

Why do we want to be friends with the wolf?

Maria Lepistö

2014

DEAR WOLF	1
ONCE UPON A TIME IN NORTHERN EUROPE	2
ONCE UPON A TIME BUT MORE RECENTLY	3
THE WORLD IS TOO ARTIFICIAL	7
ATTRACTION TO DARKNESS	9
ABOUT BOREDOM	11
“CHRISTIANITY DESTROYED EVERYTHING”	13
DOMESTICATION	15
THE WOLFDOG- <i>“Go get a lap dog if you want a pet.”</i>	17
WHAT WE WANT	19
REFERENCES	20

DEAR WOLF

I want to be friends with the wolf. I say The Wolf because I see only one. I walk up a frosty hill and there he stands, looking at me straight in my eyes. It is only me and him and the forest surrounding our little hill. Oh, and the moon of course, the moon is there too and it is full.

This is obviously a romantic fantasy I have, but it is not only mine. I dare to say it is a collective one. Yet most of us have never met a wolf, and most of us never will. In 2013, ten Norwegian and Swedish scientists wrote a letter stating that the wolf packs in Scandinavia have reached a “Favourable Reference Population FRP” (1). This just means they are not threatened to extinction anymore. There are around 270 to 330 wolves living in Sweden. Farmers argue against animal friends. The wolf is too brave now, it goes into villages and close to cattle (2). Cattle needs to be protected. The wolves are hunters, they live in packs. They howl to tell other family members where they are and to tell other packs that the area is occupied. *Canis Lupus*, 90-150 cm, 30-55 kg. But let’s leave reality and these facts behind because they have little to do with my vision of the wolf.

My wolf appears on t-shirts in a Bulgarian heavy metal shop. She is the mother of all the turkish people. She is the savor of the creator of Rome. He lives in the fantasy world, in old folk songs and lullabies. The songs are old but praised and sung again and again in covers and fan arrangements, available on youtube. Fenris is the name of the huge dangerous wolf that chases the moon across the sky in the Poetic Edda, a collection of Old Norse poems about the asa-gods. Illustrations of Fenris are remade in photoshop and shared on fantasy lover’s forums such as deviantart.com. The wolf has its own fan club and it’s own sub culture.



“Lone wolf howling in the misty woods longing for an answer!”
on pinterest.com. (3)

ONCE UPON A TIME IN NORTHERN EUROPE

Animals in general have a central role in myths where they helped us to relate to the mysteries of the world. They did not explain the world in a logical way like science, it was much more poetic than that. We lived side by side with them, their parallel lives became our metaphors. Animals came to us as promises and messengers. When humans learned to paint, she first drew an animal (4).

The different natures of different animals merely served as inspiration for their mythical selves. We say the owl is wise perhaps because it looks as though it wears glasses. The fiction character of the wolf is much more diverse and complex. The wolves strength and hunting skills made them a feared enemy, their community life style in packs relates to our own families and societies and their ability to adapt is the very condition that made most of them turn into working dogs, and at last, pets. Wolves appear in myths and stories all over the world but I will focus on the European wolf living in the cold dark forests in the North. I will tell the stories that I grew up with.

It all starts in the Iron Forest. There sat an old evil giant which, and she gave birth to the son of the sneaky god Loke, a wolf called Fenrir. The wolf was expected to be troublesome because of the nature of his parents but as a puppet he was rather cute and he was brought into the home of the gods, Asgård. The wolf grew and grew, became a bloodthirsty monster whom only the god of war dared to feed with scraps of meat. And it seemed that this was not enough because at some point this domesticated beast colored the earth red as he feasted on human corpses. His fangs were cold. His nostrils and eyes shot fire.

*He feeds himself on corpses
of men, who died
The home of the gods soiled with blood
Black becomes the sunshine
the following years,
all weather precarious. (5)*

He came to us as a warning of bad weather, deserving the name “moon-snatcher in troll’s skin”. His two sons chased the moon and the sun over the sky. Not only did he live in the Iron Forest, he was totally integrated into the landscape. The contours of his body were drawn on a map. His saliva became a river and he grew so large that when he opened his fangs the upper jaw would touch the sky and the lower jaw the earth. This beast was too dangerous to run loose. It was hard but at last they managed to bind him with a rope made out of the noise of a cat, the beard of a woman, the roots of stones, the breath of a fish and the spit of a bird.



Illustration of Fenrir with a river running from his mouth. From the 17:th century Icelandic manuscript (6)

The story of Fenrir is old, part of old songs in the Poetic Edda, carved onto stones known as runes. The metaphors in these myths explained the world to the vikings and helped them to define their identity. These myths taught the vikings everything from how to deal with women (do not sleep with a woman who knows magic tricks) to how to drink beer and avoid a hangover. The stories about Fenrir obviously acknowledge violence as a natural part of their lifestyle.

Eventually Christianity took over and Scandinavia is now considered a set of tolerant countries with high social security. There are those who hold on to the the old Norse myths, feeling rather angry about the way Christianity erased their old original culture. New threats of other invading cultures brings racism into the old Norse myths. The power of Fenrir is appreciated. Its symbols are sometimes connected to ultra nationalism, racism and fascism. The god Oden gave name to Odinism, a contemporary religion or ideology uniting white men. Unlike Christianity, that is spread all over the world, Odinism is a very local religion. As it spreads to other places, like the U.S.A, Odanism changes its name to Odalism, now specifically aiming to uniting white men of germanic origin. Or to be even more specific, white germanic men who reside in germanic countries. In fantasy fiction it is common to divide the habitants of the world into different races, like forest elves, highland elves, dark elves, dwarfs and etcetera. They each have their own very specific physic, carachteristics and beliefs. The perhaps most famous fantasy writer in the world is J R R Tolkien, and his trilogy Lord of the Rings is both accused for being Christian (7), and accused by Christians for not being Christian enough, including too many dangerous Faerie elements (8). Tolkien himself was raised as a catholic.



