

**Beastly Spaces: geomorphism in the
literary depiction of animals**

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ABSTRACT

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In 2010, Simon Estok observed that, “the most immediate question ecocriticism can ask is about how our assumptions about animals affect the natural environment”. In this thesis, I respond to this challenge by generating a sustained conversation between the hitherto surprisingly distinct fields of animal studies and ecocriticism. I do this by formulating a new critical concept, that of the geomorphic animal, which I use to show how literary representations of animals often expose the many complex ways in which they constitute space rather than simply inhabiting it. This, in turn, should make them central to future ecocritical readings.

I focus on two periods, medieval and modern; the broad historical and generic scope of this thesis is intended to demonstrate the conceptual validity and robustness of geomorphic readings. Chapter One shows how concerns with death and symbiosis are expressed through the earth-bound activities of the geomorphic animals of the Exeter Book riddles. Chapter Two examines geomorphic whales in texts deriving from two related traditions: the Book of Jonah and the Physiologus. Chapters Three and Four focus on modern theatre, which affords distinctive ways of articulating the spatial implications of geomorphism. Chapter Three discusses the literary representation of museums and zoos in terms of the interpretative complexities generated by staging and spectacle. Chapter Four, focusing on mediation, discusses the interplay between animals, viewpoints and place in theatre, also taking into account particular issues arising from the adaptation of plays into films. This argument paves the way to addressing the geomorphic depiction of marginalised humans and human groups, suggesting the critical potential of geomorphism as a means of furthering feminist and post-colonialist aims.

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References and Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout for standard editions and reference works:

- ASE* *Anglo-Saxon England*
- ASPR* *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-42)
- Beo* *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 4th Edn, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2008)
- Biblia* *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, 5th ed., ed. by Roger Gryson (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2007), *Academic Bible*, German Bible Society. Available at <<https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/biblia-sacra-vulgata/read-the-bible-text/>> [accessed 10 January 2017]
- B-T* Bosworth, Joseph, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. by Thomas Northcote Toller and others; comp. by Sean Christ and Ondřej Tichý, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, 21 March 2010, Online, 5 November 2013. Available at <<http://www.bosworthtoller.com/>> [accessed 10 January 2017]
- DSL* Dictionary of the Scots Language/ Dictionar o the Scots Leid, available at <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl/>> [accessed 10 January 2017]
[DSL-DOST: Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue entries; DSL-SND: Scottish National Dictionary entries].
- DML* Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, ed. by R. E. Latham and others, vols 1-. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997-)
- DO* *The Complete Works of Charles Darwin Online*, ed. by John van Wyhe (2002) <<http://darwin-online.org.uk>> [accessed 10 January 2017]
[Of this collection I consult the following,
DO-C: Notebook C, Darwin's second notebook on Transmutation of Species (February-July 1838); and,
DO-N: Notebook N, Darwin's second notebook on Man, Mind, and Materialism (October 1838—August 1839);

Origin: Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: Murray, 1859);
Nat. Sel: *Charles Darwin's Natural selection: Being the Second Part of his Big Species Book Written from 1856 to 1858*, ed. by R. C. Stauffer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975)]

DOE Dictionary of Old English, ed. by A. Cameron and others (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986-)

EBR Exeter Book Riddles

In various editions and translations, several systems for numbering the Exeter Riddles have been employed. See John D Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Text* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006) pp. 46-48 for a discussion of these issues.

This thesis follows the conventional numbering of the Exeter Book riddles as found in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Phillip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 180-210 and pp. 229-43.

Unless otherwise noted the texts of all Exeter Book riddles cited in this thesis are taken from *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, ed. by Bernard J. Muir, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000)

MED *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. by Hans Kurat, Sherman M. Kuhn, and Robert E. Lewis, vols 1-. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1954-), available at <<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>> [accessed 10 January 2017]

OED *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016 <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 10 January 2017]

PMLA Publications of the Modern Language Association

Except where noted, translations are my own.

Introduction: ‘The Absent Animal’

This thesis is designed to be a theoretical intervention between two bodies of criticism: ecocriticism and animal studies. Animal studies and ecocriticism take the extra-human world as their specific critical focus, but there is a surprising gap for the examination of non-human animals which *function as part of environment, space and atmosphere in literature*. Simon Estok has questioned the absence of discussion of animals within “orthodox [eco]critical machinery”¹ to the end of defining *ecophobia* alongside an argument for radical intersectionality in ecocritical thought.² He is right to say that “the topic of animals has remained on the fringes” of ecocriticism; this liminality goes further even than he suggests.³ Important, but few, works of ecocriticism do also directly address this paucity, such as, Barney Nelson’s *The Wild and the Domestic* (2000) and Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2009).⁴ Even within these bodies of criticism, the encounter with the animal *as space* remains unseen. Without consideration of the animal, ecocriticism over-simplifies the view of ecological consciousness.

The fictionality of ‘Nature’, and the nature/culture dichotomy on which Nature as construct depends, has been well noted,⁵ as has the fallibility of the narrating human gaze, but I argue that there is no reason to exempt ecocriticism from this tendency. Real animals are on a conceptual threshold between human and environment: both animate and ultimately inscrutable. They disrupt the still, idealistic and patriarchally exploitative duality of man within “his” landscape and disturb and override human response to environment with responses of their own, based on their own desires and existential

¹ Simon Estok, ‘Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia’, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 16.2 (2009), 203–25 (p. 204).

² Estok, ‘Theorizing in a Space’, p. 215.

³ Estok, ‘Theorizing in a Space’, p. 215.

⁴ Barney Nelson, *The Wild and the Domestic: Animal Representation, Ecocriticism and Western American Literature* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000).; Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009).

⁵ See, for example, Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural Environment: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), pp. 23-24.; Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995) pp. 36-39.; and later, more controversially, William Cronon, ‘The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature’, in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. by William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), pp. 69-90 (p. 69).

drives. The mediation of the nonhuman through literature allows for the blurring of epistemological categories, and so engenders the assumption, against which both ecocriticism and animal studies pit themselves, that nature or animals in literature always mean or represent *something other than themselves* (implicitly something anthropocentric). Whilst in support of the posthuman project to overturn such an assumption, I also establish that such mediation can allow other kinds of blurring, specifically between animal and space. Attention to the potential of literary animals to become part of depicted environments is, I argue, a desideratum in ecocriticism. The simultaneous oddity and pervasiveness of this practice focuses upon the largely unmentioned gulf between the silence of described landscapes and the animated real spaces from which they take inspiration. In the course of this thesis, through diverse case-studies, I argue that literary animals cross perceptual boundaries, switching—and thus complicating the division—between agent and environment, between figure and ground.

Animal-as-space has been afforded little attention in literary criticism as a whole. The unconsidered, and often unseen, slippage of the animal between agent and environment is tied to ways in which perception and mediation are represented in literature. This slippage is the central topic in this thesis, in which I explore modalities of geomorphism. I argue that geomorphic representations and functions of animals in literature are an important avenue of exploration for both these approaches, in a manner analogous with other approaches, such as feminist and postcolonial criticism, that foreground otherness and liminality, precisely because geomorphic animals are often unseen and undiscussed and yet at the same time so pervasive.⁶ Bruce Holsinger's exploration of Jorge Luis Borges's arch comment that Mohammed must be an Arab because he makes no mention of camels, is a useful illustration of what I mean by this. Holsinger writes that, "in the Koran, then, camels are both ubiquitous and invisible [...] infrequent mention paradoxically confirms their centrality [...] In this respect they nicely encapsulate the symbolic and material functions of animals more generally in the pre-modern world."⁷ As Barbara Hanawalt and Lisa Kiser note, "Special problems beset historians and cultural critics treating the nonhuman natural world in [medieval and early modern] periods. The most daunting problem is that in both the visual and written

⁶ Further examples are the development of Object Orientated Ontology, and Posthumanism (particularly associated with Animal Studies), both of which take a stance against Cartesian and Kantian privileging of the human subject. See, Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. xxv.

⁷ Bruce Holsinger, 'Of Pigs and Parchment: Medieval Studies and the Coming of the Animal', *PMLA* 124 (2009), 616-23 (p. 617).

records of the time, nature appears to be both everywhere and nowhere.”⁸ There is a paradoxical feedback loop between visibility and ubiquity when it comes to subaltern presences in literature.

In this thesis I offer a new critical tool for this examination. My intervention takes the form of a case study approach to defining and examining a literary phenomenon: ‘geomorphic animals’. Geomorphic animals are animals that resemble and behave as landscape in a text: a whale that seems to be an island, for example, or a single swooping swallow used as a synecdoche for Dorset landscape.⁹ I seek to refine our critical tools for thinking about animals in literature, by exploring chapter by chapter different aspects of representing and responding to animals as spatial. Drawing on Rita Felski’s assertion that “history is not a box—that conventional models of historicizing and contextualizing prove deficient in accounting for the transtemporal movement and affective resonance of particular texts”,¹⁰ I explore this idea through a mixture of literary and dramatic texts ranging from Old English riddles to very recent drama, aligning geomorphism with what Felski calls “transtemporal impact”. Rather than a single text, however, I speak of a mode of representation which can take many forms and thus nonetheless requires historical nuancing in each of my chapters. My object is to bring history and theory into conversation whilst remaining alert to the broader conceptual possibilities. As well as being transhistorical, the scope of this thesis ranges across genre, mixing theatre and poetry, with a wider sense of visual culture where relevant (of particular relevance to the chapters dealing with theatre, itself from Latin *theātrum*, and the Greek *theastai*, ‘to behold’).¹¹ Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan have outlined and critiqued the way that genre comes to circumscribe the scope of ecocritical (as well as postcolonial and “zoocritical”) creativity, contrasting the analysis of pastoral and protest literature, for example, in their proscription of theoretical imagination.¹² The intermixing of genre in this thesis seeks to avoid such curtailing of the possible applications of geomorphism, and

⁸ Barbara Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser, ‘Introduction’, in *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Barbara Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser (University of Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 2008), p. 1.

⁹ ‘The Whale’, in the Old English ‘Physiologus’, in *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, vol. 1, ed. by Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp. 266-74, discussed in Chapter Two, pp. 72-98.; Nick Stafford, and Michael Morpurgo, *War Horse* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 15, discussed in Chapter Four, p. 160.

¹⁰ Rita Felski, ‘Context Stinks’, *New Literary History* 42.4 (2011), 573–91 (p. 574).

¹¹ ‘theatre | theater, n.’, *OED*.

¹² Tiffin and Huggan, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*.

promote the revision of animal/environment distinctions possible through joint engagement between animal studies and ecocriticism.

I seek to modify the projects of both critical fields by suggesting that the division between animal and landscape be dissected, frustrated and perhaps ultimately rejected. Ecology, from *oikos* for house or dwelling, is the study of the relationships within this world and the term from which ecocriticism takes part of its name. Jonathan Bate notes that “(o)ecology” was first used, with a sense of objective detachment, by E. H. Haeckel, and first included humans in Ellen Swallow’s application in the late nineteenth century.¹³ The relationship between ecology and animals, however, is not so simple as it might intuitively appear for reasons explained by the narrator of J. M. Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals* (1999):

In the ecological vision, the salmon and the river-weeds and the water-insects interact in a great, complex dance with the earth and the weather. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. [...] As for actual role-players, as long as they are self-renewing, as long as they keep coming forward, we need pay them no heed.¹⁴

In seeking to modify a critical orthodoxy in ecocriticism, it is also important to research across period boundaries, because the animal can be treated, as Coetzee suggests, as though ahistorical and universal, both in literature and, indeed, in criticism. My cross-genre and transhistorical methodology is designed to intervene in this convention. Derrida, for example, insists on the real individuality of his cat in *L’Animal que donc je suis* (2002), affirming that “it isn’t the figure of a cat”. He contrasts his real cat with a sketch of what a figure of a cat might be: “It doesn’t silently enter the room as an allegory for all the cats on the earth, *the felines that traverse myths and religions, literature and fables*. There are so many of them.”¹⁵ The very fact that the idea of ‘animal’ has been endowed with a quasi-transcendent lack of historicity and, as Derrida implies, lack of *genre*, can be challenged by including animals within the discussion of the impact of human history upon literature. Character, a concept with which the animal in literature overlaps and interacts, has similarly been critically revised and revived. Character has been questioned as a repressive flattening of people into symbols, in much the same way as animal depictions are of purely figurative vehicles for something other than an animal itself. Hélène Cixous’s

¹³ Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 36.

