Farley Mowat has chiseled a niche for himself as a successful novelist in Canadian literature. His diverse thematic concerns and innovative modes of writing have fetched him an enviable position in the global literary milieu. Mowat is basically an author who voices in strong and vociferous terms the need of a perfect harmony between man and environment and affirms and vindicates through his own experiences that coexistence between human beings and animals is possible. In the chapter, an attempt is made to evaluate the language, narrative techniques and art of characterization that enabled Mowat to faithfully register his views on ecological consciousness and environmental concern.

Mowat's success as a narrative artist depends on the choice of suitable themes, but much more depends on his talent in dramatizing them with lively descriptions. He is an excellent story teller with humorous touches. Beyond wit, farce, melodrama, excitement and fun Mowat shows a seriousness of purpose in his writings. On the one hand, he is in sympathy with the down-trodden and abused, and on the other, he is out of sympathy with the White society. Moreover, if his human characters sometimes support stereotyped concepts about certain aspects of human behaviour, his animals never do that.
Acclaimed by the masses and attacked by the critics, Mowat described himself as a storyteller who is far more concerned with reaching his audience than with garnering kudos from the arbiters of literary greatness. When asked where he would place his own work in the mansion of Canadian letters, he bellowed emphatically: “Nowhere! I'm in a room by myself. I'm considered pretentious and artistic by the commercial guys, and too commercial by the artistic guys. And I'm perfectly happy in that position” (Grady 67).

According to John Orange, Mowat's writings include his life stories and autobiography. His writing is ‘subjective non-fiction’ and he distinguishes between ‘fact’ and ‘truth’. The general purpose of his work is to educate and reform but his sense of humour adds a great deal of entertainment. His writings bear the tone of an anti-authoritarian, intensely nationalistic, environmentally conscious, and passionately romantic.

Mowat himself admitted that he took poetic license with the writing of the book *Never Cry Wolf*, blending fact and fiction for effect and to propagate his message. A reviewer of *Macleans* once remarked that the book is a "spoof and a potboiler," and also a "passionate defence of the wolf"(Gale 14). In 1996, a minor scandal broke out surrounding Mowat's use of facts in his work. John Goddard, a reporter of *Saturday Night* charged Mowat with playing fast and loose with factual material in his books. He maintained that Mowat "has broken a trust with his public" (Goddard 46). The prolific author brushed off the criticism saying that he had always admitted to certain factual errors in his
books, changing names and locations in his nonfictional books, and reworking some of the tales he had heard to achieve the proper effect. However the dispute did not last long. In an interview, Mowat admitted that his books are ‘thinly-veiled fiction’.

Mowat’s writings have a very strong background. He never wrote anything out of just imagination. It is observed that Mowat is gifted with a preordained spontaneity of ecocentric writings. In 1935 as a boy of fifteen he looked out of the train window on the line from Winnipeg to Fort Churchill in Hudson's Bay. Across the track, flowed a great brown river a quarter of a mile wide, not of water, but of caribou, the annual migration. From that moment he was infected with the Arctic fever; and it was this disease of the imagination that brought him back to the Barren Lands in 1947. That summer he made his first contacts with the Eskimos of the Barrens, the Ihalmiut before canoeing back to Churchill. Next year, with a zoologist companion, he came back to learn the language of the Ihalmiut, study the deer, and follow their migration north to Angkuni Lake. This is the origin of Mowat's *People of the Deer* that demonstrates his power of grasping the original pattern of life in the Barrens as well as enduring its physical rigours.

The new light in the face of the Eskimo Ohoto was not simply due to the prospect of gorging on meat. Rather, it was the endless lines of the deer that brought something of their own immeasurable vitality. In fact, the affinity between the Ihalmiut and the deer was something more than a physical tie. In
other words, it is the co-existence that was prevailing for centuries till the white man intruded only to exploit both the deer and the people. *People of the Deer* is his admirable ‘plea for the life’ of the deer and its people. Being practical he suggests the ways how the Greenland Eskimos, a primitive race can be encouraged to develop along lines in harmony with nature and the land they live in. But this can never be done by persons whose interests in the land were measured in dollars and cents.

Mowat impresses the readers because he has a poet's as well as an ecologist's grasp of the connection between a landscape and the life in it. One of the difficult tasks for any author to perform is to write a book that cannot be put down once one has started reading it particularly when its theme is a pitiable cry in wilderness. Mowat has succeeded in achieving this with *The Desperate People* a well-written, sensitive, and lucid account of one of the most horrible sidelights of history. The people of the 'barren land' could survive anything in the Arctic wilderness except the white-man. They were rich, their caribou were abundant and their dogs were many and strong. The children in the tents were happy, and there was never any fear of going hungry. Then came the ruthless white man's civilization. And with it came slaughter of the herds, starvation of the flesh, and torture of the spirit. For *Saturday Review*, the British critic Ivan Sanderson wrote, “It is hard, if not impossible, even to attempt to review a book when its contents raise your most elemental passions to such a White heat that you find tears in your eyes over and over again—tears as much of frustration as of horror and fury”(14).
Mowat's experience among the wolves is chronicled in *Never Cry Wolf*, perhaps, his best-known adult work. In his personal life he has inestimable love for all animals. When he was assigned by the government to gauge the extent to which wolves were responsible for disappearing caribou population of the North, he accepted his job in the right manner irrespective of his personal dogma. He too believed, to some extent, that wolves had been responsible for the drop of caribou herd. The situation became serendipitous when Mowat discovered that wolves killed only old or sickly caribou and thereby they contributed to the strength of caribou herds. It was the fur trappers who were responsible for the decimation of the caribou herds. Thus his innate interest on wildlife exceeds the government order despite his attempt to do justice to his job. Mowat also learned that wolves were gentle rather than ferocious and fed mainly on mice. When Mowat reported to the government that its wildlife mismanagement, not the wolf, was causing the caribou's decline, his report was quickly dismissed. His book *Never Cry Wolf* signifying the plea for conservation of wolves in the wild became an immediate best seller and Soviet government banned the slaughter of wolves referring Mowat's findings. According to Mowat's preface, *Never Cry Wolf* is an intense plea for understanding and preservation of a highly evolved and attractive animal. Thus the novel is an outcome of the author’s experience. Keith Lawrence in *Twentieth Century Young Adult Writers* comments:

