

FROM COLONIZATION TO CONSERVATION: EXAMINING REPRESENTATIONS OF
NONHUMAN ARCTIC ANIMALS IN BRITISH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DURING
THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Arctic and Northern Studies

University of Alaska Fairbanks

August 2023

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of British children's literature on shaping attitudes toward the Arctic and its nonhuman animals during the long nineteenth century. As the British renewed their interest in the Arctic, authors used children's literature to convey imperial ambitions and shape beliefs about the region. Using an ecocritical lens, this analysis demonstrates that the crafting of nonhuman animal portrayals helped shape children's beliefs about the Arctic and its role in the British Empire. The literature showcased illustrates a significant shift in British attitudes toward the human-environment relationship, moving from exploration to exploitation to protection. Early exploration narratives introduced the idea of limitless wildlife populations and encouraged children's interest in natural history, while later anthropocentric adventure stories reinforced beliefs about empire by pitting humans against wild creatures. Ecocentric Arctic fiction published in the last third of the period challenged beliefs about resource colonization and fostered conversations about conservation by using ecohorror and writing from the perspectives of wild creatures to evoke empathy in readers, ultimately decentering people and shifting British beliefs about Arctic nonhuman animals moving into the twentieth century.

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Acknowledgements

I am forever indebted to Dr. Jennifer Schell for providing direction, guidance, and encouragement through numerous rewrites and feedback sessions, all while on sabbatical. I would not have completed this thesis without her enduring support and patience, and, for this, I am extremely grateful to have her as my advisor and Chair. I also want to thank Dr. Brandon Boylan for his feedback and suggestions, specifically on Arctic history and politics, and to Dr. Katherine Arndt for her insights into the literature and eye for detail. Thank you also to Aaron Salzman and the UAF Writing Center for spending many hours reviewing my prose and helping me edit.

Additionally, I want to thank the family of Richard Smith Grey for their financial support throughout my education. Your generous donations made it possible for me to study at UAF and take inspiring and engaging courses in Arctic and Northern Studies and English. Finally, thank you to the Graduate School at UAF for providing me with financial assistance to complete my thesis through the Degree Completion Fellowship.

We worked away until night, but did not finish even then, as it takes twelve hours to strip the blubber off a large whale. We commenced again at daylight, and it was dark before we began to cut into the second whale. We had still a third to operate on, but as each was worth nearly a thousand pounds, no one complained.

— W. H. G. Kingston, *Peter Trawl: Or, The Adventures of a Whaler*

There were bears in the woods, and wolves, and many kinds of smaller game, still left to afford sport for our wanderers; and there were gulls and guillemots; and innumerable wild fowls as well; and lo! here were several new visitors from the regions of the Pole itself; an Arctic fox or two might be seen skipping hither and thither, and in the water four or five different kinds of seals often came up to stare and marvel at the *Snowbird*. A whale, with her calf, was seen ploughing through the still waters of the bay, probably going still farther south for the winter months.

— William Gordon Stables, *The Cruise of the Snowbird: A Story of Arctic Adventure*

1. Introduction

A complex mix of imperial ambition and national pride fueled the British fascination with the Arctic during the long nineteenth century.¹ Yet, it was through the captivating portrayals of the region's nonhuman animals in British children's literature that these beliefs and attitudes toward the Arctic and its creatures were conveyed and solidified, shaping the way future generations would view this vast and awe-inspiring wilderness.² As the British renewed their interest in the Arctic during the long nineteenth century, they sought to convey their growing excitement and imperial ambitions to children through literature, a medium that would not only entertain young readers but also shape their beliefs and perceptions. These epigraphs taken from British children's novels published during the period demonstrate opposing perspectives on the Arctic through their portrayals of the region's wildlife. Comparing the two epigraphs reveals deeply held British beliefs about the purpose and treatment of Arctic wildlife, which stemmed from broader environmental understanding and British activity in the Arctic at different periods.

In the first quote, Peter describes the difficult, time-consuming work required to process a whale. He notes that the crew labored for twelve hours just to extract the blubber. The word "operate" highlights the technical skill required to do this job and demonstrates that whalers had to be dexterous during processing. The fact that the entire crew worked together also shows that cutting-in whales required teamwork and camaraderie since the job was both difficult and dangerous. Kingston mentions the monetary reward awaiting the crew, proving that the endeavor was well worth the effort. The whale is ultimately reduced to a resource and

1. The term "the long nineteenth century" coined by Eric Hobsbawm starts at the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1789 and ends at the beginning of World War I in 1914.

2. I choose to use the term "nonhuman animals" throughout this thesis to clearly distinguish from *Homo sapiens*. Making this distinction is important in ecocriticism and critical animal studies because humans are animals but, as I explain later, power structures in environmental orientalist and environmental paternalist human-nature relationships place humans firmly above nonhuman animals and the rest of the natural world.

Kingston characterizes the Arctic as a place that gave British men opportunities to use their strength and skills to make a fortune along with their crewmates.

The second epigraph disputes the idea of the Arctic as *terra nullius*.³ Stables' Arctic is full of wildlife and advances beliefs about limitless nonhuman animal populations. He calls the Arctic foxes "visitors" and describes them as "skipping hither and thither" showing that they are carefree and unafraid. Similarly, the whale and her calf travel together as a family through a tranquil ocean. The seals are said to "stare and marvel," which are human tendencies, showing their curiosity and awe when seeing the *Snowbird*. Stables calls the humans in the scene "wanderers"; while the explorers entertain themselves through sport hunting — a popular nineteenth century pastime — they also express appreciation for and admiration of an Arctic environment that is different from the cities back in England. Thus, Kingston and Stables represent two different beliefs about Arctic creatures that align with British beliefs about the environment during the long nineteenth century.

Historically speaking, the British had been in the Arctic before the start of the long nineteenth century, but their interest reached new heights as their colonial ambitions increased during the time of peace that followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In their ironically titled article, "The Useless Arctic: Exploiting Nature in the Arctic in the 1870s," Ulrike Spring and Johan Schimanski argue that the relevance of the polar regions was an important point of discussion among all states with an established navy, specifically as those states considered making efforts to claim territory near the pole. These conversations took place alongside competition over natural resources, which involved products like furs and oil derived from whales and seals. Controlling these resources would inevitably provide states with more economic and geopolitical power (Spring and Schimanski 15). During the time

3. The term *terra nullius* translates to "territory without a master" ("Terra Nullius").

period in which British interest in the Arctic increased, children's literature emerged as a unique genre. Scholars attribute this development to new laws mandating public education, advances in printing technologies, and progressive beliefs about childhood.⁴ The Arctic became a popular setting in children's literature because of the increased public and imperial interest in the region, and because it transported readers from heavily industrialized and overpopulated British cities to a land of white ice and snow. Early Arctic fiction showcased its wild aspects and introduced readers to exotic wildlife like reindeer, birds, walruses, and whales. Midway through the century, the Arctic served as a setting where young men developed their masculinity through their exploits. On this topic, Robert G. David says, "adventures in the Arctic were hard to beat for excitement, tales of manhood and stirring patriotism," making it the perfect setting for boys to become men (196). Near the end of the century, public interest in the Arctic waned due to fewer expeditions and increased presence in other parts of the globe. In order to keep readers interested, authors incorporated environmental themes into their stories which opened readers' eyes to the impact of British activity in the Arctic. These late nineteenth century works with ecocentric themes challenged previously held viewpoints about humanity's relationship with nonhuman animals.

British children's literature during the long nineteenth century contained detailed commentary on nonhuman Arctic animals, which reflected or subverted broader beliefs about the Arctic. Through an ecocritical lens, it becomes apparent that authors intentionally crafted representations of wildlife to shape children's beliefs about the Arctic and its role within the

4. I use the term "children's literature" to define books marketed to adolescents from ages 0-18. Some scholars like Robert G. David distinguish between children's and juvenile literature, with children's literature applying to adolescents aged 0-12 and juvenile literature written for those aged 13 to 18. Given that some books written for juveniles were read aloud to children, I choose to simply define the entire genre as "children's literature."

British Empire.⁵ This analysis reveals this significant shift in British attitudes toward the human-environment relationship in the Arctic, as demonstrated through the changing portrayals of nonhuman animals from exploration to exploitation and ultimately to protection. An analysis of a body of British children's literature either set in or referring to the Arctic and published between 1789 and 1914 showcases this shift, which parallels events taking place. The period began with Britain's renewed interest in mapping and claiming territory in the Arctic in order to expand its empire and inspire national pride. As time progressed, the Industrial Revolution required extensive resources to fuel factories, which increased demand for nonhuman animal products like oil. The last part of the century saw backlash against the effects of the Industrial Revolution as the public began to question the cost of "progress," specifically its impact on nature and nonhuman animals. All the literature examined in this thesis is fiction, although many works are based on the author's firsthand experiences. Non-fiction texts for children are excluded because they do not fit squarely within the definition of children's literature, which is meant to instruct and entertain.

An ecocritical reading of three early Arctic exploration stories written for children and published between 1789 to 1848 shows that the British focused mostly on specimen collecting and scientific descriptions of wildlife and introduced the idea of limitless populations. Given the popularity of natural history, it was important to encourage children's curiosity by introducing them to a wide variety of nonhuman animal species. The British practiced environmental colonization in the Arctic by deriving products from nonhuman animals. Environmental colonization themes are heavily featured in mid-nineteenth century

5. For this thesis, I define "ecocriticism" as explaining how relationships between humans and nature (including but not limited to landforms, weather, plants and nonhuman animals) are depicted in literature. Ecocriticism does not exclusively identify positive human-environmental relationships but looks for these relationships in all forms in order to understand the societal beliefs of the period. Borrowing a definition from ecocritical scholars Emine Ulu Aslan and Bayram Bas, "Ecocriticism offers the opportunity to examine the relations between literature and environment, ecology, and culture in depth by interpreting literary and cultural texts from an environmental perspective". More succinctly, ecocriticism in this thesis is concerned with understanding the British-Arctic environment relationship through depictions of the Arctic in children's literature and situating the relationships in broader historical context (Aslan and Bas 712).

anthropocentric adventure stories through human confrontations with whales, seals, and other fur bearing creatures.⁶ Works of naturalists like Charles Lyell influenced Arctic anthropocentric adventure stories by reinforcing widely held beliefs about human superiority over other species. Texts produced in the final third of the long nineteenth century reveal a shift in messaging about the Arctic environment to children as authors challenged them to consider the plight of nonhuman animals and their relationship with the environment. Authors of ecocentric adventure stories effectively incorporated ecohorror and nonhuman animal perspectives to encourage environmentalism, and referenced environmental legislation written near the end of the long nineteenth century.

