that social sciences which do not consider these relationships are deficient (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 4). Thus, the framework of new animal geographies has emerged to “explore the dimensions of space and place which cannot but sit at the heart of these relations” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 4). Furthermore, Philo and Wilbert take on the issue of construction, and suggest that while humans are constructive of nonhuman animals in a number of ways, it is also important to consider how nonhuman animals construct us. This is significant because it raises questions “about non-human agency, about the agency of animals, and the extent to which we can say they destabilize, transgress, or even resist our human orderings, including spatial ones” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 5). Wolch and Emel further argue that nonhuman animals have consistently been the ‘other’ against which western humans have

constituted themselves, and as such “we can see animals as constructive of humans, revealing the porosity of the distinction between human freedom and animal necessity” (Wolch and Emel 1998, 18).

The idea that nonhuman animals have the ability to destabilize, and even reorder human relations based on the spaces they occupy is particularly relevant to liminal species and the way that they are embedded in their communities. For example, in both of the case studies I consider, it is the very presence of deer and bears in places where humans do not think they should be – deer are occupying urban spaces, while the Great Bear’s grizzlies are moving into island territories the provincial government has not accounted for – that sparks the political debate regarding their status and human management of their populations. The people of Oak Bay are irritated with the ever growing deer population, while the movements of bears into new spaces and the lack of response from the provincial government is a key arguing point for First Nations when they point to the mismanagement of these bears. Both deer and bears are generally seen as wild animals, and wild animals do not often form relationships with humans, however, in both case studies, these animals live in proximity to people, and as such, have created mixed-species societies.

New animal geographies also aim to show how space directly constructs the relationships between humans and nonhuman animals. Philo and Wilbert argue that there is also “a strong human sense of the proper places which animals should occupy physically” (Philo and Wilber 2000, 10). This is related to all species – most of us have clear distinctions about which animals belong where. Livestock are to be kept on farms, and factory farms, which produce the intensively farmed animal products most readily

available for consumption, are certainly to be kept out of sight. Wild animals are to stay in the wild, unless we transport them to a zoo or aquarium. Liminal animals, who occupy cities and towns, are often constructed as vermin and various traps are put out to capture and kill them. Even animals who we invite into our homes – such as cats and dogs – often have restrictions. At the very least, their day usually centres around that of their human companion. They eat when we put food out for them, they sleep when we sleep and they are made visible if and when we choose to take them outside.

Defining and imagining what nonhuman agency does and can look like is also a significant component of new animal geographies, and is also an important factor in politicizing nonhuman animals. Philo and Wilbert use Actor Network Theory (ANT) to explain how they conceptualize the agency of nonhumans. In ANT agency is not a static thing that can be possessed. Rather, it is relational and in constant flux depending on the environment and surroundings of the actor – “this means that anything can potentially have the power to act, whether human or nonhuman, and the semiotic term ‘actant’ is used to refer to this symmetry of powers” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 17). The fact that this theory is relational speaks to how nonhumans can be supported in a community setting to make choices and show preferences. Further, ANT accounts for how humans can construct the appropriate mechanisms for nonhumans to make their choices known – nonhuman animals are making choices all around us, but in many western settler contexts, we lack the tools and capacities necessary to acknowledge these choices.

Lastly, Philo and Wilbert discuss anthropomorphism – the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman animals – as it operates in animal geographies. This, along with anthropocentrism – the understanding that humans are superior, or central – is a

term that is often used to downplay the efforts of those advocating on behalf of nonhuman animals, and as such, anthropomorphism is generally seen as faulty logic and as a shaky foundation for both activism and academia. Philo and Wilbert, however, provide an account of a much more nuanced form of anthropomorphism that can be a helpful tool through which to think about nonhuman animals and our relationships with them.

Firstly, they borrow from Bruno Latour and claim that instead of solely discussing anthropomorphism, we should be thinking about “many different possible ‘morphisms’, whether these be technomorphisms, zoomorphisms, or whatever” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 19). In order to have a thorough understanding of relations between humans, nonhumans, technologies, and spaces, we need to have a broader understanding of who influences and shapes whom. For example, many dog lovers are often charged with anthropomorphising their dogs – they attribute characteristics, thoughts, and emotions to their dogs that we would normally think properly ‘belong’ to humans. However, since dogs are pack animals, many dogs who live in mixed households with humans, perhaps other dogs or other species altogether, will maintain a pack mentality. Dogs seek leadership, and when they do not receive it, they can often develop aggressive or dominant behaviour patterns as they position themselves in the pack leader role. Can we think about dogs as adopting humans into their packs? Would this be a zoomorphism – dogs attributing dog-like characteristics to humans and other species in their household, simply because this is the way in which they relate to the world by virtue of being dogs? These questions are worth considering, even if simply to displace the human as the dominant subject position from which we see the world.

Secondly, Philo and Wilbert suggest that certain levels of anthropomorphism may be helpful in formulating analysis. The argument against anthropomorphism is that it is a process of attributing human traits to nonhuman animals, thus, obscuring the true ‘nature’ of the nonhuman animal in question. However, Philo and Wilbert suggest that there may be times at which this is admissible, because there may indeed be nonhuman animals who possess traits that we typically associate with humans. They claim that we need a conception of anthropomorphism that would allow for “the possibility of insights being produced from considering *some* non-humans in *some* situations as *if* they could perceive, feel, emote, make decisions and perhaps ‘reason’ something like a human being” (Philo and Wilbert 2000, 19). Disregarding this possibility entirely is just as dangerous as rampant and unchecked anthropomorphism.

Politicizing New Animal Geographies

Ultimately, animal welfare and animal rights approaches fail to recognize the way that the nonhuman and the human are simultaneously or relationally constituted. The category of the human is seen as so central and natural that the nonhuman is often obscured and made invisible as a consequence. However, I contend, human society has in fact developed in direct relationship to nonhuman animals – we have domesticated them, hunted them and generally evolved alongside them – and the impacts of these processes cannot be entirely one-sided. While humans have surely held more power in most of these relationships, nonhuman animals have also impacted and influenced our cultures, histories, and stories, ultimately, shaping us.

Therefore, while the category of the nonhuman is kept invisible in many western discourses, we cannot begin to talk about nonhuman political participation. All of the

approaches mentioned above simply attempt to work nonhuman animals into our existing social structures – utilitarians expand who can be considered in their theory, but do not do anything to meaningfully alter the base assumptions inherent in utilitarianism. Rights based approaches, and similarly Donaldson and Kymlicka's citizen based approach, simply work nonhuman animals into liberal democratic understandings of rights and citizenship which are fundamentally based on situating the human in opposition to the nonhuman – in a liberal democratic framework, we hold up Enlightenment values such as logic, speech, and rationality which are always understood as in opposition to wild and untamed people, animals, and places. However, while accommodations may be made to allow nonhuman animals to participate in this system, the assumption is that the system will, and should, carry on as is. Thus, the idea is that the issue is not with our practices, but rather, that our practices do not extend far enough. I have suggested that the human/nonhuman dichotomy is so central to western political thought that it has rendered the nonhuman invisible and has naturalized the human as a definitive category. This is important because the centrality of the human/ nonhuman dichotomy makes it difficult to reimagine our relationships with nonhuman animals unless we challenge the existing framework. If this is to be taken seriously, we cannot possibly continue to offer approaches that simply involve casting a wider net. Instead, we need to look for ways to disrupt the human category more broadly and embed humans as one species among many. This is important because it not only results in different understanding of our communities more broadly, but also in how we fit into these communities in relation to others.

Animal geographies offers some of the necessary tools to disrupt the category of the human by focusing on relationships between various individuals and communities, and by analyzing the ways in which humans and nonhuman animals construct and act upon each other. The ways in which animal geographies frame animals and humans is important to the case studies I examine because the focus is often on space, place, and contextualized relationships. In other words, since the remainder of this thesis focuses on two very specific case studies, this approach enriches and supports my findings. Recognizing the ways in which nonhuman animals are already agents in our communities, as well as considering in what ways we can further enable their ability make choices, will embed them further into the communities they already inhabit.

Deer Neighbours and Urban Ungulates in Oak Bay

Introduction

The first time I saw a deer on campus I was with a group of friends, and a few of us got excited – we had only been in Victoria for a few weeks, and a deer walking out of shrubbery to slowly cross Ring Road was still a novelty to revel in. I had never seen a deer before, and I had certainly never seen an animal of that size in an area so densely populated by humans. The deer walked with ease and was not startled by cars or people walking by – it was clear that she was comfortable in her environment and knew her way around. One of the other students remarked that that was how you could tell new students apart from those who had already spent a semester or two in Victoria: for many seasoned students, seeing a deer was generally not a notable experience anymore. I soon came to find that deer are a fact of life in many parts of Victoria, and that many people have strong opinions about the deer population's 'rightful' place. Some people believe that deer are wild animals, and as such, have no place in the city. Others argue that since deer are native to Vancouver Island, humans need to learn to cohabitate with them. For all sides, the relationships between deer and humans are complex and varied – individual humans relate to deer in different ways, and so do different communities as a whole.

While deer are native to British Columbia, in the last several years an apparent rise in urban deer populations, and with it, a rise in human-deer conflict, has resulted in the government management of deer populations. The provincial government published its “British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis” in 2010 (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a) and in 2012 the Capital Regional District (CRD)

began to work towards a management plan to decrease human-deer conflicts in both urban and rural regions (Capital Regional District 2015). Oak Bay, a municipality in the Greater Victoria area, was the pilot project for urban deer management in the CRD, with that project coming to an end in the spring of 2015.

When it comes to nonhuman animals who can pose a challenge to cohabitation – like deer – the initial awe and excitement of the unexpected interaction wears off and feelings of irritation set in for some people. Many Oak Bay residents have complained about the deer in their neighbourhood – people are concerned about a rise in car accidents involving deer (Capital Regional District 2012b) as well as the damage that deer can inflict on personal gardens (Capital Regional District 2012a). The idea that humans may need to make sacrifices or adjustments to their behaviour in order to successfully cohabitate with deer makes the deer undesirable neighbours for some, thus making deer a population management concern for various levels of government. At the same time, because deer are charismatic mega-fauna, there are other members of the community who want to protect them and live in their midst (Capital Regional District 2012a). Further, since the human population of both the CRD and Oak Bay is largely made up of western settlers (Statistics Canada 2006), relations between deer and humans in this region are largely characterized by western settler cultures and understandings of wild animals as inherently belonging ‘out there’ in the wilderness, not near human settlements (Capital Regional District 2012a, Capital Regional District 2012b, Capital Regional District 2012c). While there are certainly residents who are willing to cohabitate with deer, the management solutions appear to largely be driven by those who do not see deer as

belonging since officials at both Provincial and municipal levels aim to reduce human complaints about deer.

This understanding of deer as wild, and subsequent categorization of wild animals as not belonging near humans, has framed both the ways in which community members have related to deer, as well as the way that conflict management has been implemented. However, because the deer in question live in urban spaces, framing them as wild and proceeding to treat them as such, is problematic. For Donaldson and Kymlicka, deer who both depend on humans for sustenance and who have regular interactions with humans would be considered liminal, not wild. In fact, Donaldson and Kymlicka suggest that because the domesticated/ wild dichotomy is so prevalent in western cultures, liminal animals are often seen as imposters or as pests, leading to the implementation of population management programs which often include mass relocation or mass extermination (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 211). According to the authors, while humans are not obligated to make urban spaces attractive for liminal animals, people cannot simply cast them out or implement a cull because we deem them to be difficult cohabitants (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 251) – rather, we must make accommodations as liminal animals are a part of our larger communities.