The account of the government- hired biologist whose fear of Arctic wolves is replaced by admiration, whose assignment to
study the wolves gives way to a self-imposed mission to preserve them, is one of the finest contemporary statements on the human capacity to bond with other animals and thrive in the natural world, no matter how threatening either appears. (34)

Mowat's great gift to children's literature is twofold: he brings his own love of nature and wildlife and he flavours it with his sense of humour. In fact his message of responsibility is echoed in his books for children. In an essay for the *British Columbia Library Quarterly*, Joseph E. Carver states:

Mowat knows children and what they like and can open doors to adventures both credible and entertaining to his young readers. His stories are credible because Mowat wanted to write them to give permanence to the places, loyalties and experiences of his youth; entertaining because the author enjoys the telling them . . . Because almost all of his writing is autobiographical, he relieves his experiences so vividly and exuberantly that the action rings with an authenticity the reader cannot help but enjoy. (11)

Mowat has written four books about animals. Of these, the publishers have classified only *Owls in the Family* "For Young Readers" (Lucas 45). Since it is a sequel to *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be*, the latter also belongs to the same category. *Never Cry Wolf* and *A Whale for the Killing*, despite being animal stories, however, are books for adult readers, for their subject concerns the adult world and the cause of conservation of natural wildlife. Within the
genre of the animal story, *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be* belongs to the very popular class in which pets are the protagonists.

Regarding the plot of *The Dog who Wouldn't Be* Lucas comments that:

> On the surface it is an animal-cum-family children's story that has proved very popular. Written in the first person about the author's childhood, it allows both the child and the adult reader to identify with the story teller's "I," as wish-fulfillment for the one in a world of mischievous but affectionate pets. Actually the book is broken-backed, for the protagonist, Mutt, fades from the middle of the story for some eighty pages. Because the book is episodic and anecdotal, the break does little harm, however, especially since the story never slackens pace from its remarkable *in medias res* beginning, whether Mutt, Father, or the owls are in the spotlight. Much of the humour is tongue-in-cheek, and, indeed, the whole story is a tall tale, for Mowat describes a dog who uses a diving board to go swimming, who climbs trees, fences, ladders, and mountains, and who challenges the very science of biology with his chattering teeth. (47-48)

This principle of exaggeration leads most frequently to slap-stick scenes, which Mowat occasionally garnishes with fine dialect dialogue. *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be* stands apart from Marshall Saunders's *Beautiful Joe*, R. M. Ballantyne's *The Dog Crusoe*, E. R. Young's *Hector, My Dog*, and
Morley Callaghan's *Luke Baldwin's Vow* and from Roberts's and Seton's stories with their attempts to examine animal psyche and character. It could be argued easily that Mowat satirizes all of these in his book, for it treats light-heartedly and even irreverently everything that they took so seriously. Mutt, the animal hero or anti-hero embodies Mowat's own sense of fun in a world of ‘make-believe’. Mutt and Wol reflect something of the revolt against the status quo of the time as the dogs of the earlier books reflected the attitudes of their day and age. Mowat forgot everything in the magical world of wildlife. Mutt never remained a pet; rather it was one of Mowats. As a writer, Mowat has strong conviction that man is an inferior animal who kills other beings out of greed and aggressiveness whereas the other animals kill the fellow beings out of need only.

*Lost in the Barrens* tells the experiences of two boys in their teens: one white boy who has recently lost his parents and one Indian boy from the Cree tribe of the same age. The boys embark on a mission to relieve the starvation of a neighbouring Indian village, the Chipewyans, but due to a series of unfortunate events become trapped in Canada's Barren Lands during winter. Their survival depends on the knowledge of the wilderness on the part of the Indian boy and an innovative spirit in the city-bred boy. Thomson Gale in *Authors and Artists for Young Adults* says that the book “remains an exciting yarn of the two boys' discovery of the Arctic wilderness.” (17). They learn to respect the mighty power of nature and never attempt to fight against it. Mowat could make the most of a situation in which man and nature meet, not as rivals
but as partners. Although storms blow violently in Hidden Valley, it is always comfortable in the cabin. Thanks to human ingenuity and to nature's bounty in supplying food and fuel. As evidence of even greater joy, a caribou fawn soothes the boys giving them an opportunity to satisfy their wish ‘to love and to be loved,’ the motif of so many pet animal stories. On the surface, the central theme of the book may appear to be that of survival, but Mowat has dedicated his story to positive values through which one asserts a joy in the vitality of living in harmony with nature and wildlife.