Fenrir, by the artist Chaos-Drako on deviantart.com. His image is also illustrating the card “Devil Wolf of the North Pole, Fenrir” in the game Magic. (9)

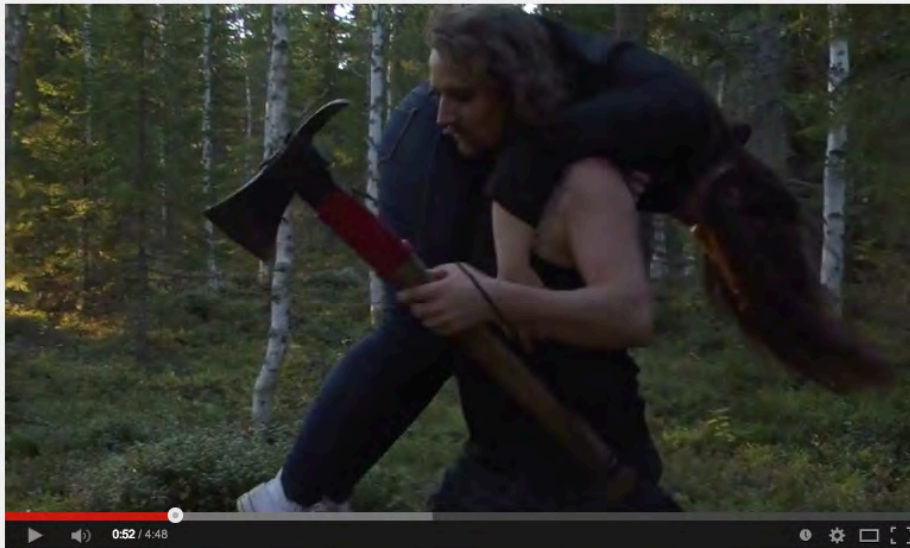
ONCE UPON A TIME BUT MORE RECENTLY

I believe the change of religion into Christianity came to influence the character of the fiction wolf. Or was it the urbanization, industrialization or socialism or capitalism, or the fact that we mastered the breeding of dogs to fit so well into our urban life styles, perhaps even into our handbags. The world changed, and so did the wolf.

At a first glance into more modern wolf stories the wolf might seem pretty much the same, and his surroundings too. We are still in a dark forest. The moon is full. Over moss in the winter cold rides a little girl on the back of the wolf. So begins the story in the song “Vargaflicka”. The original song is made by the Swedish underground folk song musician Loke Nyberg (under the pseudonym of his live role playing name Måns Klang). It goes:

*And the girl played and the wolf caressed
with his tooth and claw as sweet and gentle as he could*

The wolf love turns out to be true. As the spring comes they go hunting together and in the summer he is still faithful to her, but as the girl grows up she leaves the wolf for another, human man. Across the forest and the nearby villages one can hear the broken hearted wolf howling out his sorrow. In jealous fury he kills the new man.



A music video for Loke's song Vargflicka on youtube. (10)

The wolf has turned into a brute man in wolf shape. The way he makes love, his possessive feelings. The howling of the wolf is also mentioned in the story of Fenrir, but it was not a howling caused by a broken heart. It is hard to imagine Fenrir, whose saliva became a river, being jealous. As the wolf became human, she also stopped being the nursing mother. The nursing continues to be a theme in wolf stories but it is now done by a human. The wolf became the outcast from whom the mother needs to protect her child, because the wolf wants to eat it. The mother of Ronja Rövardotter (11) sings:

*The wolf is howling in the forest of the night
he wants to, but he can not sleep
The hunger is tearing his wolf-belly
and it is cold in his lair
You wolf, you wolf, don't come here
you will never get my child.*

She offers him the tail of a pig, food “that better fit into the belly of a wolf”. The mother sympathizes with the wolf. Perhaps she understands him as she understands her husband, who cries in his sleep because he misses his daughter. And after all the child has also chosen to live in the forest, a life outside their bandit society. She begs her to come back.

*Sleep, my child, in the bed with mother
and let the wolf howl in the night*

As the wolf became a human his metaphors also become human. He stopped being part of the landscape, instead he is an outcast living there. In the book *Why Look at Animals*, John Berger argues that “the pettiness of current social practices is universalized by being projected on the animal kingdom” (12), saying that “The animals have been absorbed into the so called silent majority”. He gives an example of a Donald Duck who can’t enjoy dating or picnicking because he is broke. Another consequence of animals losing their mystical powers is that they became innocent. “the animal has been emptied of experience and secrets and this new invented “innocence” begins to provoke in man a kind of nostalgia”. Wild animals seem to us powerless and poor, as they need to be protected by law against hunters killing them as a hobby. And Nature, and the environment, is something “we need to take care of”.

The wolf shrank in size. Fenrir was a giant monster, but now he’s in the size of a big muscular human. Perhaps he is about 90-150 cm, 30-55 kg. Sometimes he is even smaller.



Another drawing of Fenrir invites us to feel sympathy for the poor wolf. It is criticized for not being powerful enough “*That looks like a fucking shit cat, not a huge beast, did you seriously spend years on this?*”
On deviantart.com by Kitsune-Prophet. (13)

The wolf in *Tale of Tales* is known as “little grey wolf” and looks a bit like a teddy bear. It is a short Soviet film directed by Yuriy Norshteyn’s in 1979. (14) He lives on the very edge to civilization, making a fire in the bushes just next to the highway to cook his potatoes. He lives alone in a depressing situation, like a homeless person occupying a ramshackle hut. He dances alone with his half eaten potatoes. In a house nearby he mother breastfeeds her baby singing a lullaby