¹⁴ J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 53-54.

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)’, trans. by David Wills, *Critical Inquiry* 28 (2002), 369-41 (p. 374).

influential essay, ‘The Character of “Character”’ (1974), critiques character in order to reestablish that “‘fiction’ should not be taken simply [...] as part of a pair of opposites, which would make it the contrary of ‘reality’.”¹⁶ Recent critical work has overturned this view of character as mere simulacrum in a way that is comparable to the reclamation of animal depictions in animal studies. Felski writes that “character has become newly intriguing — no longer epiphenomenal but irreducible, socially saturated yet significant and substantial in its own right.”¹⁷ Her exploration rethinks the rejection of ‘character’ as antihistorical. Furthermore, in choosing to conduct this survey through genre intermixing, I align my methodology with Felski’s affirmation of the structuring of truth through language. In her “unmanifesto” *Uses of Literature* (2008), she writes “knowledge and genre are inescapably intertwined, if only because all forms of knowing — whether poetic or political, exquisitely lyrical or numbingly matter-of-fact — rely on an array of formal resources, stylistic conventions, and conceptual schemata.”¹⁸ Felski’s assertion is also a warning not to read as though points of comparison may be cut away from or divorced from the textual web that creates and sustains them: a warning of which I am mindful in my analysis of a mix of genres in this thesis. Riddles, narrative poems, plays, bestiaries and film all frame their subjects in ways that differently impact how animals are depicted, and a theory of geomorphic animals must be able to adapt to nuances of genre. In line with such a warning, I also outline my terminology below.

Terminology

In the context of my particular concerns, words such as “wilderness” and “animal” carry with them certain assumptions about the human place within the ecosystem, as do several other keywords that are fundamental to my critical approach. I therefore explain here how they will be understood in this thesis. As Hubert Zapf puts it, the explosion of ecocritical thought in recent decades, has posed an “enormous challenge [...] for individual scholars to integrate the vast, transdisciplinary but also highly specialized and differentiated knowledge that is relevant to the field.”¹⁹ To this end I clarify my own use of terms, which have the potential to be greatly altered by their disciplinary context.

¹⁶ Hélène Cixous, ‘The Character of “Character”’, trans. by Keith Cohen, *New Literary History* 5 (1974), 305-7.

¹⁷ Rita Felski, ‘Introduction’, *New Literary History* 42.2 (2011), v-ix.

¹⁸ Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), p. 83.

¹⁹ Hubert Zapf, *Literature as Cultural Ecology: Sustainable Texts* (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 5.

Animal

Whilst the *OED* records an ordinary or non-technical sense of “any such living organism other than a human being”, the first recorded sense affirms that humans *are* animals.²⁰ The medieval sense of the term includes humans in the category of animals. The *MED* holds the sense for *animal* as, “[a]ny living creature, including man”, citing John Trevisa’s translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1398) (‘On the Properties of Things’):

Al þat is comprehended of fleissh and of spiryte of lif, and so of body and of soule, is y cleped animal, a best, wheþur it be ayry as fowil, or wattry as fissh [...] oþer erþy as bestes þat goþ on grounde [...] as men and bestes wilde and tame.²¹

As these contradictions and expansive definitions show, the decision to include humans within and scope of animal (as many ecocritics and animal studies critics do) is loaded, despite having historical support. As much of my primary material was created in periods in which human exceptionalism was the norm for the sake of clarity and consistency when I use the term ‘animal’ it means ‘non-human animal’.

There is, however, a functional void then between animals and animality: human participation in the category of ‘animal’ reflects a conscious decision about how to view relationships and similarities with other species. But the choice to treat humans as though separate can mask other kinds of participation. Una Chaudhuri’s careful construction and definition of the term *zooësis* in her critical work draws on the vast cultural scope of any attempt to refer to animal representation. *Zooësis* denotes, “the myriad performative and semiotic elements involved in the vast range of *cultural animal practices*”, within which Chaudhuri includes, “*literary representations* of animals [...] *dramatic representations* of animals [...] animal performances in circuses and on stage [and] also [...] ubiquitous or isolated *social practices* [...] *zooësis* is the *discourse of animality* in human life”.²² Chaudhuri’s sense that analysis of animal representation can, and should, include an understanding of

²⁰ ‘animal, n.’, *OED*.

²¹ ‘animāl (n.)’ *MED*. Quotation transcribed in *MED* from John de Trevisa, trans., *Bartholomew de Glanville’s De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Photostat of London, British Library, MS Additional 27944: 258b/b. See also *On the Properties of Things, John Trevisa’s Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum, a Critical Text*, ed. by M. C. Seymour, and others, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

²² Una Chaudhuri, ‘Animal Geographies: Zooësis and the Space of Modern Drama’, *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*, ed. by Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart (Berne: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 103-18 (pp. 103-4).

interaction with both actual and imagined non-human animals underpins the contextual understanding of all four case-studies in this thesis.

Given the potential diversity of material and approaches it seems necessary to reassert that this thesis is focusing specifically on literature. Many animal studies writers use a number of cultural records and historical documents, for example, Erica Fudge, Steve Baker, Keith Thomas, Donna J. Haraway and Cary Wolfe. I, on the other hand, am primarily a student of literature, and specifically a medievalist by training, now exploring the viability of a new critical concept both within and beyond the period boundaries of medieval literature, and it is from this standpoint that I pursue my interest in animals, perception and text. The animals with which I engage are not real animals, but fictional depictions, and will be treated as such. My focus has narrower scope than Chaudhuri's and is attentive specifically to the *representation* of animals as though geomorphic, which is necessarily imaginative, if never completely separate from a sense of animals as real beings outside of literature. The range of animals I address is vast — worms, minute insects, whales, dogs, horses, snails, goats, cats, moths, oxen, lemurs, gorillas, dodos, mice — but in order to avoid Felski's warning about flattening distinctions between literary styles and genres, I respond to the way in which particular texts treat animals, rather than seeking out particular species as my point of departure. I allow the fascination with particular animals to come forward from the texts I read in this thesis, rather than seeking out particular species as my start point. It is nonsensical not to treat individual species with clarity, as this will inevitably affect the way that they also appear variously as figures or space in literature. As I am examining the literary depiction of animals in this thesis it is important to acknowledge that of course some species may have been represented more often than others. In *Speaking for Animals* (2013), a volume of essays on the portrayal of interspecies communication, animal personae and avatars, and animal voices, the species, for example, are overwhelmingly fluffy.²³ Mammals, according to the contents of this volume, are apparently the most sympathetic and the most overwhelmingly appropriated as avatars – their bodies or identity spaces are more inhabitable than any other type of animal. Nonetheless, as suggested by Darwin's minute and anthropomorphic description of caterpillars (amongst other invertebrates) any species may be seen as charismatic,²⁴ depending on what attention is given to them. Laline Paull's recent novel *The Bees* (2014), for example, took the hierarchy of bees as a starting point in order to explore how politics,

²³ *Speaking for Animals: Animal Autobiographical Writing*, ed. by Margo DeMello (New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁴ *Nat. Sel.*, p. 12.

as well as species, might shape sensorial experience.²⁵ Though, necessarily, animals in literature are framed by the desire and perspective of their text, there is a balancing act required in preventing such an awareness leading to a reading of animals as merely symbols.

As well as a sense of individual species difference, the vast category of ‘animal’ (as in, ‘non-human animal’) cannot be ignored as a continued strong influence on the ways that animals are read and written. In literature, the term ‘animal’ typically carries with it the connotation of the ‘non-human’ and the other, the liminal and the ultimately mysterious: a set of outside eyes through which the human is witnessed, the existence of whose enigmatic perspective points to and defamiliarises human culture. Derrida’s punning “animots”,²⁶ a deconstructionist approach which points to animals residing in the human language (*mots*) and categories we use to describe them, underlines the ludicrous use of a single term for such a diverse array of species. In recognising different kinds of animals it is important not to let this override the specificity of one animal as representing only itself in a text (a difficulty to which Derrida points when he underlines the presence of his “little cat” as itself). Marti Kheel, for example, proposes an ethos based on care, empathy, contextuality, and relationality, which treats other-than-human animals as individuals, rather than generalised species or types. Her use of “individuals” as a way to morally conceptualise animals is complicated by the fact that, “(f)eminists have pointed out that an Enlightenment notion of an abstract, isolated individual, unencumbered with ties to others, reflects a masculinist ideal of independence”.²⁷

Perceiving animals by narrowly using the human as a reference point has conferred value according to similarity between other species and our own. The protest of British gardeners against proposed animal rights legislation in the summer of 2004 is one such example. The gardeners’ complaint was that the legislation would give the same protection to slugs and snails as to cats and dogs, the gardeners thus making a clear assumption as to the relative value of species based upon the way in which humans relate to them.²⁸ Mona Frances Caird explicitly took such a stance in her argument against live experimentation at the beginning of a British anti-vivisectionist movement, publishing “A

²⁵ Laline Paull, *The Bees* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014).

²⁶ Derrida, ‘L’Animal’, p. 74.

²⁷ Marti Kheel, *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective* (Lanham, MD.; Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), p. 6.

²⁸ *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. by Martin A. Danahay and Deborah Denenholz Morse (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), p. 2.

Sentimental View of Vivisection” in 1895 and “Beyond the Pale: an appeal on behalf of the victims of vivisection” two years later. Eerily similar is George Eliot’s report of George H. Lewes, a keen amateur vivisectionist who felt happy to vivisect molluscs as they “wouldn’t object to a little rough handling for the benefit of science”.²⁹ Even in claiming the insignificance of mollusc’s pain, Lewes constructs the agency of the animals in anthropomorphic terms. Darwin too, often records animals, particularly minutely examined invertebrates, in this way. For example, in his discussion of “Mental Powers and Instincts of Animals” he writes that “a caterpillar [...] put into [a hammock] finished up to the sixth stage, so that much of its work was done for it [...] was much embarrassed, & seemed forced to go over the already finished work”.³⁰ Though, as Allen MacDuffie explains, whilst under natural selection an organism is simply a disposable vehicle for the transfer of genetic material, Darwinism does *not* curtail the description of individual animal personality.³¹ An animal as an individual and an animal as a synecdoche of its species are held in tension.

Landscape

Landscape is a term that is distinct from ‘environment’. The senses for ‘landscape’ as recorded in the *OED* have a strongly visual aspect and imply a surveying impression of a geographical space, for example, “a picture representing natural inland scenery”; “a view or prospect of natural inland scenery, such as can be taken in at a glance from one point of view; a piece of country scenery”; “a tract of land with its distinguishing characteristics and features, esp. considered as a product of modifying or shaping processes and agents (usually natural)”; and “the depiction or description of something in words”.³²

Environment on the other hand is circumstantial and describes a physical context. The *OED* records a sense, for example, of the “physical surroundings or conditions in which a person or other organism lives, develops, etc., or in which a thing exists; the external

²⁹ Richard Menke, ‘Fiction as Vivisection: G. H. Lewes and George Eliot’, *English Literary History* 67 (2000), 617-53 (p. 622).

³⁰ *Nat. Sel.*, p. 478.

³¹ Allen MacDuffie, ‘The Jungle Books: Rudyard Kipling’s Lamarckian Fantasy’, *PMLA* 129.1 (2014), 18–34 (p. 20). See also Gillian Beer, *Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 38.