Civilized man surveys creation through the glass of his knowledge and sees the whole picture in distortion. He exploits the other creatures for their incompleteness and for their tragic fate of having taken form far below human. And there lies the flaw of appraising the other beings inferior to man, or even second rate creations. In a world older and more complete than that of man, they move gifted with extension of the sanity man has lost. They live by voices that will never be heard by man. Mowat identifies and addresses them as 'other nations' caught with man in the net of life and time as prisoners on the earth. When the eighty ton whale became trapped in a Newfoundland lagoon, Mowat rejoiced that there was a chance to study at close range one of the magnificent animals in creation. But the local men thought otherwise and started blasting the whale with rifle and hacked open her back and left her to death. Mowat’s *A Whale for the Killing* records his heroic battle to save the life of the whale in which he miserably fails. He wraps up saying that in a few years there will be no whales left and man can do nothing other than writing their epitaph.
In order to maintain harmony with the surroundings one must develop an attitude whereby one applies the same morality to other forms of life that is applied to one's own species. That old notion of 'scientific objectivity' and the practice of observing from afar are not only useless but extremely bad. Not by those means will one ever penetrate the inner sanctum of animal life. The writer advises, “You have to be "subjective", you have to use your senses, your emotions, your viscera. Your intellect alone will never with you access. In this sense I am proud to say that I am not a scientist. I am not a 'picker-up' of facts” (Gale 23).

Mowat has lived life and that is a distinction never understood by many scientists. Nobody really knows about what goes on in the heads of other animals. Those who have had tiny glimpses into the intimate lives of other species, particularly mammalian, all say essentially the same matter; these animals are more closely related to human beings. They too feel pain like human beings. But a lot of people still refuse to admit that animals feel pain, even though it has been demonstrated clinically that some species feel pain to a greater degree than human beings. There is no query that animals feel everything that human beings feel. The only difference may be the matter of degree. Mowat wishes that human beings must act upon this recognition. Otherwise, harmony will be lost and eventually earth will be a place unfit for living.
Mowat contends that, of all his books, *Sea of Slaughter* was by far the most difficult to write. A number of reviewers, including those within the international scientific establishment, cited it as Mowat's most ambitious and most important work. It is, in sum, a history from 1500-1980 of man's overexploitation of the North Atlantic, which has resulted in legion numbers of extinct, dying and seriously reduced species. One of the most striking of his findings is the vast amount of waste entailed in commercial fishing. In the net fishery a very large percentage of netted seals are pregnant females, the death of each destroys two lives. As applied to the gun fishery, prior to the breeding season, when they were still fat but not fully buoyant, at least half the adult harp seals got killed in open water. They sank before they could be recovered. In addition, most of those hit were only wounded and would dive and not be seen again.

Mowat also documents ‘the horror’ that had routinely been part of commercial expeditions after birds, fish and fowl. The following account is from the writings of Aaron Thomas, who worked on “Funk Island” toward the end of the eighteenth century. The island had been named so because of the incredible stench resulting from the killing of the island's wildlife.

While you abide on this Island you are in the constant practice of horrid cruelties, for you not only Skin [the Penguins] *Alive*, but you burn them *Alive* also ... You take a Kettle with you and
kindle the fire under it, and this fire is absolutely made from the
unfortunate Penguins themselves. (SS 24)

Mowat also lets out,

Writing this book was the most terrible five years of my life
I wish I could forget. It was a descent into Dante's innermost
circle of hell. Three times I told myself, 'You can't go on with
this.' I had started out to do a rather slim book on recent
extinctions. A little pamphleteering let us say. But as so often
happens with me, the book took charge. Which means my
subconscious took charge and led me to do a book I had not
intended. The research for *Sea of Slaughter* yielded tens of
thousands of pages. (Gale 27)

*Sea of Slaughter* is not only a chronological documentation of startling
facts of wildlife extinction, but also a close and well involved research work
which can be used as a resource to ornithologists and naturologists. In addition,
the pattern of presentation of the text is intensely personal, unadorned,
methodically referential, objectively focused and a conglomeration of
information and observation which is a valuable social, scientific and narrative
record. The literal plentitude is the foregrounding of literary factors of the text.

The art of characterization in the narratives of Mowat is embroidered by
natural fervour sliding innovatively towards discovery and realization of
reality. In *People of the Deer*, Mowat is greatly affected by an 'arctic fever'
right from his boyhood. It is this inspiration that led him to explore many avenues in that line of character. He is even more affected by the fusion of people and the deer that tells the character of Eskimos, the Ihalmiuts. Mowat is captivated by this indivisibility that becomes a prominent subject of his literary career. The more time Mowat spent with the Inuit, the more he came to admire and celebrate their differences. Rather than expecting the Inuit to adapt to him, he moved towards them. Mowat states, “The unadorned fact that I, a white man and a stranger, should voluntarily wish to step across the barriers of blood that lay between us, and ask the people to teach me their tongue, instead of expecting them to learn mine – this was the key to their hearts” (PD 101).

While Mowat's father Angus became an excellent sport hunter, Mowat remained a lukewarm participant in all their outings in *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be*. He wanted to be like his father, but he could not put his heart into it. He accompanied his father, but he wanted to look at the birds, never meant to destroy them. He never intended to break his compact with nature. It was Uncle Frank who drew the mind of Mowat towards birds and animals. While his uncle’s concern was rather scientific, Mowat was not at all ready to do away with his harmony with nature and wildlife. Uncle Frank was blunt with him: “Don't be soft. There's millions more out there. We are doing this for science. I measure every specimen. I shoot and note the condition of its plumage. Science needs to know these things” (King 51). For this, the boy Mowat assented at that time, but later he would come to the realization that even collecting expeditions were little more than high-grade plundering operations
conducted in the hallowed name of science. Mowat was of the strong conviction that wild life must not be targeted even for the cause of science.