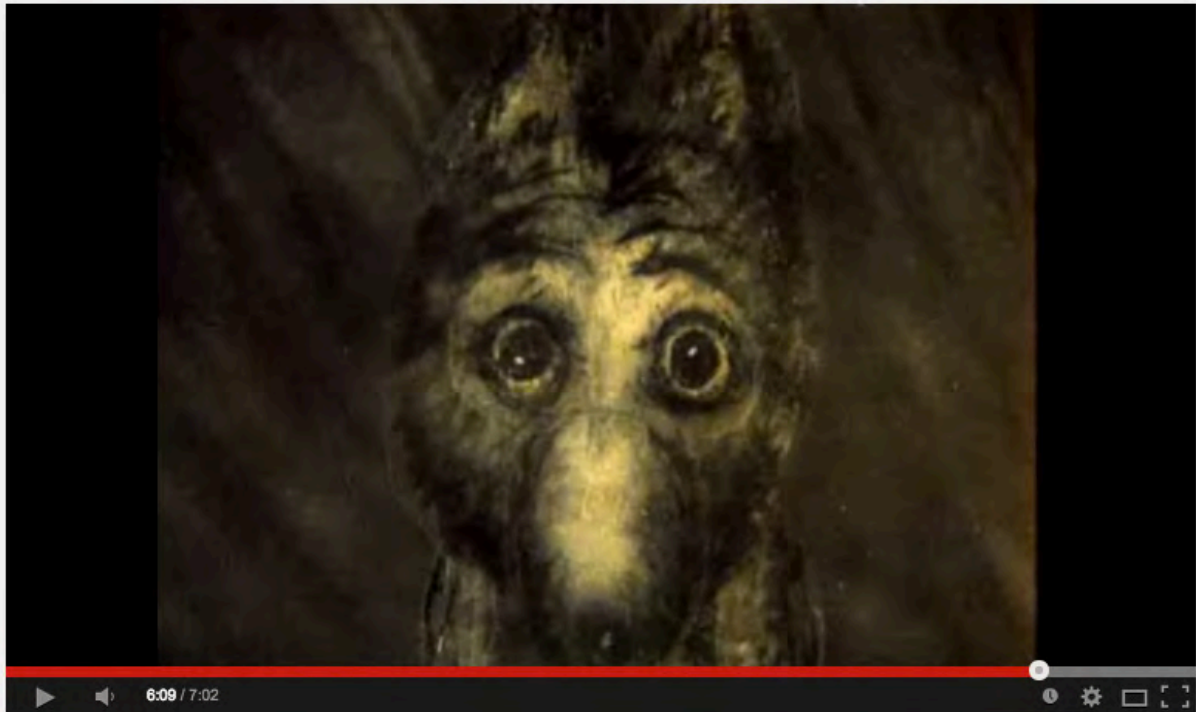
*Hush, little baby
don't you cry*

*Or the little grey wolf will hear
The wolf is always near*

*Sleep tight baby, and be good
Or he'll take you
to the dark and scary woods.*

The wolf lives up to society's expectations of him being evil and steals the baby from the mother but as he runs through the forest with the baby in his arms he is not able to kill it. He ends up sitting by the cradle singing lullabies himself. Sometimes the criminal is just a misunderstood man hardly able to survive in a dark hostile world.

The wolf story has turned from being one that glorifies violence or praises the nursing mother into a melancholic one about social injustice. Death and violence is not any more a natural part of life, it is something lurking in the darkness. This is the metaphor we live with today. The wolf will never be the mute majority, not even in Disney's version of the Big Bad Wolf in his tattered old trousers. He is lonely and misunderstood. He is not like anybody else. The wolf does not belong to us but our minds can not let him go. The wolf is a lover we passionately want to reunite with, or the outcast we fear yet sympathize with. Somewhere in our hearts we know he is just like us, with our jealousy, with our broken hearts and insomnia, eating potatoes.



The Little Grey Wolf . Tale Of Tales Part III, on Youtube. (15)

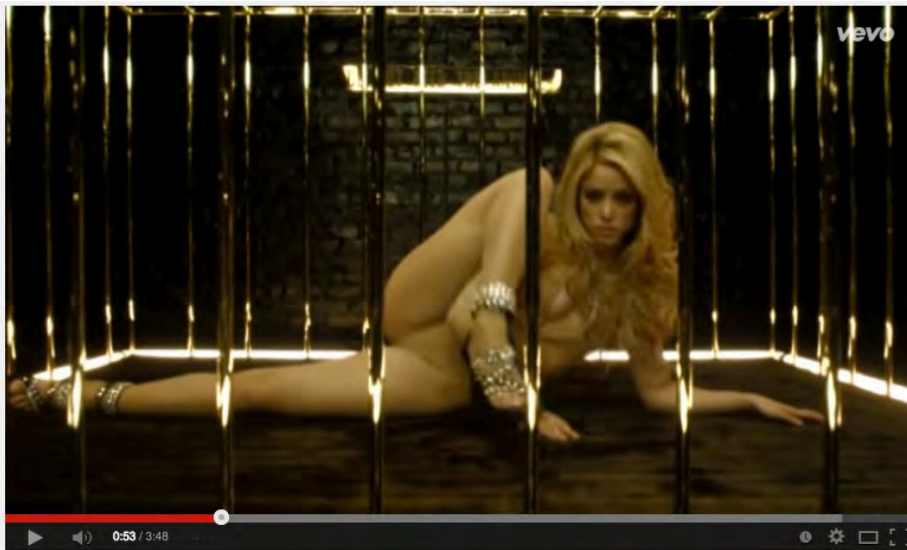
THE WORLD IS TOO ARTIFICIAL

Everything around us is artificial, synthetic, produced in factories, fake. We live in cities where nature is restricted to carefully designed parks. Nature becomes an escape out of the urban prison we have built for ourselves, while the word natural becomes the contrary to artificial. In “history of class consciousness” Lukacs puts his finger on the word “nature”. “Nature thereby acquires the meaning of what has grown organically, what was not created by man, in contrast to the artificial structures of human civilization. At the same time, it can be understood as that aspect of human inwardness which has remains natural, or at least tends or belongs to become natural once more.”(16) The life of a wild animal becomes an ideas, as they seem to live out the desires that we repress.

This might explain why wolves are so romanticized and not dogs. Although originating from the same species, dogs are now just another human product, something we can buy. As it was bred it abandoned its place in nature and stepped into culture. A domesticated wolf becomes a good metaphor for a woman who feels limited by the expectations on her being a “good girl”. In the darkness she reveals her true, natural self.

*A domesticated girl
that's all you ask of me
Darling this is no joke,
this is lycantrophy.*

So it happens that the wolf migrates to other sub cultures and it brings the darkness and the moon with it. In Shakira's She Wolf she leaves her boyfriend in her fancy apartment and goes out hunting. She is a werewolf, the moon calls her. She goes to the club where she hunts for lovers. She is hungry. She is stuck in a cage in some dark dungeon. The cage is made of shiny gold and her high heels glitter with crystal bling bling. She presses her almost naked body against the golden bars. It was her raw sexual energy that was suppressed. The darkness hides something attractive and the fact that it's gold and crystal bling bling that glitters is just a product of another culture with different aesthetics.