³² ‘landscape, n.’, *OED*.

conditions in general affecting the life, existence, or properties of an organism or object”; as well as “the natural world or physical surroundings in general, either as a whole or within a particular geographical area, esp. as affected by human activity”; and a more cultural sense of “the social, political, or cultural circumstances in which a person lives, esp. with respect to their effect on behaviour, attitudes, etc.; (with modifying word) a particular set of such circumstances.”³³ Landscape was introduced as a technical term in painting in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The term necessitates, and implies, a viewpoint. Environment, by contrast, implies a centre-point. On the one hand such a point is distant from or *outside* of the landscape in some way and on the other the relevant point is embedded *within* the environment. Perspective is crucial, as this difference demonstrates, to the definition of space.

Rebecca Solnit finds in her exploration of the violent political history of Yosemite National park, “the gap between our view of the landscape and of history” to be “full of lost stories, ravaged cultures, obliterated names”.³⁴ Building on this, Solnit suggests that when the landscape is defined as a “visual spectacle”, tourism becomes the “normal and proper” human relationship with it, cementing distinctions between human and non-human territories and placing fences around a perceived wilderness. Historically, however, wilderness is also artificially created and staged. Adam Sweeting and Thomas Crochunis parallel wilderness space and theatrical space as “places that have been carved and framed through legislative or executive action”, suggesting that “space-based notions of wilderness [...] locate the wild within specific geographical confines”.³⁵ In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), for example, Lady Catherine de Bourgh requests a walk with Elizabeth in terms that directly point to the *cultivation* of wilderness as leisure space: “Miss Bennet, there seemed to be a pretty-ish kind of little wilderness on one side of your lawn. I should be glad to take a turn in it”.³⁶ Of this Amy King notes that ‘the ‘wilderness’ in which they walk is an explicit reference to a feature of the picturesque garden, “a garden [...] based

³³ ‘environment, n.’, *OED*.

³⁴ Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Hidden Wars of the American West* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 222.

³⁵ Thomas Crochunis and Adam Sweeting, ‘Performing the Wild: Rethinking Wilderness and Theatre Spaces’, in *Beyond Nature Writing*, ed. by Kathleen R. Wallace and Karla J. Armbruster (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001), pp. 325-40 (p. 325).

³⁶ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. by R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 352.

on the implied erotics of the landscape”.³⁷ Nonetheless, the sense of a place that is separate from the human has always been inherent in the idea of wilderness. In its six recorded meanings in the *OED*, ‘wilderness’ always refers to land that is uncultivated: in some way untouched, uncivilised, specifically at a distance from discernible human alteration and contact. William Cronon has suggested that, as a result, conception of wilderness is in fact a reflection of “our own unexamined longings and desires.”³⁸ But in its etymology, wilderness comes from its association not with wild space but with wild animals: from ‘wilddeor’, literally, ‘wild animal’. Sweet’s *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, for example, cites *wild(d)éornes*.³⁹ Though it derives from the Old English ‘wilddeor’, ‘wilderness’ has no citations before the beginning of the thirteenth century. In Old English the equivalent term was *westen* (‘a desert, wilderness’).⁴⁰ The roots of wilderness, then, are not about the kind of space that it is, defined against and therefore by the limits of human culture, but instead suggest that the presence of wild animals constructs and constitutes wilderness. Written long before the events beginning in 1851, in the previously quoted evocation of picturesque and constructed wilderness in Austen, there is of course the underlying influence of landscapists like Capability Brown and the picturesque aesthetic, as King explores. In her analysis of the way in which the ‘serpentine line’ —“the essential difference between the new picturesque aesthetics and the formality of the French garden”—⁴¹ of Hogarth’s *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) informs the depiction of Elizabeth Bennet, she writes that, “Hogarth turns to a variety of natural objects in order to determine why the serpentine line [...] is most pleasing. In so doing, he turns the objects of natural history (the flower, the shell) into the templates for the lines of the picturesque, making landscape aesthetics and scientific exploration of the natural world overlapping concerns.”⁴² Hogarth explicitly posits harmony between micro and macro views of the natural world.

When I use the term ‘landscape’ I refer to the environmental space of a text: the *Umwelt* of the narrating perspective. As detailed above, the term landscape is an

³⁷ See Amy King, *Bloom: The Botanical Vernacular in the English Novel* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), particularly pp. 73-131 (p. 112). For more on this see Laura Dabundo, ‘The Devil and Jane Austen: Elizabeth Bennet’s Temptations in the Wilderness’, *Persuasions 21* (1991), 53-58 (p. 54).

³⁸ Cronon, ‘The Trouble with Wilderness’, p. 472.

³⁹ Henry Sweet, *The Student’s Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (New York; London: The Macmillan Company, 1897), p. 206.

⁴⁰ ‘wilderness, n.’, *OED*.

⁴¹ King, *Bloom*, p. 91.

⁴² King, *Bloom*, pp. 91-92.

anachronism in medieval literature, a period to which I give significant examination in this thesis. Nonetheless it is a term that usefully captures the visual aspect I seek to explore, and one that is also used in other works of medieval ecocriticism. In *Greenery* (2007), Gillian Rudd writes on cultivated spaces only after the examination of explicitly uncultivated spaces, and uses the uncultivated, beyond the garden wall, as a reference point for her explanation. “One might expect [gardens, fields] to be quintessentially different from the world of seasons, forests and wildernesses, but the notion of marvel, ‘ferli’, [...] is also at work in the more everyday landscapes of *Pearl* and *Piers Plowman*. The spaces found in these two poems are linked by the thread of human cultivation.”⁴³ The cultivated marvel resonates with the landscape as a view of the land, held in place by perspective. Furthermore, the clusters of association of the medieval garden, in particular, rely on conceptual and physical circumscription: “against a background of the less controllable world beyond its walls. The image that emerges is that of the *hortus conclusus*.”⁴⁴ The potency of the term landscape is that it may be used to express an oasis of beauty maintained through unity between human skill and preexisting nature, or it may equally be used to elucidate, the theatrical reliance of any spectacle on spectators for its existence. As Derek Lee Barton, asserts, “Critical performance theorists in recent decades [...] describe a nature that is not found, but rather *produced* by ideological forces always already at work in constructing epistemologies of the non-human.”⁴⁵

Geomorphic consideration of spaces that may be read as landscape can therefore reveal an intersection of ethics and aesthetics within a text. In Thomas Hardy’s novels, for example, wild animals often serve as the interjecting Other in situations of his characters’ emotional distress. Hardy has long been treated as a nature-writer and has had significant critical attention to this end.⁴⁶ The Hardy Society insists that “first and foremost a landscape novelist, a landscape poet, who painted enduring pictures of a natural world – a real outdoor world – which forms the stage upon which his characters live out their tragic

⁴³ Gillian Rudd, *Greenery: Ecocritical Readings of Late Medieval English Literature* (Manchester, GB: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 165.

⁴⁴ Rudd, *Greenery*, p. 166.

⁴⁵ Derek Lee Barton, *Staging Nature: Ecology, Performance, and Environments*, Diss., Northwestern University, 2012. <<http://gradworks.umi.com/35/27/3527511.html>> [accessed 12 August 2015], p. 2.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Andrew Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1979); Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (1973; reprint Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011); Michael Irwin, *Reading Hardy’s Landscapes* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Ralph Pite, *Hardy’s Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

lives.”⁴⁷ Richard Kerridge calls him an “obvious candidate for the ecocritical canon”.⁴⁸ In *Tess*, the eponymous heroine, whose daily business is in interaction with caged or domesticated beasts, is often flanked by woodland creatures in moments of emotional agitation. Her rape by Alec D’Urberville is witnessed, for example, by “gentle roosting birds in their final nap [...] about [which] stole the hopping rabbits and hares.”⁴⁹ They are a hollow mockery of Tess’s “simple faith” in a protective divine spirit: her actual witnesses have no conception of her trouble. They are part way between negligence and unconsciousness of the situation, and thus their presence is uncomfortable, as they draw the narrative eye away from the rape, and yet it remains ‘on view’ due to their proximity. The animals here are an accidental intrusion that serves to remind the reader of the relatively unremarkable quality of Tess’s situation on an ecological scale. In the numbing and distracting of a readerly emotional response to the heroine, the rape is reduced to an act of procreation, like those of a non-human animal. The woodland does not share the human moral scale.

Nor indeed, do the humans of the novel include the actual inhabitants of the woodland in their own moral scale. Tess’s later remark to Angel, that “the trees have inquisitive eyes”, expresses the sensation of being watched by nature, assigning eyes where there are none and ignoring where they do exist, in the heads of indifferent animal witnesses.⁵⁰ Tess’s hidden approach to Angel Clare highlights her own indifference, which echoes that of the surrounding wildlife. “She went stealthy as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails underfoot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off on her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare”.⁵¹ Beneath the overflowing slime, spittle, milk marking Tess’s clothes and bare skin, with obvious eroticism, what is not remarked upon are the “cracked snails”, the underlying, undervalued death in this “profusion of growth”, a Malthusian excess noted by several commenters. Beer notes Tess’s immersion in a

⁴⁷ ‘Hardy Country’, *Thomas Hardy Society* <<http://www.hardysociety.org/about-hardy/hardy-country>> [accessed 9 January 2017].

⁴⁸ Richard Kerridge, ‘Ecological Hardy’, in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, ed. by Karla J. Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace (Charlottesville; London: University Press of Virginia, 2001), pp. 126-42 (p. 126).

⁴⁹ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urberville’s* (1891; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 90.

⁵⁰ Hardy, *Tess*, p. 159.

⁵¹ Hardy, *Tess*, p. 158.

disturbingly viscous garden of “sticky life-and-death”, of which she nonetheless appears acceptingly almost unaware.⁵² Furthermore, Deanna Kreisel, in her analysis of literary and economic connections, relates Tess’s abundant sexuality, an overtone in this passage, to the “horrors of surplus” in which the overflow of fertility (figured as over-production) mirrors contemporary anxiety about the potential for surplus to overwhelm the delicate balance of the marketplace.⁵³

Tess’s approach to the path through the environment which she here treads, is as indifferent as the regard of the rabbits of *The Chase*. It is not only in similar action, however, that man and animal converge. The fact that animals can respond to us in an immediate and interactive manner raises the issue of inter-species responsibility intimated by Hardy, in his neutral illustration of the behaviour of wild animals with regard to nuances of human morality. Whilst this question must be contextualised for Hardy within his Malthusian politics, famously displayed in Little Jude’s suicide “Done because we are too menney”, but referenced too in *Tess*, “As Tess grew older, and began to see how matters stood, she felt Malthusian vexation with her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers”,⁵⁴ it is also possible to explain how the ignored witnesses of the scene in *The Chase* in *Tess* are negated by the fact that their gaze is incidental: their presence in the scene is marginal, framing the disturbing event between the two humans in that woodland clearing. The geomorphic analysis of Hardy’s *Tess* suggests how the concept may be used to break down the elements of pastoral setting in the novel in an ecologically-focused way. *The Chase* scene, such well-trodden critical ground, can nonetheless offer new ways of seeing Hardy’s narration, which has often been highlighted for its elision of significant detail.⁵⁵ Rather than regarding the birds and rabbits as purely a frame for Tess’s body, like the “profusion of growth” through which she approaches Angel Clare, or simply as representatives of a larger, omniscient “Nature”, the setting-function of these animals can be read both alongside *and* in spite of their individual behaviour.

⁵² Beer, *Darwin’s Plots*, p. 239.

⁵³ Deanna K. Kreisel, *Economic Woman: Demand, Gender, and Narrative Closure in Eliot and Hardy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 207-31.

⁵⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1896; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 1967), pp. 409-11.; Hardy, *Tess*, p. 37.

⁵⁵ H. M. Daleski, ‘Tess of the d’Urbervilles: Mastery and Abandon’, *Essays in Criticism* 30 (1980), 326–45 (p. 331).; Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell, ‘General Introduction’, in Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, ed. Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 45.; Kristin Brady, ‘Tess and Alec: Rape or Seduction?’, in *Thomas Hardy Annual* 4, ed. by Norman Page (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 127-47 (p. 131).; Ellen Rooney, ‘“A Little More than Persuading”: Tess and the Subject of Sexual Violence’, in *Rape and Representation*, ed. by Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 87-113 (p. 97).