Further, because of the prominence of the domestic/ wild dichotomy, liminal animals are often framed as outsiders when they are encountered in urban environments. Owain Jones shows how, in a western context, humans spatially construct and categorize nonhuman animals (Jones 2000, 269) – wild animals are meant to be in the wild, farm animals are meant to be on farms, and so on. These constructions often make it difficult to cohabitate with nonhuman animals who, for whatever reason, are occupying a space

that we have not prescribed to them. Further, many western understandings of human relationships with nonhuman animals are characterized by the power humans are able to exercise over those around us, which complicates human relationships with animals who challenge that power by occupying spaces we are not used to sharing with them. Often, western understandings of human/ nonhuman animal relationships are framed by a lack of agency on behalf of nonhuman animals. This is reflected in the property status that animals hold in many western states, as well as the systemic use and abuse that is inflicted upon nonhuman bodies in factory farms, labs, and other spaces. However, liminal animals hold a particular position that is characterized simultaneously by their close proximity to humans and their ability to transgress human orderings by virtue of not being domesticated. In other words, animals like deer are able to show nonhuman capacity for agency by being agentic in a social setting in which most humans do not recognize that agency – deer transgressions are counter to western ideas of the ways in which animals, especially animals who are in close proximity to humans, should behave.

Both government officials and residents in the CRD generally see black tailed deer as animals who belong in the wild – according to the provincial government’s urban ungulate management strategy, deer and other ungulates “have a widespread distribution across British Columbia, providing significant public recreational opportunities and aesthetic enjoyment to BC residents” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, i). While BC residents may enjoy the aesthetics of deer in the wild, “excellent habitat in residential areas and protection from hunters and predators” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, i) has led to growing populations of urban deer across the province, which, according to the provincial government, has “led to the increased

conflict with the human residents of those areas” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, i). In other words, when deer are aesthetically pleasing, they are seen as providing recreational pleasure, but when deer are in close proximity to humans, conflicts arise and their populations must be managed. While some western settlers continue to maintain hunting relationships with deer, the provincial government has noted that as deer are entering urban spaces, the relationships between deer and hunters are no longer the focus of wildlife management (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 36). Thus, once deer enter spaces that are designated for human use, like urban neighbourhoods and farmland, they are instead primarily characterized as simultaneously dangerous and irritating. This is evidenced by the complaints launched by Oak Bay residents, as well as the subsequent management responses by Oak Bay, the CRD, and the Provincial government. Deer cause car accidents, are a potential public health hazard, and they also create inconveniences by congregating on private property and devouring carefully manicured gardens. Not only are deer transgressing human spatial markers – they are jumping fences and grazing on lawns, they are not abiding by the roads humans have carved out of their neighbourhoods – they are also taking up space in unexpected ways by occupying land that we would not think of as ‘wild’. Further, urban deer are actively challenging human objectification of their bodies – by occupying urban spaces they are no longer objects to be used for recreational enjoyment in the wild, they are species who shape and live in our communities.

The deer in Oak Bay are quite literally constructive of their spaces – they jump fences, feast on shrubbery, and are generally skilled at repurposing human made spaces for their own uses – they enjoy golf courses and other human made spaces. Further, by

transgressing human spatial orderings – by occupying, using, and thriving in spaces that are designated for human use – they are shaping human social and political processes in several ways. First, these specific deer, by virtue of their proximity, are forming direct and personal relationships with humans, and these relationships are subsequently impacting policy decisions. Later in this chapter I consult resident responses to various management options in the CRD and assess the ways in which humans discuss and relate to the deer around them. Second, deer have long captured the western imagination (Fletcher 2014) and as such, humans understand deer in very specific ways. Humans are engaging in conversations about what human-deer relationships should look like, and these conversations are happening at the level of municipal and regional governance, as well as in communities.

The aim of this chapter is to show how the management of urban deer in British Columbia, and in Oak Bay specifically, is characterized by the relationships deer have formed with humans in their community – in this case, the relationships between urban deer who are perceived as ‘wild’ and out of place by human residents and predominantly western settlers who occupy the CRD. I will assess the ways in which humans in Oak Bay relate to deer by analyzing resident responses to management options. Further, this chapter aims to show how western constructions of human/ nonhuman animal relationships dismiss nonhuman agency, and how this agency is in fact illuminated by deer transgressions. Thus, deer shape and impact these relationships by transgressing the orderings that humans have imposed on them. Western cultural narratives about deer in wild spaces frame deer as beautiful, serene creatures, unless, of course, they are in season (Elder, Wolch, and Emel 1998, 76). However, once those creatures are not where we

think they should be, they are often characterized as hazardous and as irritants by the humans in their midst.

I will begin by outlining the Province’s “British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis” to show how the Provincial government frames deer who are sharing spaces with humans. Then, I will analyze the CRD’s pilot project in order to see how it characterizes deer in multifarious ways in southern Vancouver Island specifically, and will move to Oak Bay’s pilot project in order to focus on the management of deer in urban spaces. I will then turn to animal organizations such as the BCSPCA and comments submitted to the CRD during their consultation process in order to better understand the ways that different people and communities form relationships with and perceive urban deer.

Urban Deer in British Columbia: Managing Human Relationships with Deer

First, it is important to outline not only the Province’s strategy of urban deer management, but also its understanding and framing of urban deer and their acceptable roles in communities. As the provincial government is responsible for wildlife management, it provides guidance and resources for municipalities that have strained relationships with wildlife, so the government’s position is important in framing the types of management decisions human communities make about the wildlife in their midst. While various ungulates like bighorn sheep and moose live in Canada, the primary challenge to urban ungulate management, especially in British Columbia, is urban deer. Canada does not have an extensive history of urban ungulate management – prior to 2010, only a few cities had implemented active urban deer management, and none existed in British Columbia (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, i). Urban

ungulate management poses a challenge for several reasons. Biologically, urban deer are highly adaptable to urban environments and thrive in the absence of natural predators. Management decisions are also difficult to make because of the overlapping roles of the provincial government and municipalities. Finally, because of the wide range of public opinions regarding urban deer and appropriate management strategies, finding a solution can be challenging (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, i). In fact, this position persists throughout the provincial government's discussion of deer management – the issue with urban deer is not so much managing the biology of deer, but rather, managing the emotions and opinions of constituents. In other words, the Province's major concern is managing constituents' responses and, as is evident in the wide range of management options implemented in different communities, deer management is less about finding the most effective solution in each case, and more about placating humans who identify urban deer as an issue. This is important because it shows how human-deer relationships are a significant driving force behind management decisions.

While most British Columbians live among various liminal animals, managing urban ungulates can be particularly challenging. According to the Province, a successful management plan will include a multitude of solutions, but “because both the positive and negative values associated with ungulates are so high, setting management goals and determining treatment options can be very difficult” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 1). In fact, Ministry officials interviewed relevant city officials and provincial wildlife managers in other Canadian cities who already have management plans in place, and found a wide range of tactics and solutions, ranging from taking no action, to a controlled hunt, to wildlife relocation. For example, while deer vehicle

accidents are frequent in Calgary, Alberta, there are no current management concerns (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 12). Residents of Magarh, Alberta, however, demanded a management plan and almost unanimously supported a quota hunt (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 14), while those in Winnipeg, Manitoba opted for relocation and overwhelmingly voiced a preference for nonlethal management options (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 21). In other words, while a range of solutions is recommended, communities generally go through a consultation process and proceed to implement the practices that are favoured by human community members, regardless of whether or not the selected management options are projected to be most effective.

Once a population plan is being designed and implemented, humans are clearly exercising power over the bodies of deer in an unbalanced way – deer cannot respond to policy in a traditional sense. However, what is significant here is that the policy decisions do not appear to be primarily driven by scientifically based population studies or previous management decisions which have been shown to work in similar regions. Rather, management decisions and tactics are based on the responses given by community members, and these responses – the reason people feel compelled to speak to deer in their community one way or another – are based on the varying relationships deer and humans have developed with each other. Thus, the deer are not simply passive recipients of human power in the form of policy, but rather, they are contentious community members. Further, deer and western settlers have a long standing history which impacts how people in Oak Bay view the urban deer in their midst. Western settlers and deer have been

constructing each other¹ since settlers overpopulated North America. John Fletcher shows how both species impact each other in almost cyclical ways – deer numbers decline as the human population rises, then as the human population peaks, deer leave the area or are generally overhunted. Then, as the human population becomes urbanized, deer numbers rise to unprecedented levels (Fletcher 2014, 170).

Thus, the Ministry acknowledges that the social conflicts of managing urban ungulates are much more challenging than the biological components. In other words, managing deer populations which come into regular conflict with humans is difficult because of the varied relationships that humans have with deer and with each other. In fact, Fletcher traces the changing relationships between deer and western settlers in North America. He shows how, as the settler population grew exponentially in the 17th and 18th century, white-tailed deer, the most commonly found deer in North America, declined by 35 to 50 percent (Fletcher 2014, 155). As the trade in deer pelts, meat, and other parts began to decimate deer populations, regulations on hunting and trading were introduced in the United States. These regulations, coupled with relocating deer to areas where their populations were eliminated, allowed the population to rebound (Fletcher 2014, 159). However, as deer populations had the opportunity to grow, human populations were increasingly moving out of the countryside and into urban neighbourhoods, resulting in a fast and strong recovery for deer. By the 1940s, farmers in New York state were complaining about damages caused by deer, and the estimated population more than doubled between 1978 and 1993, reaching almost one million (Fletcher 2014, 159).

¹ While First Nations who have ongoing relationships with deer also undoubtedly impact and construct deer populations, and vice versa, these relationships generally operate in very different ways. Considering Oak Bay's demographic of mostly western settlers, my focus here is on how this particular dynamic has manifested.

Fletcher then shows how the idea of hunting deer has changed in the cultural imagination of people – where hunters were once portrayed as “morally upright quasi-heroic figures” (Fletcher 2014, 159), releases of films like Disney’s *Bambi* (1942) and the addition of Rudolph to Santa Claus’ reindeer in 1939 have changed this perception (Fletcher 2014, 161). The author argues that cultural phenomena like *Bambi* and Rudolph took hold in the public’s imagination just as North America was being more urbanized, and as people were less likely to hunt (Fletcher 2014, 162).

Deer, then, occupy a complex space in the public imagination of many North Americans – they are simultaneously protected woodland creatures and anthropomorphized and beloved characters. While Fletcher argues that there is a general animosity towards deer hunters and the practice of hunting deer because of these close cultural associations, I would suggest that most urban dwellers in Oak Bay do not necessarily take issue with the hunting of deer, especially if it is something that appears to be regulated and occurring ‘out there’ in ‘the wild’. However, because these particular deer have transgressed – they have left the wilderness and entered human spaces – they are increasingly challenging the humans around them. There is a sense that these deer do not belong here, and as such, human residents are not required to accommodate them. In order to illustrate this, the ministry draws a distinction between biological carrying capacity (BCC) and cultural carrying capacity (CCC). The BCC of a region is “the number of ungulates in good physical condition that a parcel of land can support over an extended period of time” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 2), while the CCC is “the maximum number of ungulates that can coexist compatibly with local human populations” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 2). The CCC of

a region can be difficult to determine, and can also vary significantly depending on the views of the human population. Therefore, the same number of deer could reach CCC in one region, and not in another region with similar external factors depending on the views of the human citizens. CCC is determined by “local land use practices, local population density, and attitudes and priorities of humans” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 2), and indications that CCC has been reached include a rise in homeowner complaints, vehicle collisions, and reports of wildlife aggression. In other words, what is needed for deer or other ungulates to be considered a management concern is the human perception of a large or problematic population, which does not necessarily mean that the deer population is in fact too large to be supported by the land. This is important because it shows that the management of deer in the CRD and in Oak Bay is not solely driven by scientific or ecological concerns, but rather, that the views and comforts of local human residents play a significant role in the responses of various levels of government.