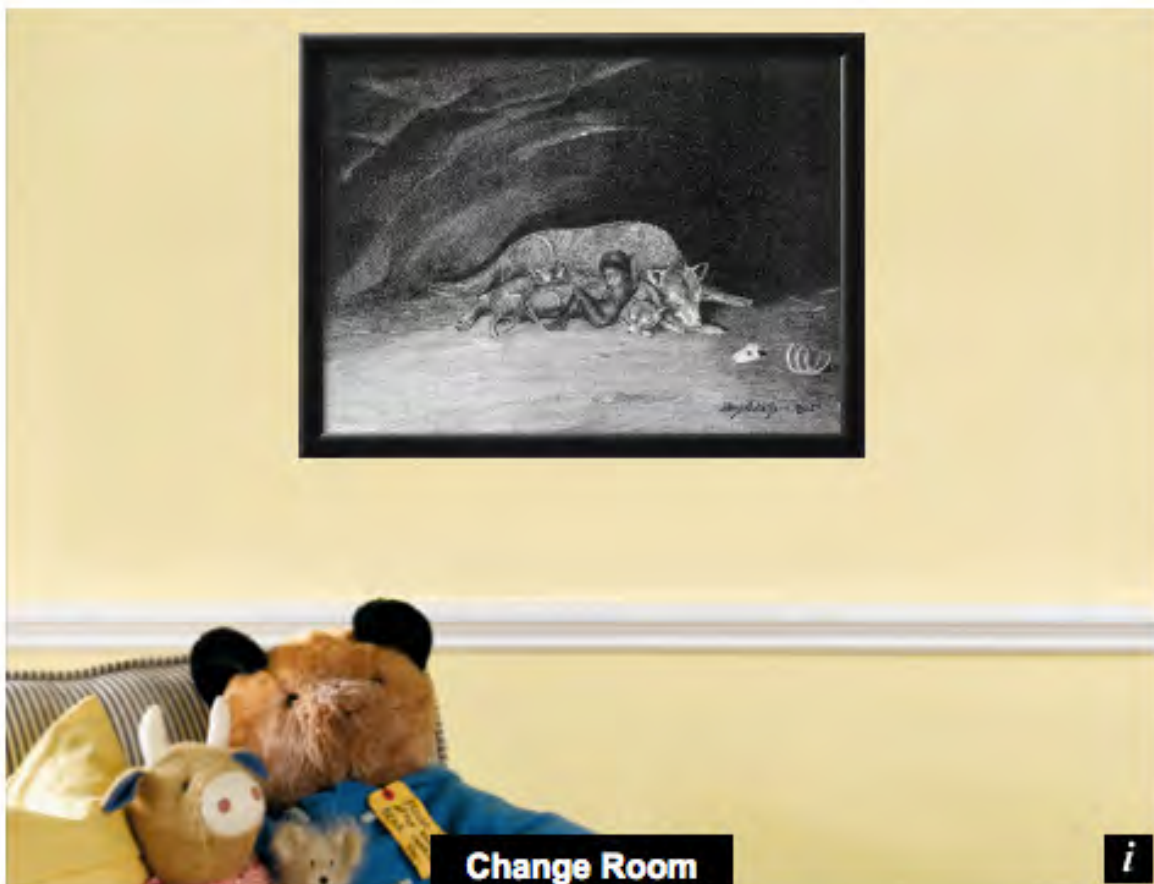
Shakiras in her music video She Wolf, on youtube. (17)

“Within every woman there lives a powerful force, filled with good instincts, passionate creativity, and ageless knowing. She is the Wild Woman, who represents the instinctual nature of women. But she is an endangered species.”

This is the content of the bestseller *Women who Run With the Wolves* presented on by Clarissa Pincola Estés (18). On Clarissa's facebook page she is described as an American poet, Jungian psychoanalyst and post-trauma specialist (19). Her books is told to help women reconnect with their fierce, healthy and visionary attributes.

As our civilized manners were refined, the dark side of society lurking around the corner became fascinating. The edge of society became a hot subject for scientists. Stories about feral children are discussed as a hint of what civilization does to us humans. We are amazed by the fact that the Wild Boy of Aveyron grew up naked, grunting and digging up roots. On a youtube video we see the Ukranian girl Oxana Malaya walking around on all fours, barking. (20) Sexual fantasies towards the wild are revealed in the comments. *“I imagine how feral sex would be like with her since she has a primal side; it would be crazy”* - Gary Tabalco. Lacking the ability to use language in communication stirs our definition of what is human or not. There is a nasty side to these stories, about isolation and abuse. Oxana was neglected by her alcoholic parents and went to sleep with street dogs.

However harsh the reality of these stories are, we like to think of them as happy, and the children turn out as heroes. We prefer the children being raised by wolves than street dogs. In the *The Jungle Book's* Mowgli is playing with wolf puppies, growing up to be a brave man who takes part in the battles of the animals. Romulus and Remus grew up to become ambitious urban planners, and another young boy raised by the wolverine Asena, gave birth to the ancestors and leaders of what became the turks.



Suggested presentation of the image “Wolf Adopting Human Child” by Harry B. Neilson. Now on sale on allposters.com. (21)

ATTRACTION TO DARKNESS

Some people want escape from a safe, all too familiar, well structured, life style. I'm talking about people living in one of the riches countries of the world. The role players, the nerds. They are likely studying physics or mathematics in a university of a boring small town in Sweden or Norway. They sit in a cellar, throwing dices in the candle light. Too much plastic, too much commercials, too much bullshit propaganda make them feel something is wrong. In a documentary about Norwegian black metal (22), a man called Varg Virkenes says: *"In our contemporary society youth are pretty much lost, they have no direction. Nobody is telling them what to do. People are telling them what to do but youth have an instinct telling them - this is wrong"*. His name Varg means wolf. In a discussion on the characters inhabiting the world of Lord of the Rings, he says: *"I could easily identify with the fury of the "dark forces", and enjoyed their existence very much because they were making a boring and peaceful world dangerous and exciting."*

The fantasy fiction cherish organic aesthetics, as long as they hint of danger and dark secrets. On the covers of black or death metal albums we see again the bad weather phenomenons that were mentioned as a result of Fenrir's violent acts. Storms, thunder, dark heavy clouds, fog over a swamp smelling of decay. Fantasy art reminds much of romantic paintings, only darker. Even the typefaces are organic, squiggly letters shaped out of evil roots.