The distance implied by “landscape” can thus suppress discussion of spaces of close, unregulated or unintended contact. Greg Garrard writes that ferality may be a fertile seam for ecocritical inquiry.⁵⁶ Barney Nelson has warned us that the category is flimsy, equivocal, indicative of an animal’s position in relation to human settlement at a particular time, not of its natural behaviour. A feral pigeon, for example, may well be in my living space, but I too am an uninvited presence on the edge of *its* nest space. The definition of these spaces, both an outside to the other’s inside, depends on perspective alone. Crochunis and Sweeting’s writing resonates with this observation: “the processes of the wild — like those of the theater — take place even as we ask ourselves the question about our location.”⁵⁷ In the medieval bestiary tradition, if a wolf catches sight of a man before the man sees the wolf, the man will lose his voice and the wolf will attack. But if the man sees the wolf first, the wolf will lose its ferocity. London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B. vii (f. 120v & 121r), for example, shows the man seeing the wolf first, and the wolf seeing the man first, in two separate drawings.⁵⁸ Rather than a race that can be won for the supremacy of perspective, however, the interpretation of outer and inner is never finished, when animate beings are allowed to be constitutive of space, and agents within that space. As Lavery writes, “[l]ike ‘nature’, there is always something in the medium of theatre that refuses to serve a purpose, and which is content, merely, to reproduce itself, again and again.”⁵⁹

The term ‘landscape’ sensitises us to the construction and performance of spaces and their associated designations, such as wilderness. It emphasises the importance of ‘spectacle’ in considering the way in which such spaces are depicted, and thus the relationship between space and perspective. These are important issues that will be explored more fully, and most particularly in relation to theatre, later in this thesis.

⁵⁶ Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 150.

⁵⁷ Crochunis and Sweeting, ‘Performing the Wild’, p. 325.

⁵⁸ For manuscript images see George Warner, *Queen Mary’s Psalter: Miniatures and Drawings by an English Artist of the 14th Century* (London: British Museum, 1912). The wolf appears in thirty-seven manuscripts, in Latin, French, Middle Scots, Middle Dutch, comprising both first and second family bestiaries, as well as others outside of these groupings, such as Richard de Fournival’s *Bestiare D’Amour*. See also the source of this idea in Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, trans. by J. Bostock and H. T. Riley (London: Taylor and Francis, 1855), Book 8, 34; and *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. by Stephen A. Barney and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Book 12, 2:23-24; and Bartholomaeus Anglicus, ‘de Lupo’, in *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa’s Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum: A Critical Text*, ed. by M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975-1988), Book 18, Ch. 71.

⁵⁹ Carl Lavery, ‘Introduction: Performance and Ecology – What Can Theatre Do?’, *Green Letters* 20.3 (2016), 229-36 (p. 203).

Geomorphic

As previously suggested, I use the term geomorphic to mean “in the shape of and/or behaving as geographical space.” The first citation of *geomorphic* in the *OED* is from 1835, meaning “[o]f or relating to the natural physical features of the earth’s surface; (of a process, agent, etc.) shaping such features; geomorphological.” I believe that I am the first to use “geomorphic animals” in a literary context. Outside literary theory, in the study of geomorphology, the term has a different nuance, referring to animals as agents rather than as spaces. The use of the term ‘geomorphic’ in relation to animals was first used by David R. Butler (1995), in a very different context: the study of zoogeomorphology.⁶⁰ Butler offers a wholesale scientific consideration of animals as geomorphic agents, a part of the larger geological process of weathering that had previously only had limited geomorphological consideration. “Specific processes associated with the diversity of animal influences in geomorphology”, he writes, are “burrowing and denning, nesting, lithophagy and geophagy, wallowing and trampling, food caching, excavating for food, and dam building by beavers.”⁶¹ With far more impactful and large-scale projects and technologies humans, like the beaver, are another large mammal with geological agency. Though many date the Anthropocene from the Industrial Revolution, as David Farrier notes, “[h]umans have moved the earth to suit their needs since Paleolithic times.”⁶² Biogeomorphology is the study of the effects of plants and animals on the landscape, as well as how geomorphic processes (for example, running water, glacial ice, wind, wave action, landslides and mass movements) affect the distribution of plants and animals. Zoogeomorphology is a subfield of biogeomorphology that specifically focuses on the study of the geomorphic effects of animals: the consideration of animals as geomorphic agents.

For my purposes, a ‘geomorphic animal’ is an animal that in some way behaves as, or has significant power over, geographical space. These may be animals that shape, constitute and sometimes even problematise their environment in a variety of possible ways. This thesis elaborates and demonstrates a theory of geomorphism and so in doing explores many different geomorphic animals. This might mean an animal which behaves

⁶⁰ Andrew Goudie, *Encyclopedia of Geomorphology*, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 2004), vol. 2, p. 1122.

⁶¹ David R. Butler, *Zoogeomorphology: Animals as Geomorphic Agents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

⁶² David Farrier, ‘Reading Edward Thomas in the Anthropocene’, *Green Letters* 18.2 (2014), 132-42 (p. 133).

like land that can be walked on, or a space that can be inhabited, as comes to the fore in Chapter Two. This may mean the sculpting and altering of space by means of animal behaviour: by burrowing, building, weaving, for example, as Chapter One demonstrates. I also consider how animal presence may actually constitute the classification of certain spaces (as in my previous discussion of wilderness, and as in zoos, which I explore in Chapter Three): zoos are not zoos without animals, they are the vital elements (living and indivisible) of that space. It is in this aspect that theatre is so useful to developing the theory of geomorphism, because, like zoos which are dependent on animals, the occurrence of theatre is dependent on *presence* in a way that is not true of other kinds of literature. Theatre opens up new possibilities for considering the aspects of performance that tacitly occur in spaces which are nominally constituted by animal presence, and allows the *affective* presence of animals to be explored. Unseen, though sometimes heard, animal presence is a powerful force in the plays I will discuss. The geomorphic aspect of these animals is in being able to function as both character and setting, through the liveness of theatre. In exploring the relationship between presence, absence, and geomorphism, theatre reveals ways in which animal depictions can be evoked through the theatrical use of space, as Chapter Four establishes. Such depictions have aspects of *both* agent and environment.

I am not the first, of course, to use the term ‘geomorphic’ on its own in relation to literature. For example, David Farrier, refers to changing consciousness around the concept of the anthropocene era in these terms. He suggests that whilst understanding of our new geological agency slowly grows, bringing with it a full acceptance of the predicted, catastrophic consequences, “the ground beneath our feet [already] bears the marks of our much longer-held status as *geomorphic* agents.”⁶³ Farrier’s remark illustrates that *humans* can be depicted as geomorphic animals as well, in the alteration of space and, pertinently to the discussion of interspecies communication and cohabitation, also in being able to be inhabited by other smaller animals, such as parasites, when living, or animal agents of decay, in death. It is in death that another opportunity to consider geomorphic animals emerges, that of living beings as organic components. Consequently, death is a theme to which I return throughout this thesis in relation to geomorphism.

⁶³ Farrier, ‘Reading Edward Thomas’, p. 133.

Space

An underlying assumption of this thesis is that space does have agency. Indeed, this is an explicit and uncomfortable conclusion of Chapter Two, which draws out geomorphic whales as a cetacean manifestation of the abyss: a kind of ‘evil space’. Wesley Kort argues that place is at least as significant as character in narrative discourse.⁶⁴ Karen Grunberg argues that space has an agency that is comparable to narrative description.⁶⁵ Grunberg also asserts that to represent such agency as universal would be an irresponsible generalisation. She frames her consideration of place in relation to contemporary Hebrew literature and suggests that spatial discourses which ignore the material elements of space lead to a conflation of vastly different experiences and identities. She emphasises that, for this reason, analysis of textual space “*must* not be abstract.”⁶⁶ Grunberg cautions against the privileging of one viewpoint or identity in the analysis of literary space, which she portrays as set against the material, concrete elements. I agree with the caution wholeheartedly, but not with the dichotomy. To read animals spatially is possible both literally and metaphorically (and often both) depending on the animal and the text. My position finds more support in Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (1958).⁶⁷ In *The Production of Space* (1991), Henri Lefebvre criticises Bachelard’s conflation of home with nest. Explicitly, Bachelard characterises images of home as “primal”, an echo of the way in which “[p]hysically, the creature endowed with a sense of refuge, huddles up to itself, takes to cover, hides away, lies snug, concealed”.⁶⁸ By contrast, in Lefebvre’s thinking, space is produced: it is neither neutral nor preexisting, but both a dialectical product and a means of production.⁶⁹ Lefebvre follows Marx in assuming the intentionality and awareness of all human builders as a given capacity of their species.⁷⁰ Refusing to expand the definition of labour, production or craft to include non-human animals closes the

⁶⁴ Wesley Kort, *Place and Space in Modern Fiction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), p. 10.

⁶⁵ Karen Grunberg, *Place and Ideology in Contemporary Hebrew Literature* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), p. 24.

⁶⁶ Grunberg, *Place and Ideology*, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (1958; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 215.

⁶⁸ Bachelard, *Poetics*, p. 91.

⁶⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1991), p. 85.

⁷⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: Modern Library, 1906), p. 198. See also discussion in Karen Raber, *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 131-33.

question about the status of nature and environmental stability. Implicitly, Lefebvre places the animal *outside* history and culture, a placement to which I object throughout this thesis. Yet whilst Bachelard's use of the term 'primal' indeed carries such an implication—the implied definition of *before-* (to which one might traditionally attach culture, society, history etc.)—his careful examination of 'animality' undermines a predictable and uncomplicated division between human space and animal space. Alan Bleakley writes that "*Maldoror* stimulated Bachelard to propose a distinct 'animal life complex', a way of looking at the world that is aesthetic, vital and grounded in originary animal forms."⁷¹ Val Plumwood, furthermore, argues for a kind of teleology inherent in the unfolding, development and directness of natural processes, indeed in any production, that is tantamount to intentionality. Re-describing process itself in intensional terms, she argues, cuts through the assumptions which lead to the question (as described above) of how processes can possibly be set into motion by things that are without apparent cognition. Through this process theory she comes to argue that, "intentionality [...] does not mark off the human, the mental, or even the animate."⁷² The beastly aspects of space explicit in Bachelard's theory, and the decoupling of intention from anthropocentrism in Plumwood's, are implicit in my discussion of geomorphic animals: in my exploration of the blurring of space into animals it must be acknowledged that such a movement across boundaries can also flow in the other direction, of animals into space.

Furthermore, movement across, disruption, and in some cases indifference to, human boundaries involves the reconfiguration of such already-considered categories as wild and domestic. Barney Nelson interrogates the wild/domestic dichotomy her examination of and eventual collapsing of "American Wilderness". She records the crossing of certain species in and out of domesticity throughout history, belying the description of any specific species as 'wild' in its nature alone, and any teleological expectation for those animals currently domesticated, to always behave tamely, and thus be justifiably domesticated.⁷³ At the same time, Nelson objects to agricultural living (as a human or animal) becoming the repository for all that is negative about human cultural relations with their surrounding species: "as an ecocritic, I have one foot in literature and the other on rural grazing land, and I am continually trying to negotiate between cows

⁷¹ Alan Bleakley, *The Animalizing Imagination: Totemism, Textuality and Ecocriticism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 106.

⁷² Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 135.

⁷³ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, pp. 130-40.

and my fellow environmentalists.”⁷⁴ Nelson holds that lived relationships with animals, and participatory occupations within rural space, have academic value, and a place within posthumanist thought.