Deer not only live in urban environments, they thrive in them for a number of reasons. First, deer and other ungulates do well on edge habitat, so they are particularly well suited for the fragmentation of urban green spaces (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 4). They can easily find a range of habitat in city parks, open fields, and urban gardens. Further, deer have no natural predators in urban environments – larger animals who would normally hunt adult deer do not live in the city, and smaller animals who might hunt fawns under normal circumstances have very different behaviours in urban spaces (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 4). Finally, humans also contribute to the success of urban ungulates. Intentional wildlife feeding habituates deer

to urban spaces and provides additional nutrients, and hunting restrictions in urban areas provide additional protection to populations who would normally be subject to seasonal hunts (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 4).

Growth in the deer population can have negative consequences for humans, especially as deer approach CCC. Deer can have negative impacts on green spaces, particularly as the population grows and there is an increase in competition for food (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 5). Over browsing homeowners' vegetable and flower gardens can lead to complaints and tension between humans and deer. Another significant issue is a rise in ungulate vehicle collisions – while data on ungulate vehicle collisions in municipalities is not regularly collected, communities with high ungulate populations generally report high rates of collisions (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 6). High densities of ungulates also lead to fear of disease, as diseases can be spread between ungulates, between ungulates and humans, and between ungulates and livestock (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 6). Finally, reports of aggressive behaviour can lead to complaints and calls for population management.

Because urban ungulate management is so multifaceted, a plan that features many options, including short term and long term solutions, is necessary in order for it to be successful (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 46). There are four major categories of urban ungulate management – conflict reduction options, population reduction options, fertility control options, and administrative options – and each category features several tactics. Conflict reduction options focus on keeping deer away from properties and minimizing the damage they can inflict onto personal properties

(Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 47) by using hazing or frightening techniques, installing appropriate fencing, and using landscaping alternatives, to name a few. According to the Province, even though deer can cause damage to property and personal gardens, they are “important and valued species” which makes population management “both a social and political issue” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 47). Population reduction options include capture and relocate, and various forms of a cull, including capture and euthanize, controlled public hunting, sharpshooting, and natural predator introduction. Population reduction is generally carried out in two phases where a significant portion of the population is removed followed by maintenance culls (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 66). Fertility control options can be physical or hormonal – animals can be surgically sterilized, or given various types of contraceptives. Fertility control only provides long-term solutions and can be difficult to implement with large, roaming populations (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 97). Finally, administrative options are also important as they include monitoring, amending bylaws and regulations, and public education. Population management must include some administrative options as there are often existing administrative limitations, such as a need for a bylaw prohibiting the feeding of deer. Further, as the goal of population management is not to eradicate deer, but rather, to decrease human-deer conflict, public education and outreach are important for long-term success and cohabitation.

However, the ultimate challenge to managing deer populations is their human neighbours, and more specifically, shifts in public views and opinions – according to the Province, “community residents have strongly held and varied opinions about what

should happen with “their” deer” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 34). Even though government officials are identifying deer management as a sensitive issue for many human residents and proceeding with caution because of that, one of the reasons behind these strong human emotions is the varied relationships that humans and deer have developed. Fletcher argues that the “often ill-informed public, increasingly urban in attitude, dislike the idea of killing deer, so there is therefore implicit disapproval of hunters” (Fletcher 2014, 172). However, these urban sensibilities are challenged in places like Oak Bay when human residents cohabitate with deer. Once deer have transgressed out of the wilderness and into human spaces, they are out of place – to the extent that people file formal complaints and view deer as a management concern – and are disrupting the images we have created of deer in our collective imaginations. Thus, there is a growing disconnect and tension between how we imagine deer – wild, serene, mystical – and how we experience them – in our yards and on our roads. There are also human residents who do, in fact, enjoy living among deer and are happy and willing to amend their behaviours in order to cohabitate with them. However, Oak Bay is managing deer populations because a significant number of complaints have been filed, to the extent that the municipality could not ignore the issue. Changes in the way the general public relates to nonhuman animals means that wildlife management is shifting from maximizing wildlife populations for the purpose of hunting, to “maximizing wildlife values for society” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 34). In other words, the varying ways in which humans relate to deer have resulted in diverse relationships and values in regard to how deer should be treated by humans. The ‘wildlife values’ present in a given human community are often inconsistent, the result is “a

management challenge rooted in social values, ethical decisions and possibly legal issues rather than strict biological or ecological considerations” (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a, 34). Thus, management decisions now have social, political, and legal components, in addition to biological and ecological considerations.

Capital Regional District: Human-Deer Conflict in Urban and Rural Spaces

The Capital Regional District (CRD) encompasses the southern tip of Vancouver Island and the surrounding Gulf Islands and works to provide regional decision-making and shared local government services. After widespread acknowledgement of tensions rising between black tailed deer and humans in the region, including complaints from community members and requests from municipalities for an overarching management plan, the CRD petitioned the provincial government for a management plan in 2011 (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 1). The provincial government’s response indicated that designing and implementing a community deer management plan is the responsibility of local levels of government, thus, the CRD appointed a Citizen’s Advisory Group (CAG), whose role it was to review population management options and develop a Regional Deer Management Strategy according to the board-adopted Terms of Reference with the assistance of an Expert Resources Working Group (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 2). While the CRD is a region that encompasses urban, rural, and agricultural land use, the CAG was tasked with prioritizing agriculture-deer problems.² Ultimately, the goal of the CAG was “to identify, evaluate and recommend options to mitigate deer-human conflicts over short and long

² Since my case study is Oak Bay, an urban municipality, I will primarily be focusing my attention on solutions aimed at urban environments. However, since the CAG’s main goal is to lessen the impact of urban deer on farmers and crops, it is also important to consider how these relationships impact policy more broadly.

terms” (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 2), and many of the solutions they considered were derived from the “British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis”.

There is no clear methodology to account for urban deer populations, so the CRD bases its claim that the deer population in urban spaces is growing based on citizen reports and concerns. Currently, the provincial government provides deer population data for Vancouver Island as a whole, and while the population seems to be steady or mildly increasing, “anecdotal evidence of increased conflict confirms that urban deer are present in areas where they were not seen in earlier years, indicating that urban populations are increasing, even if overall counts may be stable” (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 8). Thus, the management goals for urban spaces in the CRD is to “reduce the deer population to natural levels inside settled areas and provide urban residents with measures to reduce deer human conflicts to within the range of individual tolerance levels” ” (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, iii). As no population studies have been conducted in the CRD, it seems that “natural levels” simply indicates tolerable levels – there does not seem to be an account of how many deer are currently living in the area, nor is there an account of how many deer would be appropriate. Further, reference to settled areas once again frames deer as outsiders who do not belong in or near human settlements. The main concerns identified for urban regions are garden losses, human/pet health, and deer-human/pet safety. In regard to garden loss, most “expressed a level of personal frustration with the current situation” (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 10) – an indication that deer in this region have surpassed CCC. There are also concerns regarding exposure to Lyme

disease, as well as aggressive or territorial deer, especially in the spring when fawns are born. Further, in all regions deer-vehicle collisions remain a concern.

After reviewing various management options as outlined by the “British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis”, the CAG recommended multiple short and long term solutions for urban, rural, and agricultural areas. Among their recommendations for urban areas, the CAG advocated for more mitigation options for property owners in order to lessen the damage deer can inflict on personal gardens (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 28). They also suggested the consideration of various policies, including granting municipalities the authority to deal with aggressive deer, implementing bylaws that prohibit the feeding of deer, creating incentives for installing appropriate deer-proof fencing, and purchasing repellants in bulk (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 28). Finally, the CAG also recommended the implementation of a cull using both sharpshooting and capture and euthanize methods, depending on the type of property and amount of openness. In order to decrease deer-vehicle accidents, the CAG recommended working with The Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC) to increase driver awareness, as well as using ICBC identified high collision zones to improve signage and decrease speed limits (Capital Regional District, Citizen’s Advisory Group 2012, 29).

While the “British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis” strongly identifies considering human responses to population management plans as a crucial component to successful management, the CRD’s assessment of local deer does not, even though they clearly state that their management plan is based on the “British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis”. The CRD’s report lacks any mention of emotional

human responses to deer, both negative and positive. Arguably, the CRD's motivation behind creating this report comes from ongoing complaints from various parts of the region, and coupled with their public consultation process, which I will discuss in a later section of this chapter, they are able to gauge the mood of the general public. Further, since the CAG's main focus was on alleviating crop damage and losses faced by farmers, the discussion around deer and their rightful place in communities is framed by economic loss and frustration. In her research, Rosemary-Claire Collard shows how cougars in Sooke on Vancouver Island are made killable when they threaten the lives or property (in the form of domesticated animals) of humans (Collard 2012, 31). She shows how even though community members often have a sense that cougars are a natural part of the region, once they make spaces that are understood as human spaces unsafe, they are deemed killable. Similarly, deer in the CRD are framed as pests because of the severe damage they are able to inflict onto crops and private property in general – many farmers with large properties cannot install proper fencing around all of their land, and therefore deer have easy access to food sources. In other words, since the primary focus of the CRD's CAG is to accommodate farmers, the debate at this level of government understands the relationships between deer and humans in a very particular way – deer are damaging property, and their numbers need to be controlled.

The deer are also made killable by transgressing human orderings – they are entering spaces that have been designated for human use, and by rejecting the category of 'wild' which has been imposed onto them, they are challenging and reshaping the ways that they interact with humans. These changes challenge human perceptions of belonging and order, and once public safety and property damage become issues in these new

relationships, the deer are seen as imposters who need to be eradicated. Glen Elder, Jennifer Wolch, and Jody Emel show how “animal practices, rooted in deep-seated cultural beliefs and social norms, fuel ongoing efforts to racialize and devalue certain groups of immigrants” (Elder, Wolch, and Emel 1998, 73). The authors argue that all human communities create practices involving nonhuman animals which are normalized, and when these practices are disrupted or when community members – often those who are different from the majority racially or culturally – act contrary to what is expected, they are framed as ‘savages’. In other words, the dominant group uses the animal practices of the minority to label and police their behaviour.

This need to police very specific animal practices which are seen as violent, while disregarding violent practices which have been normalized by the majority explains why Oak Bay, and the CRD more broadly, have taken such care to implement very specific ‘humane’ practices. As culling deer is a new practice for the region, it is important to implement culls in a way that guarantees moral high ground. Elder, Wolch, and Emel argue that there are four key elements that are important to consider – the rationale for harm, whether or not the person inflicting the harm is ‘appropriate’, the way the harm is inflicted, and the site of the harm (Elder, Wolch, and Emel 1998, 84-5). In the CRD, culling deer is justified because they are annihilating crops, causing an increase in vehicular accidents, and they also have the potential to spread disease, such as Lyme disease. Further, in the case of Oak Bay, both the person inflicting the harm and the method of harm were carefully selected (District of Oak Bay 2015, 10). It is on the last point – location – that the carefully constructed veneer between animals we value and animals we kill comes apart. Animals we deem killable generally do not reside in urban

and suburban neighbourhoods – the animals we eat often come from farms which are far from where most people live, the animals whose bodies we use in science are behind many walls and security passcodes, the animals who entertain us are only glimpsed as we rarely have any idea what happens between the scenes. While cities and other urban spaces are often also be used as nonhuman animals who many people may classify as vermin, like rats and mice, these animals are generally not as visible as deer, often because of their smaller size or predominantly night time activities. Most western settlers can easily condemn others for their treatment of animals because we choose to turn away from the harm we inflict. Therefore, culling a deer population in an urban neighbourhood needs to be done with great care in order to maintain that we, as a western settler community, engage in humane relationships with nonhuman animals.