Album cover for Panzerfaust by the Norwegian black/death metal band Darkthrone. (23) Fenriz and Kveldulv are the stage names of the band members. Kveldulv means "evening wolf".

"Nazgul" means "Ring Wraith" in called Black Speech, a language invented by Tolkien and used by the dark and deathless servants of the evil ringlord Sauron. It is also the name of a Spanish (thrash/symphonic) black metal band. In their song "When the Wolves Return to the Forest" they sing about Iberian wolves, the type of wolf that inhabit the plains and forests of Spain and Portugal. They are not lonely wolves, they are a pack who intones a *"war hateful howling"*. It is still happening under the full moon. (24)

*following the way of blood with sharp axes
we walk through the old forest dark and endless
here lived our pagan spirits from the beginning times*

*and now a cross rules in this place
But in the mountains confines rises the wolfthrone again
with eyes full of vengeance and pride
baptized with iron and fire*

*when the moon returns to the forest and the eagle flies under a thousand dark war clouds
The winds of rage blow around all these lands
bastion and home of the braves*



The band members of Nazgul. The image is taken from metal-archives.com.

They are cursing Christianity just as much as the Scandinavian nationalists who worship the old Norse myths. They praise their *pagan spirits from the beginning of time* and *vengeance*. In Turkey the Grey Wolves are known as a neo-fascist terror organization with an aim to restore Turan, the old Turkish empire that spread all the way from eastern Europe to western China, uniting the ancestors of the mythological Asena. (25)

The strength and wild fury of a wolf beast like Fenrir are good attributes for somebody who wishes to break down the shiny artificial surface of our contemporary society. In *Until the Light Takes Us*, Varg Vikernes explains further about his activities in Norway: “*We stock piled weapons and ammunitions to prepare for war because we not only suspected there might be a third world war, we hoped that there would be a third world war. Not because we enjoyed destruction so much but because we knew that if you want to build something new, you got to destroy the old first.*” The building of something new seems to take place in *the old forest dark and endless*.



An image by the underground Swedish black metal band Arckanum founded by Shamataae who is also a writer of occult literature. Just like Varg Vikernes he comes with a whole ideology. On a metal webzine he is called an artist who fuses “raw but melodic black metal and Norse mythology with chaos-gnosticism”. (26) The wolf Fenris appears again in the name of his latest album “Fenris Kindir.”

ABOUT BOREDOM

Time to have a closer look at this boring and peaceful world that Varg talks about. Boredom is what makes rich people seek danger and darkness. With their shiny lives they have no right or reason to be dissatisfied, yet they are. This results in some kind of detachment or indifference towards the world around them, perhaps even depression. The world surrounding the rich person is the same world surrounding the poor person but the relationship to the things in it are different.

The things in this world are physically the same for all humans and also for all animals. But animals are “poor in this world” (27), because even if they live in a world of iPhones and duct tape they will not react to those things. These things are not accessible to them. The philosopher Martin Heidegger and the biologist Jacob von Uexküll introduce the terms “carriers of significance” and “disinhibitors”. These terms describe things that seem to be accessible to a specific being.

“Being accessible” is very similar to “having a function”. Humans are overwhelmed with functionality. Nature is our raw material to create comfortable lives for ourselves. Functions are sometimes abstract. A ticket might one day be a valuable piece of paper with a clear function, and the next day it’s expired and worth nothing, with no function. Our world is divided according to ownership and things in it are valued according to complex economical systems. We live in homes, “withdrawn into the private small family unit, decorated or furnished with mementoes from the outside world, which is such a distinguishing feature of consumer societies”.(28) Rich people are bored because things have lost their function to them, whereas poor people are busy struggling to achieve what the rich people have. I’d like to describe boredom as feeling deattached to the carriers of significance, to the many functional things that seem to exist only to us. our physical landscape.

It seems as though boredom and depression is a human problem, but by putting animals in zoos we can see similar traits. “*The body, instead of relaxing, huddles, the eyes stare painfully without focus, the hands, finding nothing new to touch or do, become like gloves worn by a creature drowning*” (29) - these are symptoms of boredom on captivated apes. It is even suggested that animals in captivity can “help us understand, accept and overcome the stresses involved in consumer society” (30) Animals in zoos are imprisoned in a fake reality where every piece of nature surrounding them is a decoration or, as John Berger puts it, “tokens to suggest something of the animals original landscape” (31). Their dependence and isolations have made them indifferent to everything in front of them. They don’t react to the children’s annoying attempts to get attention. Wolves in a zoo are incredibly boring. Berger even suggests (in a shy parenthesis) that the animals tendency to bundle against the edges is because “Beyond its edges there may be real space”.

For a well off humans there seem to be no edges to bundle against. And although we seem to live free and independent lives we feel imprisoned. Role playing offers a perfect escape back to a world of passionate struggle and functionality of things This is especially well illustrated by computer role playing games. The world in games like World of Warcraft are epic landscapes constructed of digital paintings in 3D with lots of details. Some objects in this world are so called “carriers of significance” and those are possible to pick up. This becomes obvious because they are programmed to glow a little when the mouse cursor hovers above them. Every action adds up to what makes the character “level up”, making the characters skills improve. The character has to go through tough challenges to complete tasks or quests, always with the danger of being killed.



Character on a mission in the World of Warcraft. *This is the Tainted Forest, which my host, the mayor of Surwich, directed me. He asked me to rid the area of unwelcome guests, from animate trees to winged demons and “bog lords.”* (32)

Fantasy role playing not only brings us back to serving a purpose. The existence of *magic* brings back the autonomy and mystey of objects that in our everyday lives exist only for our own needs. As important as the objects are the very atmosphere. The magic is woven into the very landscape. This is a nostalgia towards the earth we live on. Darkthron made a song called “Snø Og Granskog”, Snow and Fir-Tree Forest. I think it is a love song to the forest. The dark, cold forest of a dark cold country.