2. Literature Review and Methods

Several scholars have explored the intersection of children's literature and Arctic writing, but none to date have focused specifically on how British authors carefully constructed imagery about nonhuman animals in order to shape children's Arctic ecoconsciousness during the Empire's height of power. Robert G. David's edited collection *The Arctic in the British Imagination: 1818-1914* covers how the Arctic is portrayed in Victorian-era creative works, including plays, art installations, and illustrated newspapers, among others. David dedicates one chapter titled "The Young Person's Arctic" to "the nature of the representations of the Arctic to which children and juveniles were exposed" (David 185). He spends some time discussing geographic education but does not examine ecological themes in children's literature, aside from mentioning that authors paid attention to Arctic land and seascapes. My thesis seeks to go a step beyond David's assessments of representations of the Arctic and attempts to understand why they described the landscape and nonhuman animals in specific ways, and what those descriptions communicated to

6. Paul Driessen uses the term "eco-imperialism" to refer to efforts to impose Western beliefs about environmentalism on non-Western cultures. "Environmental colonialism" is its effect, and scholars of environmental colonialism focus on the environmental impact of colonization (Duquette).

young readers about Britain's relationship to the Arctic. Scholars Heidi Hansson, Maria Leavenworth, and Anka Ryall edited a collection of essays titled *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Young Adults*. Hansson writes in the introduction that given "extensive interest in the environment, in the sense of both location and ecology, the lack of studies concerning children's literature in and about the Arctic is notable" (1). The subsequent essays reinforce this idea, especially regarding the impact of literature on children's perceptions about the Arctic. Hansson touches briefly on environmental messaging about the Arctic in children's literature by effectively arguing that reading literature chronologically shows changes in global attitudes about the region over time. She specifically argues that themes in children's literature show a shift in thinking about the Arctic as *terra nullius* to a place to be conquered to an area needing protection for both people and environment. Her argument parallels mine, although she extends the time period to the present day and draws from global children's literature. The essays themselves cover topics like polar history, Indigenous representation, and "Arcticity and Imaginary Arctics." In one of the essays, Hennig Howlid Woerp makes a compelling argument about changes in representations of polar bears in Nordic literature. He argues that over time, depictions of polar bears changed from fantastical and mystical, to seeing polar bear hunting as a rite of passage. Woerp also argues that more recent descriptions of polar bears emphasize conservation given knowledge about climate change (Woerp 71). Ultimately Woerp demonstrates that Nordic children's literature from the 1970s served as an important means through which to build support for polar bear conservation. This analysis is strong, but Woerp does not discuss whether these representations extended outside of Nordic literature. For example, Nordic children would have been familiar with nonhuman Arctic animals like the polar bear due to relative proximity, while British children

had little to no exposure.⁷ In the case of British literature, readers' lack of proximity meant that authors had more creative license when characterizing nonhuman animals.

Only one essay in the collection touches on British children's literature. The essay focuses on Arthur Ransome's novel *Winter Holiday*, which is about four children who pretend they are adventurers in the Arctic. Author Johan Schimanski does not touch on ecological themes or nonhuman animals but does spend time discussing maps and the importance of mapping in "controlling space" and "creating empires" (Schimanski 190). I do not spend time discussing British mapping of the Arctic, but I agree with Shimanski's assertion that mapping and claiming territory is important. Mapping and place naming are imperial actions. Mapping territory meant that the British had knowledge of the land, and naming places established their presence there. Also, the British crown claimed territory in the Arctic, in part, to harvest nonhuman animal resources. Overall, *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Young Adults* provides a wide sampling of themes present in Arctic literature for children across multiple locations and time periods, making it a valuable resource for those interested in the topic.

Helen Reddick highlights the use of nonhuman Arctic animals in children's literature in her essay titled "Ice Bears, Ice Boys and Ice Men." Reddick's thesis is that British children's literature published during the height of Arctic activity deliberately included scientific themes. She argues that authors communicated "science" to young readers using fictional encounters between heroes and the environment. I agree with her assessment that authors used descriptions of Arctic environments and wildlife to interest readers in science and show how British explorers successfully manipulated the environment. Reddick's essay is valuable because she demonstrates how authors purposefully incorporated scientific themes

7. Laurence Talairach-Vielmas explains that children visited menageries and natural history museums where they could see nonhuman animals collected from British colonies. He does not specifically mention Arctic nonhuman animals, but it is safe to assume children may have seen some in these collections. An example of this comes from *Northern Regions* where Tom mentions seeing a reindeer in an exhibition in London.

into fiction and how those themes connect to scientific discoveries happening during the period. However, her analysis is brief, and she does not focus on a specific realm of science. She surveys few texts and focuses on broad scientific themes involving the landscape, plants, and wildlife. My analysis looks specifically at representations of Arctic creatures and how authors reflected popular beliefs about nonhuman animal science and natural history in literature.

Finally, John Miller's essay "Bare Life and Bear Love: Masculinity, Capital, and Arctic Animals in the Nineteenth-Century North" explores representations of polar bears in two nineteenth century texts. He argues that characters' domination over polar bears upheld British social values around masculinity. He states, "[t]he imposition of British masculine energies on the Arctic is also the assertion of the human over the monster; nationalist discourses coincide with discourses of species" (Miller 122). I agree with Miller's assessment that characters' interactions with Arctic wildlife typically fall into two categories: heroic or economic (Miller 122). However, he does not account for changing representations of nonhuman animals as his analysis is confined to two texts published at the midway point of the long nineteenth century. I am less interested in how authors' portrayals of Arctic creatures reflect British social values, and more interested in using ecocriticism to understand how these texts support or refute historical environmental beliefs. Additionally, Miller focuses on polar bears while I spend time discussing representations of whales, foxes, seals, and other Arctic nonhuman animals.

I limited my research to the long nineteenth century for two reasons: first, because of the amount of British activity in the Arctic, and second, because it was a period of rapid social, economic, geopolitical, scientific, and industrial change. Marxist scholar Eric Hobsbawm coined the term "long nineteenth century" and argued that the end of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars ushered in a new power balance among European nations,

while the start of World War I represented a breakdown in nationalism that resulted in a geopolitically restructured Europe. His historical framework is helpful in terms of understanding events and movements that fueled such rapid change during the long nineteenth century. Hobsbawm's central argument is that "dual revolutions" — the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution — shaped the long nineteenth century. The century is best understood by dividing it into three periods: the Age of Revolution (1789-1848), followed by the Age of Capital (1848-1875), and ending with the Age of Empire (1875-1914). Hobsbawm defines the Age of Revolution as the period beginning with the end of the French Revolution and the construction of the first factory in Lancashire, England in 1789, and ending in 1848 with the construction of the railway network and the publication of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (Hobsbawm 1962, 3). He states that empire building is the defining characteristic of the age and explains that the British Empire's domination had "no parallel in history" (Hobsbawm 1962, 3). Arctic scholar Nanna Katrine Lüders Kaaalund adds that Britain was able to focus on empire building and Arctic exploration during this period since its navy was not embattled in war (27).

Capitalism's triumph, perhaps obviously, defined the Age of Capital which saw nations competing over global resources in order to obtain and increase wealth without regard for future consequences. By 1860, society had completely embraced the belief in economic growth fueled by cheap labor and Hobsbawm explains that the British viewed progress as "massive, enlightened, sure of itself, self-satisfied, but above all inevitable" (Hobsbawm 1975, 13). More simply, the public saw industrial progress as a natural continuation of humanity's dominance in the world and did not heavily consider the negative effects of progress at home or in other parts of the Empire. While the construction of the railway network and revolution of 1848 define the beginning of the age, it closes in the year 1873

with the Victorian Great Depression, which brought forth the next age: the Age of Empire.⁸ Hobsbawm names the period between 1873 and 1914 as “The Age of Empire” for two reasons: first, because a new kind of imperialism (colonialism) developed in Europe and, second, because many rulers called themselves “emperor” during this period. Capitalist empires like Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and others had all established colonies in Africa, South America, and Asia, and the race to colonize other parts of the globe motivated competition (Hobsbawm 1987, 57). In Britain, approximately 90 percent of British military officers found themselves unemployed by 1817 leaving the Empire supplied with a large, experienced group of men well-suited to imperial activities like exploration and colonization (Kaalund 27). However, nationalism and global competition — which had defined much of the long nineteenth century — finally gave way at the end of the Age of Empire with the start of the first World War. Understanding the forces at play during the long nineteenth century contextualizes Britain’s Arctic ambitions within a rapidly changing world.⁹

I selected British fictional texts published for children during each age of the long nineteenth century in order to demonstrate change over time and connect the publications to historical activity taking place in the Arctic at each point. I applied the following subgenres to each group of fiction and grouped the stories based on time period and similar themes around Arctic wildlife: early exploration novels (1789-1848), anthropocentric adventure stories

8. Hobsbawm says, “With the revolution of 1848...the earlier symmetry broke down, the shape changed. Political revolution retreated, industrial revolution advanced.” The Revolutions of 1848, also called the Springtime of Nations, refer to the many social and political revolutions that took place across Europe. The revolutions include ending serfdom in Austria, overthrowing the monarchy in Denmark, and the creation of the Second Republic in France (Hobsbawm 1962, 17).

9. In addition to serving as a geopolitical framework, the term “long nineteenth century” is sometimes used in literary studies to encompass a period of change and experimentation in British literature where authors began to challenge convention in their writing. The long nineteenth century literary period encompasses the end of the Neoclassical era, the Romantic period, the Victorian era and early Modernist works at the beginning of the twentieth century. While I do not spend time analyzing British literature for adults, it is important to understand that the “long nineteenth century” was a period of literary change and many works that are part of the canon of British literature were published during this time.

(1848-1875), and ecocentric fiction (1875-1914). The texts themselves are primarily novels, most exceeding 150 pages, but I included one short story, specific chapters from longer works, and an excerpt from a volume of stories.

Publishers released a limited amount of children's literature pertaining to the Arctic prior to the Franklin expedition in 1845, making it difficult to find primary sources for the first age spanning from 1789 to 1848. Lack of publications during this time is due to few Arctic exploring voyages taking place prior to 1845, thus providing authors with less source material (David 196). Arctic exploration stories from this age drew from the real-life adventures and experiences of individuals or groups who traveled to the region for scientific, commercial, or geographic purposes. Arctic exploration stories often include descriptions of harsh weather conditions, dangerous wildlife, and encounters with Indigenous people. They were also used to promote national pride and imperial ambitions and were popular as Britain sought to expand its empire and advance scientific knowledge through exploration. I managed to find one novel set in the Arctic prior to 1845 — *Northern Regions* — and then chose to use an excerpt set in the Arctic from Robert Southey's *The Life of Nelson*.¹⁰ An anonymous author published *Northern Regions* and little is known about its origin. Robert Southey (1774-1843) is best known as a Romantic poet, but his biography of British naval hero Horatio Nelson proved to be immensely popular.

Numerous stories were set in the Arctic and Far North from 1848 to 1875 due to the popularity of adventure novels and significant public interest in the Arctic. These novels fall into the category of anthropocentric adventure stories. Generally, I define anthropocentric adventure stories as adventure stories that place human beings and their actions at the center of the narrative, often at the expense of the natural world. In these stories, human characters

10. The full title of this text is *Northern Regions: A Relation of Uncle Richard's Voyages for the Discovery of a Northwest Passage, and an Account of the Overland Journies of Other Enterprizing Travellers*. It was first published in Britain in 1825 by an unknown author. Given the title's length, I refer to it simply as *Northern Regions*.

are typically portrayed as heroes who overcome or conquer nature in order to achieve their goals, whether it be discovering new lands, conquering territories, or taking resources. The environment is used as a static backdrop or obstacle to be overcome, rather than a complex and interconnected system that is worthy of respect and protection. Anthropocentric adventure stories also perpetuate the belief that humans are separate from nature and more powerful than it, so they can control it for their own purposes.

While it is difficult to draw conclusions about authors' intentions, especially when looking at historical texts, it is useful to examine their backgrounds and experience in the Arctic to better contextualize their works. Two authors — W. H. G. Kingston and R. M. Ballantyne — dominated the genre of Arctic anthropocentric adventure stories. I chose to analyze multiple works written by these two authors since they were the most popular adventure novelists and, therefore, they are representative of the genre and time period. I also included *Arctic Crusoe* by Percy Bolingbroke St. John, even though he was a less popular author, since it contains similar themes. R. M. Ballantyne (1825-1894) was a Scottish author who previously worked as a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada (Cockburn 70). This experience provided him with first-hand knowledge of the Arctic and the people who lived there. Ballantyne's views on the Arctic reflected the prevailing anthropocentric attitudes of his time, which saw the area as a resource-rich frontier for British exploration and exploitation. William Henry Giles Kingston (1814-1880) never traveled to the Arctic but published multiple stories set there. Drawing from sailors' stories, he portrayed the Arctic as a place of danger and mystery where brave British explorers overcame harsh conditions to claim new lands for the British Empire. Like Ballantyne, Kingston adhered to the prevailing colonial and imperialist attitudes of the mid-nineteenth century. His stories exalted the superiority of British culture and values, especially the importance of Christian morality, and his books instilled these values in young readers (Shepherd 10).