Oak Bay: Managing Urban Deer

Oak Bay is a municipality in the CRD that is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island near the city of Victoria. Since deer-human conflicts and complaints have been on the rise in Oak Bay, the municipality chose to participate in the region's "Deer Management Strategy Urban Pilot Project" as a way of addressing these concerns. The main concerns residents had prior to the pilot project were deer-vehicle collisions, aggressive deer behaviour, damage to properties and gardens, and deer feces in parks and other public areas (District of Oak Bay 2015, 2). The project began in the fall of 2013, and by 2014 Oak Bay had implemented several management strategies geared towards reducing deer-human conflict (District of Oak Bay 2015, 2). They renewed fencing bylaws, reprinted and distributed educational brochures, implemented the use of deer repellents in parks, increased fines for feeding deer to \$300.00, provided the public with

updates electronically, increased signage in areas with high deer populations, and assisted the CRD with a population count (District of Oak Bay 2015, 2). Oak Bay also used public updates to urge citizens to “actively focus on conflict reduction throughout [their] pilot program” because “learning to live safely and sensibly with urban deer is a responsibility that we all must share” (Jensen 2014, 1). However, in his letter to residents, Mayor Jensen also noted that “[deer] are wild animals – they are not pets” (Jensen 2014, 1). In other words, while urging residents to cohabitate with deer, he simultaneously imposes a wild/ domesticated dichotomy onto deer. Since they do not properly fit into this dichotomy – they are not domesticated by any means, but they also do not live their lives away from human activity – deer can be seen as transgressors who are disrupting the appropriate order of things.

After implementing a variety of nonlethal management options, Oak Bay determined that it needed to control the local deer population through a cull. This was a high profile election issue in the municipality, and Oak Bay residents elected officials with the mandate to proceed with a cull (District of Oak Bay 2015, 3). Logistically, executing the cull proved difficult as there were some issues coordinating with the provincial government regarding allocating resources, traps, and properly trained personnel (District of Oak Bay 2015, 4). However, more importantly, Oak Bay had a difficult time with the emotional and public component of implementing a cull. According to the document commissioned by the municipality for the project’s end, “regardless of having the support of the silent majority in our community, there is currently no permitted and socially acceptable way to responsibly and ethically manage a growing population of urban deer in a manner that does not financially and emotionally

severely challenge the municipal leadership who are taking action” (District of Oak Bay 2015, 4). In fact, this document repeatedly refers to the sensitive nature of the issue and gives multiple suggestions for how deer management can be better handled in the future, including having a management team in place prior to executing management solutions, better educating the public, and communicating with media (District of Oak Bay 2015).

Further escalating the sensitivity of the issue is the fact that several local organizations oppose the cull, perhaps most notably the BCSPCA. The BCSPCA issued a position statement on Oak Bay’s desire to implement a cull and stated that they are against a cull when “there is a lack of credible scientific evidence to support it, and/or it cannot be achieved humanely” (British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals 2014, 1). The BCSPCA urges communities to choose nonlethal options, as it suggests that lethal options only provide a temporary solution. However, if a cull is indeed undertaken, the BCSPCA states that it must be “conducted in a humane, responsible and sustainable manner by qualified and experienced wildlife professionals in accordance with the BC SPCA Hunting Position Statement” (British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals 2014, 2). Once Oak Bay announced its decision to proceed with a cull, the BCSPCA reaffirmed their strong opposition, noting that “the transient and unknown deer population in the CRD spans numerous municipalities, and therefore the cull [in Oak Bay] is bound to fail to achieve reduced deer interactions in the long-term (British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals 2015, 1).

This focus on the sensitivity and complexity of deer management is important because it reveals the complex relationships people have with deer in their communities, in addition to the range of values expressed by different community members. As

residents who chose to comment on urban deer in the CRD will show in the following section, many people believe that deer are valuable community members, and many others see them as intruders. Regardless of the negative or positive nature of these views, deer in Oak Bay seem to have taken a hold of human residents' imagination. These relationships are by no means equal – humans are still the ones making management choices – but the deer are not passive objects in this situation. The CRD and Oak Bay are both implementing policy because of resident complaints and concern; however, these resident concerns are responses to deer activities around them. In other words, deer are not static, they repurpose human-made spaces for their own uses, and they interact with the humans around them. The heightened emotional responses on either side of the debate indicate that what is happening between humans and deer is much more complex than humans imposing power structures and regulations onto deer – deer create visceral responses from the general public. Further, when humans do, in fact, attempt to fence their property or plant deer-proof vegetation, deer have figured out ways to get past these obstacles. They are not accepting human orderings, in fact, they are highly adaptable and resourceful.

Local Positions: The City of Gardens Cohabitates with Deer

Finally, in order to better understand both the negative and positive relationships humans have built with these deer, it is important to consider the written responses that were collected by the CRD during the CAG's public consultation process. Since these responses are from residents of the CRD, there is no way to determine who lives in Oak Bay and who does not. However, many responses make reference to urban settings or farmland, therefore it is possible to discern to some extent what type of environment the

responders live in. During the collection of these responses, residents were asked to comment on a particular set of management options at a time, and three rounds of responses were collected. I surveyed all of the responses that were made available through the CRD and looked for trends between different responders. Many of the people who submitted their feedback expressed strong feelings about deer in their neighbourhoods, and also generally expressed preference for certain management methods over others. Since this was an optional exercise which required residents to seek out questionnaires and answer them, it follows that many of the respondents would have strong feelings about local deer, whether positive or negative. My goal in this section is to show a variety of opinions in order to illustrate the different types of relationships people in the CRD have with deer.

I particularly want to focus on responses that depict deer as either belonging or as invaders. This is important because it illustrates two of the primary ways deer are framed and understood in Oak Bay. Some people do not see deer as belonging and object to their presence for a variety of reasons. One resident was claimed that “the sooner the deer population is reduced the better. I've now been unable to grow any vegetables for my family in my back yard for the past 3 years and the deer are constantly decimating my perennials” (Capital Regional District 2012a, 7). Another argued that “deer do not belong in urban and suburban areas. They also should not be allowed to threaten the livelihood of farmers and threaten our food supply. In decades past the [First] [N]ations people, hunters, farmers, explorers etcetera prevented the deer problem by killing and eating them. We should do that again” (Capital Regional District 2012b, 19). Both of these sentiments were repeated multiple times – many people saw the deer as animals who

were forcing them to make accommodations they were unwilling to make. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that liminal nonhuman animals, like deer in Oak Bay, are made invisible because they are neither wild nor domesticated, and as such, they disrupt human orderings of animals. The authors suggest that this invisibility leads to a “de-legitimization of their very presence” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 211). This notion helps to shed light on the views of some Oak Bay residents – since deer are occupying urban spaces, and yet are often not seen as belonging to those spaces, their existence in the city becomes stigmatized. Multiple respondents also commented on the role of First Nations peoples in the hunt, on occasion to suggest that including First Nations in deer culls might make the process bureaucratically easier to implement, ultimately trivializing the relationships that First Nations have with deer. Further, the sentiment that deer simply do not belong where people are was articulated many times but rarely was it coupled with an understanding of the human causes behind urban deer populations, such as urban sprawl and the eradication of natural predators.

Others expressed great care and admiration for deer – even including comments that suggested they enjoyed having deer in their spaces: “I am surrounded by deer, and yet have developed a method of gardening, including vegetable gardening, which allows me to keep the deer out of the things I don't want them in. In the open area, I grow only deer-proof plants. And, I love having them around. (Capital Regional District 2012b, 16). Multiple gardeners, like this respondent, also explained how they themselves have cohabitated with deer in their own gardens: “our front yard is all deer-proof plants and the back is all fenced. There are safe routes for the deer to move from place to place. This has worked well for us for 23 years and certainly has required us to adapt but we

feel that it is our responsibility to do the adapting. The deer are residents in our neighbourhood. We protect them as we would any other neighbour” (Capital Regional District 2012c, 16). This is important because it shows how people can choose to account for the needs of nonhuman animals around them by seeing them as neighbours and as community members who belong and deserve reasonable accommodation. Both of these accounts, as well as many others, indicate long term interactions with deer, which would suggest that there are ongoing relationships between these residents and the deer in their neighbourhoods. This is important because it shows an alternative way of relating to deer that incorporates implementing accommodations for their presence and behaviours. While many people in Oak Bay and the CRD indicate that cohabitating with deer is unreasonable, the two respondents above show that they have managed to garden and grow food on at least a small scale without disruptions from deer. Therefore, for at least some human residents in Oak Bay and the CRD, the presence of deer is legitimate, and as such, they have chosen to make efforts to accommodate deer and cohabitate with them.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined deer management from the perspective of several different levels of government, including provincial, regional, and municipal levels. The management of urban deer is often determined by the relationships that humans have with the animals in their communities, and as such, population managers are likely to select solutions that reflect the desires of the community. Western understandings of nonhuman animals largely limit or ignore animal agency, and as such the transgressions of liminal animals like deer work to highlight this agency. Further, in the case of deer in Oak Bay, there is a strong sense of belonging and not belonging – while some residents

cohabitate with deer and happily make amendments to their behaviour in order to accommodate deer, others see deer as pests who do not belong in the wild. However, regardless of whether human residents view deer in a positive or negative light, the deer in Oak Bay are not passive recipients of human power and orderings. Rather, they construct the community they live in both by virtue of their physical presence and impact on their environment, and by virtue of their relationships with their human neighbours.

Bear Neighbours and Trophies in the Great Bear Rainforest

Introduction

Our teachings that have been handed down say that our first ancestors came from the upper world in the beginning of time in the form of the grizzly bear.

- Clyde Tallio, Nuxalk, *Bear Witness*

On the walls of heaven hung all the coats of the different animals and he gave the First Peoples a choice of what they wanted to come to earth as.

- Karen Anderson, Nuxalk, *Bear Witness*

They use the grizzly bear ... as a way to move between the worlds.

- Clyde Tallio, Nuxalk, *Bear Witness*

When they came down, the coat of the animal went back to heaven, and now we have a direct connection to the creator through our crest.

- Karen Anderson, Nuxalk, *Bear Witness*

When we are here in Kimsquit with our young people, we teach them these lessons. We teach them to respect that this is, we're in the home of the grizzly bear right now.

- Clyde Tallio, Nuxalk, *Bear Witness*

In 2013, Bears Forever, an initiative of Coastal First Nations aimed at ending the trophy hunt of bears in the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia, made a film about the kill of one particular bear, a grizzly named Cheeky. In *Bear Witness*, members of multiple First Nations along the coast discuss their personal relationships with bears, as well as the broader relationships their communities have with these animals. Above is a story told by two Nuxalk people about the significance of grizzly bears to their community.³ This is important because it provides an example of the intimate relationship the Nuxalk people share with bears, and the significant role bears play in

³ I am purposefully using a direct quote here and elsewhere in this chapter because it is important for Indigenous people's voices to be heard as they are, rather than through any filter that I would surely impose onto these stories if I were to choose to paraphrase them.

their community, spiritually, culturally, and historically. Bears are not seen as passive objects who are acted upon by humans, but rather, as active participants in their relationships and encounters with humans.