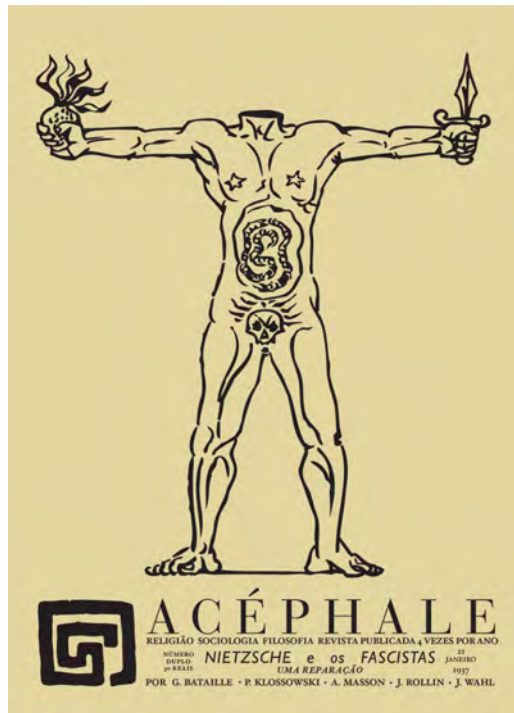
*Talk about what home is
snow and fir-tree forest is home
From the very start it is ours
Before anyone has told, that it is snow and fir-tree forest,
it has its place in us
and then it is there the whole, whole time*

*Waist-high drift around dark trees
it is for us
mixed into our own breath
the whole, whole time* (33)

This forest and the people, they belong together. The “us” that is mentioned in this song is open for anybody to identify with. It creates an identity for the people who feel that they belong to a snowy fir-forest. The followers of Odinism are obsessed with their origin, because in their opinion religion is bound to blood and earth. (34) Carrying a certain type of “blood” in our veins is known to be connected to our ancestors (for example royal blood that is inherited from royal parents). This makes a more narrow interpretation a feeling of identity that is more excluding.

“CHRISTIANITY DESTROYED EVERYTHING”

Not only did Christianity replace many local European folk religions, the very detachment to nature is the fault of Christianity. It all started in the Garden of Eden with Eve and the apple of knowledge. She ate it and became aware of being a human. This separated her from the rest of the animals. She is sad, worried, angry, betrayed. She is not any longer totally absorbed in her relationship to her surroundings. She stands beside it and looks at it, thinking of how to categorize it. We are now doing the surgery that separates our soul from our bodies. It leads to an identity crisis and it is very complicated.



There is a man without a head on the cover of a magazine called *Acéphale*. Georges Bataille, who created it, explains that “man escaped from his head, as the condemned man from prison”. (35) Another philosopher called Alexandre Kojève, talks about a Natural World as what will remain at The End Of History. There are no wars, no bloody revolutions, no philosophy. Man is happy. Man is animal again. The thing is, Bataille, Kojève and a bunch of other fine men included in this circle of 1930’s philosophers had many ideas in common when it came to this End of History, but they couldn’t agree on some details. It was concerning what exactly that man had in his head that he had to lose and what this new kind of freedom and happiness consisted of. However, there was something man had to “lose” to become natural again. The assumption is that man has something “more” than the animals. The separation is already unavoidable. We cannot escape from it because it is in our language.

This is the start of endless and rather tedious discussions following the rules of logic invented by the Greek philosophers. What is alive and what is dead. What contains a soul and what doesn’t. As Aristotle puts it: “life belongs to the living things”. (36) Then comes the unavoidable continuation on hierarchies of life, as plants are capable of growing and decaying but not moving and thinking. Endless dividing and categorizing. Biologists, taxonomies, Linné joins in the club. Humans on the top. Human on top because of “our *cognitio experimentalis*” (37), our ability to experiment. Human looks on a monkey and sees herself. Human was given the gift of categorizing, and “must recognize herself in a non-man in order to be human”. Scientists look at the monkey, trying to see these differences, similarities.

We invent, twice, an anthropological machine which function is to define what is human. Either it isolates what is non-human within the human and call it the ape man, or it searches for what is human in an animal, and with

these attributes create some kind of man-ape. This was quite useful on barbarians, slaves and other uncivilized foreigners. As the human struggles to define himself, the animals become more and more distant. There are no animals in philosophy. We are stuck.

A monkey must indeed be the most rational choice when looking for a bridge between the human and animal. But there is no middle step between what is human and animal. So when looking for animal friendship we turn to the wolf instead. The problem with the monkey is that it will never be domesticated. Neither does it fit into the fantasy world. It doesn't howl in the night. It doesn't live in the dark Northern forests. It doesn't look as serious as the wolf when it stands on a frosty hill with its profile darkened by the moon shine. We will never return to the magical forest by any rational research on the behavior of a monkey. Neither will the scientific relevance of the feral children get us any closer. I believe that what we need is metaphores and fairy tales. We need the mute wolf on the frosty hill is a portal to this world. He is not violent, he just stands still, looking.

DOMESTICATION

Wolves have large, curved canine teeth adapted to crush huge bones in one crunch. They are excellent hunters. There's not so many wolves left but there's more dogs than ever before. The wolves became smaller as they were bred into dogs, as well as their teeth and prey instincts. Dog owners swear that their dog would never ever be able to bite anybody. It is "the kindest in the world". When a pit bull gets accused for being a dangerous dog its owner gets upset and says it is not the nature of the dog. It is the owners fault, who raised it wrong.

The dog bears no responsibility of what it is doing. After all, it is a product of human creation, breeding. The very existence of dogs are a consequence of human intention described as something like "Man took the (free) wolf and made the (servant) dog and so made civilization possible". Well, the story depends on who tells it. says Donna Haraway says this "masculine, single parent, self birthing" act of man as he performed the domestication is just a story invented by technophiliacs. (38) She prefers to use words such as "co-evolution", nature-cultures, symbio-genetics, plasms. When the the biology of dogs was molded into our culture, our culture was molded too. Domestic animals is not a consequence of civilization. It was the very basis for civilization!

Romulus and Remus were abandoned by their parents but rescued and nursed by a wolf. In a famous bronze sculpture we see them literally sucking milk from the tits of the wolverine. Romulus founded Rome. A Turkic village in china was attacked by Chinese soldiers but a little boy survived. The wolverine comes to rescue him too. She nurses him and raises him and eventually also has sex with him. She gets pregnant and gives birth to the ancestors of all the turks.