Authors began writing ecocentric Arctic fiction near the end of the century alongside heightened public opinion surrounding the seal fur trade and overall treatment of nonhuman animals. These stories largely fall into the category of ecocentric fiction, but the genre can be further broken out into two subcategories: ecocentric adventure stories and nonhuman animal stories. I define ecocentric adventure as a subgenre of adventure fiction that focuses on the natural world and the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman life. In these kinds of stories, the environment and its nonhuman inhabitants are essential to the plot and the characters' motivations. Themes of ecological conservation, environmentalism, and care for wildlife appear in ecocentric adventure stories, and plotlines emphasize the importance of protecting the natural world and promote a deeper understanding of the human-nature relationship. Ecocentric adventure stories typically feature heroes who are not only motivated by personal goals or struggles but also demonstrate a connection to the natural world and express a desire to protect it. Setting these kinds of stories in the Arctic provides ample opportunities for the characters to interact with the region and to confront environmental challenges. Finally, unlike anthropocentric adventure stories that typically use violence or conflict toward wildlife as a driving force, ecocentric adventure stories tend to emphasize empathy toward wild creatures. The subcategory "animal stories" refers to a genre of literature that features nonhuman animals as the main characters and often focuses on their experiences, emotions, and relationships with other creature and with humans. Animal stories often include themes and messages promoting nonhuman animal welfare, exploring relationships with humans, or simply entertaining readers. Overall, authors of ecocentric fiction aimed to inspire readers to value and protect the natural world while also providing exciting and engaging narratives.

For my analysis of ecocentric fiction, I relied heavily on the works of William Gordon Stables and Frank T. Bullen. Literary scholars like Robert G. David and Douglas Wamsley

classify their works as adventure stories, but I categorize them specifically as ecocentric adventure stories because of their clear ecological themes. William Gordon Stables (1840-1910) wrote many adventure novels for children in the late nineteenth century, including several set in the Arctic. He wrote from personal experience, having served on multiple Arctic expeditions specifically aboard whaling ships (Wamsley 2). Stables was deeply interested in the natural world and drew on his extensive knowledge of flora and fauna to create accurate descriptions of the Arctic landscape and its animal inhabitants (Wamsley 1). Throughout his Arctic novels, Stables emphasized the importance of scientific inquiry and exploration, and he frequently portrayed the natural world as a source of wonder and inspiration for his young readers (Wamsley 3-4). Frank Thomas Bullen (1857-1915) was a British author and sailor who wrote several adventure novels, most based on his own experiences at sea. His obituary in *The Geographical Journal* states that he lived a “roving and adventuring life from a young age” and his personal exploits influenced his stories (“Obituary”). His membership in the Royal Geographical Society and role as a lecturer there suggest that he had an interest in natural history and the environment (“Obituary”). His books contain strong Christian religious themes and some include scenes of human cruelty toward wild creatures, which implies he believed it was morally imperative for humans to coexist peacefully with the natural world.

3. Children’s Literature and Environmental Themes, 1789-1914

Studying children’s literature is an important and valid way to understand British society’s beliefs about the environment during the long nineteenth century. Children’s literature scholar Laura Apol argues that “children’s literature provides a unique window into the pervasive values and deeply-held beliefs of a culture” meaning that stories for children reflect what beliefs and values a society wants to communicate to the next generation (Apol

1). Usually these beliefs and values involve social and cultural issues, but I argue that they also involve environmental ones. Scholar Laurence Talairach-Vielmas explains,

Quite logically, therefore, natural history found its way into children's fiction, and animals were given a prominent place in the narratives, and not just because animals were seen as an appropriate subject for children. As [Harriet] Ritvo contends, zoological discourse enabled popularisers to present 'a moral hierarchy in the animal kingdom based on the hierarchy of orders in human society'. Thus, the popularisation of zoology often revealed an 'anxiety about the maintenance of social discipline' which was crucial to the British imperialist project (Talairach-Vielmas 16-17).

I agree with Talairach-Vielmas' points; the study of natural history provided a framework for the British to understand their relationship to the environment and nonhuman animals.

Through most of the period, natural history allowed humans to justify their position within the environment, which as Talairach-Vielmas argues, was essential for empire building. The British needed to popularize beliefs about their superiority over nonhuman animals in order to continue promoting the expansion of the Empire whether through exotic species collecting, using nonhuman animals for labor, or extracting products like sea mammal oil and fur. Given the popularity of children's literature, it makes sense that authors would include characterizations of nonhuman animals. These characterizations reinforced nineteenth century beliefs about the environment and the roles nonhuman animals played in supporting imperial goals.

Two policies aided the emergence of children's literature as a genre during the long nineteenth century. The Foster Education Act of 1870 resulted in many more British children, specifically lower-class children, being educated and exposed to the written word (Lundin 23). This legislation followed the Reform Act of 1867 and essentially mandated universal public education for British children. According to scholar Anne H. Lundin, it also "promoted an awareness of educational needs and created a growing market for the publishers," meaning that publishers had an economic incentive to print works for children (46). The Sunday School Movement created another opportunity for young students to

receive moral and religious instruction.¹¹ Due to this additional instructional time, teachers needed appropriate materials to convey British and Christian values in an age-appropriate way.

Children's literature steadily gained popularity throughout the nineteenth century. One reason for this was the treatment of books as a commodity, specifically as rewards or prizes, and they were "designed to impart moral guidelines, to reinforce exemplary behavior, and to caution against the evils of intemperance or profanity" (Lundin 34). Scholar M. Daphne Kurtzer reinforces this argument and states that "[t]he purpose of children's texts, both fictional and nonfictional, is to help acculturate children into society and to teach them to behave and believe in acceptable ways" (xv). They also conveyed popular attitudes about the environment and its nonhuman inhabitants. On the topic of nonhuman animals, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas states that "[b]east fables were used to tackle the relationship between humans and animals or, rather, to capture how humans viewed themselves in relation to animals, sometimes satirically" (55). Authors used wild and domestic nonhuman animals in literature in order to reinforce beliefs about human-nature relationships. Messaging about the treatment of animals varied and depended on popular beliefs of the time. Sometimes authors characterized animals as disposable labor used by humans to further industrial progress. Other depictions of nonhuman animals showed them as entertainment for sport hunters or personal use as pets. In the later part of the century, stories like *Black Beauty* showed children that nonhuman animals had thoughts and feelings and were worthy of protection.

Science education for children ensured the continuation of the British Empire's scientific and technological domination, and because of the popularity of natural history.

11. John Raikes is credited with starting the first Sunday School in 1780 to provide moral instruction and keep children out of crime. The idea of Sunday School gained traction throughout the long nineteenth century with 200,000 children attending by 1800, approximately 1,250,000 by 1830, and two million attending by 1850 (Laqueur 44).

Robert G. David argues that little attention was paid to the Arctic in science and geography textbooks, so works of fiction supplemented readers' Arctic education (195). With regard to Arctic "science," Helen Reddick explains that science education appeared in everyday life, and that "exploration was not just something that involved science — exploring was science" (180-181). Authors of children's literature wove nonhuman animal science terminology and concepts into Arctic fiction. *Northern Regions* included descriptions of nonhuman animal migration patterns and explained concepts like camouflage through physical descriptions of fur and coloring. Arctic whaling stories described "operating" on whales and included details about cetacean anatomy. Some stories like "The White Seal" even introduced children to concepts like extinction, which was an important topic in the nineteenth century. Specimen collection and creating nonhuman animal taxonomies were immensely popular hobbies, and participating in these activities reinforced the power of the British Empire. Including nonhuman animals in literature emphasized the power of the Empire by highlighting exotic specimens from the British colonies. An example of this is Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, which introduced children to different species from India. Including descriptions of nonhuman animals in collections and menageries encouraged children to engage in specimen collecting, which "offered a way of knowing the world, of exploring it and of acting in it" (Talairach-Vielmas 17).

The long nineteenth century was an important period in which children's literature evolved from simple, instructional books to richly illustrated novels and picture books that communicated complicated ideas about the Empire's relationship to the environment and nonhuman animals. Given the popularity of the genre and the Crown's imperial goals in the Arctic, it is easy to understand why the British chose to communicate environmental values through children's literature.

4. British Ecoconsciousness and Understanding of Nonhuman Animals

British environmental consciousness and beliefs about the relationship between human and nonhuman animals changed dramatically alongside renewed interest in the Arctic. It is important to briefly examine the history of environmentalism and nonhuman animal science in Britain in order to understand how the beliefs about the human-nature relationship evolved over time. In his influential essay on human-environmental relationships, anthropologist Gísli Pálsson says that human-nature relationships fall into one of three categories: environmental orientalism, environmental paternalism, and environmental communalism. Humans have power over nature in both environmental orientalist and environmental paternalistic human-nature relationships, but the two categories differ in the way humans exert power over the environment. According to Pálsson, environmental orientalism is an exploitative relationship in which the environment is othered and exoticized and is closely associated with colonialism and resource extraction.¹² Pálsson also argues that scientific objectification is a component of environmental orientalism if the primary goal is to take from nature in order to advance human progress.

Environmental paternalism relates to orientalism because humans still see themselves as having power over nature, but they use that power to protect it instead of exploiting it. Both relationship structures place nature firmly in the “other” realm but paternalism at least attempts to protect nature. Communalism is radically different from the other two relationship structures; environmental communalism decenters humanity in the human-nature

12. It is important to understand that Pálsson’s use of the term “orientalism” does not refer to the actual Orient, or any geographic place. For reasons he does not explain, his use of “orientalism” invokes but is unrelated to anthropologist Edward Said’s definition of “Orientalism,” in which Said argues that Western anthropological writings about the Orient inherently reinforced the superiority of Western culture and society. In the introduction to his famous book *Orientalism*, Said defines Orientalism in three ways: an academic field of study; a worldview and “style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident!’;” and as a “Western style for dominating restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”. His last definition may be the most appropriate when trying to understand Pálsson’s use of “environmental orientalism.” By this, I mean that calling a human-nature relationship “orientalist” means exploitation and domination of the environment, without meaning the Orient geographically.

relationship and is a relationship “in which one engages with nature, becomes part of the ecological and allows it contingency” (Spring and Schimanski 25). Pálsson establishes that environmental communalism is the goal for human-nature relationships but acknowledges that it is difficult to achieve since it requires humans to surrender power.

The British human-environment relationship was primarily environmental orientalist during the long nineteenth century. The British viewed themselves as dominant over nature because of legal and religious authority granted by the Doctrine of Discovery and the Bible, and believed God ordained their exploitative actions toward the environment.¹³ Contrary to popular understanding, the Doctrine of Discovery is not a single document but an amalgamation of numerous legal documents which gave Christian nations the right to seize and subjugate “empty” land or land held by non-Christians. The origin of the Doctrine of Discovery lies in papal bulls issued by the Catholic Church which gave the Christian nations of Spain and Portugal the right to seize the Canary Islands and convert their inhabitants to Christianity in 1437 (Miller 36). *Johnson v. McIntosh* is the most well-known case upholding the Doctrine of Discovery in the context of the loss of land rights by Indigenous people living in what is now the United States. The 1823 Supreme Court decision reads, “the character and religion of its inhabitants afforded an apology for considering them as a people over whom the superior genius of Europe might claim an ascendancy” (Miller 39). Indigenous rights scholar Robert J. Miller lists ten elements that consistently appear in legal justification for European colonization and land claims: Christianity, civilization, first discovery, actual ownership and possession, preemption, Indian/Native title, limited Indigenous sovereign and commercial rights, contiguity, *terra nullius*, and conquest (40-41).