Despite opposition from First Nations and many other British Columbians, the provincial government continues to issue hunting licenses for both grizzly and black bears in the Great Bear Rainforest. However, public interest and general discontent in the way that British Columbia manages its bear populations has steadily grown in recent years – the issue is now regularly covered in provincial and national news outlets (Hume 2013, Moore 2014, Pynn 2013), and much of the opposition to the hunt has come from Bears Forever, a Coastal First Nations initiative. While trophy hunting for bears happens all over the province, Bears Forever works specifically to protect bears in the Great Bear Rainforest on BC's coast.

This burst of attention has been partially generated by the increase in scientific research, often not only in collaboration with First Nations, but with First Nations leading and directing research questions. This has resulted in community-led research which asks questions that local communities want and need answered (Artelle et al. 2014, Housty 2014, Service et al. 2014). Some First Nations, especially in the Great Bear Rainforest, have used this data to challenge the Province's bear trophy hunt in their traditional territories and have successfully generated news coverage and public interest opposing the hunt. This issue has ethical, cultural, social, legal, scientific, and economic components, and each of these lenses is often interpreted and presented differently depending on the stakeholder in question. For example, according to the Ministry of Environment, the hunting of grizzly bears not only has a long history in British Columbia

which predates European settlement, but also has a long tradition of non-resident hunts (Province of BC 2010, 1). However, according to the Bears Forever campaign, bears feature within the cultural ceremonies and crests of every Coastal First Nation – “they are more than neighbours; in many families, they are considered relatives” (Bears Forever 2013-2014, “The Debate is Over.”). While both sides reference history, there is a clear division between whose history is valued and protected by the province’s policy – there is an effort to preserve the non-resident hunts which have taken place on these lands since the 1900s, but little, if any, attention is given to the long standing history of Coastal First Nations. Ultimately, both grizzly and black bears are seen as significant members of their Indigenous communities – Coastal First Nations live among these bears and feature them heavily in their stories and dances. The bears also play significant roles in the overall health of the ecosystem on which the local people depend. These processes and histories are interlinked and challenge the nature/ culture divide that is often constructed in western thought. What is at stake then, simultaneously, is both the health of the ecosystem and the flourishing and continuation of the place based cultures of the Coastal First Nations.

The Great Bear Rainforest is a rich, abundant, and lush region on British Columbia’s coast, which roughly stretches from the northern tip of Vancouver Island to the northern tip of Haida Gwaii. Here, wildlife is plentiful and incredibly interconnected – the forests and the ocean move in cyclical patterns that have sustained life for thousands of years. The people that have lived in this remote region since time immemorial are intimately familiar with these natural processes and with the animals who live here. Bears are important residents in the Great Bear Rainforest – some of the

last grizzlies in North America live here, and there is a high concentration of Spirit bears, black bears with a recessive gene that results in their white coat, on coastal islands in the region. They are incredibly rare and many people go on guided tours for the opportunity to see them in their natural habitat.

While Spirit bears are protected from trophy hunters, the black bears who carry the necessary recessive genes are not. Further, the Province continues to allow the trophy hunting of grizzly bears in the region. In recent years, Coastal First Nations, an organization that is a collaboration of First Nations on the North and Central Coast of British Columbia and Haida Gwaii, has put together the Bears Forever campaign, which aims to end trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest. Most importantly, Coastal First Nations assert that bears are culturally and spiritually significant, and that they play important roles in the ecosystem that sustains local communities. As such, bears are constructive members of these communities and are understood as such – they impact the humans they live among in a multitude of ways. Further, bears are also significant to some nations economically – those, like the Kitasoo/Xai'xais, who have developed bear viewing industries depend on this business to employ people in their small remote communities. Additionally, many Indigenous people see guiding as positively getting people back onto the land, enriching their understandings of cultural practices and teachings, which are foundational in the enactment of their governance. Finally, in calling for the protection of bears, Coastal First Nations are challenging the provincially mandated hunt both because of their relationships to bears, and because of growing population evidence which runs contrary to the information the government bases its quotas on. However, this challenge to the Province's management of bears, while

supported by scientific evidence, is first and foremost based in First Nations' rights to stewardship, which are rooted in Indigenous laws.

In this chapter I will show how Coastal First Nations' ongoing relationships with bears inform their cultural and legal practices, and how these practices create a sense of obligation and responsibility to bears. Ultimately, in these relationships, bears are understood as possessors of agency. Coastal First Nations have bound together to protect bears in their traditional territories because of the cultural, social, and environmental relationships they share with them. Two things are happening simultaneously: one, ongoing relationships with bears are driving Indigenous people to stand up for them on the Coast; and two, while First Nations' understandings of bears are already political, the fact that this is happening as a challenge to the provincial government in the context of resource management is politicizing bears in a western context as well.

First, I will compare several First Nations' accounts of both their personal relationships and their communities' relationships to animals and nature to western understandings of animals and nature, specifically by looking at how Destination BC markets and sells British Columbia to tourists. This is important because it contextualizes the differences between these competing understandings of human relationships with nature and nonhuman animals in regard to tourism. Further, throughout this chapter, I will return to the ways in which bears construct Coastal First Nations communities through their relationships with the people in these communities by looking at first person narratives. Then, I will show why Coastal First Nations see the protection of bears as crucial by outlining the Bears Forever campaign. I will then turn to the government's quotas and policies for trophy hunts in the Great Bear Rainforest. Finally, I will conclude

by showing how Coastal First Nations are challenging the Province's hunt by partnering with scientists, rallying other British Columbians, and challenging the economic validity of the Province's hunt.

Indigenous & Western Depictions of Human/ Nonhuman Relationships

Below, Robert Johnson, a Heiltsuk man from Bella Bella, depicts his relationship with Cheeky and his encounter with the people who killed him:

They took three shots. First shot knocked the bear down, second shot was to make sure it was down, and then the third shot they took was from their twelve-gauge defender to finish the bear off. This bear that my brother and I, named him Cheeky. He'd crawl in the grass and pop his head up and look at us and stick his tongue out at us. He just kept getting cheeky with us, just walking up and down the beach. They came out at ten to ten with their bear hide, skull and paws. I went back to my boat and got my DNA equipment, took DNA right from the bear hide, took a bunch of pictures with him. They said "Oh yeah, we've seen your sign."⁴ ... At that point, I didn't know what to feel. When I got back to camp I just sat there and cried. ... While he was alive I was about 50 yards from him. Most of the bears that we got to see, we just talk to them and told them who we are, what we're doing there. And then you got these bear hunters who come in and sit and hide in the bushes and wait for a bear to come out. They get home and they brag about it, tell their friends "Yeah, look what I got. I went all the way up to this beautiful country, and I've come home with this hide."

- Robert Johnson, Heiltsuk, *Bear Witness*

Johnson expresses ongoing relationship with Cheeky – this is a bear he had encountered enough times to have given him a name and to have noticed notable characteristics about him, such as his behaviour. Further, Johnson suggests that he has built relationships with multiple bears when he explains the types of conversations he typically has with them. This way of relating to and being with nonhuman animals is starkly different from the ways in which many people in Oak Bay relate to deer. Since trophy hunting is a form of tourism, the differences can be exemplified by the way that

⁴ Referring to a sign erected by all nine Coastal First Nations indicating that trophy hunting is closed in the Great Bear Rainforest.

Destination British Columbia sells BC and the nature-based tourism people can engage in here.

Destination British Columbia's "The Wild Within" promotional film showcases the raw, natural beauty of British Columbia's wilderness with stunning visuals and epic, grand narration. British Columbia is pure, fertile, abundant, naturally rich, supreme, super natural, constant, changing, exhilarating, alive, wild (Destination British Columbia 2014). This wilderness is so powerful, it forces you to rethink life's measures and to see the undeniable thread that connects us all – wildlife thrives here – so presumably, the connections you are meant to experience in this place include this thriving wildlife. If you come here, according to the promotional film, you will be reminded of what it feels like to be alive (Destination British Columbia 2014).

This narrative is selling British Columbia to western settlers and tourists as an emotional experience, a life altering nature adventure that will connect you and move you in ways you have never experienced before. It is easy to get lost in the lush, vibrant visuals – British Columbia is truly stunning – but at the heart of this narrative is one of the most tired western narratives: the insufficiently challenged idea that nature and culture are always opposites, that civilization and culture happen in urban spaces, that nature embodies savagery and mysticism and, ultimately, that nature, and those⁵ associated with it, can – and should – be conquered by western ideas, cultures, and people. While this narrative suggests that nature, and by extension the nonhuman animals we categorize along side nature, can have a transformative impact, it obscures the agency of nonhuman animals and processes.

⁵ While my focus in this thesis is nonhuman animals, it is not lost on me that the categorical separation of culture and nature has been used historically, and continues to be used today, to other and marginalize many different types of people, including Indigenous peoples all over North America.

The role that nonhuman animals, and natural processes more broadly, play in people's lives according to this narrative differs dramatically from how many Indigenous people relate to animals and nature. Charlotte Coté depicts the significance of the Makah Nation's revitalization of their traditional whaling practices in 1999. She argues that for the Makah and for the Nuu-chah-nulth, "historically, whaling served important social, subsistence, and ritual functions that were at the core of our societies" (Coté 2010, 6). When over-harvesting by commercial whalers depleted the gray whale population in the early 1920s, both Nations' hunts dwindled, and with them, so did "the ritual and spiritual elements that were central to our tradition" (Coté 2010, 6). Thus, the revival of the whale hunt has meant the participation of new generations in this important practice, and has also been a part of a larger revitalization of culture and self-determination which aims to overcome problems faced by these communities by strengthening cultural practices (Coté 2010, 7). For both of these Nations, the act of harvesting a grey whale takes great preparation and care, and the whale's gift is treated with great respect and care.

Similarly, Julie Cruikshank explores the significance of glaciers for Northern Indigenous peoples. For her, glaciers are actors – in the Athapaskan and Tlingit accounts she considers, "glaciers take action and respond to their surroundings, ... they make moral judgments and they punish infractions" (Cruikshank 2005, 3). In fact, she notes that "some elders who know them well describe them as both animate (endowed with life) and animating (giving life to) landscapes they inhabit" (Cruikshank 2005, 3). This is important because it shows how glaciers can be significant contributors to communities – they are seen as entities worth knowing due to their animate and animating nature. For Cruikshank, glaciers are particularly significant due to their "contributions to social

imagination” (Cruikshank 2005, 6). In both cases, nonhumans, both in the form of animals and other beings, are understood as actors who make conscious decisions, and as such, engage in complex relationships with each other and with humans.

While Indigenous teachings show the deep-seated connections and relationships between culture, nonhuman animals, and nature, western thought is based on stark divisions between nature and culture. In fact, what allegedly makes British Columbia so special is that it is here that the lines between wilderness and civilization are blurred. Our cities are shaped by their surroundings – Vancouver is “nestled between mountainous peaks and the ocean’s arms, [and] these untamed elements permeate every aspect of our culture, shaping who we are and how we live” (Wild Within 2015). However untamed and permeable the wilderness that surrounds us is, make no mistake, Vancouver is “wild by design” (Wild Within 2015). The word design invokes imagery of meticulous planning, careful choices, and structure. Yes, elements of wilderness are important in Vancouver – we have indeed been shaped by our surroundings – but these surroundings have shaped us only as much as we have let them, because ultimately, urban Vancouver has conquered the wilderness that surrounds it and erased its liminality by overtaking it. The local mountains are accessible by city transit, you can climb nature’s stair master and have breakfast with Grouse’s orphaned grizzly bears, the water that surrounds the city is permanently occupied by tankers, and far from thriving, local wildlife is learning to exist in a dense, urban environment.