Franz with his half-native status, in *People of the Deer*, is one of the leading secondary characters who support the mission of Mowat. Sharing the emotion of the author Franz attempts to the living conditions of both the Indians and the Ihalmiut. The contrast between raw eagerness of Mowat and the laid-back shrewdness of Franz is given a completely fictional reworking in the depiction of the friendship between Jamie, a white boy, and Awasin, a young Cree boy, in *Lost in the Barrens*. Stranded in the Barrens during the winter, the two friends survive because of Jamie's inventiveness and Awasin's experience that perfectly complement each other. Jeannet T. Cloud admires the boys and comments, "Jamie, the white boy, and Awasin, the Cree boy: I like their self-reliance, their ingenuity, their courage. They seem to me well-differentiated, good foils for each other" (Quoted in King 134).

During the course of the book, Mowat becomes more and more attuned with the surviving members of the tribe, who recount for him their history and traditions. In this context James King writes:

Although there are many hints early in *People*, the real villains of the book – the missionaries, the Canadian federal government in Ottawa and the Hudson’s Bay Company – surface only in the last two chapters, the portion of the narrative that caused the heavens fall upon the head of its author. (136)
Ohoto is another character, in *People of the Deer*, who contributes to the study of Mowat's art of characterization. He is the firsthand informant to the narrator. His role is perfected when he says, “the deer . . . alone in the entire world know the needs of the people” (PD 124). The suffering of Ohoto's family is an example of the pathetic conditions of natives in the Barrens after the destruction of the deer. In extreme misery and hunger Ohoto's wife Nanuk desperately whispered to her husband that they must kill his aged father to give food to their starving children. It is not the hunger that led her to speak like this, but the mother in her did it. The author makes use of these characters to bring out the injustice leveled upon them by the white man and his covetousness. The exploiting nature of the white man is retaliated by the survival out cry of Ohoto:

The white men, who have all things in this world, but being greedy for more, took also the deer who were our life – and gave us back only the Great pain which sits in our chests till we die!

You are rich! You are very rich, white men! Richer in tea and in rifles and shells than we of the People. And yet we too are rich!

Richer in graves, and in ghosts – and this is our doing. (PD: 197)

In *Never Cry Wolf*, the character and behaviour of the wolves is rendered vividly, in a language literary rather than scientific. As Mowat grew attuned to the wolves, he could not maintain a scientific distance from them:
I found myself calling the father of the family George, even though in my notebook he was austerely identified only as Wolf "A". George was a massive and eminently regal beast whose coat was silver-white. He was about a third larger than his mate, but he hardly needed this extra bulk to emphasise his air of masterful certainty. George had presence... His wife was equally memorable. A slim, almost pure-white wolf with a thick ruff around her face, and wide-spaced, slightly slanted eyes, she seemed the picture of a mix. Beautiful, ebullient, passionate to a degree, and devilish when the mood was on her, she hardly looked like the epitome of motherhood; yet there could have been no better mother anywhere. (NCW 61)

*Never Cry Wolf* has elements of a love story. The narrator himself falls in love with his main animal characters, George and his mate forgetting that he was in the world of animals. There is also a deft use of irony when the narrator castigates the 'disgusting exhibition' of the female wolf. By making the mating ritual of George and Angeline a part of the battle of the sexes, Mowat makes them human – and thus much more sympathetic to his readers. Because, Mowat the narrator inhabits two worlds: the human and the animal. He can lay claim to an understanding of the ‘Others’, those creatures of the natural world that had fascinated him since childhood. Thrilled to see Mowat's animal characters in *Never Cry Wolf*, Peter Davison in 'Introduction' to *The World of Farley Mowat* comments, "Others have written about the wolf, even with admiration
as I do; but no one else in my experience deals with the wolf in the manner of equals...." (vi).

An important character close to the personality of Mowat was the dog Mutt. The Dog Who Wouldn't Be tells in an exaggerated fashion the real-life exploits of this extra-ordinary canine. Mutt's appearance was perfectly timed enough as far as Helen was concerned. As Lucas points out, "Mutt, real or fictional, part black-and-white setter and part everything else-shared one trait, an indomitable knowledge that he was neither canine nor human" (38).

At some early moment in his existence Mutt concluded there was no future in being a dog. And so, with the tenacity which marked his every act, he set himself to become something else. Subconsciously he no longer believed that he was a dog at all, yet he did not feel, as so many foolish canines appear to do, that he was human. He was tolerant of both species, but he remained neutral. In fact, it is this uniqueness of character trait that made Mutt so appealing. His appeal as character ultimately resides in his blend of animal and human traits. Rose Feld rightly says, "The fictional Mutt climbs trees, outsmarts Father and Farley Mowat at every turn and in general, is as canny and charming a creature as ever existed. Often described in Quasi-epic and mock-heroic language, he is the very stuff of legends" (141).

The subsidiary characters the Wol and Weeps in the narrative wander in and out of Mutt's adventures. Wol and Weeps lived like human beings and neither of them seemed to know what their wings were for. Mowat’s father
said, “You know, I don’t believe that owl realizes that he’s an owl. I believe he
thinks he’s a human being” (OF 39). Wol and Weeps were different in
class. Wol was self-assured, domineering and certain of life while Weeps
was nervous and reserved brooding over his oil-barrel ordeal.

Again, for Mowat, the tragedy of the trapped whale was a deeply human
one as he writes: "The whale was not alone in being trapped. We were all
trapped with her" (AWK 168). Like Franz in People of the Deer, Onie a
fisherman in A Whale for the Killing stood by Mowat in his attempts to save
the whale. Onie was not affected by modern life while many of fishermen
companions chose the industrial life ignoring the works of their forefathers.
Onie was deeply affected by the miserable plight of the whale. Once when they
heard the voice of the whale Onie sat as if paralysed and said with
a questioning expression: "That whale . . . she spoke to we! I t'inks she spoke
to we!" (174).