13. Genesis 1:26 states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Bible, King James Version).

While greatly influencing geopolitics in the form of nation building, the Doctrine of Discovery also played a significant role in shaping British cultural attitudes toward the environment as it allowed Britain the right to claim “uninhabited” territory in the Arctic and elsewhere and possess it. In this sense, “land” refers to territory and its natural resources, including all the nonhuman animals. Britain fully owned all natural aspects of the land. The concept of “owning” a natural landform is a colonizing action and ties directly to Pálsson’s definition of environmental orientalism where the environment is “othered” and is exposed to human exploitation. According to the Doctrine of Discovery and within an environmental orientalist human-nature relationship, nature and its nonhuman animals do not have agency.

The Industrial Revolution influenced British ecoconsciousness by putting progress ahead of the environment both at home and abroad.¹⁴ Factories required resources like coal, steel, and oil, which meant materials had to be extracted from the earth and nonhuman animals. Smoke and coal dust polluted cities, and factory owners paid little attention to sanitation standards. Romantic poet William Wordsworth tried to transport readers outside filthy cities through his writings about the Lakes District. He exalted the beauty of the natural world and piqued early interest in conservation in the Lakes District at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, many British citizens could not experience nature as described by Wordsworth and his fellow Romantic poets because they lived in polluted cities devoid of green spaces.¹⁵ Victorian scholar Dennis Denisoff eloquently captures this sentiment saying, “the natural environment was something separate from society... One might visit nature, step into the natural environment, but one was not a part of it—not really” (Denisoff 7).

14. The Industrial Revolution in Britain refers to the period from 1760 to 1840. Here I use the term “progress” according to Hobsbawm’s definition: “massive, enlightened, sure of itself, self-satisfied, but above all inevitable” (Hobsbawm 1962. 3).

15. Interest in the Lakes District is attributed to Wordsworth’s 1810 work *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* (Renberg 5-6).

The treatment and exploitation of nonhuman animals must be considered when seeking to understand British ecoconsciousness during the long nineteenth century as nonhuman animals were valuable to progress and commerce because of their labor and resources. Pockets of the British public cared about nonhuman animal welfare; they founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824 and primarily focused on improving the treatment of pit ponies laboring in coal mines and influencing nonhuman animal welfare laws. They did not gain much momentum until the latter half of the century.¹⁶ The Industrial Revolution affected nonhuman animals outside of Britain through the large-scale commodification of animal resources best demonstrated through the unsustainable harvesting practices carried out by the whaling and fur industries.¹⁷ Despite being more than 2,600 miles away, the Arctic was not exempt from the impacts of the Industrial Revolution as whaling activity increased in order to harvest oil for factories and baleen for fashion. While the British knew about extinction, they failed to recognize it as an ecological reality until the 1820s. As Mark V. Barrow explains in his book *Nature's Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology*, eighteenth and nineteenth century beliefs about extinction were rooted firmly in Christian religion and, more specifically, the idea that God created a perfect world. Each species existed for a reason and played a role, so therefore “the loss of any creature threatened to bring down the entire edifice” (Barrow 541).

Amateur fossil collector James Parkinson published *Organic Remains of a Former World* in 1804 in which he reframed the idea of “plentitude,” meaning that a rise and fall in species was part of the progression toward the human species (Barrow 1008). Similarly, geologist Charles Lyell took this argument farther in 1832 and stated that extinction was a

16. The Society changed its name to include “Royal” after Queen Victoria became its patron in 1840 (“The Origins & History of the RSPCA”).

17. The commodification of nonhuman animal resources in Britain reached new heights during the long nineteenth century driven by beliefs that populations were larger than actual numbers, and that population reduction or elimination at the hands of humans was part of natural order. This belief is best demonstrated by the whaling industry and seal hunting decimating populations in the Arctic.

natural occurrence and extinctions had taken place throughout the earth's history due to climatic changes and competition by other species (Barrow 1032). In *Principles of Geology*,

Lyell states:

We have only to reflect that in thus obtaining possession of the earth by conquest, and defending our acquisitions by force, we exercise no exclusive prerogative. Every species which has spread itself from a small point over a wide area, must in like manner, have marked its progress by the diminution, or the entire extirpation, of some other, and must maintain its ground by a successful struggle against the encroachments of other plants and animals (156).

Lyell's argument formed the core of Britain's environmental orientalist relationship with nature during most of the long nineteenth century: extinction was a natural phenomenon that had occurred multiple times due to more powerful species wiping out others and therefore humans should not concern themselves with this natural occurrence.

The study of natural history as a popular hobby and professional pursuit also affected beliefs about nonhuman animals, because specialized disciplines like botany, zoology and geology focused on building taxonomies which relied upon specimen collection (Barrow Introduction). Specimen collection might appear to be a benign practice in the broader context of the environmental harm caused by the overharvesting of nonhuman animal resources. However, Barrow writes, “[t]he central organizing pursuit for most natural history fields became the creation of an exhaustive, authoritative, and rationally ordered inventory of the particular group on which they specialized” (Barrow Introduction). Collectors wanted to create comprehensive classification systems which required a large supply of dead and living nonhuman animal specimens. All of this was done without consideration for the impact that widespread collection had on ecosystems. As mentioned before, British scientists knew about extinction because of Georges Cuvier's publications comparing anatomies of different fossils, but they generally concluded that extinction was simply part of the natural order of things, so collecting specimens — even if populations were small — was acceptable. Cuvier forced them to understand that extinction, while part of earth's history, happened to a “virtual zoo of

lost creatures” and that understanding extinction was crucial to understanding natural history (Barrow 494).

The relationship between Britain and the environment at the end of the long nineteenth century is best described as a direct reaction to the social and environmental degradation caused by the Industrial Revolution. This reaction brought forth a shift in ecoconsciousness and drove many to support environmental paternalism. Three primary factors drove support for the conservation movement in Britain at the end of the long nineteenth century: first, a moral and religious call for humans to return to a state of harmony with the natural world and nonhuman animals; second, a greater public awareness of the extent of environmental destruction and overharvesting of nonhuman animal populations; and third, an economic need to preserve species and prevent extinction. Prominent progressive authors and activists like Octavia Hill, Edward Carpenter, and John Ruskin published extensively throughout the long nineteenth century about the impacts of industrialization on the environment. They appealed to British morality both with regard to caring for the environment and giving all people access to it. Ruskin argued that the present generation must practice environmental stewardship in order to ensure future generations could enjoy nature. In 1849, he published *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* saying, “God has lent us the earth for our life; it is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us ... as to us; we have no right, by anything that we do or neglect, to involve them in unnecessary penalties, or deprive them of benefits which it was in our power to bequeath” (Ruskin 156). Octavia Hill advocated setting aside green spaces for the lower classes and argued for the “value of abundant good air” (Baigent 142). Carpenter published his work *Towards Democracy* in 1883 in which he called for individuals to pursue their own paths to enlightenment and create change within themselves. He also advocated for vegetarianism and

recycling, two novel ideas that were quite progressive in the late nineteenth century (Rowbotham 10).

These calls for humanity to care for nature in order to find self-fulfillment now and in the future were important to shaping British ecoconsciousness in the late nineteenth century. Writings from progressive thinkers would not have reached the British public without advances in printing technologies and the spread of periodicals. Elaine Renberg argues that the increased availability of printed works led to “more comprehensive societal dialogue” and allowed for ideas about the environment and its treatment to permeate everyday conversations (Renberg 3). Late nineteenth century readers were able to access a plethora of works on numerous topics which allowed them to form connections and create new discourse about the environment. Given the squalor and filth in which many city-dwellers lived, it is no wonder that discourse about the environment moved from wanting to exploit it at all costs to wanting to preserve it. Organized efforts to protect the environment and nonhuman animals formed in societies and clubs like The Commons Preservation Society (founded in 1865), the Wood Green Band of Mercy for Promoting Kindness to Animals (founded in 1875 by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), and the Selborne Society (founded in 1885). The RSPCA, buoyed by public support, started prosecuting cases of nonhuman animal cruelty throughout Britain.¹⁸ In 1893, Britain created a National Trust which compiled an inventory of land and sites needing protection, and acquired thirteen protected sites.

It is easy to argue that British thinking about the environment and nonhuman animals shifted in the latter half of the long nineteenth century simply due to religious and moral convictions. However, conservation became even more important as scientists published new understanding of species extinction and the limits of populations. Plants and nonhuman

18. Anna Sewell’s 1877 novel *Black Beauty* is widely credited with garnering public support for nonhuman animal welfare.

animals were economically valuable, thus preventing extinction was important to preserving economic opportunities (Barrow 252). Environmental colonization, an action carried out as part of Britain's imperial endeavors, treated nonhuman animals as unlimited commodities instead of limited populations and, because colonization took place far away from Britain, also placed their decimation outside of British consciousness. This changed as the public learned more about the extent of species decline in places like North America and the Arctic. Additionally, British scientists like Hugh Strickland argued that the scientific community must be aware of extinction because of the risk to future study.¹⁹

The British expressed an unwavering belief in human superiority and inevitable power over nature throughout the long nineteenth century. Christian religion, philosophy, scientific theory, and economic opportunity influenced the subsequent treatment of the Arctic and its nonhuman animals. The British believed that nature was inherently "other," and the Arctic was far away. The combination of these two things meant that nonhuman Arctic animals existed out of sight and, therefore, out of mind. Pálsson states that "environmental orientalism suggests negative reciprocity," meaning that nature suffers at the hands of people (Pálsson 66). Nature suffered at the hands of the British through most of the nineteenth century, and appeared in the forms of overhunting, nonhuman animal cruelty, and pollution both within the confines of the British Isles and in the Arctic. However, the late nineteenth century ushered in new belief systems that promoted care and protection for nonhuman animals that had been exploited in the name of progress. On this topic, Pálsson says, "...paternalism implies balanced reciprocity, presupposing human responsibility" (Pálsson 66). The young conservation movement still fits into Pálsson's paradigm of environmental paternalism but calls on humans to use their power to protect nature. The conservation

19. To clarify, Strickland's call to prevent extinction encouraged naturalists to catalog more species before they went extinct and did not necessarily encourage conservation (Barrow 307).

movement represented a significant change in environmental thought as British thinkers, social activists, naturalists, and authors strove to prevent further destruction of Arctic nonhuman animal populations by educating younger generations about the importance of conservation.

Having laid out the historical context of British attitudes toward the Arctic and its nonhuman animals, it is now necessary to delve into the textual analysis of British children's literature published during this period. Analysis of early exploration narratives, anthropocentric adventure stories, and ecocentric Arctic fiction demonstrates the ways in which these attitudes were reflected and reinforced in the literature and illustrates how representations of nonhuman animals in the literature changed over time. Using ecocriticism to examine the ways in which British authors present Arctic wildlife in literature presents new perspectives about the relationships between humans and nonhuman animals in the British Arctic imagination.

5. Early Exploration Narratives

“Surely, uncle, this is the age of adventure,” exclaims Tom at one point in *Northern Regions*, as Uncle Richard recalls his expeditions in the Arctic alongside Captains Parry and Franklin.²⁰ Early Arctic exploration narratives included detailed observations of nonhuman Arctic animals to encourage children's interest in natural history and science and emphasize the idea of limitless populations. Wild Arctic creatures served as interesting, exotic specimens for explorers to introduce to children in order to expand their taxonomies. Authors took great care to accurately describe the Arctic landscape, plants, and nonhuman animals since the public expected that authors of books for children conveyed accurate scientific information (David 202). The “voyages of discovery” directed by the British Navy heavily

20. This quote is from the second edition (*Northern Regions* 246).

influenced these early narratives and children's literature framed explorers as national heroes who discovered new species while adventuring in distant places (Reddick 2013, 320).

Northern Regions, first published in London in 1825 by an unknown author, draws directly from Captain Robert Parry's 1819 and 1821 journeys and Sir John Franklin's land expedition to northern Canada and introduces a number of species while introducing the idea of unlimited populations of whales, birds, and other Arctic creatures (Reddick 2013, 321). The central character is Uncle Richard who served as a sailor in Captain Parry's crew. Richard does not talk about himself or his interests, but readers can infer that he is fascinated by Arctic landscapes and their nonhuman animals, as evidenced by his multiple expeditions, and he demonstrates some knowledge about their tendencies.²¹ In the preface, Uncle Richard clearly states that he is recounting his Arctic expeditions "in order to gratify the spirit of inquiry so desirable in youth" (*Northern Regions* ii). Richard is also deeply patriotic and extremely loyal to Captain Parry and makes multiple references to Parry's bravery and leadership.