The famous bronze sculpture of a she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus.

Not only did the stories of the nursing wolverines explain the birth of civilization, they also suggest a very intimate relationship between wolves and humans. Wolves nursed us. We had sex with them. They gave birth to us. As Donna says about dogs "We make each other up, in the flesh". (39)

At some point in pre-history humans settled and got working animals. but unlike cows and horses, dogs became pets. We are now companion species. We let the dogs sleep in our beds, lick our faces. There are a variety of pages like www.getdogsex.com and www.amateur-dogsex.com. Sex with dogs is tabu but perhaps not as rare as we think. "Significant other to each other, in specific difference, we signify in the flesh a nasty developmental infection called love." (40)

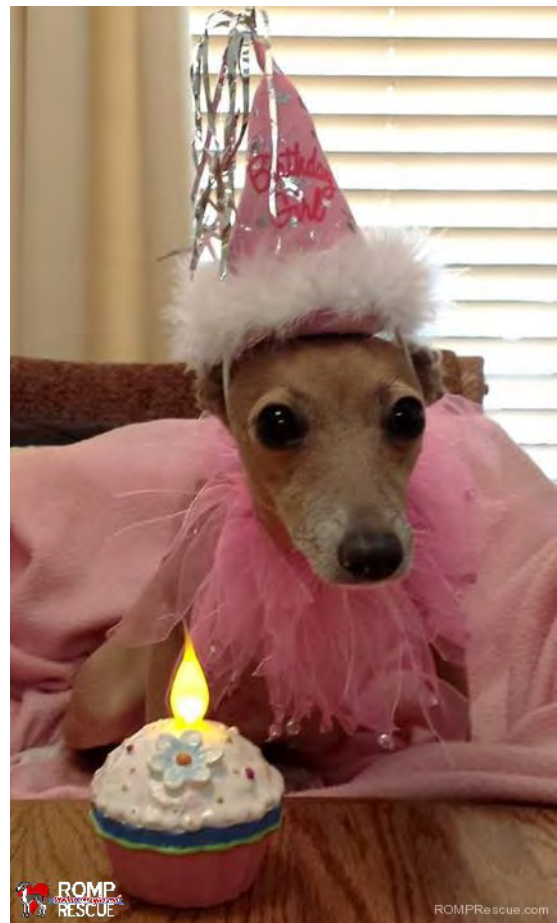
In this intimate relationship as companion species there is, just like in the one between man and woman, a power conflict. Looking at a chart of dog races, it is not difficult to see them as a product we can buy, there only to please humans. A very good product. Having a dog lower one's blood pressure and ups one's chances of surviving childhood, surgery and divorce. (41). In return we will give them shelter, food, walk with them and pick up their poop.

The danger of this is that they become commodities that need to live up to human expectations, or they are set aside. One of these expectations is love. "... dogs are attributed with the capacity for "unconditional love". According to this belief, people, burdened with misrecognition, contradiction and complexity in their relations with other humans, find solace in unconditional love from their dogs. In turn, people love their dogs as children". (42). When the dogs struggle to fit into a house makes him a clown. Parents upload funny videos of their children behaving strange or foolish. Dog owners upload funny videos of their dogs when they refuse to take a bath. There are blogs with dedicated to photos of dogs trying to sit on furniture but failing. Photos of dogs wearing stupid hats are sold as birthday cards, next to the birthday cards of babies wearing funny hats.

Donna emphasizes the fact that "Dogs are living beings living with humans, not a human intention, or figure for projection." (43) We should strife for a give and take kind of relationship where both dog owner and the dog adjusts to each other desires and needs. An equal relationship.



Sadie. She works at the Major Crimes Unit of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. (44)



"This lady is celebrating in style, her pink birthday-party is complete, with doggy cup cake, poofy collar embellishment and her favourite pink blanket!" (45)

THE WOLFDOG- “Go get a lap dog if you want a pet.”

Now there are many who really despise “the average cute cuddly puffball pet”. For them, the word pet is banned. They absolutely refuse to call their wolfdog anything else than “companion” because “Companion implies there is a sense of equality in the relationship”. They despise the fact that pets are completely dependent on it’s owner. Taking care of wolfdogs is a tough challenge demanding lot’s of attention and skills.

People “own” pets, but you can never “own” a wolfdog. You can provide for it, care for it and love it - but ultimately they make the decision whether or not to “share” their soul with you. If you are chosen to share this bond with them, they will place their trust in you for the rest of their lives and I believe, beyond . . . for even when they are gone - their spirit lives within you.

Beth

The quote is taken from a forum called “FAQ Wolfdog” on the question “do wolf dogs make good pets?” (46) The wolfdogs became the best friends Beth ever had. Another wolfdog owner says “We become as one” and the reward of “a true sense of unconditional love” is mentioned again. Only this time, the love is reserved for a few chosen ones. On this blog wolfdog owners talk about a “special sense of self”, about a “gift” that very few people have. Beth feels blessed to be one of the chosen. She finishes her text off with “Go get a lap dog if you want a pet.”

Getting a wolf dog does indeed sound like a very fulfilling, none the least spiritual experience. Tough challenge, chosen one, special, a gift. It has the fundamental ingredients of a epic fantasy story. The ending of this story is like a platonic version of the song “Vargflicka”:

*And the girl’s hand put the wolf on fire
and their wolf hearts melted together and they burned.*



This is a widely spread image photographed by the russian Vladimir Arkhipov, who is specialized in naked women posing in mysterious nature settings.

It is reblogged with the name Forest Dreams on a tumblr account and with the description Peaceful under the theme Women who Run with Wolves on pinterest. It is also used together with the song “Vargflicka” on youtube.