Further, the depiction of British Columbia as “a dichotomy that reflects our refined civilization and raw wilderness” (Destination British Columbia 2014) categorically excludes wildlife from ideas of culture and community. By presenting

refined civilization and raw wilderness as opposites, as entities that may interact, but at their cores are profoundly and undeniably different, those who are seen as belonging to the wild are excluded from civilization, culture, and community. If civilization and wilderness are a dichotomy, liminal animals – those who live near and among humans and form mixed-species societies with us and with each other – are not only excluded, but erased.

If one can only belong to the ‘refined civilization’ of BC’s urban centres, or the ‘raw wilderness’ that surrounds these places, where do British Columbia’s liminal animals fit in? For Donaldson and Kymlicka, liminal animals are “non-domesticated species who have adapted to life among humans” (Kymlicka and Donaldson 2011, 210) – while this definition might be helpful when it comes to animals who live in urban spaces where they are vastly outnumbered by humans, like the case of deer in Oak Bay, it is not as useful in the case of bears on the Central Coast. By the authors’ definition, these bears would likely be categorized as wild as they are not dependent on human settlement for survival. However, as exemplified by Johnson’s account at the beginning of this chapter, bears on the Central Coast form complex relationships with the people around them. Further, considering the far-reaching impacts of climate change and human activities in general, even animals who live in incredibly remote areas and are unlikely to see humans in their lifetime are deeply impacted by human activity. Therefore, the idea of “truly wild animals ... who avoid humans and human settlement, [and] maintain a separate and independent existence” (Kymlicka and Donaldson 2011, 156) is likely relevant for very few, if any, species.

Coastal First Nations: Opposition to the Hunt

Bears Forever is a project of Coastal First Nations and the Central Coast First Nations Bear Working Group. While all nine nations which make up Coastal First Nations have used tribal law to ban trophy hunting on their traditional territories the Bear Working Group is made up of four nations: the Wuikinuxv Nation in Rivers Inlet, the Heiltsuk Nation in Bella Bella, the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation in Klemtu, and the Nuxalk Nation in Bella Coola.

In order to understand the significance of the tribal ban enacted in all of these communities, I first turn to Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows. John Borrows argues that law is a way of being guided, and that, more importantly, law is a cultural phenomenon (Borrows 2012, 8). He further argues that Canada's legal system is based on legal pluralism because civil, common, and Indigenous legal systems simultaneously exist and overlap. For Borrows, the legitimacy of a legal tradition not only comes from its historical grounding, but is also based on its ability to apply to the modern world and to yield authority (Borrows 2012, 8). He argues that the current Canadian legal system only formally recognizes civil and common law, even though Indigenous legal systems from many nations are not only in line with current understanding of law in Canada, but are already operating and functioning as authoritative legal systems in their communities (Borrows 2012, 107). Thus, for Borrows, Canada can only stand to gain by formally recognizing Indigenous legal practices.

The Heiltsuk's *gvi'ilas*, or legal practices, are important as they impact all areas of people's lives and provide guidance for the appropriate way to conduct oneself. Historically, *gvi'ilas* were an ongoing practice that required consensus decision-making and regular amendments to laws that were not serving the community as intended

(GEOG 453 2014). The traditional values behind *gvi'ilas* continue to be integral today, and are inline with the present day ban of trophy hunting. The Heiltsuk believe that all living beings are equally important and that they are all connected and provide for one another (Carpenter 1988). Further, all living beings have spirits “and are capable of feelings and communication” (Carpenter 1988). These beliefs about other living beings have led to hunting and finishing practices that aim to conserve and not take anything that will not be used. Thus, it follows that trophy hunting is not in line with Heiltsuk cultural beliefs – trophy hunters aim to kill an animal in order to collect souvenirs – in the case of bears, the hide, head, and paws are often taken, but the rest of the body is left to rot, which is both disrespectful and wasteful.

The aim of Bears Forever is to end the trophy hunt in British Columbia’s Great Bear Rainforest for a number of reasons. This campaign is important because it argues that bears are valued as community members by showing how bears are connected to the communities they live near. It disrupts western understandings of bears as wild animals who have limited contact with humans, and it presents them as community members who are not only historically and culturally relevant to the Coastal First Nations, but who are also important to their shared ecosystem, as well as economically significant for many of these small, isolated communities.

First, bears play a significant role in Coastal First Nations’ songs, dances, and crests. According to Bears Forever, “[bears] are teachers, healers, and protectors. Killing a bear for no reason represents a grave breach of protocol – and never goes unpunished for long in the coastal legends.” This is the crux of the campaign – while Coastal First Nations have used science and public opinion to make their case, at the very heart of the

campaign has always been the notion that killing a bear – especially for non essential reasons – is not in line with Indigenous legal practices, and therefore, should not be allowed in the territories of the Coastal First Nations. This is important because it is precisely through these relationships that bears are made political. For Coastal First Nations, bears are actors who exhibit agency, preference, and have the ability to feel and communicate. In other words, bears are already political for Coastal First Nations, this campaign aims to politicize them for western settlers and governments. It is because bears and humans live in proximity to one another that bears have become culturally significant for Coastal First Nations, and it is the dependence of both humans and bears on a fragile ecosystem that makes their relationships essential.

Second, the campaign argues that hunters should only kill what they need and eat what they kill, rather than treat bears as markers of man's dominance over nature. Both the black and grizzly bear hunts in BC are not sustenance hunts – hunters, many of whom are non-residents, go to remote parts of British Columbia, often by plane, boat, or SUV, and collect the hide, head, and paws of the bears that they shoot. The bodies of these bears are not used for food or any other purpose, and are often left to rot. Since trophy hunters do not eat, or otherwise use, the flesh of the animals they kill, this practice is in direct opposition to Coastal First Nation's traditional values and cultures. Bears are used as trophies, rather than recognized as living beings with agency and complex existences.

Third, the opposition to trophy bear hunts lies in how bears are commodified; the economic value of bears is much greater when they are alive than dead. It costs about \$10,000 for a non-resident hunter to shoot a black bear, and up to \$25,000 to shoot and kill a grizzly (Bears Forever 2013-2014). Part of this revenue is paid out to the Province,

but the guide outfitters who profit from hunts in the Great Bear Rainforest are not from the region and do not contribute to the economies of local communities. On the other hand, bear viewing creates local jobs and helps to grow local economies, which is often difficult to do in this remote region. According to Bears Forever, “[the] Spirit Bear Lodge, owned and operated by the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, employs 40 people in the remote village of Klemtu and is on track to gross more than \$1 million dollars this year” (Bears Forever 2013-2014). This is important because it shows how Coastal First Nations are simultaneously preserving their traditional relationships with bears, and also giving their membership economic options that are in line with their culture. Bear viewing enterprises employ locals and get people back out onto the land where they can reconnect with their land. While bear viewing, like any form of wildlife viewing which relies on bringing people into remote and secluded areas so they can interact with animals who would otherwise go their entire lives with very limited human interactions, can be consequential, Coastal First Nations who are choosing to engage in this practice are doing so with the guidance of their traditional laws. In other words, bear viewing is done with the consideration that bears are actors and relatives, not commodities from which to extract economic value. Further, as one of the inevitable results of bear viewing is getting people out onto the land, these ongoing relationships with bears which are based on respect are likely to strengthen.

Fourth, Bears Forever argues that bear hunting gets in the way of sound science. While the provincial government uses multiple regression analysis to create rough estimates for bear populations, Coastal First Nations have partnered with scientists from the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University to count bears in the field and

produce much more actual estimates of bear populations and distributions. In this research project, individual bears are tracked via DNA samples of fur and their movements and diet can be account for. These studies are finding that bears are changing their behaviour patterns and moving out of places where they were once abundant and occupying islands that have not been used in past years (Bears Forever 2013-2014). Thus, the campaign argues that when bear numbers are so uncertain, it is irresponsible to hunt for bears, especially when they are part of active scientific studies. This is significant because it shows one of the ways that Coastal First Nations are protecting bears – these communities have actively partnered with university scientists and have guided the research that takes place on their territories in order to ensure that the results provide information the communities need to challenge the Province's policies.

BC Trophy Hunt: Government Legitimization of Policies & Quotas

The Province of British Columbia manages bear hunts for both black and grizzly bears. The government claims that these hunts are based on sound science, that bear populations are stable and that the number of bears who can be harvested each year has no lasting impact on populations (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010b). These hunts are not sustenance based, with hunters generally taking a photograph and the head, coat, and paws of the bear for trophies. Because of the differences in range and numbers, these hunts are also managed differently, with more focus and regulation being placed on grizzly hunts. Black bears are much more common than grizzlies, and cover almost all of British Columbia with the exception of areas with dense human populations, like parts of the Lower Mainland and Victoria (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2001). The government asserts that it prevents the overharvesting of black

bears by controlling hunting seasons, limiting hunting seasons in areas where the population is smaller, and by creating additional regulations such as banning the hunting of Spirit bears, young bears, and bears in the presence of cubs (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2001).

In the case of grizzlies, the government has separated known grizzly habitat into 60 Grizzly Bear Population Units (GBPUs) for which population records are kept and a limited number of hunting licenses are issued based on what the population is expected to be able to sustain (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia. 2010, 5). According to the provincial government, these hunts are important to grizzlies because the revenue that is generated helps to promote habitat conservation. Additionally, the government claims that the hunts are not damaging to grizzly bear populations because GBPUs with low numbers are closed to hunts (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia. 2010, 5). However, an independent review panel conducted by the government concluded that while there were no signs of an over-harvest, they could not conclude with certainty that an over-harvest was not occurring because small sample sizes preclude any meaningful analysis (Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Province of British Columbia 2003, 39). Furthermore, in both 2008 and 2012 the government issued separate documents accounting for current grizzly populations, adjusting numbers and defending the data they base their hunts on. In the 2008 document, six GBPUs were estimated to have lower populations than was previously thought (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2008, 1) and in the 2012 document new methods of estimating bear populations led to a discrepancy in data (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, British Columbia 2012, 2).

According to the provincial government, grizzly bear population estimates are based on “the most rigorous statistical modeling approach used to date” (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, British Columbia 2012, 2). Government scientists use DNA mark-recapture methods to estimate populations in certain areas, and then use multiple regression analysis to estimate the populations of other regions by using key independent variables, such as vegetation type and human and livestock densities. The occupied/ unoccupied line determines the area that is occupied by resident adult females, and is important in determining grizzly bear habitat and, ultimately, determining adequate hunt numbers (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, British Columbia 2012, 2). The regression model is less reliable in relation to coastal bears because there are fewer mark-recapture density estimates and because of the high influence of rainfall as a model input parameter (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, British Columbia 2012, 3). It is important to consider that many islands off the coast of British Columbia are excluded from the government’s GBPU system, and that these regions are also considered more complex when estimating populations. Recent research shows that grizzlies are, in fact, moving into these regions and have been doing so for several years (Service et al. 2014).

Since the Great Bear Rainforest is coastal, the fact that the Province asserts that its coastal model is less accurate is particularly relevant. Further, the occupied/ unoccupied line for grizzly bear habitats excludes many major islands off the coast, meaning that if grizzlies are indeed using these islands, the land not only needs to be protected as grizzly bear habitat, but the impacts on black bears need to be considered, since the two species are natural competitors and BC’s Great Bear Rainforest is home to

the only Spirit bears in the world. These bears are protected, and most of them live on islands, which, according to the Province, are not used by grizzlies. Thus, considering their incredibly low numbers, it is important to be aware of any changes to their environment. Further, the biopolitical language of population management that the Province uses directly opposes ways in which First Nations relate to bears. According to the Province, killing bears is acceptable if the population is large enough⁶ to sustain a hunt. For First Nations the killing of an animal only takes place when it is necessary, and no part of the animal is wasted.