Through storytelling, Richard introduces his nephews Tom and Charles and niece Louisa to a wide array of Arctic nonhuman animals like walruses, belugas, seals, Arctic foxes, grouse, and polar bears. *Northern Regions* is relatively devoid of plot; the explorers encounter some danger due to the harsh Arctic elements, and their meetings with nonhuman animals are generally peaceful. Uncle Richard seems most interested in observing nonhuman animals as seen through his encounter with a group of belugas while aboard the ship. Initially the crew tries to kill the whales, but the belugas evade them. Richard calls the whales "cunning" because the pod "would not permit a boat to come near them without diving" (*Northern Regions* 9). He goes on to claim that he could hear the whales singing, and

21. One example of this is when Richard shares his insights into walrus behavior, saying, "I remarked that walruses are amazingly difficult to kill" (*Northern Regions* 5).

compares the sound to “musical glasses, when you clumsily attempt to play them” (*Northern Regions* 9). This scene is packed with scientific facts about beluga whales: they can communicate through singing, and they can avoid humans using their intelligence.²² Uncle Richard’s tale introduces children to an unfamiliar species and its behavior, and they can now add beluga whales to their taxonomy.

Specimen collecting was included in the objectives of many Arctic expeditions. Richard notes multiple instances in which he tries to collect nonhuman animal specimens. He tells his nephews and niece that he tried to bring them back a “beautiful little white fox,” but it died during the passage (*Northern Regions* 26). Similarly, he says, “I wished much to bring home a snow bunting, the plumage of which is beautiful; their wings are jetty black, and on their breast is a cream-coloured mark in the shape of a horse-shoe, which contrasts most beautifully with the snow whiteness of their body... we could scarcely find in our hearts to kill them” (*Northern Regions* 210). Like many British explorers of the time, Richard wants to bring back exotic souvenirs for his nephews. He does not express further scientific goals for the fox or bird, but it was popular to collect nonhuman animals for display in personal menageries. Specimen collecting also reinforced the notion of limitless populations; sailors believed it was perfectly fine to take home creatures since they saw so many during their journeys. Later, he describes a scene where he decides to take a walk: “While most of our people went shooting on the shore, pleased at taking the first walk in North America, I was busied in searching for natural curiosities, and I soon found a complete skeleton of a whale” (*Northern Regions* 171). Instead of going shooting, he occupies himself by searching for specimens, presumably to take back to England. He emphasizes that he finds a complete skeleton of a whale, which makes his venture worthwhile and shows Tom, Charles, and

22. Belugas are referred to as “sea canaries” because of their singing. By the time of its initial publication in 1825, Arctic whales had developed tactics to escape hunters after years of extensive whaling activity.

Louisa that studying the natural world is rewarding. These descriptions of nonhuman animals show how novel Arctic nonhuman animals appeared to explorers, and how eager they were to take them back home for curiosities.

Unlike Arctic stories which focused solely on the harshness and danger of winter, *Northern Regions* spans multiple seasons, and Uncle Richard describes nonhuman animal behaviors and migration patterns. He says, “It was not until the second week of May when a ptarmigan was killed, and the first tracks of rein-deer, and musk oxen traced, which was proof that they return from their migration this month” (*Northern Regions* 40). He also talks about moose migrations, observing they were “advancing northward from their warmer winter quarters, ducks and geese and robins appeared, and spring brought again brown patches instead of the white robe which the country had been clothed in” (*Northern Regions* 125). Later he describes how some birds change color according to the season: “The plumage of the cock grouse still continued white except near the tip of the tail, where the feathers were of a glossy black, but the hen changed from day to day, and was becoming speckled” (*Northern Regions* 50). By describing how Arctic birds camouflage themselves according to the season, he shows children how nonhuman animals adapt to their environment, which is an important scientific concept. Near the end of the book, he observes signs of upcoming winter in the behaviors of snow geese: “A flock of geese migrating to the south, gave them the melancholy intimation that winter was again approaching” (*Northern Regions* 118). In addition to educating children about Arctic migratory patterns and nonhuman animal adaptations, Richard’s observations capture the dynamic nature of Arctic seasons and demonstrated to young readers that nonhuman animals had a unique ability to survive in different seasons.

Richard sprinkles vivid illustrations of nonhuman animals’ physical characteristics and behavior throughout his narrative. One of the first descriptions is of a reindeer, which

Tom mentions seeing at an exhibition in London. Richard says that the reindeer “trotted by our side like a dog” and that it was timid and friendly to the explorers to the point that they had no desire to kill it (*Northern Regions* 46-47). After Tom says he did not find the reindeer at the exhibition attractive, Uncle Richard launches into a detailed description of the reindeer:

Its fine branching horns are a great improvement to them, Tom, and probably the one you saw was without them. But it is by no means a graceful animal; its high shoulders, and awkward stoop on its head, gives it rather a deformed appearance. Our new acquaintance had no horns, was of a brownish colour, with a black saddle, a board rim of black round his eyes, and very white about the tail (*Northern Regions* 47).

Richard explains to Tom that reindeer shed their antlers, which is why his reindeer may have looked strange. Similarly, he describes musk-ox as “an ill-proportioned little animal; his hair is so long that he treads it under his feet, which appear too small. When disturbed and hunted, he tears up the ground with his horns, and looks round at his pursuers, though without attempting to attack them” (*Northern Regions* 51). His observations of these strange Arctic creatures entertain the children, and the accompanying engravings reinforce their novelty. It is important to note that Uncle Richard never says that he kills the animals he describes. In these scenes, he observes simply for the sake of conveying information about wildlife.

Unlike Uncle Richard, some explorers sought to kill Arctic nonhuman animals in order to take them home as trophies to demonstrate their bravery. In his somewhat embellished biography titled *The Life of Nelson*, first published in London in 1813, author Robert Southey describes a legendary encounter between a teenage Horatio Nelson and a polar bear. In one of his first voyages, Nelson works aboard a ship as a “sea-boy” bound for the North Pole. During the expedition, the curious Nelson sets out in the fog to try to find a polar bear, and he quickly encounters one. Finding himself only armed with a malfunctioning musket, Nelson stands his ground and attempts to club the bear, crying out, “Do but let me get a blow at this devil with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him” (Southey 16). Right as he is about to — presumably — club the bear to death, his Captain fires a shot to

scare it off and then scolds Horatio for putting himself in danger. Southey closes the scene with the captain questioning Nelson about his motives for taking such a risk: “The captain reprimanded him sternly for conduct so unworthy of the office which he filled, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. ‘Sir,’ said he, pouting his lip, as he was wont to do when agitated, ‘I wished to kill the bear that I might carry the skin to my father’” (Southey 16). This scene was likely imagined by Southey and mostly served to perpetuate origin myths about Nelson’s bravery. However, Nelson’s desire to take home a polar bear skin showed that he was eager to impress his father back in England with proof of his Arctic heroics. Many explorers took similar actions and took home evidence of — or sometimes entire — nonhuman animals to show as novel souvenirs at home and in public exhibitions.

Explorers often wrote dispatches describing seemingly massive populations of wildlife in the Arctic, and children’s literature reinforced this belief. *The History of Sandford and Merton*, first published in 1783 and reprinted numerous times throughout the long nineteenth century, was a volume of stories meant to educate and entertain children, and it follows Mr. Barlow’s education of two boys, Harry Sandford and Tommy Merton. Arctic nonhuman animals appear in two chapters. In Chapter II, Mr. Barlow tells them a story about brave Russian sailors who were marooned on the Island of East Spitzbergen. Mr. Barlow explains that the sailors were fortunate to land on an island that was “abounding in these animals” and they quickly killed twelve reindeer.²³ In addition to feeding themselves, the sailors had to protect themselves against polar bears. Mr. Barlow describes the following scene as the sailors stockpiled resources in order to survive on Spitsbergen:

The success of our islanders in making the spears, encouraged them to proceed, and to forge some pieces of iron into heads of arrows of the same shape, though somewhat smaller in size than the spears above mentioned. . . Their ingenuity in this respect was crowned with success far beyond their expectation; for during the time of their continuance upon the island, with those arrows they killed no less than two hundred and fifty reindeer, besides a great number of blue and white foxes. The flesh of these

23. An anonymous author published the first edition of the book in Britain in 1783 (Day 62).

animals served them also for food, and their skins for clothing, and other necessary preservatives against the intense coldness of a climate so near the pole. They killed, however, only ten white bears in all, and that not without the utmost danger; for these animals, being prodigiously strong, defended themselves with astonishing vigor and fury (Day 64).

In this scene, the four sailors use homemade weapons to harvest a tremendous number of reindeer, foxes, and polar bears. Day's emphasis on the quantity of creatures killed reinforces the belief in large populations. Day explains that the sailors used nonhuman animal products for food and clothing, which positioned the reindeer and foxes as resources for consumption. The sailors end up killing ten polar bears which, to modern readers who understand the current plight of polar bears, seems excessive and inhumane. This imagery showcases a human's ability to successfully use weaponry to kill massive, dangerous animals. While this chapter focuses on Russian sailors instead of British ones, Day wrote the book for a British audience and explorers' stories of seemingly infinite nonhuman animal groups undoubtedly influenced his writing.

Returning to Pálsson's human-nature relationship framework, authors of early exploration novels treated the seemingly limitless populations of nonhuman Arctic animals as exotic specimens that were property of the British Empire. Early exploration novels reinforced the environmental orientalist human-nature relationship by showcasing specimen collecting and trophy hunting which was underlined by the prevailing belief in limitless populations. Authors also described Arctic creatures in literature in order to build children's understanding of the wild kingdom and encourage interest in natural history. Nonhuman animals served as propaganda to show off the wonders and wildness of the Far North, exoticized the region, and encouraged scientific inquiry and empirical observation. Nonhuman animals interested explorers who took many of them home to England for personal collections or to use in exhibitions where they served as propaganda for the Empire. This imagery in children's literature played a role in shifting British beliefs about the Arctic

from exploration to exploitation. Specifically, characterizations of limitless nonhuman Arctic animal populations coupled with the idea that Britain owned them either as resources or specimens set the foundation for Britain's relationship with wild Arctic creatures as the long nineteenth century marched forward.

6. Anthropocentric Adventure Stories

Anthropocentric adventure stories published midway through the long nineteenth century supported an environmental orientalist relationship with nature. Authors accomplished this by communicating British beliefs about resource colonization in the Arctic through characterizations of nonhuman animals as dangerous enemies to vanquish and resources for consumption. These stories differ from early exploration narratives because authors prominently featured confrontations between British crews and nonhuman animals. Anthropocentric Arctic adventure stories reinforced beliefs about unlimited nonhuman animal populations and shaped children's ecoconsciousness by reducing whales, seals, and other fur bearing creatures to resources.²⁴ The Arctic whaling industry reached its height of prosperity during the long nineteenth century. Because it was dangerous but lucrative, it seemed like a good profession for adventurous young men and made for compelling plotlines in literature. *Peter the Whaler*, first published in 1851 by W. H. G. Kingston, is a classic example of a whaling story: the protagonist, Peter, is sent to join the crew of a whaling ship by his father, the vicar, after one too many transgressions ashore. On the ship headed to Greenland, he encounters pirates, ice floes, and shipwrecks and eventually ends up on a whaling ship under the watch of Captain Rendell. The whales themselves are secondary characters in *Peter the Whaler* and exist solely to illustrate British domination over nature. While Peter mentions the dangers of encounters with whales, he focuses on the excitement of

24. In her article, Schell refers to the American whaling industry, but the British held similar beliefs based on their whaling activity in the region (Schell 210).

seeing a whale because “as all on board benefit by every fish which is caught, all are interested in the capture of one” (Kingston 1851, 241). Successful crews could earn significant income, a detail that Kingston describes in depth saying, “they receive a gratuity for every size fish caught during the voyage, or a certain sum for every tun of oil which the cargo produces” (Kingston 1851, 106). Modern readers of this information might be bored by descriptions of payment structures especially when considering the story is meant for young readers. But, through detailing how men made money in the industry, Kingston communicates that whales were commodities. He may have even convinced some readers to join whaling crews since they could become rich.