(47)

The story of a woman and a wolf is a story about tender love. A story about a man and a wolf is also about love. But especially the story about a woman and a wolf is one about not only tender, but also passionate love. Hélène Cixous, a writer and the founder of the french gender research center Centre de Recherches en Etudes Féminines (48), talks about “Love of the Wolf” in her book *Stigmata*. The Love of the Wolf becomes a metaphor for the role of fear in a love relationship. *”There is no love except where there is fear. Love run by fear, escorted by fear. We love the wolf. We love the love of the wolf. We love the fear of the wolf. We’re afraid of the wolf: there is love in our fear. Fear is in love with the wolf.”* (49)

The male love for the wolf is also love for fear, but in combination with taming it. The fear is not a mysterious force, it is something that can be understood scientifically. He goes into the wild nature to learn about the wolves. He wins their hearts by taking control of them in a rough, unglamorous, and down to earth kind of way. He becomes the alpha male. Then he loves them as passionately as he loves science itself.

Buzzfeed.com boasts to have the “hottest, most social content on the web”. They share the popular story of Werner Freund, as “The Man Who Led His Own Wolfpack”. (50) With his professional relationship to wolves he claims to be battling the myth of the “dangerous wolf”. He had to behave as the wolf alpha male of the pack to earn the other wolves respect and to be accepted. Shaun Ellis, another man who lived with wolves explains that when he saw a wolf in the zoo he realised how far away this animal was from the mythological creature he had learned about in books and films. (51) It was his hunger for knowledge that made him move out to the woods in a research centre near Idaho. *“Even though the other biologists and scientists thought it was dangerous, I soon wanted to get closer to the wolves really to understand their behaviour. I couldn’t help wondering, “Could a human become part of their family?” If I could, I thought, imagine what information I could share.”*



The kiss of science. The Alpha male Werner Freund shares a piece of raw meat with a wolf.
Photo from buzzfeed.com.

While breaking down the myths of the fairy tale wolves, men like Werner and Shaun become faces of the popular story about the *alpha male scientist*. Fenrir didn’t offer any friendship in his story but keeping this beast makes a great challenge for those attracted to the idea of humans taming nature. They have a chance to prove their courage and intelligence, just like the war god Tyr did when he bound Fenrir. Although wolfdog owners refuse to call themselves owners they still need to go through paperwork procedures when buying the animal from a breeder. There the wolf content in these hybrids are sometimes exaggerated. The more wolf, the better.

WHAT WE WANT

Looking into the eye of an animal we see a being that is like us, but still not. An animal looks back she observes us in a way no other human can, she registers us as another being but she does not recognize herself in us. But animals have lost their power to observe us and they are only there as a trope to project ourselves upon. We have defined ourselves different from animals. No matter how hard we try to look for similarities or differences between humans and animals we will never get out of this identity crisis. It is not realistic to start living close to wild animals again, they disappeared from our lives as we domesticated them.

Most of us will never meet a wolf, but dogs are everywhere. We can have a happy, rewarding relationship if we peel off all the projections and expectations and start to treat them as companion species instead of servants or furry children. Just living side to side with them is still sharing a life with a complete different being, one with whom we will never speak a word. We can look into their eyes and enter a parallel world, giving them back their power to observe us simply by treating them as an equal, autonomous being.

This could be the closest we can get to the mysterious power that animals had in the old myths, but this is not enough. The barking of a dog can never replace the distant howl from a wolf in the night. The modest dog lacks, just like the monkey, certain features that trigger our most passionate and sometimes neurotic fantasies and desires.

We want to have a spiritual experience, to be special and chosen. The wolf comes to challenge us and to choose us. We want to be carried away by a brute stranger with a soft heart. The wolf does that too. We want to unleash the oppressed sexual power that hides in our wild heart. We transform into a wolf in the night. We want a soul-mate. The wolf's heart will melt into ours, and her spirit will live on inside of us. We want to find our natural selves. The family of wolves will nurse us to become like them. We want to escape from civilization. To break down the shiny surface of "everything is fine" when we know its not. We want to live in a world where mysteries still exist. The wolf is waiting for us there, in the dark forest, on a frosty hill. The moon is there too, and it is full.

29. John Berger, *Why Look at Animals*, page 44.
30. John Berger, *Why Look at Animals*, page 36.
31. John Berger, *Why Look at Animals*, page 34.
32. Posted on a blog about **World of Warcraft**:
<https://spellrotation.wordpress.com/category/world-of-warcraft/>
33. I found the lyrics in Norwegian and translated them myself. **Darkthrone: Sno Og Granskog Lyrics** on:
http://lyrics.wikia.com/Darkthrone:Sno_Og_Granskog
34. **Hedendomen i Historiens Spiegel** - bilder av det förkristna Norden, by Catharina Raudvere, Anders Andrén and Kristina Jennbert, page 155-156.
35. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open*, page 5
36. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open*, page 14
37. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open*, page 22
38. **Donna Harraway, Companion Species Manifesto**, page ?
39. Donna Harraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, page ?
40. Donna Harraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, page ?
41. Donna Harraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, page 12.
42. Donna Harraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, page ?
43. Donna Harraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, page ?
44. Photo taken from the blog post “**American Humane Associaton Hero Dog Award Winners**”, on Chicago Now: <http://www.chicagonow.com/steve-dales-pet-world/2011/09/3172/#image/1>
45. Photo taken from the blog post: “**Italian Greyhounds Celebrating their Birthday in Style**”, Posted on October 7, 2013 by Romp Italian Greyhound Rescue Chicago: <http://romprescue.com/2013/10/13-italian-greyhounds-celebrating-birthday-style/>
46. Quote found on the forum **Wolfdog FAQ**: <http://www.inetdesign.com/wolfdunn/wolfdogfaq/pets.html>
47. **Vladimir Arkhipov**:
<http://www.arkhipov-studio.com/en/artful-photography/exhibition-2010>
Peaceful. On the Pinterest theme **Women Who Run With Wolves** by Sandie Ciccone:
<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/173247916890920722/>
Forest Dreams by Xye: xye <http://xye.tumblr.com/post/1103751279/vladimir-arkhipov-forest-dreams>
Vargaflicka on Youtube, uploaded by Nightcore: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD-43yveoUM>
48. **The European Graduate School's** webpage <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/helene-cixous/biography/>
49. **Hélène Cixous, Stigmata**, page 73.
50. **Werner Freund, The Man Who Led His Own Wolf Pack, Has Died Aged 80**,
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/alanwhite/werner-freund-the-man-who-lead-his-own-wolf-pack-has-died-ag>
51. Experience: I lived with wolves, article in **the Guardian**:
<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/jan/15/i-lived-with-wolves>