Nelson’s revision of the binary of wild and domestic is a necessarily postcolonial and feminist intervention in the way in which ‘wildernesses’, when defined as othernesses, are described. She criticises the tendency in modern anthologies, biographies, and journal articles to “dutifully quote Bradford’s fearful description of the Pilgrim’s first sight of the New England coast as ‘a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men’”.⁷⁵ The passage itself, however, was written ten years after the Pilgrims’ first sighting of land, and is vastly different in tone from Bradford’s more positive writing at the actual moment of first sighting. Nelson asserts that the Wampanoags encountered by the pilgrims landing in New England were not wild hunter-gatherers, and that New England was not the wilderness suggested by Bradford’s infamous pronouncement. The Wampanoags “were domestic farmers and pastoralists.”⁷⁶ Setting aside Bradford’s likely intentions, to misrepresent his first impressions in later anthologies is to propagate a colonialising mentality that depicts America as having been wild, untouched, and therefore an exotic location of otherness.⁷⁷ In Nelson’s argument, conceptual othering of people, animals and space is a process of displacement, by which things identified as other are imagined to be beyond the enclosure of those things identified as of the home and the domestic, allowing the former to frame the latter: it is a worldview with *spatial* implications which applies equally to the land, plants, animals and people (i.e. both space and living beings) that fall within its framing. Indeed, Chris Philo suggests that animal movement might be read as that of a social group, inviting the application of such terms as ‘transgression’ and ‘resistance’ “when wriggling out of the cages, fields, and wildernesses allotted to them by their human neighbours”.⁷⁸ In my discussions of geomorphic animals and space, a sensitivity to animal agency is central. I consider geomorphic animals to be complex agents of change.

⁷⁴ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, pp. 61-2.

⁷⁶ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Christopher Philo, ‘Animals, Geography, and the City: Notes on Inclusions and Exclusions’, in *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands*, ed. by Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emel (New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 51-71 (p. 52).

Critical Fields: Animal Studies and Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism and Animal Studies are two separate fields of critical enquiry that, perhaps surprisingly, have only begun to collaborate in recent years. I will sketch an outline of the two fields, beginning with ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism

Broadly, ecocriticism has been defined as “green reading” – taking an environmental perspective as a start point for literary criticism. Many date the birth of the word “ecocriticism” to William Rueckert, in 1978. In his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” he wrote that ecocriticism entailed “application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.”⁷⁹ Predecessors to this ecocritical work might include the seminal *Silent Spring* (1962) written by Rachel Carson and uses of specific environmental detail such as Kenneth Burke’s 1966 work arguing that throughout *Coriolanus*, sharp divisions between land and society are an implicit foundation. He parallels this theme with detail from the historical record: “when *Coriolanus* appeared (1608), there had been considerable rioting due to the Enclosure Acts by which many tenants had been dispossessed of their traditional rights to the land, and were suffering great hardships”.⁸⁰

Since 1990, ecocriticism has flourished. In his ground-breaking work and “pastoral project”,⁸¹ *The Environmental Imagination* (1995), Buell outlines what he believes to be the characteristics of an environmental text:

- 1) The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history;
- 2) The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest;
- 3) Human accountability to the environment is part of the text’s ethical orientation; and

⁷⁹ Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 3rd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 240.

⁸⁰ Kenneth Burke, ‘Coriolanus and the Delights of Faction’, *The Hudson Review* 19.2 (1966), 185–202.

⁸¹ Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, p. 1.

4) Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text.⁸²

Jonathan Bate has been credited with encouraging the development of the movement in Britain, forging links with the ecocritical turn in the United States. *Song of the Earth* (2002), “the first ecological reading of English literature [traces] distinctions among “nature,” “culture,” and “environment” and shows how their meanings have changed since their appearance in the literature of the eighteenth century.”⁸³ Like Buell, who worked primarily on Henry David Thoreau, and much of earlier ecocriticism, Bate’s focus was a reappraisal of Romanticism. For example, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991), is the seminal rebuttal of the idea that in writing, nature can be “nothing more than an anthropomorphic construct”⁸⁴ and the resulting conclusion that any focus upon nature for its own sake is therefore politically suspect. In defending nature as important of itself, rather than as a thematic emblem, Bate reasserts the “Victorian” way of reading Wordsworth and later pastoral writing as a method of overriding the anthropocentric assumptions privileging man and his economic history over “the economy of nature”.⁸⁵

Whilst ecocriticism has broadened to include a vast field of media and genres in literature and popular culture, it was first for nature-writing and the pastoral mode that ecocriticism has re-asserted the dignity of an ethical dimension and in doing so deconstructed the motives of its previous critics. Proposed broadenings of this understanding, to realms such as urbanity and the intervention of language in perception have been made, for example, by Karla Armbruster and Kathleen Wallace in their groundbreaking, *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism* (2001). These approaches, nonetheless, continue to hinge upon inanimate sites. Ecocriticism has become an enormously fractured critical field, with an ongoing tension around the relative *activism* of its proponents, discussed at length, for example, in Laura Wright’s *Wilderness into Civilised Shapes* (2010). This tension can extend to discussion of the relationship between art and politics. Whilst this is an admirable bridging of literature and social context, this is not the reason that I believe ecocriticism is an important literary approach. I make suggestions about why literature is enriched by green reading, rather than ecological

⁸² Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, pp. 7-8.

⁸³ Jonathan Bate, *Song of the Earth* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. i.

⁸⁴ Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 9.

⁸⁵ Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 56.

concerns enriched by the appropriation of literature. Ecocriticism's commitment to contact between literature and the 'real' and phenomenological is deeply engaging, and has philosophical implications for navigating the way in which literature is used to record, and, crucially, restructure, what we experience in life.

Ecocritical processes are made inadequate, however, by failing to consider animals *at the same time* as environment, and it is here that my proposed critical intervention begins. Clearly there is a barrier to the conception of animals on the basis of the limited human viewpoint, which must include itself, and a pervading preconception of the animal as subordinate to it. Ecocritical approaches to literature focused themselves onto vegetative space, and often, in particular, to landscape, as the ultimate location of nature. That the omission of animals is silent, is not only frustrating but undermines the commitment in ecocriticism to comparing the text to its wider natural environment. An illustration of how this approach can enrich ecocritical reading can be made by revisiting some of the texts that ecocritics have assessed. Bate, for example, highlighted Wordsworth's defence of the pastoral shepherd from the clichés of literary tradition in the *Prelude* (viii, l.128-144).⁸⁶ Both Wordsworth and Bate, whilst enthusiastic about the possibility of a fulfilling connection with nature through physical work, ignore the significant lack of sheep in this passage in which he is supposedly arguing for realism in the regeneration of the pastoral shepherd. When sheep do enter Wordsworth's text, they are invariably the "flock", the herdsman's "snow-white herd"; faceless and formless, forming a landscape on which the shepherd, and very briefly his dog, are the distinct marks. This significant lack of the supposedly all-important sheep in the make-up of Wordsworth's shepherd is mirrored in the way that the shepherd's space is described. Wordsworth describes the shepherd's Spring through the agency of the land, not the animate agents upon it: "all the pastures dance with lambs" (viii, l.230), furthering absorbing of the sheep into symbolic representations of either the shepherd or the landscape on which the shepherd works; they are not creatures in their own right.

Animal Studies

Despite the shared focus on the non-human in nature, animal studies is a separate discourse from ecocriticism with a parallel rather than intersecting history. Some similar conclusions have been drawn, however, about how non-humans should be approached.

⁸⁶ Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 23.

Sarah Stanbury emphasises that “‘reading animals figuratively’ is in part a learned critical practice”, resonating with Bate’s assertion of the importance and validity of nature being read as representing itself.⁸⁷ Many point to the philosophers of the burgeoning animal rights movement in the 1970s, identifying Peter Singer and Tom Regan as the “midwives” of animal studies.⁸⁸ These approaches resonate with the much earlier (late-Victorian) animal and female rights activist Mona Frances Caird, by dissecting ideas of otherness by focusing on the animal.

There are many ways to reconsider and unpick the involvement of animals in culture, and the “animal turn” has occurred at different times in different disciplines. Often critical approaches involve the reassertion of animal awareness, suffering, agency, intelligence: and striving for a viewpoint that can approach non-human animals without reference to the human. Ground-breaking writers in this field include Jacques Derrida, particularly his posthumanist, and posthumously published, *L’Animal que donc je suis* (*The Animal that Therefore I Am*) (2002). Cary Wolfe extended Derrida’s deconstruction of the animal/human distinction in *Animal Rites* (2003), critiquing earlier animal rights philosophers such as Singer and Regan for the humanist underpinnings of their work. Boehrer also points to Derrida’s *L’Animal que donc je suis* as marking a move from this earlier movement towards the newer poststructuralist tradition in current animal-studies theory, in which the margin between animal and human is problematised and “[t]he deconstruction of the human emerges as a philosophical imperative”.⁸⁹ Significant other works in this vein are Donna Haraway’s explorations of cyborgs and companions, Gilles Deleuze’s and Felix Guattari’s theories of “becoming-animal”, Susan Crane and J. J. Cohen’s exploration of medieval identities and hybridities, Bruce Holsinger’s animal-conscious approach to book history, and a number of writers concerned with the real

⁸⁷ Sarah Stanbury, ‘Posthuman Theory and the Premodern Animal Sign’, *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* 2.1 (2011), 101-14 (p. 102).

⁸⁸ James Jasper and Dorothy Nelkin, *The Animal Rights Crusade: The Growth of a Moral Protest* (New York; Toronto: Free Press, 1992), p. 90.

⁸⁹ Bruce Thomas Boehrer, *Animal Characters: Nonhuman Beings in Early Modern Literature* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania University Press, 2010), p. 4.

working relationships with animals affected the contemporary philosophy, such as Steve Baker and Erica Fudge.⁹⁰

These studies are almost entirely from the standpoint of the human within culture and comparing how their treatment reflects cultural tendencies. A useful example is the analogy proposed between animal cruelty and dominance and the subordination of women by, variously, Caird in her writings on vivisection and narrative and Juliana Schiesari in her critique of domestic animals and the female sphere in renaissance Europe, *Beasts and Beauties* (2010).⁹¹ Revisionist approaches to established centre-periphery relationships are at the heart of the broad fields of feminism, ecocriticism and postcolonial projects, though there has been less harmony between these fields than might intuitively be expected. The uniting of postcolonial and ecocritical thought, for example, has been the project of Cara Cilano and Elizabeth Deloughrey, Graham Huggan, Helen Tiffin, Rob Nixon.⁹² Tiffin and Huggan in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2010), and Wright in *Wilderness into Civilised Shapes* (2010) explicitly bring considerations of animal representation into this conversation. Both critical works are concerned with the interface between aesthetics and activism which necessarily comes from revisionist perspectives on literature: the insistence that the way that words are written and read affects real life.⁹³

The critics who have addressed animals in a broadly ecocritical manner tend to fall into this anthropocentric focus by looking at, as Bruce Holsinger writes, the “various and subtle challenges posed by animals to basic human categories of culture, community

⁹⁰ Donna J. Haraway, ‘Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s’, *Socialist Review* 80 (1985), 65-108., reprint as ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century’, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 149-181.; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, ‘1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...’, in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 232-309.; Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).; J. J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).; Holsinger, ‘Of Pigs and Parchment’.; Steve Baker, *Artist/Animal* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).; and Erica Fudge, ‘The Animal Face of Early Modern England’, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 30.7, 177–98.

⁹¹ Mona Frances Caird, ‘A Sentimental View of Vivisection’ (London, William Reeves, c.1895).; and Mona Frances Caird, ‘Beyond the Pale: An Appeal on Behalf of the Victims of Vivisection’ (London: William Reeves, 1897).; Juliana Schiesari, *Beasts and Beauties: Animals, Gender, and Domestication in the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

⁹² Cara Cilano and Elizabeth Deloughrey, ‘Against Authenticity: Global Knowledges and Postcolonial Ecocriticism’, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 14.1 (2007), 71-86.; Graham Huggan, “‘Greening’ Postcolonialism: Ecocritical Perspectives”, *Modern Fiction Studies* 50 (2004), 701-33.; ‘Green Postcolonialism’, Special issue of *Interventions* 9.1 ed. by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2007).; Rob Nixon, ‘Environmentalism and Postcolonialism’, in *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*, ed. by Ania Loomba and others (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 233-51.