Authors informed readers about whale fisheries and used descriptions of excess killing to reinforce beliefs about abundant whale populations which assured young readers that they could make fortunes in the Arctic.²⁵ In Ballantyne’s *World of Ice*, first published in London in 1859, Captain Guy and his whaling crew sail to the Greenland whale fisheries, which was a British-controlled, specifically mapped region. They hunted “off the coast of Greenland [where] many whalers were seen actively engaged in warfare with the giants of the Polar Seas.”²⁶ Ballantyne explicitly compares whaling to warfare, which is an accurate comparison considering the amount of weaponry, strategy, and manpower required to kill a whale. Ballantyne says that Captain Guy “proceeded through Davis’ Straits into Baffin’s Bay... and afterwards prosecute the whale-fishery” (Ballantyne 1905, 39). In this instance the word “prosecute” means to continue with a course of action with a view to its completion, meaning that Guy intended to spend a significant time hunting whales without regard to the impact extensive hunting would have on populations.

25. Some textbooks exposed readers to the commodification of Arctic nonhuman animals. For example, the textbook *An Easy Grammar of Geography for Schools and Young Persons* says that Greenland was famous “for the whale fishery”, Russia for “the produce [that] consists of fur and skins” and the furs and fisheries found in Canada (David, 188).

26. The original edition was published in 1859 (Ballantyne 1905, 39).

Themes of excessive hunting appear in *Arctic Adventures*, published by Kingston in 1882. The story follows the adventures of a whaling crew aboard the *Hardy Norseman* heading to the Arctic near Spitsbergen. The captain's primary goal is to hunt whales and seals, and his secondary goal is to look for the unnamed protagonist's brother who disappeared while sailing in the same area. The crew quickly manages to kill three whales, representing massive wealth and resources, but they are unable to pull all three onto the boat at once and end up towing two behind. A storm hits and, "before half the blubber had been cut off, they had been compelled to cast [the whales] adrift" (Kingston 1882, 23). The narrator explains that the "captain intended to wait where we were in the hopes of again getting hold of it, and of picking up the other whale we had killed, and perhaps also the one we had wounded," but the crew never ends up recovering them, and they are not mentioned again (Kingston 1882, 23). Modern readers will regard this scene as terribly wasteful; the whalers knew that they were incapable of processing three whales at the same time, yet they still continued to hunt, resulting in an unnecessary loss of life. In the context of the long nineteenth century, it was perfectly reasonable to capitalize on the opportunity to kill three whales, and then show little concern about abandoning the whales since, as scholar Jennifer Schell argues, whalers believed in "fantasies of ecological abundance" (211).²⁷

Actual encounters with whales were essential to the plot lines of Arctic adventure stories and set up the ultimate showdown between man and nature by using descriptions of warfare and military battles to evoke British pride and nationalism. Ballantyne dedicates an entire chapter to the first meeting of harpooners and whales in *World of Ice*. In the opening paragraphs, Ballantyne highlights the exhilaration of the crew upon seeing its prey, saying that "the sight of a whale acted on the spirits of men like wild-fire" and his young hero, Fred,

27. Again, Schell refers to American whaling, but the British shared similar beliefs about the abundance of Arctic whale populations.

experiences “intense excitement, as he caught sight of the whale not more than fifty yards ahead of the boat” (Ballantyne 1905, 31, 33). Like soldiers entering a battle, the crew does not express fear despite knowing the danger that whales posed. Instead, they prepare themselves for the fight showing their bravery and confidence. Ballantyne describes the battle scene that followed: “This time a harpoon was thrown and a deep lance-thrust given which penetrated to the vital parts of its huge carcass, as was evidenced by the blood which it spouted, and the convulsive lashing of its tremendous tail” (Ballantyne 1905, 35). This scene is packed with the language of warfare. Images of the blood spouting calls to mind scenes from the battlefield, and the whale struggles against the harpooners as it slowly succumbs to its fate. This type of imagery also draws from religious stories like David killing Goliath, and classical myths in which heroes like Odysseus kill their much more powerful enemies using their superior intelligence, technology, and skill. Percy Bolingbroke St. John chronicles a similar scene in his 1854 novel *The Arctic Crusoe, a Tale of the Polar Sea* and captures the emotions of the captain and crew as they slaughter the whale saying, “[t]he looks of the men testified their admiration of their chief mate’s skill” (34).²⁸ Thus, he portrays whaling as an admirable job that required strength, bravery, and talent, in addition to skill and practice. The skill set required for whaling is like that required by the British Navy, which mandated that its shipmen be brave, strong, and well-trained.

While whaling stories captivated young readers through thrilling descriptions of dangerous showdowns with massive marine mammals in the faraway Arctic Ocean, authors writing about the Canadian Arctic included descriptions of the fur trade and fur bearing animals such as foxes and seals. This form of labor represented another way in which the British exploited Arctic nonhuman animals. In anthropocentric adventure stories, explorers typically killed seals for oil, skins, and meat, and mass slaughters usually happened before

28. The first edition was published in 1854.

crews wintered in the Arctic. Authors spent less time describing seal hunting because it did not have the same level of danger and struggle as whaling and did not require the same level of physical strength and talent to harvest them. Whaling required an entire crew participating in a carefully coordinated attack using highly specialized equipment while aboard a boat. Clubbing seals, on the other hand, required only training men to use a short club and learn techniques for luring the seals out of the water. Seals appear in almost every adventure story, though. In *Arctic Adventures*, Kingston says that the sailors “killed a number of seals by concealing ourselves behind the rocks on the shore, while they lay enjoying the warm sun on the ice” showing that the seals stayed in large groups and portraying them as easy targets (Kingston 1882, 68, 70). Ballantyne also emphasizes the abundance of seals in *World of Ice*, saying that the men grew fat because of “an abundance of the flesh of seals, walruses, and polar bears” (Ballantyne 1905, 82). As with whales, British explorers understood seal populations to be unlimited and authors transmitted these beliefs to children by emphasizing the quantity of seals killed by sailors.

In *The Arctic Crusoe*, the protagonist Henry is abandoned in the Arctic and must kill seals for oil, which is “an article on which I depended in part for food, in part for light, and even to a certain extent warmth” (St. John 102). St. John describes a scene in which intelligent and resourceful young Henry uses his knowledge of the natural world — specifically sulfur — to subdue a seal colony and then slaughter them en masse:

I then landed, and at low tide I captured as many as I possibly could make any use of. Some of them were very long and ugly. I killed them not only for their oil, but for their skins, their tendons, &c. I manufactured a very large quantity of oil, some of which I poured into my well, which I then covered up, and the rest I filled some skins with. I occupied myself unceasingly for some time in laying in a stock of fish, of birds, and of fuel, until I began to feel that I really had provided tolerably well for one man against the rigor of the climate and the first crying wants of nature (St. John 102).

Henry is a resourceful hero who understands how to successfully manipulate the Arctic environment in order to obtain the quantity of nonhuman resources he needs to survive. This

scene differs from Henry's earlier encounters with whales as St. John focuses less on the struggle of man versus nature and more on the ability of a single, intelligent British man to systematically harvest nonhuman animals.²⁹ The scene is not gory and relatively absent of danger as Henry efficiently obtains the oil he needs by outsmarting the seals. Henry insults the seals and implies their lack of intelligence because he easily tricked them using sulfur. Additionally, he expresses no emotion or remorse toward decimating the colony.

Authors gave the least amount of attention to foxes in adventure stories most likely because trapping was largely a solitary endeavor and readers would not have the opportunity to learn about British values like camaraderie and loyalty in the face of danger. Additionally, trapping took place out of sight of other people. However, there was still significant money to be made in the fur trade. Ballantyne briefly mentions the value of fox fur in *The Young Fur Traders* saying, “[t]he skin of the silver fox... is the most valuable fur obtained by the fur-traders, and fetches an enormous price in the British market, so much as thirty pounds sterling being frequently obtained for a single skin” (Ballantyne 1852, 251-252). Ballantyne spends time praising the genius of British trapping technologies, which improved their success and ultimately their bottom line. He states that “a pretty strong effort is required to set the trap,” showing that trapping required strength and dexterity (Ballantyne 1852, 253). He provides extensive instruction for setting a trap describing the multiple steps required to conceal the trap and lure the fox, saying that “the bait is always scattered *round* and not *on* the trap, as the fox, in running from one piece to another, is almost certain to set his foot on it, and so get caught by the leg” (Ballantyne 1852, 253). In *The Young Fur Traders*, Henry and his companion, the accountant, call the foxes stupid since they were easily trapped. Upon seeing a pack of white foxes, the accountant says with contempt, “Oh, they are the most stupid brutes alive... I've seen one of them sit down and look at me while I set a trap right

29. Perhaps obviously based on its title, St. John based his *Arctic Crusoe* on *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe.

before his eyes; and I had not got a hundred yards from the spot when a yell informed me that the gentleman's curiosity had led him to put his foot right into it" (Ballantyne 1852, 254).

They set a trap and quickly killed one of them, showing how easily they were able to outsmart the foxes and providing justification for killing them in massive quantities.

While Henry and the accountant easily killed numerous foxes, trapping was certainly not without danger and excitement as checking traps required men to take solo ventures into the Arctic wilderness during the winter months, leaving them vulnerable to attack from polar bears. In many Arctic adventure stories, authors used trapping scenes to set up battles between young men and polar bears, which allowed the men opportunities to prove their masculinity and bravery by escaping or killing the bear. In an exchange between Davy and the Captain in Ballantyne's novel *Fast in the Ice*, the Captain says, "If you get a fox, it's well worth the trouble. And hark'ee, Davy, take your axe, and make one or two more of these snow-traps of yours. It will be a well-spent hour" (Ballantyne 1863, 58). The other crew members observe Davy's outfit, notice his massive horse-pistol, and tease him about being afraid of bears. Davy responds, "Oh, no, not *afraid*, you know. But there's no harm in being armed" (Ballantyne 1863, 58). His preparation turns out to be warranted as he is attacked by a polar bear soon after leaving the camp. He manages to escape, but this scene proves that trapping could be extremely dangerous due to its solitary nature and exposure to the elements. A similar scene occurs in *The World of Ice* in which O'Riley hears a noise and goes out of the ice tunnel to check a fox trap and runs directly into a polar bear. He manages to scare the bear away, but not without a brush with death.

Arctic adventure stories used language of warfare and empire to reinforce beliefs about human domination over nature and supported British exploitation of nonhuman Arctic animals. Writers like Ballantyne, Kingston, and St. John exalted the bravery of British men dueling with whales and polar bears and praised their ability to quickly kill large quantities of

fur bearing animals using their intelligence and technologies. These stories convinced readers that nonhuman animal populations were limitless resources, and that they existed for the purpose of supplying men with materials needed to survive in the Arctic and prosper upon their return to England. In addition to resources, nonhuman animals like polar bears and whales provided men with battles to fight, which was important to developing their masculine identity and training them for future military conflicts. Descriptions of men killing seemingly unintelligent, infinite nonhuman animal populations shaped British beliefs about the Arctic wildlife by convincing readers not to question the suffering and population decimation the creatures experienced at the hands of British whalers and hunters. It was not until the late nineteenth century that authors began to challenge these beliefs by writing ecocentric fiction, which significantly shifted British beliefs about Arctic wildlife.