Thus the characters in wildlife narratives of Mowat are manifold, and
they are tuned best to achieve credibility contextually. His art of
characterization can be predominantly viewed from two types of narrativity.
First of all, in the narratives like People of the Deer, Never Cry Wolf, A Whale
for the Killing, The Dog Who Wouldn’t Be, and Owls in the Family the author
as the protagonist, the first person point of view has been adopted. Secondly, in
the narratives such as Lost in the Barrens and Sea of Slaughter intrusive
mimesis in the third person narrative has been followed. There are four broad
varieties of characters in all these narratives. The author is the active character and the agentive protagonist in most of the narratives where as in *Lost in the Barrens* the author is the passive protagonist. There are characters like Mike in *Never Cry Wolf*; Franz in *People of the Deer* and Art and Onie in *A Whale for the Killing* who are embedded active characters working as transitional elements between the protagonist and the respective plots. The ‘Whiteman’ is the implied antagonist in most of the narratives where as the animals are objective and passive characters. However, the animals like deer, wolf, dogs and whales and the owls are personified whereas the animals and the birds in *Sea of Slaughter* are not personified but they help framing an alarming statistical data. Even the car T. Eardlie has a character and idiosyncrasies that add to the story.

The Arctic wildlife characters are languished. But a live and unambiguous running commentary of Mowat over their goings on is a verisimilitude. Their sociability and adaptability; their temperament and responsiveness; and their final endangered state are thoroughly patterned what allures the readers in characterization in the reflection of natural, instinctive and cooperative involvement of characters in furthering the narratives irrespective of category or division. All are represented as if unfeigningly trickled to the sequential plot breaking the barrier of zoological and geographical divisions. John Bemrose writes in *Maclean’s* that
Farley Mowat is considered by many to be Canada's most famous author of nature lore whose influence extends far beyond the borders of Canada. Dubbed an environmentalist, Mowat is chiefly known for his vivid powers of observation and the flair of his nonfiction story telling technique, employing what he himself calls "subjective nonfiction" effects. (par.2)

Speaking of Mowat's work in general, Thomson Gale called Mowat,

… ‘essentially romantic in outlook’, and a man who despises the cramping influence of the modern metropolis, preferring the simpler, older rhythms of life in small towns and traditional societies. Sometimes his nostalgia leads him into pathetic pronouncements, but more often it allows him to express something of truth and beauty of existence as it has been known by ordinary men and women through ages. (18)

Mowat betrays his anger towards the authorities for neglecting the weaker section of the society. Writing in The New York Times Book Review, Walter O'Hearn called Mowat "Canada's angriest young man" and added, “If we are at last fumbling toward a grasp of the Eskimo problem, the goading of Mowat is one of the reasons. He has convictions and he can express them in prose that sears the conscience" (37). To be brief, the language in all his selections matches the Arctic scene in its starkness and beauty.
Regarding his writings, Mowat says that he prefers writing for kids and adolescents.

Once people become adulting, you can't get through to them anymore….I'm a storyteller in the same tradition as the old saga men who told their tales to a live audience. The saga man was a moralist, in a sense, passing on sugar-coated ethical concepts. But it's the tale that grabs people's attention, the tale they can't get out of their minds, long after the telling of it has passed. Now, of course, the ancient saga men were tellers of tales, I am a writer. I do use a lot of oral material in my work, bits I've overheard, parts of legends, stories and conversations. I do this in all of my work.(Gale 27)

Sheila Egoff observes that the combination of dramatic setting and narrative skill that makes for a compelling tale is best exemplified in the books of Roderick Haig-Brown and Farley Mowat. These writers stand far above their Canadian contemporaries and rank high internationally. Both Haig-Brown and Mowat have come to the writing of outdoor books almost inevitably. They are regarded as confirmed naturalists who have given years of their lives to exploring the Canadian wilderness. Being active and determined campaigners for conservation, they have a feeling for the Canadian land and knowledge of it that are genuine and deep. More important, they are thoroughly professional writers who have learned how to shape their feelings rather than just express
them. They know that even in children's stories a character remains in the minds of the readers.

The narratives of Mowat go beyond the most common patterns because he assimilates social, natural, literary and linguistic elements together to yield a unique shape of composition of the texts. In all his texts, he is found to have the beginning of adventurous spirit and scientific inquiry that come out with evidences. He gradually lapses himself into a thought through the paradigm of literary nostalgia. The sequences and consequences of his books continue to give moving pictures of adventures reflected through authorial intrusion. In the beginning of his People of the Deer Mowat says,

I brought back many memories both varied and vivid. Yet, as time passed, it was the memory of the great heard of caribou at Mile 410 . . . the arctic had implanted so deeply in my heart that its fever could not be chilled even by the passing years . . . . It is a sort of disease – an arctic fever . . . . (PD 5)

This is further reinforced by the expression, “I saw in my mind's eye as a mighty land and a strange one”(7). In Never Cry Wolf, the same technique echoed as he writes, "... the story of my sojourn amongst the wolves begins properly in Granny's bathroom"(NCW 1). Then, he tells about the three cat fish in the bathroom tub and Granny's "nocturnal peregrinations" (3) and finally says, "... my infatuation with the study of animate nature grew rapidly into a full-fledged love affair" (3).
His curiosity as a key point is apparent in the beginning of *A Whale for the Killing*. The moment he is assigned the duty of going to Burgeo on a mission of the study on whales, he is absorbed in the process as he writes:

A curiosity about the whale nation has been a part of me for as long as I can remember. When I was a very small child, my grandfather used to sing me a song that began:

In the North sea lived a whale . . .