⁹³ Tiffin and Huggan, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*.; Laura Wright, *Wilderness into Civilised Shapes* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

and identity especially”.⁹⁴ These approaches include Carol J. Adams’s vegan ecofeminism, Barney Nelson’s address of false dichotomy in ‘wild’ and ‘domestic’ labelling of animals and Erica Fudge’s comments upon the absence of considerations of pet, meat and clothing industries within the ecocritical sphere.⁹⁵ These studies can touch upon but turn aside from the ease with which animals become invisible in, for example, landscape description and ecocritical discourse, for example Bruce Boehrer’s work on animals and character in which he discusses Ruskin’s elucidation of the falseness of pathetic fallacy in *Modern Painters*. He suggests that pathetic fallacy is a form of solipsism and notes that, though Ruskin’s examples of this phenomenon are drawn from non-sentient nature, “nonhuman animals may serve as a marginal case of the same mental event: their obvious ability to react to their surroundings complicates matters [...] but their inner life – their susceptibility to what we might call human passion — remains inscrutable.”⁹⁶

Erica Fudge’s explanation of the “dance of relating”, using Haraway’s term in ‘The Animal Face of Early Modern England’, also gestures towards the interspecies relationship enacted within a shared green space.⁹⁷ This part of her work, however, is situated within a larger context of exploring the categories and boundaries drawn up around humanity and rationality in the Early Modern period, and exploring how animals disturb this. Her point that animals are simultaneously subjects and objects, at once an individuals and symbols— “they are things of value; they are living symbols; and they are simply members of the household with whom humans share bodies, healthcare regimes and blessings. And all these states happen at the same time” — is extremely sensitive to the ways in which the boundaries of animals are fluid ideas, and like much of animal studies her work brings the animal-human encounter to the fore.⁹⁸ Fudge implies that it is not possible for humans to be aware of how human animal relationships actually work unless they are actively experiencing them, as though the part of the consciousness that is aware of the complexity of the relationship switches off when outside of the instance of encounter. Fudge explores Early Modern descriptions of real relationships between working domestic animal individuals and the humans who own and work with them.

⁹⁴ Holsinger, ‘Of Pigs and Parchment’, p. 617.

⁹⁵ Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum International, Oxford: Polity Press, 1990.); Nelson, *Wild and Domestic.*; Erica Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002).

⁹⁶ Boehrer, *Animal Characters*, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁷ Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, p. 180.

⁹⁸ Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, p. 190.

Fudge uses the phrase “dance of relating” to explain how the inexplicit but vital signals that pass between these animals and the humans that know them build up a tacitly accepted dance of perception and emotion.⁹⁹ Fudge’s term ‘dance’ accentuates the nonverbal communication between humans and nonhumans and suggests that this communication is dependant on a shared and sustained knowledge of how to respond to each other. Fudge further discusses Emmanuel Levinas's denial that animals have “face” [or in other words, moral personhood]. She compares this with an account from Barbara Smutts, criminologist, about her experience watching baboon colonies. Smutts was advised to behave like a rock, a totally silent watcher. The result of this was that the baboons moved away from her. It was only when she learned and began using enough baboon signs and language to become “like a shy baboon” that she was able to spend long enough with the colonies to observe their behaviour over long periods. Fudge finds in this account the question as to whether, for baboons, or indeed other animals, people have “face”.¹⁰⁰ In this exchange of animal and human gazes, it cannot be assumed that the animal and human have the same kind of perception of one another’s presence; both gazes are actual, personal and subjective to the gazer. In Chapter Three, for example, Jerry, a character of Edward Albee’s *Zoo Story* narrates the “Story of Jerry and the Dog” concerned with just such a meeting of gaze and wills, in which Jerry attempts, by food then poison, to bend a dog’s animosity towards him into love. Like this, Fudge’s baboon question is thus a solid rebuttal of the idea that the animal can be a simple mirror, ocellus, or symbolic other to human culture. Tantalisingly, in this paper Fudge implies that people are not fully aware of the workings of human/animal relationships unless they are actively experiencing them, as though the part of the consciousness that is aware of the complexity of the relationship is only active within the instance of encounter, and thus the reality of the animal, once absent, is misremembered and partly lost.¹⁰¹ This is a suggestion implicit too in Nelson’s work on the American West, in which she places her work as mediating between cows and environmentalists, between academia and farming.¹⁰² Whilst I would not go so far as to suggest that there is no overlap between these fields, or that identity necessarily precludes understanding, I find the claim

⁹⁹ Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. 208 cited in Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, p. 181.

¹⁰⁰ Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, p. 181.

¹⁰¹ Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, pp. 188-90.

¹⁰² Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 21.

compelling that immediacy and presence informs how animals are perceived. Nelson opens *The Wild and the Domestic* with an epigraph of Gary Paul Nabhan's statement, "A cultural parallax, then, might be considered the difference in views between those who are actively participating in the dynamics of the habitats within their home range and those who view those habitats as 'landscapes' from the outside."¹⁰³ My argument, however, has been that such an escape from the trap of experiencing 'landscape' is illusory, that immediate, immersive experience is still necessarily partial and from a particular perspective.

Methodology

This thesis is driven by theoretical questions. As suggested, I explore and develop answers (which are multiple and necessarily situated and context-dependent) for these questions through a case-study approach, addressing specific instances of geomorphic animals chapter by chapter. In doing so, the full chronological range of my thesis is broad. I make no pretensions that my work is an historical survey of the linear development of a phenomenon. I draw on Margot Norris's *Beasts of the Modern Imagination* (1985), in which she examines a "specific tradition — the critique of anthropocentrism at the hands of 'beasts' — [in] writers whose works constitute animal gestures or acts of fatality". She examines a group of texts which, in resisting the traditional ascription of anthropocentric significance to fictional animals, nonetheless, acknowledge the difficulty, even impossibility, of creating fully zoocentric literary meaning.¹⁰⁴ In this work, Norris uses a particular type of approach to the subject of animals as the guiding force by which she chooses and interrogates her texts, which, like my work, leads to analyses that range across period and genre. Norris's ultimate caveat to this work is that "Like Kafka in his tales, which often begin with a statement whose ultimate retraction is the major burden of the story, I will eventually have to concede that this 'tradition' is no tradition at all."¹⁰⁵ Whilst those schemata and institutionalising factors that might be said to form a "tradition" are missing, or bend under her critical pressure, the phenomenon —the fascination— that Norris perceives in her texts remains. Lisa Kiser's work also informs my methodology. She uses close examples of historical detail in 'Mak's Heirs: Sheep and Humans in the

¹⁰³ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Margot Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst and Lawrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, p. 2.

Pastoral Ecology of the Towneley First and Second Shepherd's Plays' (2009), marking not only the influence of the enclosure acts of 1440-1520 in the setting of the play, but also the post-enclosure context of the play and manuscript itself (likely 1550s) in order to conduct a green reading of these plays as a basis for a strong "secular typology".¹⁰⁶ This approach is far more successful in its examination of human relationships with animals and nature than, for example, Carlos Barros's 'The Humanisation of Nature in the Middle Ages' (2001).¹⁰⁷ This article, whilst marking the difference in medieval and post-medieval ideas about nature, treats the period boundary as a watershed, behind which the human conception of nature remained apparently homogenous for a millennium despite vast historical and political changes. Barros is hampered by his choice to treat the entire subject of the natural world, rather than a symbolic figure Nature, whereas Kiser's narrowed focus on sheep and shepherds gives her scope for firmer conclusions about literary meaning and wider society. Kiser's work is a model that I find supportive to my own methodology. Nonetheless, a vast difference in the materials and texts available must be acknowledged. As Vicki Szabo notes, "[p]ointed analyses of humanity's role within the natural world are rare in premodern literature, so much of our evidence must be gleaned from indirect references or allusions from the works of poets, philosophers and historians. The most important viewpoints, those of the people who lived in, worked in, and exploited nature on a daily basis, namely farmers, fishermen, foresters and the like, unfortunately remain silent in the medieval historical record".¹⁰⁸ So too, I would note, do those of many, and in many periods most, women, who worked and lived equally in the company of animals and animate spaces. The potential parallels between liminal figures of women and animals form the subject of my concluding chapter, illuminated by the postcolonial ecocriticism of critics like Tiffin, Huggan, and Wright, whose work is amongst the earliest to explicitly draw together these two fields, and attempt to mend the fissures between "the ethics of place and the experience of displacement".¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Lisa J. Kiser, 'Mak's Heirs: Sheep and Humans in the Pastoral Ecology of the Towneley First and Second Shepherd's Plays', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 108 (2009), 336-59.

¹⁰⁷ Carlos Barros, 'The Humanisation of Nature in the Middle Ages', *The Medieval History Journal* 4 (2001), 149-80.

¹⁰⁸ Vicki Ellen Szabo, *Monstrous Fishes and the Mead-Dark Sea: Whaling in the Medieval North Atlantic* (Brill: Netherlands, 2008), p. 16.; J. Donald Hughes, *Pan's Travail: Environmental Problems of the Ancient Greeks and Romans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 70.

¹⁰⁹ Rob Nixon, 'Postcolonialism and Environmentalism', in *Postcolonialism and Beyond*, ed. by Ania Loomba and Suvir Kaul (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 233-51 (p. 235), cited in Wright, *Wilderness into Civilised Shapes*, p. 5.

Chapter Outlines

My chapters proceed chronologically. I begin, in the chapter entitled “The Riddling Animal”, with an exploration of earth-shaping creatures, and the holes they make, in the riddles of the Exeter Book and Anglo-Latin Riddle tradition. I begin with an exploration of worms in part because they are non-mammalian animals and I seek to challenge the privileging of the most visible, most human-similar animals in this study. The interest in primates particularly, and furry mammals more generally, can be marked within certain examples of animal studies, such as DeMello’s *Speaking for Animals*, as discussed above, which exclusively addresses mammalian animals. Such a focus is in some ways predictable: mammalian animals are more often domesticated and therefore accessible as proxy symbols or more available as subjects of personal interest or, perhaps, more obviously engaged in communication with humans: a social relationship between a human and a dog or chimp, even rat, is more likely than one between a human and a worm or beetle. Nonetheless there are a number of focused publications in this area, such as Eric Brown’s volume *Insect Poetics* (2006).¹¹⁰ In this chapter I underpin my exploration of the worms and other riddling animals of the Exeter Book riddles with a biocentric approach to manuscripts in order to discuss violence, butchery, dismemberment, eating, digestion, death and transformation. This chapter takes such an approach in three parts, considering the worms of the earth, of the skin and finally of the book. Fittingly this discussion closes with the *Exeter Book* bookworm riddle and its positioning of animal eating and goes on to discuss parallels between *ruminatio* and ruminant animal digestion. In the course of this chapter I find the distinctions between worm environments collapsing — to the Old English worm, it seems, all materials are the same — but the smallness of worms and their hole-making comes to take on a potent significance. At first an obvious marker of weakness, the smallness of the worm comes, to be its very strength as an animal image for the weakness of the human. Through my methodology this chapter traces the human, like the worm, as geomorphic: even in a period characterised by an Adamic ideology that separates the human from the nonhuman (though pervaded by anxiety about such a distinction) the human as *space* is no different to any other part of the mortal, mutable, munchable world.

In my next chapter, “The Scripted Animal”, I examine two chronologically separate but conceptually interlinked pieces of Medieval poetry, ‘The Whale’ of the *Exeter*

¹¹⁰ *Insect Poetics*, ed. by Eric Brown (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006)

Book Physiologus and the *Pearl*-poet's *Patience*. I argue that, though explicitly versions of the *Physiologus* whale (or 'asp-turtle') and the story of Jonah respectively, these narratives are blurred in this literary depiction of whales. I situate these texts through explicit taxonomical frameworks for animal representation (*Physiologus*, bestiaries) alongside zooarchaeological and literary evidence (for example, Ælfric's *Colloquy* and the Frank's Casket) of interaction with animals as co-workers and companions in more marginally depicted ways. As Susan Crane notes of bestiaries, "scholars have tended to [...] assum[e] that the preoccupation with animal characteristics and the preoccupation with figurative meaning are competing interests in the bestiaries" and I follow her work in arguing that this is not the case.¹¹¹ Within such thickly resonant layers of association around medieval whale depictions, there are also necessarily blurred boundaries between landscape and animal, and it is this that speaks to the questions of my thesis. In the *Physiologus* and bestiary the whale is an island, in the *Book of Jonah* a kind of boat, bower, prison and the 'dimme hert' of the sea. I explore this depiction of whales as a kind of faux-landscape, or 'unlonde' and find in this particular association the connection between sea and the *abyss* transplanted onto the animal itself.