7. Ecocentric Arctic Fiction

Ecocentric Arctic fiction written in the later part of the long nineteenth century reflected a development in British ecoconsciousness from environmental orientalism to environmental paternalism. This shift happened as more of the British public became involved in environmental and conservation efforts as they realized that nonhuman animal populations were not infinite and learned more about the violence surrounding the whaling and seal hunting industries. Additionally, the public had a growing awareness of extinction. “Animal stories” anthropomorphize nonhuman animals and tell stories from their point of view. In *Human Minds and Animal Stories*, authors Wojciech Małecki et al. argue that reading animal stories influences a person’s moral beliefs. Because of the “culture of sentimental liberalism,” many nineteenth-century authors used nonhuman animal narratives to influence morality and push for social reform (Małecki et al 3). In addition to nonhuman animal stories, writers like W. Gordon Stables and Frank Thomas Bullen wrote ecocentric Arctic adventure. Their stories included scenes in which characters expressed disgust toward

seal hunting and whaling, and even made explicit appeals to readers about supporting nonhuman animal welfare. Ecocentric Arctic adventure stories differed from the anthropocentric adventure stories of Ballantyne, Kingston, and St. John, which glorified the violent struggle between man and beast, and asked readers to consider new beliefs about nonhuman animal-human relationships in the Arctic.

As mentioned, W. Gordon Stables was an adamant supporter of nonhuman animal welfare which influenced the way in which he described interactions between nonhuman and human animals and set him apart from other authors of adventure stories like Ballantyne and Kingston. Douglas W. Wamsley writes of Stables' attention to and care for nonhuman animals saying, "Stables' aversion to animal cruelty and his abiding passion for animal welfare, flows unrestrained" and was drawn from his personal experiences in the Arctic sailing aboard seal hunting ships (Wamsley 4). Stables was also keenly interested in observing nonhuman Arctic animals. Wamsley says that Stables believed that the best way to study nature was to be in it, a sentiment reflected by Stables' characters. In the sequel to *The Cruise of the Snowbird* titled *Wild Adventures Round the Pole*, Silas — an avid hunter and woodsman — lectures Rory on the importance of learning about nature through experience, saying, "No, take my advice, boy Rory; if you want to study nature, put little faith in books... There is only one way, gentleman, to study natural history; you must go to the great book of Nature itself" (Stables 1884, 214). Encouraging readers to spend time observing nature through experience reflected the sentiment of environmental activists who believed that people stopped caring about nature due to the Industrial Revolution. Silas's statement is also a jab at museums and collectors of specimens who often collected animals to the point of extinction in order to build their private collections.

Stables first published *Wild Adventures in Wild Places* in 1881. The story elaborates the adventures of three young men — Frank, Chisholm, and Fred — who join the ship the

Grampus heading to Greenland. Along their journey, they have numerous encounters with nonhuman animals, but it is their observations of a brutal seal hunt that most affect them.

Stables spends a long paragraph describing the seal hunt, and he vividly depicts the actions of the hunters and the agony of the seals:

And now the day's work was begun. Warily at first, the riflemen had to creep toward their prey on hands and knees, taking advantage of every hummock or boulder to screen themselves from view. On each piece of ice some forty or fifty seals lay, and each "patch" had a sentry set. When they succeeded in killing him, the others were very much at their mercy; but oftentimes the seal on watch would succeed, even before his eyes closed in death, in giving his companions warning. Then, almost ere another bullet could reach them, they had leapt helter-skelter into the water. But when the sun got higher, the seals seemed to get almost too lazy to move; they could then be approached very much more closely, and the work of death was carried on with an earnestness and energy that was terrible to behold. Indeed, a kind of madness to shed blood seemed to take possession of every man on the ice. There was no thought but to slay. The excitement was intense—awful in its intensity. The sun went slowly round and down, and as he set behind the rugged hills, his disc seemed to reflect the blood on the ice. Even his parting beams had borrowed the self-same hue, and the tops of the highest icebergs looked as if dipped in gore (Stables 1884, 41-42).

This is not a glorious scene of man's triumph over nature. It is a merciless, brutal slaughter of helpless animals by manic men. Stables terrifies young readers by making the hunters the villains in the story by using words like "earnestness," "madness," and "energy" to describe their actions. The hunters kill the helpless and innocent seals with a frenzy; there is no heroism here. In fact, Stables describes the seals as "lazy" which shows readers that the hunters took advantage of a vulnerable population. Stables successfully inverts the nonhuman animal-human relationship from earlier Arctic anthropocentric adventure stories and makes the hunters the monsters and the seals the innocents. In Stables' Arctic, the hunters are not brave heroes, but rather evil men driven to insanity by bloodlust.

Stables uses the sun to create an apocalyptic scene of ecological horror. The sun plays two important roles in this scene: his presence intensifies the horror of the moment, and he is an ever-present witness to the butchering. Stables personifies the sun, calling it "he." He is always present and always watching, like the omnipresent Christian God with whom readers

would have been familiar, and he witnesses everything the hunters do. The sun's rays also magnify the intensity of the bloodshed to the point that even the icebergs look like they are covered in blood. In this scene, evil, crazed hunters turn the Arctic ice from a white, pristine landscape to a bloody, horrific killing field. The sun also shows the passage of time; the slaughter starts during the day, the sunset corresponds with the end of the killing, and night falls on the decimation of the seal colony. By invoking ecohorror, Stables forces readers to confront the realities of the destruction humans wrought upon Arctic fur seals.

Returning to the argument of Malecki et al. about the power of animal narratives to shape human morality, Stables clearly believed that telling the awful truth about seal hunting to children was crucial to developing their ecoconsciousness. In addition to appealing to readers through descriptions of seal hunting, Stables' writes his characters as budding conservationists who are quick to condemn the practice. After watching the killing, Fred is the first to speak saying, "Oh! boys...don't you remember how bright and lovely the snow was in the morning? Behold it now!" Chisholm responds, "Ay, behold it now...Indeed, Fred, this is murder. I don't feel I can call it by any other name, and I'm half ashamed of myself." Frank concludes saying soberly, "So am I for a seal can't defend itself" (Stables 1884, 43). Stables showed readers how British boys should react to cruelty against nonhuman animals by choosing to write from Frank, Fred, and Chisholm's point of view and emphasizing their abhorrence of the hunt. Chisholm goes as far as to call the hunt a murder, and his use of this term makes the crimes against the seals quite serious since murder was a serious crime in the British system. Stables implies that the hunters are older, and his juxtaposition of the boys' young, moral goodness against the uncivilized brutality of the hunters shows how the younger generation's beliefs and values differed from past generations.

Stables extends his calls for nonhuman animal welfare by anthropomorphizing whales in *The Cruise of the Snowbird: A Story of Arctic Adventure*, which was first published in

1882. *The Cruise of the Snowbird* is the first of two stories telling of the adventures of two young Scotsmen who travel aboard the *Snowbird* and, in contrast to *Wild Adventures in Wild Places*, the boys have mostly peaceful meetings with different types of animals as they explore the Arctic. Rory sees a whale early on in their journey. Soon the crew gets involved in racing the whale, which the narrator says, “seems idle work, but sailors, when far away at sea, do idler things than that” (Stables 1882, 130). As the ship gains speed to outpace the whale, the crew muses on its motivations and life in the ocean. Ralph, Rory, and Allan, discuss whether the whale is lonely because “[h]e has left his wife in Greenland, perhaps” and whether the whale is “going, like ourselves, to seek his fortune in the far west” (Stables 1882, 131). They continue to debate why the whale is this far out in the ocean and how it could possibly find its way home before determining that a divine power must be involved. Allan says, “Now boys...you see what a wide, wide world of water is all around us...How, if a Great Power did not guide them, could mighty fishes like that find their way about?” (Stables 1882, 131). The boys’ anthropomorphizing of the whale aligns with what Charles Darwin wrote in *The Descent of Man*, saying that “there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties” (Darwin 35). In the case of Rory’s whale, the boys construct a fictional family for it, make up stories about its life, and also give it human motivations for adventuring. They do not view the whale as a resource but rather as a being with agency and purpose. Giving the whale human attributes made readers see the connection between themselves and the natural world and, in turn, care about nonhuman animals.

Stables returns to advocating for seals in *Wild Adventures Round the Pole*, first published in 1883. While it does not feature a nonhuman animal as its central character, it makes multiple references to animal cruelty and explicitly calls on readers to join the animal welfare movement. In the chapter aptly titled “A Sad Scene,” Stables describes the murder of

a seal colony from protagonists Rory and Allan's point of view and directly addresses his young readers:

Saw the blood, reader! Indeed our heroes had. Where was it that that blood was not? All the beautiful snow was encrimsoned with it on the distant field of ice, where the men were carrying out their ghastly work. It was as if a great battle had been fought there, and the dead crangs lay in dozens and hundreds...let me whisper a truth in your ear, and I know your brave young blood will boil when I tell you: I've known our men, Englishmen and Scotchmen, flense the lambs while still alive.³⁰

In this scene, Stables' imagery of the murder of the seals is evocative of the saying "like lambs to the slaughter," which has Christian religious origins, as well as being a popular idiom in literature. Stables likens the seals to lambs and explains that some of the hunters are so cruel that they skin the seals while they are living. Like lambs, the seals are unaware of the motivations of hunters and completely vulnerable to their brutality. Drawing connections to Christian religion would have been a powerful way to motivate late nineteenth century readers who were still deeply religious.

Rory and Allan represent Stables' vision of a more environmentally conscious Britain. Stables consistently calls the boys "heroes" and positions them on the side of the animal welfare movement saying they were "not a little horrified as well as disgusted" by the slaughter (Stables 1885, 139). Additionally, the narrator strives to make readers' "young blood boil" by drawing them into the scene through graphic descriptions of the slaughter and inhumane actions by the hunters and explicitly compares the seals to innocent, pure lambs.³¹ To put it plainly, Stables is saying that heroic Arctic explorers like Allan and Rory support animal welfare and, if his young readers wanted to be heroes, they should too. The narrator — speaking for Stables himself — even goes so far as to tell the readers how they can help fight against animal cruelty as adults. He says that while he does not seek to scare his readers, he wants to ensure they understand that "these cruelties are very great, and believing this, if

30. "Crang" means a carcass (Stables 1885, 138-139).

31. The teenage boys who read Stables' stories would be approximately the same age as the protagonists Allan and Rory.

ever you have an opportunity of voting for a bill or signing a petition to get poor Greenland seals fair play, I know you will” (Stables 1885, 139). Here Stables refers to ongoing efforts by animal welfare activists to pass laws limiting or prohibiting seal hunting in the Arctic.

Frank Thomas Bullen takes a similar approach in his novel *Fighting the Icebergs*, which was first published in 1910. Bullen’s narrator comments on a seemingly inevitable seal hunt saying, “of all the butchering that must be done in the world, none seems to me more trying to all the finer feelings than the killing of things that trust you, that fear no evil of you, that walk up to you and look with their kind, expressive eyes into yours” (Bullen 200-201). Like Stables, Bullen does not hide his disgust for seal hunting and speaks directly to the readers saying explicitly in the next paragraph,

I know you’ll forgive me for prefacing the sealing with these remarks, and I’m sure that if you knew how difficult the question is with me, you’d understand how impossible I feel it is to write about it without some explanation. Because I love a seal. It is such a beautiful, gentle, harmless creature, living in the remote parts of the world and hurting no one (201).

While Stables and Bullen were not directly involved with political organizing, their efforts to convey cruelty against nonhuman Arctic animals through children’s stories certainly furthered the conservation movement in Britain by shaping the ecoconsciousness of the next generation and motivating them to act. The impact of their and other concerned citizens’ actions resulted in The North Pacific Fur Seal Convention of 1911, which provided extensive protections for seals and prohibited commercial seal hunting.³² The United States and Great Britain both signed the treaty which effectively ended commercial seal hunting worldwide, marked a massive victory for the conservation movement, and motivated activists to push for more legal protections for nonhuman animals.³³

32. Publishers marketed Stables’ stories to teenage boys. If readers were aged 13-15 when reading *Wild Adventures Round the Pole* in 1884, they would have been adults at the time of the Convention and would have been able to participate politically.