Consilience: Coastal First Nations Lead & Collaborate with Scientists

Part of what makes the Bears Forever campaign so compelling is that Coastal First Nations have partnered with scientists in order to add scientific data to their argument. The research that is coming out of this partnership is guided by the needs of First Nations and local communities, and is designed to answer questions regarding stewardship and resource management that deeply impact the lives of those who live on and off of the land. Further, the research projects are designed with long-term policy decisions in mind. Thus, they take place over longer time periods and are well-equipped to notice population trends.

It is important to consider the type of knowledge that is being produced and which ways of knowing are being favoured or generally presented as superior. Paul Nadasdy's work in the Southwest Yukon shows how co-management and general consultation processes continue to favour western ways of knowing and suggests that these processes are coming at a price for First Nations people (Nadasdy 2003). He argues that in order for

⁶ Although, even this concept of 'enough' is questioned as I will show in a later section.

First Nations' claims to be not only heard but also implemented in policy, they must be presented in a form that is understandable to state bureaucrats. The result is that First Nations people need to learn the languages of biologists and legal experts, which can lead to compromising the cultural, social, and legal traditions that co-management is meant to protect in the first place (Nadasdy 2003, 2). Further, Nadasdy's work is on co-management, suggesting that First Nations in the Southwest Yukon are consulted on at least some level. In the case of trophy hunting in the Great Bear, the provincial government has not consulted First Nations, in fact, the provincial government has ignored bans implemented by Coastal First Nations using tribal law. Thus, the effects that Nadasdy describes are different in this case, which has resulted in Coastal First Nations seeking out partnerships with university scientists in order to challenge the government's position in their own language. However, the studies that are being conducted on Coastal First Nations' territories are guided by *gvi'ilas* and also often feature authors, or at the very least participants, from the communities in question. Thus, while First Nations are responding to the government with types of knowledge it can recognize, they are guiding and producing that knowledge with their traditional laws and values in mind.

According to Housty et al. the traditional territories of First Nations are some of the highest priority conservation areas in North America. In order to create meaningful management strategies that are rooted in science and are also culturally appropriate, it is vital to not only incorporate Indigenous traditions, but to ensure that management decisions are led by local First Nations in networks which incorporate local communities, policy makers, and scientific researchers. This study uses six *gvi'ilas*, or Heiltsuk traditional laws, to set the research questions and to guide the research in order to ensure

that the results are relevant to local management goals. Housty et al. conducted hair sampling in the Koeye watershed on the Central Coast of British Columbia between 2006 and 2009 to track grizzly bear movements and account for population trends.

Housty et al. detected 57 individual bears, with annual detections ranging from 4 in 2006 to 41 in 2008. After 2008, most bears were recaptures, “suggesting high fidelity and a relatively low number of bears entering the watershed among years” (Housty et al. 2014, 7). Further, the data collected directly disputes the provincial government’s habitat quality model, which classifies the Koeye watershed as ‘low’ or ‘very low’ quality. If that was, in fact the case, the Koeye watershed would not be able to sustain such a high number of individual bears. According to the authors, the model used by the provincial government uses various geographic computer tools but does not incorporate salmon density or other data collected in the field. Housty et al. argue that scientific knowledge can be better used for conservation means by considering multiple knowledge sources and values. Thus, value-focused thinking, “a process of clarifying or exposing what matters most to local people most affected by resource decision making in terms that resonate culturally” (Housty et al. 2014, 10) should be considered.

Artelle et al. argue that wildlife management often does not account for uncertainty, and that the conflation of targets and limits can be detrimental to grizzly bear populations because when targets are set as high as limits, any additional strain can have adverse effects on a population. According to the authors, grizzlies make for an excellent case study because grizzlies have “history characteristics – including long lifespans, low reproductive rates, delayed reproductive maturity, and slow population growth rates – that cause high vulnerability to population declines in many other taxa” (Artelle et al.

2013, 1). Further, since most mortality is human-caused, population management decisions are vital to the health of the species. This study assesses both total and female mortalities from 2001 to 2011 by comparing known human-caused mortalities with target levels in GBPU (Grizzly Bear Population Units) that have allotted mortality targets.

According to the authors, overmortality occurred at least once in 26 of the 50 population units surveyed, and was much more likely to occur in population units with low targets. However, when accounting for uncertainty, in order to maintain the probability of overmortality under 5%, “targets would need to be reduced by an average of 81% across all population units relative to 2007–2011 targets, and by 100% in 15” (Artelle et al. 2013, 5). Thus, the authors argue that responsible management of grizzly bear populations in British Columbia would require significant reductions in mortality. Further, since female mortality seems to be particularly difficult to control, the authors recommend conservative targets in order to ensure the health of the population. In other words, the quotas the government sets are significantly higher than the authors suggest would be reasonable in order to maintain population numbers. This study in particular has been instrumental in arguing that the government is doing a very poor job managing grizzlies, and that this responsibility needs to be resumed by Coastal First Nations. While conservative quotas for trophy hunts would not solve the main problem First Nation have with this hunt – the fact that it is not in line with their legal and cultural systems – it contributes towards discrediting the government’s position.

Service et al. argue that since many recent shifts in population distribution of wildlife have escalated due to human causes, current and accurate information is important for the responsible management of species. The study specifically considers the

recent shift in grizzly use of island habitats on the central coast of British Columbia. According to the Province's management strategy, grizzlies are only accounted for on five islands, which has significant implications for hunt quotas and habitat protection (Service et al. 2014). This study considers four of these islands, as well as 14 additional islands. Since identifying distribution shifts requires knowledge of both past occupancies and an understanding of the distribution over a large area, the authors employ various methods, including surveys with local and traditional ecological knowledge holders (LEK and TEK) and scientific methods such as hair sampling, the use of remote cameras, and consideration of mortality rates according to provincial records (Service et al. 2014).

The authors report that 12 of the 18 islands considered had multiple grizzly sightings, and that 86% (19/22) of LEK holders reported seeing island bears. The genetic hair sampling further indicated that at least 9 individuals were detected on 7 separate islands, including 3 females, which is an indicator that islands are not only used by roaming males – sows and cubs were observed by LEK holders 23 times, and were detected with remote cameras 7 times (Service et al. 2014). Further, interviews with LEK holders indicate that the grizzly occupation of islands is recent and increasing in rate. Overall, the data collected by interviewing LEK and TEK holders overlaps significantly with the various scientific methods used to detect island grizzlies.

The authors note that shifts in apex predator range can have severe consequences for ecosystems, and that the drivers for this shift can also be influencing the behaviour of other species. Some possible reasons for this shift include declining salmon stocks and an increase in berries on islands post logging. However, grizzlies also outcompete black bears, which are known to occupy these islands. Since Spirit bears hold cultural and

economic value and occur with relatively high frequency on some of the surveyed islands, the presence of grizzlies will have significant management implications.

All three of these studies were conducted in collaboration with university scientists and Coastal First Nations. Since the research was led by local people, the research questions were designed to answer questions that would inform and contextualize long term sustainable management of the region. Further, these research projects seriously consider the importance and significance of local and traditional ecological knowledge. In fact, in the Service et al. study, the use of TEK and LEK not only confirms the findings of traditional scientific methods, it also provides the authors with the ability to consider possible population shifts over a longer time period. Finally, the findings of these studies, all three of which were released within the last year and a half, directly contradict data presented by the provincial government. This is significant because it directly throws into question the Province's ability to make decisions regarding hunt quotas considering their data is out of date and incomplete.

However, it is also important to consider that these studies are still being done in a western framework that privileges scientific ways of knowing. These studies would have likely been respected by the scientists' peers and by the provincial government without considering *gvi'ilas*, LEK or TEK, but none of these approaches are sufficient on their own when it comes to trying to enact change in policy. As Nadasdy shows, state bureaucracy cannot account for Indigenous practices or ways of knowing (Nadasdy 2003). It is important to not only design scientific studies with concrete, community-centred research questions in mind, but to also base policies on the results of these studies. However, perhaps most importantly, the fact that local Indigenous people were

the driving force of this research means that the research can indeed be based on *gvi'ilas* and it can result in work that provides Coastal First Nations with answers that are relevant to the communities. Further, Coastal First Nations have the capacity and the knowledge to responsibly manage their traditional territories and their relationships with bears have led them to use not only their traditional management methods, but to also partner with western scientists in order to reaffirm what they value.

Public Support and Economic Value: Bears are Worth More Alive than Dead

The provincial government has often suggested that the trophy hunt is important for the Province's economy, and that those in favour of a ban are a special interest group. However, province-wide polling data and an independent CREST study, which compares the economic benefits of trophy hunting to those of bear viewing, disprove both of these claims.

In 2013, the Bears Forever campaign conducted an independent poll to survey British Columbians on their views regarding nature, bears, trophy hunts, and the legitimacy of First Nations to make decisions regarding their territory, amongst other things. While there were some discrepancies between age groups and regions, overwhelmingly, British Columbians came out in support of First Nations and in opposition to trophy hunting.

For example, 92% said that hunters should respect First Nations laws and customs when on First Nations territory, and 90% said that you should not be hunting if you are not prepared to eat what you kill (Bears Forever, "Research & Data" 2013). For Coastal First Nations, eating what you kill is important because nonhuman animals are believed to have spirits and be capable of communication – thus, waste is prohibited as hunters are

thankful for the animal's sacrifice (Carpenter 1988). Further, a total of 87% said that there should be a ban on trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest (Bears Forever, "Research & Data" 2013). This poll has been instrumental in showing that the majority of British Columbians are not in favour of trophy hunting in general and that they oppose a bear trophy hunt in the Great Bear Rainforest specifically. Further, it has also shown that there is public support for Coastal First Nations managing their own territory and making decisions about what sort of activities align with their cultures and laws. This is important because it has given the campaign wider appeal and has made it easier for Coastal First Nations to argue that this is a province wide issue with support from a wide range of people. While bears are already seen as political by Coastal First Nations, the provincial government and western settlers in general see bears as a resource to be managed. Thus, Coastal First Nations' management of their traditional territories would begin to challenge these conceptions, and with support for Indigenous management, those conceptions could influence a wider audience.

In 2014, the Centre for Responsible Travel (CREST) conducted an independent study comparing the economic benefit of trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest to bear viewing. Using the same criteria used by Statistics Canada to determine the economic significance of sectors, the CREST study found that "the overwhelming conclusion is that bear viewing generates more value-added and provides greater employment opportunities than does hunting" (Centre for Responsible Travel 2014, 81). Bear viewing contributes more than trophy hunting in expenditures, GDP, and labour income. In fact, the labour income from bear viewing in 2012 was \$4.9 million, while the combined labour income for non-resident and resident hunting was \$262,500 (Centre for

Responsible Travel 2014, 81). Further, CREST found that bear viewing was likely to grow as an industry in BC, with at least 60 times more tourists engaging in viewing activities rather than sport hunting (Centre for Responsible Travel 2014, 82). Ultimately, this study shows that bear viewing generates more income not only for the Province as a whole, but also for local communities. This is important because it means that First Nations in remote areas have options regarding the development of their economies.