Theatre is the subject of my third chapter, entitled "The Ghost Animal". Gillian Rudd notes of Crochunis and Sweeting's previously mentioned comparison between realist stages and wilderness zones, that "[s]uch geographical wildernesses are akin to realist stages, each being defined areas designed to be visited and viewed".¹¹² The visiting and viewing of animals as exhibits is the subject of my third chapter. Chapter Three discusses the depiction of spaces used to present animals, in particular primates. It treats collecting, hoarding and conserving institutions and the idea of animal spectacle.¹¹³ Texts I approach for this, Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* (1958), Terry Johnson's *Cries From the Mammal House* (1984), and Robin French's *Gilbert is Dead* (2009), are also discussed by Kirsten Shepherd-Barr's work *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* (2015). She writes that "[w]hat is fundamental to evolution—"the relation of organism to organism . . . along with their relations to the wider shared environment"—is also the basic stuff of drama and always has been."¹¹⁴ This chapter discusses representations of animal collecting —

¹¹¹ Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 70.

¹¹² Rudd, *Greenery*, p. 92.

¹¹³ *Victorian Animal Dreams*, ed. by Danahay and Denenholz Morse.; Ralph O'Connor, *The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science 1802-1856* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

¹¹⁴ Gillian Beer, 'Darwin and the Uses of Extinction', *Victorian Studies* 51 (2009), p. 323. cited in Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 1.

museums and zoos — extracting animals, dead and alive, and planting them in artificial space, made for, and made up of animals.

In my penultimate chapter, entitled “The Mediated Animal”, I continue my discussion of theatre in the exploration of the staging of animals, description of space and the complexity of viewpoint in theatre. I discuss post-war anglophone animal dramas, in particular Peter Shaffer’s *Equus* (1973), Edward Albee’s *The Goat* (2002) and Nick Stafford’s adaptation of Michael Morpurgo’s *War Horse* (2007). I discuss the interplay between animal, viewpoint and place in all three plays: the inhabitability of the horse body in *Equus*; the evocation of Dorset landscape through bird puppetry and equine shapes in *War Horse*; and the mediation of the goat Sylvia through dialogue and description in *The Goat*.

My conclusion, “The Unseen Animal,” extends ideas about fictionalised animals, narrative and scenery. I argue that the highly constructed centre-periphery relationships, like those found in wilderness and wildness by theorists such as Cronon and Nelson, can be exposed and reconfigured through attention to geomorphism. The figure/space construction applies to the concept of ‘wilderness’ — it goes beyond the oft-cited, oft-condemned Nature/Culture dichotomy. Cronon’s controversial yet seminal volume *Uncommon Ground* (1996) criticises and unpicks the deep and tangled roots of such an application to the idea of ‘wilderness’ within the environmentalist movement itself. The idea of wilderness is historically and culturally sensitive, as indeed is the conceived relationship between wildness and place.¹¹⁵ This sensitivity is true of medieval as well as modern literature. Rudd suggests that “Wilderness as a geographical space can be delineated, usually by defining the boundaries of owned and managed land, but [...] the [late medieval] idea of wilderness is neither easily defined nor easily contained [...] wilderness in [...] medieval texts becomes the place in which the mysterious can act as a palpable force”.¹¹⁶ Rudd’s suggestion that permanence and wilderness are at odds finds support, as she states, in both the biblical resonances of Old Testament wilderness, and the itinerant movement and culture central to present day desert-dwelling.¹¹⁷ A place of savage danger, a source of ‘bewilderment’ and fear, wilderness is also, however, now often spoken of as a precious sanctuary. The World Wilderness Congress, for example, supported by the Wilderness Foundation Global, began in 1977. Wilderness Foundation

¹¹⁵ For a thorough history of how many different cultures have conceived of wilderness, see Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

¹¹⁶ Rudd, *Greenery*, p. 92.

¹¹⁷ Rudd, *Greenery*, p. 91.

(UK), for example, advocates for “the irreplaceable value, benefits, and beauty of wilderness, and the unique way in which the experience of wilderness can give us a sense of both our origins and our place in modern society.”¹¹⁸ Impermanence and ephemerality have an uneasy relationship with circumscription and treasure. Such ‘wildness’ should itself be pressured, as Nelson does at length and to great critical effect in *The Wild and the Domestic*. Comparable to figure and space, nature and culture, Nelson finds in the wild and domestic dichotomy a falsely fixed cultural pairing, and in examining the biological history of the American West reasserts any animal’s, and indeed any plant’s, capacity to fit in not only either category, but in fact both categories at once. Horses and camels, for example, she notes were evidently once indigenous to the American continent before dying out and then being reintroduced by humans in later centuries.¹¹⁹ ‘Wild’ then, may, under Nelson’s treatment, be a better way to note the *place* of an animal in relation to space or time, rather than to provide any fixed judgement about its nature or character. This argument paves the way to address the geomorphic depiction of marginalised humans and human groups, adding geomorphism to the toolkits of feminist and post-colonial criticism.

¹¹⁸ *Wilderness Foundation*, Wilderness Foundation UK, 2015. <<http://www.wildernessfoundationglobal.org>> [22 February 2016]

¹¹⁹ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 25.

Chapter One: 'The Riddling Animal'

In her essay on Greg Bear's novel *Blood Music* (1983), Myra J. Hird emphasises the importance of an "ethics of vulnerability" for posthumanist criticism in order to keep sight of the human need for a hospitable environment and our fundamental dependence upon other species.¹²⁰ In order to challenge conventional use of nonhuman animals to define what is distinctly human she compares bacteria, the only species metabolically classified as producers, with all other animal and plant species (including humans), which are *all* metabolic consumers. In doing so Hird goes on to claim that building what she calls an "ethics of vulnerability" to other creatures contributes to a materialist critique of Kantian separation of humans from the rest of the universe.¹²¹ In order to build such an ethical framework she considers how the human is defined by its metabolism, which, as outlined above, is a shared trait with a great many species. Hird emphasises that eating and digesting are activities that are at once mundane and essential, defining human behaviour, culture and existence "to our core".¹²² Similarly, in *Creaturely Poetics* (2011) Anat Pick asks us to think about what she terms the "corporeal reality of living bodies" and the idea of vulnerability.¹²³ She argues that animals have traditionally been conceived of heuristically through a contrasting of material animal bodies with perceived human mindfulness and soulfulness. Admitting the vulnerability of both the body *and* the mind to earthly forces disturbs this division.¹²⁴ For her, the creature, a term designating both human and animal beings, is "first and foremost a living body – material, temporal, and vulnerable". Whilst Pick argues that this emphasis on vulnerability challenges the foundation of liberal humanism she further emphasises that to be *eaten* is a far more powerful reminder of vulnerability.¹²⁵ Eating breaks down an animal, human or plant

¹²⁰ Myra J. Hird, 'Animal, All too Animal: *Blood Music* and an Ethic of Vulnerability', in *Animals and the Human Imagination, Companion to Animal Studies*, ed. by Aaron Gross and Anne Vallely (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 331-48 (p. 332).

¹²¹ Hird, 'Animal, All too Animal', p. 332.

¹²² Hird, 'Animal, All too Animal', p. 342.

¹²³ Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 3.

¹²⁴ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, p. 5.

body into constituent parts, killing and repurposing them as energy. Metabolic producers return that body, through the particular kind of eating we call rotting, to the soil. Pick and Hird's emphasis on the breakdown of bodies directs attention to the geomorphic potential in all mortal living things, and in doing so implicates the possible psychological and emotional experience associated with vulnerability: at best, openness and empathy and at worst fear and horror.

Eating is a particularly highly charged activity in Old English poetry. Hugh Magennis's analysis resonates with Myra Hird's assessment of human metabolism, that whilst eating together and feasting are cultural activities, the act of eating itself is a physical necessity for human beings and animals alike. Magennis suggests that the association of eating with animals was a source of unease because among animals eating is often an aggressive activity. Even if by comparison human eating behaviours were less competitive, eating nonetheless "belongs to the realm of what Mikhail Bakhtin famously referred to as the 'material body'".¹²⁶ It is for this reason that Magennis suggests that when eating is depicted in Old English poetry it is predominantly an activity of animals, monsters and "depraved humans like the godless Mermedonians in *Andreas*".¹²⁷

Old English poetry can offer us many examples of the horror of consumed human bodies. *Beowulf*, for example, graphically depicts the menace of Grendel through his bone-crunching and blood-drinking murder of one of Beowulf's thanes, as the Geat band wait to ambush him in the hall Heorot.¹²⁸ Blood-drinking in this context may be horrifying in a way that parallels the cannibalistic Mermedonians of *Andreas*.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Acts 15:29 explicitly forbids the eating of blood, further cementing Grendel's identity as spiritual outsider.¹³⁰ In contrast to Grendel's fearsome display of legendary size and strength, as well as those of Grendel's mother and the fatal dragon of *Beowulf*, this chapter turns away from obviously violent threats and regards, instead, the

¹²⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 1968), pp. 18-28, cited in Hugh Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites: Food and Drink and Their Consumption in Old English and Related Literature* (Bodmin, Cornwall: MPG Books, 1999), p. 12.

¹²⁷ Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites*, p. 12.

¹²⁸ *Beo*, p. 27: ll. 740-750.

¹²⁹ Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites*, pp. 25-27.

¹³⁰ Acts 15:29: *ut abstineteis vos ab immolatis simulacrorum et sanguine suffocato et fornicatione a quibus custodientes vos bene agetis valete* "That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if you keep yourselves, you shall do well", *Biblia*.

threat of consumption of minute animals, worms, to both the body and the book.¹³¹

Hoccleve's self-consciousness about the materiality of the manuscript page in *The Regiment of Princes* (c.1410-1413), is echoed in Bruce Holsinger's contemplation of manuscripts as skin. Hoccleve writes of his "laboure in travaillous stilnesse; / We stowpe and stare upon the sheepes skyn, [...] oure yen / Upon the whyte mochil sorwe dryen." [*we*] labour in effortful stillness; / We stoop and stare on the sheep's skin [...] our eyes on the white [page] dry very painfully. (ll. 1013-1022).¹³² Holsinger, conversely displaying moral rather than physical discomfort, writes that, "Medieval literature survives to us primarily on and as animal", he writes "[...] to be a medievalist is to be hopelessly implicated in and constantly witness the mass deaths [...] for literary transmission."¹³³ He directs us, as manuscript scholars, to be more mindful of the animal lives and deaths necessary to the making of parchment codices. Flesh and the book are irrevocably interlinked. The process of early medieval book-making in Britain begins with the carcass of the animal (sheep, cow, pig etc) killed not for its meat but for its skin. The richly-made Lindisfarne Gospels, for example, would have required some 150 calf skins to produce.¹³⁴ Once slaughtered, however, the animal is put to one side for the rest of the book-making process, and also is apparently largely absent from the consideration of the medieval scholar. On the face of it, the meat of the animal is simply a by-product for medieval literary production. As far as the codex is concerned, meat is a waste product, the first step in a lengthy process of crafting a material text.

For worms, however, the idea of 'waste' is redefined. Worms behave geomorphically in living material both by breaking down matter through eating and by making that matter a *habitat* as they do so. They are creatures that are therefore doubly geomorphic. They live in contact with their environment, in earth, water or animal insides; their homes and their food are blurred categories. Worms are also geomorphic in the sense that they are earth-shapers, making holes and pathways, some performing a regenerative function in the nutrient cycle (such as earthworms) and others eating away at

¹³¹ Though the dragon, for example, is also a *wyrm* — "wyrm onwoc [...] stearcheort" *the worm awoke...stout-hearted one* (2287-88), *Beo*, p. 79. — unlike the worms of this chapter the dragon's metabolism is not the focus of its description and symbolism.