Big of bone and large of tail . . . (AWK 57)

It is this inquisitiveness that has inspired the author to be committed to work on the whales.

Mowat's narratives are somewhat more conventionally adventurous and less thoroughly realistic than Haig-Brown's. *Lost in the Barrens* recounts the experiences of a white boy, Jamie, and an Indian boy, Awasin, who become separated from the Indian band. They encounter every test the North can impose upon them. They suffer near-starvation and snow blindness. They fight to the death with the Barren Land and with almost unbearable suspense they miss by a hair's breadth the Indian band they were supposed to join for the return. Somehow they survive it all and grow up in the process. Thus Mowat's strength lies in the sense of pace and breathless suspense he gives to his tale. The boys almost reel from crisis to crisis. But, Mowat is too good a writer to strain credibility in the interest of narrative, besides his deep knowledge of the North. Beneath the overlay of adventure Mowat marks the solid substance of
the North and the kind of character development it imposes on those who live there. Awasin, the son of a Cree chieftain, explains to Jamie, the city boy, that one must conform to the North rather than fight it, and so the interest of the story is fundamentally based on the way that adaptation is made rather than on the events that precipitate it. Mowat's style, as in *Lost in the Barrens*, is simple and exact, and detailed, in the tradition of the plain English of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. According to Sheila Egoff,

> Mowat and Haig-Brown owe most of their success to their respect for their skill and for their readers. There is no sense of writing down for the reason that they write on equal terms with their readers, like Stevenson, and, most important, they have a lot to say to them. (167)

If Mowat is impressive for his handling of his settings, subjects, and themes, he is no less so for his skill as a story-teller and for the liveliness of his humour. He creates suspense by hinting at future events or by withholding information and by dramatizing or describing exciting episodes in which disaster is always imminent. In fiction of event, the characters are types with just enough individuality to set them apart from each other, but not so much as to preclude the reader's identification with them, or to hinder the flow of the narrative. Mowat is little concerned with analyzing personality. His interest centres on the physical world and the life of action. This interest
unquestionably attracts young readers, but it also seems to have contributed much to the popularity of his books for adults.

Focusing on the narrative technique of Mowat, Lucas comments:

Mowat's verbal, descriptive, and situational humour as in *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be* is never subtle. Unfortunately the verbal humour is sometimes forced or obnoxiously prurient, and the descriptive and situational is hackneyed (at least in the tired old "dog and skunk confrontation") or coarse (as when Mutt falls foul of a cormorant in its nest). Humour of character often combines with humour of situation in *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be* in the battle of the sexes during the mild skirmishes between Father and Mother Mowat, but especially in Father Mowat's misadventures (afield and afloat). Although they are not the bland and sentimentalized parents of many children's stories, they are traditional, however, in that their ancestors have had long and distinguished careers in life-with-father comedies—a naive wife (who thinks Mutt chases cows because beef is a "dreadful price"), a blustering husband (who loves boats but moves to the dust-bowl prairies), and a precocious child (who acts as innocent commentator, observer, and prankster). All of these make for the fun Mowat has—hilarious is a favourite work word with the critics—but it is Mutt, not the father in the familiar roles of
green-horn nimrod or sailor or foolish eccentric, nor the owls, who gives the story distinction. (48)

Mowat's beast fable *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be* fits the genre, for it employs an animal to satirize man. Besides the family comedy, there are inklings of a deeper satiric intent in Mowat's grumbling about Ontario's lack of culture and Paul Sazalski's shrewd business practices. This is exposed in *Owls in the Family* through the pets' parade sponsored by T. Eaton Departmental Store in the town. Here, Mowat, the social critic, surfaces too obviously. But it is Mutt who focuses the entire irony. Also, Mowat practises a tradition in which "fiction" and "truth" are not mutually exclusive.

Again, the voice or narrative style Mowat uses in his books is virtually identical to the voice between the writer and the reader. Peter Davison highlights this view stating that book after book, the reader hears Mowat's:

… favourite words- "existence," "elemental," "unbelievable", "superhuman", "irresistible", "struggle" – repeated in the rhythm of insistence on what it is that holds us together in the companionship of animals. It is part of being animals that enables us to feel the tie between Kikik and her children, between the dying whale and her sentinel at the edge of the sea, between husband and wife, between a son and his father, a boy and his dog, even between a writer and his friends. We do not survive in order to die as victims but to live as companions. (Davison 11)
It is his voice and narrative style that transmit his message to influence millions of human beings for a change of attitude towards nonhuman beings.

Mowat bequeaths millions of readers with a blueprint for global salvation amidst pollution and environmental hazards. His ultimate motive is that those living on the land or at sea must live in peace with nature and win over those who are not doing so. Winner of many awards and honours, Mowat infuses his work with affection for the Canadian wilderness and its inhabitants, both human and animals. His books offer tragic glimpses of the extinction of species at the hand of so-called "civilized" humans as well as strong warnings about the future of a human race that devours natural resources unchecked. Valerie Wyatt in Profiles remarks that "Mowat has a remarkably humble view of his place--of man's place in general--in the scheme of things" (8). She adds, "He believes that man is no more and no less important than any of the other animals that inhabit the planet and Mowat has lived by this philosophy, elaborating on it in his books" (8).