33. Unfortunately, Stables died in 1910 and did not get to see the passing of the treaty.

The brutality of seal hunting remained a popular topic in children's literature throughout the end of the long nineteenth century. Rudyard Kipling wrote "The White Seal" in 1893 at a time when commercial seal hunting and whaling were slowing down in the Arctic. This was due in part to losing popularity among the British public because of increased awareness about violence toward nonhuman animals. The story is set in the Bering Sea and follows Kotick, a white seal born to parents Sea Catch and Matkah, who goes on a quest to find a safe place for his family.³⁴ Kipling describes a scene in which Kotick and the other seal pups play on the beach: "The first thing [Kotick] did was to crawl inland, and there he met tens of thousands of babies of his own age, and they played together like puppies, went to sleep on the clean sand, and played again" (Kipling 3). Authors of nonhuman animal narratives heavily anthropomorphized nonhuman animal characters by giving them names, writing dialogue for them, and having them participate in human-like activities in order to create a connection with readers and, ultimately, empathy. Kipling helps build empathy in younger readers by calling the seals "babies" and "puppies," depicting them as innocent and vulnerable. Kotick and his friends live like British children: happy, playful, and carefree.

Like other authors writing nonhuman animal stories, Kipling does not shy away from graphic violence and ecohorror in "The White Seal" in order to convey the horrors of seal hunting and evoke anger and shock in readers: "Ten minutes later little Kotick did not recognize his friends any more, for their skins were ripped off from the nose to the hind flippers, whipped off and thrown down on the ground in a pile" (Kipling 5). Since Kipling had established an empathetic connection between readers and Kotick and the seals in earlier

34. The opening lines read, "All these things happened several years ago at a place called Novastoshnah, or North East Point, on the Island of St. Paul, away and away in the Bering Sea" (Kipling 1). The story was initially printed in the *National Review* in London in 1893 and then later included in *The Jungle Book* anthology in 1894. According to the Kipling Society, Kipling studied *The Seal Islands of Alaska* by Henry W. Elliott (1881). Elliott's account of seal hunting undoubtedly influenced this story. Kipling uses the Russian-derived regional-specific names for the seal characters: котик (Kotick) means baby fur seal, секач (Sea Catch) means male fur seal, and matka (Matkah) means a mother fur seal (Underwood and Radcliffe).

scenes, this is a devastating turn of events for readers. Kipling increases the horror by having the slaughter happen to young seals, which would have been even more shocking to readers. By using verbiage like “skins ripped off,” Kipling likens their actions to workers in British slaughterhouses who swiftly and viciously executed domestic nonhuman animals. When Kotick explains what he witnessed to his parents, his mother says, “You will never be able to stop the killing. Go and play in the sea, Kotick” (Kipling 5). Kotick’s mother represents the older generation that does not think the fur trade will ever be fully stopped due to the value of seal pelts. But Kotick is determined to find a safe place for seals to live so he embarks on a quest to discover a new home. Ultimately, he finds a place where he and his family can be safe from hunters in “that sea where no man comes” (Kipling 13).

“The White Seal” primarily focuses on Kotick’s journey to find a safe place for his seal colony, but a secondary plot line involves a Sea Cow and addresses extinction. As Kotick considers his options for relocating his family, Sea Vitch the Walrus advises him to “Go and ask the Sea Cow... If he is living still, he’ll be able to tell you” (Kipling 8). Kotick has never heard of the Sea Cow but is determined to find him since the Sea Cow has managed to evade hunters. Finally, when he has almost given up hope, he travels west to the shoals of Copper Island where he finally encounters the only creatures that are “uglier than a Sea Vitch — and with worse manners”: the Sea Cows (Kipling 10). They cannot speak but Kotick follows them as they slowly migrate north and eventually arrive at the most beautiful and hidden beaches that he has ever seen. Finally, he finds a safe place for his family to live, away from the killing fields and hidden from humans. The Sea Cow in the story is based on *Hydrodamalis gigas*, an Arctic sea mammal “discovered” by Vitus Bering and Georg Steller in 1741. In the next thirty years, the entire population was completely exterminated by Russian hunters who found it an easy target because it was not able to completely submerge. By 1768, the population of Arctic sea cows was extinct, serving as an example of the

irreversible consequences of resource colonization. Thus, Kipling's inclusion of the Sea Cow in "The White Seal" educated children about extinction and disproved the belief in limitless nonhuman animal populations.

The latter half of the long nineteenth century marked a significant change in beliefs about Arctic nonhuman animals from environmental orientalism to environmental paternalism. This shift happened due to three causes: first, the British public became exposed to the violent practices of the whaling and seal hunting industries. As evidenced in the works by Stables and Kipling, literature played a key role in communicating the brutality committed by hunters by using nonhuman animal perspectives to evoke empathy and outrage in readers, resulting in action. While still controversial, Darwin's writings arguing for the close connection between humans and nonhuman animals made readers reconsider their actions toward nonhuman animal populations. Second, growing concerns about extinction pushed the British public toward environmental paternalism as science revealed the extent of damage done to nonhuman animal populations. Both Stables and Kipling make references to dwindling populations and extinct — or soon-to-be extinct — nonhuman Arctic animals in their stories, which made readers question the justification of resource harvesting. Finally, Stables and Kipling spend time simply describing the wonder and beauty of the environment, a reaction to the Industrial Revolution which widened the gap between humans and nature.

Stables, Bullen, and Kipling specifically used nonhuman animal imagery or wrote from nonhuman animal points of view to persuade readers to support nonhuman animal welfare legislation and to convince readers to care about the Arctic. They accomplished this by incorporating religious imagery that emphasized the innocence and purity of nonhuman animals, using ecohorror imagery to describe hunting scenes, anthropomorphizing nonhuman animals, and sharing their opinions on seal hunting directly with readers. Environmental legislation like the Convention between the United States and Other Powers Providing for the

Preservation and Protection of Fur Seals passed at the end of the long nineteenth century demonstrated strong public support for protecting nonhuman animals in the Arctic. Stables', Bullen's, and Kipling's ecocentric stories certainly played a role in shaping the opinions of British children who were then motivated to support environmental protections and nonhuman animal welfare as adults.

8. Conclusion

Communicating environmental beliefs, specifically in the context of the Arctic, was important as Britain sought to bring Arctic territory into its empire and generate public support for a region that was far away and did not have obvious value. Historical events, philosophical writings, and developments in nonhuman animal science undoubtedly influenced Britain's beliefs about the Arctic and its nonhuman animal residents but children's literature provided the Empire with a way of ensuring transmission of environmental beliefs to the next generation. Both adults and juveniles read children's literature during the long nineteenth century making the genre an excellent method for authors to communicate the Arctic's value to the Crown through portrayals of nonhuman animals. Children's fiction entertained readers and engaged them in plotlines featuring nonhuman animals. Whether subconsciously or consciously, children and adults absorbed prominent imperial messaging about the Arctic environment as a resource colony through most of the period. In this way, children's literature upheld imperialism and resource colonization in the Arctic.

However, authors also used children's literature to challenge resource colonization, question beliefs about limitless nonhuman animal populations, and foster conversations about conservation. This made the genre somewhat revolutionary for the period since authors interrogated the idea of using the Arctic as a resource colony, thus challenging Britain's imperial project. As more of the public grew to understand the extent of humanity's impact on the environment, authors fostered an environmental paternalistic human-nature

relationship by publishing ecocentric Arctic fiction and nonhuman animal stories. Ecocentric stories subverted nonhuman-human animal relationships from earlier works that exalted the power of men over nonhuman animals. Authors introduced important questions about Britain's relationship with the Arctic and criticized human activity taking place to that point. Ecohorror forced readers to see the violent reality of resource colonization in the Arctic and stories from the perspective of nonhuman animals in order to build a relationship between them and readers. Ecocentric stories decentered people and put the focus on nonhuman animals, and this change in perspective marked a massive shift in British beliefs about the Arctic moving into the twentieth century.

Using children's literature as primary sources is an effective way of studying British society's beliefs about the Arctic since children's literature ensured that the next generation learned the most valuable beliefs and lessons. Most scholarship on British children's literature to date focuses on how it communicated societal values, but using an ecocritical reading of children's Arctic fiction reveals what environmental beliefs and ideas were most important to the British throughout the period. Evidence from children's literature demonstrates that British attitudes toward the Arctic and its nonhuman animals changed dramatically across the long nineteenth century. Returning to Pálsson's framework, early exploration narratives emphasized an environmental orientalist relationship with the Arctic, and they introduced the "fantasy of ecological abundance" to children through scenes describing vast populations of wildlife. These narratives also included scenes where explorers killed nonhuman animals for trophies or collected specimens for exhibiting at home. Trophies and specimens from the Arctic supported Britain's territorial claims and encouraged public curiosity in the region.

Mid-century anthropocentric adventure stories reinforced an environmental orientalist relationship with the Arctic by reducing nonhuman animals to the resources they could

provide. By this point the British saw the value in using the Arctic as a resource colony, and literature depicted young men participating in trapping, whaling, and seal hunting. Battles between men and dangerous animals like polar bears and whales glorified man's conquest of the natural world. Later, ecocentric adventure stories grappled with topics like extinction and mass killing of wildlife within the context of Britain's budding conservation movement. Nonhuman animal stories promoted an environmental paternalistic relationship with nature by telling stories from a nonhuman perspective. These two types of fiction helped garner support for legislation protecting Arctic species and gave readers instructions on how to act.

The novels and stories discussed in this thesis demonstrate that children's literature was a powerful mechanism for communicating British beliefs about Arctic nonhuman animals during the height of its Empire. Messaging about nonhuman animals mostly echoed environmental orientalist beliefs about the Arctic, but it also introduced readers to a different way of thinking by presenting the idea of environmental paternalism in the last part of the period. My research presents a comprehensive analysis of Arctic children's fiction from 1789 to 1914 but poses questions about the continued evolution of attitudes toward nonhuman Arctic animals and how these attitudes are reflected in later fiction. This question is interesting because, according to Heidi Hansson, current children's Arctic stories largely focus on conservation. However, it is unclear whether British children's literature continued to change, especially as Britain ceded territory and decreased its activity in the region. Given that the United Kingdom is not an Arctic state, why do British authors continue to publish Arctic fiction for children?

Following this line of inquiry, many nations had a vested interest in the Arctic during the long nineteenth century, and children's literature expanded beyond the British Empire. As the genre became popular in other nations, how did authors from outside Britain communicate environmental messages? For example, there is a significant number of notable

American stories either set in or containing Arctic references like *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, *The Ice Elephant* by Frederick Whitaker, and “Matwock of the Icebergs” by William J. Long. It is likely that there is some overlap in themes given similar ambitions such as whaling and the fur trade, but it would be interesting to explore how American authors portrayed nonhuman animals in comparison with British authors. Authors from Arctic states like Norway and Russia also wrote stories for children and it is worth examining how authors incorporated environmental messaging similarly or differently given their proximity to the territory.

As Heidi Hansson so eloquently states in *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Young Adults*, “the books we read and love as children stay with us the rest of our lives,” and this statement could not be truer for children’s Arctic literature published in Britain during the long nineteenth century (1). Authors meant for Arctic stories to stay with children throughout their lives, and ultimately, stories about the Arctic and its wild creatures inspired future generations of explorers, scientists, whalers, and conservationists by teaching them about the region and explaining why the British ventured there. In reflecting and subverting broader beliefs about the Arctic and the human-nature relationship, British children's literature during the long nineteenth century not only taught young readers about the region and its wild creatures but also challenged and transformed their perceptions of the human-environment relationship, leaving a powerful and enduring legacy for generations to come.

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