Conclusion

My grandfather's uncle told a story of a grizzly bear, that there was two people that were out on the inlet and they were fishing. One of them looked over to the other side of the channel and saw something swimming. And as the people got closer in the canoe, the bear started to get to shore and its feet hit the shore and it started to walk up on the beach. And as it reached the forest line it stood up on two legs and it transformed completely into a human and it was a man. And he started singing a song as he was walking, and they remembered the song and they took it back to their tribe. And for generations that song was used whenever they brought out the bear dance for the ceremonies.

- William Housty, Heiltsuk, *Bear Witness*

In this chapter I have shown how Coastal First Nations relate to and understand bears in a way that is very different from how many residents in Oak Bay relate to the deer around them. For Coastal First Nations bears have cultural significance, as they feature heavily in Nations' stories, dances, and crests. However, most importantly, bears are seen as actors who make choices, have complex lives, and ultimately engage in relationships with individual humans and communities more generally. Because of these ongoing relationships, Coastal First Nations have used tribal law to ban trophy hunting on their territories and continue to lobby the provincial government to stop issuing hunting licenses for bears in the Great Bear Rainforest. As western settlers continue to reconsider and reimagine the role of nonhuman animals, these challenges are important not only to

First Nations themselves, but also to the broader community as they introduce different ways of relating to nonhuman animals.

Conclusions: Where do we go from here?

In this thesis I have argued that nonhuman animals are constructive of human societies by virtue of the complex relationships they form with humans, both at an individual and at a community level. I have also suggested that particular constructions of human/ nonhuman animal relationships fail to account for animal agency, and that the transgressions of liminal animals highlight this agency. Specifically, I have used two case studies – deer in Oak Bay and bears on the Central Coast – to show how nonhuman animals can be seen as actors and as active shapers of our mixed-species social orderings and communities. Rather than being passive objects who are subject to government policy and human orderings, I have argued that these nonhuman animals are shaping political processes in their communities through the relationships they have formed with the humans around them. In the Oak Bay case, there is a varied response to deer from human residents – some people feel compelled to eliminate deer from urban spaces, while others have chosen to find ways to cohabitate with deer. In either case, the deer are soliciting such strong emotions from people, that a political process of managing deer populations has been spearheaded. In the Great Bear, bears have ongoing political and social relationships with Coastal First Nations, and as such, people feel a sense of obligation and responsibility to the bears in their communities. These relationships have prompted Coastal First Nations to stand up for bears and challenge the Provincial trophy hunt in the Great Bear.

I began by employing Donaldson and Kymlicka's category of liminal animals and argued that the mega fauna who live in British Columbia often occupy a blurry space

between liminality and wildness as they are simultaneously not always dependent on human settlements for their survival, but are still living in close proximity to humans and forming relationships with the human residents in their communities. Liminal animals can be difficult to cohabitate with, because they can be framed as wild animals who do not belong in human settlements, and as such, their populations are often controlled or eliminated altogether. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that since liminal animals are not domesticated, they are perceived as out of place and are subsequently made invisible when they live in places that are populated by humans. This invisibility prevents them from being seen as community members, and they are only made visible when their presence is seen as problematic. This is particularly relevant in the Oak Bay case where a perceived increase in urban deer populations has led human residents to demand management from local and provincial governments. In the Great Bear, bears are already perceived as community members, and as such, the overwhelming sentiment is to protect them from the ongoing trophy hunt.

I then provided a brief history of western political thought's treatment of nonhuman animals, and showed how many canonical thinkers have excluded nonhuman animals from their work. As such, both the human/ nonhuman and the nature/ culture dichotomies have remained relatively intact, and as a result, the status of liminal animals is particularly difficult to challenge and understand. Next, I suggested that two of the main lenses through which nonhuman animals are considered – animal welfare and animal rights – have limitations in terms of allowing us the necessary space to understand the impact nonhuman animals have had on our social, cultural, and political processes. While animal welfare has made tangible improvements in the lives of many nonhuman

animals, it has not been able to adequately question the human use of nonhuman animal bodies (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). Animal rights, on the other hand, attempts to push beyond these confinements of animal welfare, but it continues to inadvertently remain centred on humans by virtue of being an extension of human rights (Wolfe 2003).

Finally, I turned to animal geographies, and argued that it provides a lens through which we can begin to understand how animals generally, and liminal animals specifically, impact our mixed species societies. The influence of animal geographies is present in this thesis on several levels. First, and perhaps most importantly, the decision to centre this thesis around two very specific case studies was driven by a desire to not only analyse space, but also place. I purposefully chose two case studies that have many things in common – they both take place in BC, they are both relatively recent public concerns which are ongoing, and they feature similar human actors. However, there are also significant differences between the two case studies – Oak Bay is an urban municipality with a predominantly white, settler human population, while communities in the Great Bear consist of a series of rural Indigenous nations. Second, one of the central premises of this thesis – that nonhuman animals are constructive of the communities they live in in a multitude of ways – is a central claim in animal geographies. By focusing on specific places I was able to see what this claim means for these two very different communities. In Oak Bay, there was a much wider range of opinions on the rightful place (literally and figuratively) of deer, while in the Great Bear, the cultural significance of bears is much more consistent. Because deer and bears are regarded so differently by the humans they live among, the transgressions they exhibit and the subsequent human interpretations of them vary significantly. Thus, the ways in which these animals are

understood by the people around them are shaped by how these humans understand deer and bears respectively and how they relate to them.

Since deer in Oak Bay are often perceived as wild animals by the human residents, their presences is a transgression of these human understandings of where they belong. Their presence has resulted in the municipal government making management decisions regarding the growing population of deer, but interestingly, these management decisions are strongly influenced by the local human population's emotional connection to deer (Ministry of Environment, British Columbia 2010a). In other words, these policy decisions are largely guided by the relationships that exist between the human residents of Oak Bay and the deer. While there is significant disagreement between human residents regarding whether or not deer populations need to be managed, and if so, how, the current management plan was conceived because of human complaints, and subsequently designed based on feedback from residents. That is to say, while there are discrepancies between how local residents relate to deer, the management decisions chosen by Oak Bay are representative of at least some residents.

On the Central Coast, Coastal First Nations are seeking to ban the trophy hunt of both grizzly and black bears on their traditional territories. Coastal First Nations have worked together to ban the trophy hunt using tribal law, and this is important because it is indicative of the long-standing relationships Indigenous people have with bears on the Central Coast. I have shown, through various stories, how bears are revered, valued, and ultimately, connected to humans. Thus, for Coastal First Nations, bears are already political actors. This is significant because it shows a different way of relating to nonhuman animals from the Oak Bay case – while deer are, as Donaldson and Kymlicka

argue, made invisible by their liminality until they are seen as a problem, Coastal First Nations have historical and ongoing relationships with bears that value them as community members. Bears feature heavily in the origin stories of many nations in the Great Bear and are also incorporated into the crests of many nations.

This thesis contributes to the growing literature on liminal nonhuman animals, often in the field of geography, by focusing on relationships in addition to how these relationships are shaped by the place on which they are mediated. By grounding this thesis in two concrete case studies, I have analyzed the specific relationships between deer and human residents in Oak Bay, and bears and Coastal First Nations in the Great Bear. Considering the relationships nonhuman animals build with humans, both as individuals and as communities, has implications for the way we relate to nonhuman animals on several levels. First, thinking about nonhuman animals as actors in mixed-species communities has implications for the way we theorize space, society, and politics. In other words, since nonhuman animals play such varied roles in our social orderings that understanding their specific contributions in their given communities is bound to have impacts on the ways in which we understand all sorts of social and political relations. Second, reframing our relationships with liminal animals as relationships between neighbours rather than relationships between humans who belong and nonhuman animals who are intruding on a space that is not theirs must also reframe the ways in which we interact with these animals, both as individuals and as governments. Here, Indigenous laws and practices can show one alternative of how we can relate to nonhuman animals differently. In the cases I surveyed, there are multiple differences between how residents in Oak Bay and community members in the Great Bear relate to

the nonhuman animals around them. While there were competing views of deer in Oak Bay, there was not a clear understanding of deer as agentic, even among those who were willing to make accommodations for them. In the Great Bear, however, bears are seen as actors who engage in complex relationships with each other and with others.

One of the first things I read when I began this degree was Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and I have found myself continuously returning to one particular section. In "One or Several Wolves?" Deleuze and Guattari explore the notion of becoming wolf in relation to pack mentality. When Franny, a patient of Freud's, is asked if she would like to be a wolf, she replies that one can never be a wolf, but would always have to be "eight or nine, six or seven" wolves (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 29). You would not be multiple wolves "all by yourself all at once, but one wolf among others, with five or six others" (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 29). What is significant is the individual in relation to the pack – "how the subject joins or does not join the pack, how far away it stays, how it does or does not hold to the multiplicity" (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 29).

Franny's dream further elaborates on this point. She dreams that there is a crowd in a desert, and she is "on the edge of the crowd, at the periphery; but [she] belongs to it, [she] is attached to it by one of [her] extremities, a hand or foot" (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 29). She understands herself as necessarily in the periphery – she would die if she was ever at the centre, but she would also die if she were to leave. Holding this position is inherently difficult – others are in constant motion, and by virtue of staying connected to the crowd, she herself is constantly in motion as well. Interestingly, while this perpetual

motion understandably gives her a sense of incredible tension, it also gives her a “feeling of violent, almost vertiginous, happiness” (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 27).

What is significant is Franny’s understanding of her position – the necessity of remaining in the periphery, and the simultaneous joy of constant motion and uncertainty coupled with a sense of tension and an understanding of the difficulty of the task at hand. She understands that she cannot leave the crowd, but she can also never dominate it from the centre. Her significance, much like for the wolf pack, is relational; “how [she] joins or does not join the pack, how far away [she] stays, how [she] does or does not hold to the multiplicity” (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 29).

This is important in our understanding of and connection to the environment, to other beings, and ultimately, to each other. As much as Deleuze and Guattari criticize Freud for always having a ready answer, for always returning to “mere roots” when “on the verge of discovering a rhizome” (Deleuze and Guattari 2011, 27), so can western thought be criticized for creating dichotomies and missing plentiful opportunities to think of ourselves as inherently embedded in a range of multiplicities among nature and natural processes. We have created a false dichotomy between natural history and human history that we default to whenever we are forced to grapple with the environmental consequences with our collective actions, or whenever we have the opportunity to experience a deeper connection with nature. We tell ourselves that the world of humans is inherently separate from the world of beasts, and that clear lines separate civilization from primitive nature. This mode of thinking has not gotten us very far – we are increasingly undermining the very natural systems that sustain us, we are demolishing other species, we are disconnected from other humans and their experiences. We are

alienated from the very basis of life, and the consequences of this mode of being are all around us.

The concept of the wolf pack gives us an entirely different way of thinking about our relationship with nature, with animals, and with each other. Rather than existing on the other side of an impenetrable wall that allegedly divides those who belong and those who do not, we are each a multiplicity in a crowd of other multiplicities. The multiplicities in this crowd vary significantly – there are people, bears, deer, ravens, bees, apple trees, dandelions and all sorts of microbial life forms. (Perhaps there are even natural processes – storms, clouds, ocean currents.) We know that if we leave the crowd, or if we push our way to the centre, we will die. What becomes important, then, is our relationship to everyone else in the crowd – how we join the pack, how far away we stay, how we hold on to the multiplicities. As Franny notes when she describes her dream, this is a very difficult position to hold. It is even more difficult if we think of ourselves as part of a crowd filled with a wide variety of species. Since what is significant is relational, we need to learn how to exist as a member of the crowd, how to be in constant motion and how to embrace unpredictable nonrhythms. However, coupled with this potentially overwhelming sense of difficulty is a feeling of jubilation. A sense that persevering through the nauseating vertigo is well worth the ultimate outcome.

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