Mowat is not an arm-chair naturalist or yacht-club seaman. He is a literary genius with an organic and much warranted purpose of dragging attention of all through data based discoveries of ecological crisis. He virtually lived in Canadian North and sailed the eastern seaboard and the coasts of Newfoundland. Writing from experience he succeeds in sharing his knowledge of these regions and re-lives in them. One of the marked features of his writings is the extended metaphorised spontaneity. In almost all his writings,
one can find some impressive lines that add the style of writing with ornamental verbosity. In the *People of the Deer*, while describing wind outside the aircraft he writes, “The wind outside, and the chill damp inside, made me thought of a fire like the dream of a lovely woman – irresistible, and quite unattainable” (PD 20). Again while describing the breath of the land after winter, he writes, “The sterile, unbreathing land of winter breathed deeply now, and its breath was that of a strong woman in grip of passion” (PD 21). On another occasion while describing a girl child Kunee, he mentions, "I cannot describe the emotions that filled me as I watched this girl child with a knife in one hand and a great chunk of dripping back meat in the other, stiffing her little face and burping like an old clubman after a Gargantuan meal"( 52). In *Never Cry Wolf*, similar pattern of expressions are there reflecting the tails of two wolves proceeding to the esker. He writes, “The esker overlooked my position on the bay's shore, and I felt as nakedly exposed as the lady in the famous brassiere advertisement” (NCW 43).

While mentioning Uncle Albert's sound for his catalogue of wolf noises, he narrates, “It was a high pitched snarl of shock and outrage – not entirely unlike the sound I have heard an angry woman make when, in a crowded subway car, someone pinched her bottom” (116). In yet another event, while encountering a group of unfamiliar Eskimos he describes that "gradually they ceased to eye me like a flock of chickens in the presence of a rattle snake"(151).
In *Lost in the Barrens*, the angry remarks of Awasin is to be noted here as he says, “You know nothing about this land, . . . You are like the weasel that climbed into the cookstove to see if it was hot, and got roasted for his trouble!” (LB 40). After a bullet shot among the caribou herd, Mowat rightly compares, "The tiny figures of the distant deer spread out as ants do when a man disturbs their nest" (87). In *A Whale for the Killing*, he arouses the reader's interest by describing the position of the whale "like a cow bawling into a big tin barrel" (AWK 91).

Mowat is an ecocentric author who is unique in his creativity. He gives colour to his organic experiences. He breathes life into old themes and endows with up-to-date taste and variety. The predominant point of view and the guiding spirit of all his narratives reflect his concern over fast decaying wildlife associated with them. The texts warrant not only pleasure for the reader but also immediate social action. So, the facts of his narratives are based on influencing on certain actional- social-cultural realities. His keen observation of the way of life of the Arctic wildlife designs his language primarily. This is evident from some of his statements as he says in *Never Cry Wolf*, " . . . I became even more wolf conscious"(NCW 27) and concludes that, "Economy of effort seemed to be a guiding principle with the wolves – and an eminently sensible one too… (135). This is further echoed in his *People of the Deer* as he says," . . . the picture of the deer held firmly in my mind as a spiritual talisman” (PD 7). “. . . the mental image of this magnificent spectacle strengthened my desire to go to the Barrens . . .” (9).
A Whale for the Killing also reflects the same language defining the spirit of the author as he says:

My duty, obligation, purpose – whatever it might be called – did not lie with man; it lay solely with the trapped whale . . . The more I thought about it all, the more I realized that inter-human conflict would grow worse for want of understanding. It might well become intolerable." (AWK 168)

The purpose of his writings can be compounded like, “Realities were dimming in the euphonic glare of attention . . ."(193) which can be further modified by the statement, "It numbed my mind and left me feeling as if the inanimate world had been saturated with a reckless prodigality in that sacred and precious thing called life"(PD 55). So it can be rightly said the narratives amount to a reader response not through the pleasure of reading the texts but very much pleasure of feeling the emergence of social action. Among the textual aspects, it is found the graphic indention of the marginal marks of the linear representation of textual chunks to deviate the norm by introducing the chapters with marginal marks without space.

The cohesion of the texts of People of the Deer, Never Cry wolf, Lost in the Barrens and The Dog Who wouldn't Be is based on the chain of events of the individual chapters having their own independent units of episodic completeness with chapter headings. But, both in A Whale for the Killing and Owls in the Family, cohesion of facts flows towards the end arousing curiosity
of the readers. So, the structure of the first four narratives is compact whereas the later two are loose. However, both the cohesiveness and coherence of all the texts are the outcome of the blend of anaphoric and euphoric sequentiality mostly powered by the fluidity of the inductively related facts and expository style. The unity of the plot of the narratives is maintained by his complete configuration of the trinities of values called pride, humility and endurance fit rightly with time, place and action as zoologist turned anthropologist turned environmentalist of the Arctic region. In this, he reserves his autobiographical and experimental contributions. The style of representation remains flat and mild satire can be marked with character portrayal.

The modes of discourse in all the narratives of Mowat are situation bound and dramatically disclose the ecological imperilment of the Arctic region. So, it is observed that both the fact and style of the narratives are designed broadly from anthropocentric to ecocentric dimensions based on canonicity and multivalent documents conveying highly concentrated message of saving wildlife and the ecological chain as the realm of textuality. In all the narratives, it is observed that they are viewed with romantic ecological aspects and yet transformed to proto-evolutionary view of nature. Attention is drawn upon the ecocritical elements with statistic, scientific and investigative details reflecting the victimization of nature by the so called techno-utopianism of modern humanity. The discourse features of People of the Deer and Never Cry Wolf are formal whereas in A Whale for the Killing, it is changed by including the dialects of the local inhabitants of Burgeo. In Lost in the Barrens and
Owls in the Family, the formal story telling method is adopted in a regular conversational tone. In The Dog who Wouldn't Be a personal mode has been adopted. The narratives are found to bear a cognitive domain of the authorial humbleness and admired with the spirit of a writer. So, at the literary level, all the narratives are tragedies whereas thematically all are ecocentric metanarratives.

The sound-lexis–syntax pattern of the narratives is remarkable. It is found that the author is used to bring about an effect of writing emphasizing on adjectives formed out of addition of prefix. Thus, the words such as 'unruffled, 'enseconed', 'enforced', 'nonessential', 'unfield', 'unprepared', 'unproductive', 'unsettling effect', 'unmistakable', inconvertible', 'unbashed candon', 'undid' and 'nonplussed' bear importance in Never Cry Wolf. In People of the Deer the words such as 'irresistible and quite unattainable', 'unperturbed', disembowed', 'unexplained', 'unsurpassed' are effective whereas in A Whale for the Killing, 'impenetrable secret', 'unquiet waters', 'insufferable', 'afeared', 'inestimable damage' bear the nuclei of expressions.

The syntactic patterns of the narratives are unique. In most of the sentences, it is found that the use of noun-phrases as antecedents function as co-referentials. Dummy subject 'It' also introduces the clauses. In addition, narratives are embedded by clauses marked by pauses. For examples, “In the spring of 1935, when I was an undersized youth of fifteen, I made my first journey into arctic lands, under the tutelage of a great uncle who was an
amateur but fanatical student of birds" (PD 1). "Having already been unnerved by the gravity of the gathering, I lost my head completely when the assembly began to consider the twelfth item listed in these horrendous document" (NCW 7). "It is, I suppose, a sort of disease . . . It is a disease of imagination . . ." (PD 5).

It is noticed that in general sequences, the sentences are introduced mostly with adverb phrases, sometimes with inversion, but for the sake of emphasis, instead of introducing the photographs with generic noun phrases, he prefers specific patterns like "The first days of the thaw . . . (PD 186). The next day Anga. . . ; The day was dark. . . " (PD 195)

"The Oakville house – 'Green-hedges' it was called – was a singularly genteel establishment; and I did not feel at home there." (NCW 1)

As a writer, Mowat ranks with other popular anthropological and ecological writers like Daron Collins, Jane Goodall, D.H. Barnhill, L.S. Leakey, Paul raffle Margaret Mead and Margaret Atwood. He contributes a lot to the study of the anti wildlife attitudes of the scientists and the governments. In addition, his writings can be included for the study of real literature. The most remanuable factor on his narratives is that he is faithful to reality; truthful in portrayal's unbiased, unprejudiced and bear a primitive and inquisitive sight. He has not only narrated his discoveries and experiences, but also calls for regaining a sense of inextricability of nature culture. This is above all a deviation of modernistic trends of writing. He represents his accounts of
wildlife unadorned and unambiguous for which he can be called a faithful
writer with true national as well as notional spirit. He contributes a lot to the
eccritical hermeneutics, the study of the philosophy of ecoliterature.

He is an eloquent spokesman for conservation, a bold adventurer, and a
daring explorer. His real life narratives dramatize the plight of endangered
species and appeal for the sanctity of life on this planet. Excitement, adventure,
suspense and humour are the trademarks of his writings. The narrativity of
Mowat is powered not by his passionate tales of survival that he has seen and
experienced alone, but by something more dominant. In the "Foreword" to The
People of the Deer Mowat recounts:

I am still tied to the Barrens, not by the simple web of memories
alone, but by something more powerful. There is an abiding
affection in my heart for the men and women of the plains who
lent me their eyes so that I was privileged to look back through
the dark void of years and to see not only the relics of forgotten
times, but also to see into the minds and the thoughts of the men
of those times. It was a great gift I had from the People and one
that deserved repayment…”

His adventure accounts with the Ihalmiut in the People of the Deer;
the myth and magic of wild wolves and man's true place among the creatures of
nature in Never Cry Wolf; the heroic battle to save the life of a fin whale in
A Whale for the Killing; the lure to explore the great arctic wastes and draw the
knowledge of the ways of the wilderness and the implacable northern elements in *Lost in the Barrens*; the adventure of his dog hero Mutt, a canine of indeterminate breed and eccentric habits with remarkable character and personality in *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be*; and the "Hoo – hoohoo – Hoo!, that is the proud saying of the owl in *Owls in the Family* deserve distinct identity as symbols of true life. Mowat says, “. . . so long as I live I shall hear the echoes of that haunting cry. And they will remind me that life itself – not human life – is the ultimate miracle upon this earth" (RE 78).

The spirit of outdoor life of Farley can be marked from one statement as he writes in his journal note, “The Ancient Mariner had nothing on Burgeo. He only had an albatross slung round his neck.” (AWK: 204). This is enough to evaluate him as a writer. Thus his writings can be truly called metanarratives because they are evidently powerful narratives replete with real accounts of adventure in one side; but in the other, the language, expression and the emotional heights are expressed go beyond the level of simple narratives. These books are narrative plus. They are factual stories told explicitly but the discourse goes beyond the limits and parameters of narratives by adding fabulous feelings. Fables, adventures, autobiographical writings, scientific reports, culture, politics, history, feelings, fancies, actions and reactions in tragic, comic and satiric temper- all are blended in the narrative embroidery.

In a nutshell, the thematic concern and the stylistic aspects of Mowat's writings forge an identity for him as an author of global repute and recognition.
His rare ability of blending facts with fiction and narrating his experiences as an adventurer in a moving manner create awareness among the readers regarding the exigent need to protect the wildlife and all important harmony between man and environment.