¹³² Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. by Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), *TEAMS Middle English Texts*. <<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/blyth-hoccleve-regiment-of-princes>> [accessed 26 December 2016].

¹³³ Holsinger, 'Of Pigs and Parchment', p. 619.

¹³⁴ Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 200.

things once valued. For a worm any body might be experienced as food and as space, and so their presence defamiliarises humans, animals, plants and objects alike. In this chapter I explore ways in which the geomorphic crafts of the worm are depicted in the *Exeter Book Riddles (EBR)*.

The subject of this chapter, the *EBR*, is a relatively loose collection of texts of a highly wrought literary form which is concerned jointly with the depiction of the material world and its own literary construction. Though God is a given within the medieval assumptive world this is rarely explicit in the *EBR*, which are texts that seek to evoke strangeness and provoke lateral thought as part of their riddling process. Fittingly, given their defamiliarising and minutely transformative behaviour, worms appear frequently in these riddles, which draw on a Latin tradition as well as vernacular. I focus on the worms, and earth-moving tool-creatures, of the *Exeter Book* because these smaller, mundane images have, in that very smallness, something to offer to the readings of these riddles and, as Pick and Hird suggest, to how these considerations of the wider world relate to the human. Other medieval animal studies critics and, to a lesser extent, ecocritics have also turned their attention to Anglo-Saxon riddles, though none has yet focused thematically on worms.¹³⁵ In this chapter I discuss three sites of animal burrowing in the *Exeter Book*: the first in human skin, the second in the earth, and the third in the book (itself, of course, also partly made from skin). I predominantly discuss the *EBR*, but make reference to other early medieval texts both within and beyond the *Exeter Book*.

EBR are unique as an early medieval vernacular riddle collection. Approximately ninety riddles, almost all in vernacular Old English are contained in Exeter Cathedral Library, Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501 (“the Exeter Book”), a neatly written poetic miscellany, and one of the four major extant codices of Old English poetry. The Exeter book is one of those given to Exeter Cathedral by Leofric, bishop of Devon and Cornwall from 1046-1072. This manuscript has been dated by its most recent editor to circa AD 965-975 and has been housed at Exeter at least from 1072. Patrick Conner dates the Exeter Book somewhat earlier on paleographical grounds, using close analysis of its script

¹³⁵ Heide Estes, *Old English Literary Landscapes: Ecotheory and the Anglo-Saxon Environmental Imagination* (Chicago: Amsterdam University Press, 2017).; *Medieval Ecocriticisms: Animals, Landscapes, Objects, and the Nature of the Human*, ed. by Heide Estes (Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2018).; Megan Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies: The Poetics of Human Experience in Old English Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).; Donna Ellard, ‘Going Interspecies, Going Interlingual and flying away with the Phoenix’, *Exemplaria* 23.3 (2011), 268-92.

to suggest that the 'Exeter Book' began to be written after 950 and before 968.¹³⁶ The dialect of this codex is predominantly West Saxon, and so scholarly conjecture usually suggests that the manuscript could have been produced in a West Saxon centre of learning such as Crediton, Glastonbury, or possibly Exeter itself. Conner has made the case for Exeter. Richard Gameson offers a critique of Conner's conclusions and suggests Glastonbury or Canterbury as likely places of origin.¹³⁷ Muir judges Exeter or Crediton to be the most likely candidates, as Leofric moved the episcopal see from Crediton to Exeter in 1050.¹³⁸ *EBR* 1-29, 30a and 31-59 are found on folios 101r-115r, while *EBR* 61-95 are found in the final section of the book on folios 124v-130v. Between these two groups are a number of miscellaneous texts, some of which, such as *The Husband's Message*, as well as *EBR* 30b and 60 may be construed as riddle-like.¹³⁹ Patrick Murphy is one of a number of critics to speculate that the compiler of the Exeter Book exemplar was likely aiming for a century of riddles because a hundred is the traditional number of enigmata in Latin collections.¹⁴⁰ Some such collections of enigmata were known and popular in Anglo-Saxon England. The collection of Symphosius, who may have written his Latin enigmata sometime between the late fourth and early sixth centuries AD, circulated from at least the late seventh century on.¹⁴¹ Aldhelm's century of riddles (c. 639-709) was more widely circulated. Aldhelm's, Anglo-Latin *Enigmata* were known in Anglo-Saxon England and on

¹³⁶ *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, ed. by Bernard J. Muir, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), p.1.; Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 48-94 (p. 94). For early descriptions of the Exeter Book see also Max Förster, 'The Donations of Leofric to Exeter', in *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry: Facsimile* (London: for the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral by Humphries, 1933), pp. 10-32.; and Max Förster, 'General Description of the Manuscript', in *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry: Facsimile*, pp. 55-67.

¹³⁷ Richard Gameson, 'The Origin of the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry', *ASE* 25 (1996), 135-85

¹³⁸ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*; Gameson, 'The Origin of the Exeter Book'; Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 3. More recently, Robert Butler argues for Glastonbury. See Robert M. Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', in *Old English Literature in Its Manuscript Context*, ed. by Joyce Tally Lionarons (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2004), pp. 173-215.

¹³⁹ For *EBR* 30a-b, see Roy Michael Liuzza, 'The Texts of the Old English Riddle 30', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 87 (1988), 1-15.; A. N. Doane, 'Spacing, Placing and Effacing: Scribal Textuality and Exeter Riddle 30a/b', in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, ed. by Sarah Larratt Keefer and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998), pp. 45-65.

¹⁴⁰ Patrick J. Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), pp. 1-2. See, for instance, Andy Orchard, 'Enigma Variations: The Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition', in *Latin Learning and English Lore; Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 284-304 (p. 286).

¹⁴¹ Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 334, lists four extant copies of Symphosius's *Aenigmata* from Anglo-Saxon England. For more on Symphosius, see Zoja Pavlovskis, 'The Riddler's Microcosm: From Symphosius to St Boniface', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 39 (1988), 219-51. For texts and translations, see *The Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition*, trans. and ed. by Andy Orchard (Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2018).

the Continent.¹⁴² Furthermore, riddle tradition draws on a much richer but far less traceable oral past. Michael Lapidge notes that it is likely that popular riddles circulated in oral form in Aldhelm's England because of their wider Euro-popularity.¹⁴³ Conversely, Craig Williamson cautions against taking the orality of a specific collection without question as it is impossible to prove or disprove. He suggests, however, that were the tradition of oral riddling widespread in England at this time it is surprising that there is no explicit literary mention of it.¹⁴⁴ Surviving written parts of the Anglo-Saxon tradition involve not only the large collection of anonymous vernacular riddles in the Exeter Book (as well as one Latin riddle in that collection) but also the Anglo-Latin *Enigmata* of Aldhelm, Boniface, Tatwine, and Eusebius. Tatwine (d. 734), a contemporary of Aldhelm, composed a group of forty Latin Enigmas, after which another eighth-century author known as Eusebius seems to have sought to 'complete' Tatwine's collection. Eusebius wrote sixty more riddles to form the traditional century. Boniface (c.675-754) composed twenty enigmata on Christian virtues and vices in a balanced collection of ten riddles on each.¹⁴⁵ As well as these; included in the tradition are the anonymous Bern and Lorsch collections. The sixty-three "Bern Riddles" are also referred to as the *Enigmata Tullii*. The "Lorsch riddles" are a collection of twelve riddles reserved in a single surviving manuscript. Both collections of Latin riddles are thought to have their origin in Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁴⁶ Patrick Murphy notes that, "Latin riddles also show up gathered together with catechism-type puzzlers and proverbs in collections such as the *Flores*, once

¹⁴² For an introduction to and translation of Aldhelm's *Enigmata*, see *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. and ed. by Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), pp. 59-94. For the text of the *Aenigmata* (with English translations by James Hall Pitman), see *Variae Collectiones Aenigmatum Merovingicae Aetatis*, ed. by Frans Glorie (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), pp. 359-540. See also Rudolf Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera* (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1919).; Nicholas Howe, 'Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology', *ASE* 14 (1985), 37-59.; *Through a Glass Darkly: Aldhelm's Riddles in the British Library MS Royal 12 C. xxiii*, ed. by Nancy Porter Stock (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990).; and Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁴³ Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm*, p. 62. See also Archer Taylor, 'The Riddle', *California Folklore Quarterly* 2 (1943), 129-47 (p. 141).; Andrew Welsh, 'Riddle', in *Medieval Folklore: An Encyclopaedia of Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs*, ed. by Carl Lindahl, John McNamara, and John Lindow, 2 vols (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2000), n.p.; and Savely Senderovich, *The Riddle of the Riddle: A Study of the Folk Riddle's Figurative Nature* (London: Kegan Paul, 2005).

¹⁴⁴ Craig Williamson, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 23.

¹⁴⁵ See Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, pp. 3-4. For texts of the enigmata of Tatwine and Eusebius (as well as an English translation by Erika von Erhardt-Siebold), see Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, pp. 165-271. See also F. H. Whitman, 'Aenigmata Tatwini', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 88 (1987), 8-17. For Boniface see also Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, pp. 273-343.

¹⁴⁶ For the text of the Lorsch Riddles (as well as a German translation by K. J. Minst), see Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, pp. 345-58. For the text of the Bern Riddles (and a German translation by K. J. Minst) see Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, pp. 542-610. See also Chauncey E. Finch, 'The Bern Riddles in Codex Vat. Reg. Lat. 1553', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 92 (1961), 145-55.

attributed to Bede, and the *Disputatio Pippini*.¹⁴⁷ Andy Orchard also includes *Propositiones ad acuendos iuuenes* and the anonymous *Solomon and Saturn II* in his consideration of the Anglo-Saxon riddle tradition.¹⁴⁸ Solitary riddles appear throughout the manuscript record (Murphy refers to these as “stray riddles”)¹⁴⁹ such as the Leiden Riddle, which is, like Exeter Riddle 35, an Old English version of Aldhelm’s *Lorica* “corselet” enigma, but written in an early Northumbrian dialect).¹⁵⁰

Whilst I restrict my own readings of the riddles to a select few dealing with worms, bugs and earth-moving tools in the Exeter Book, these riddles interact with the rich, and widely studied, tradition on which they build. The *EBR* are an enigmatic panoply of change and difference, of familiar things made strange and also of strange things brought close to the light. They are full of humans and animals being changed, changing each other, and changing the spaces that they are in. Whilst these riddles survive without explicit solutions,¹⁵¹ the effects of plants and animals on the landscape and the way in which geomorphic processes affect plants and animals are central to the subject matter of the Exeter Book riddles.¹⁵² Such processes appear in or are the main subject of many of the riddles, for example, *EBR* 1-3, usually solved as storm;¹⁵³ *EBR* 7 usually solved as

¹⁴⁷ Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, p. 4. See also Frederick Tupper Jr, ‘Riddles of the Bede Tradition: The “Flores” of Pseudo-Bede’, *Modern Philology* 2 (1904), 561-72.; *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*, trans. and ed. by Martha Bayless and Michael Lapidge (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, 1998).; Thomas D. Gill, ‘A Riddle on the Three Orders in the *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*’, *Philological Quarterly* 80 (2001), 205-12.; Martha Bayless, ‘Alcuin’s *Disputatio Pippini* and the Early Medieval Riddle Tradition’, in *Humour, History, and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 157-78.; and *The Prose Solomon and Saturn and Adrian and Ritheus*, ed. by James E. Cross and Thomas D. Hill (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

¹⁴⁸ Orchard, ‘Enigma Variations’, pp. 284-285.

¹⁴⁹ Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ See Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 243-248. See also M. B. Parkes, ‘The Manuscript of the Leiden Riddle’, *ASE* 1 (1972), 207-17.; Rolf H. Bremmer Jr and Kees Dekker, ‘Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Vossianus Lat. Q. 106’, in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile*, vol. 13, ed. by A. N. Doane (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), p. 107.

¹⁵¹ A great number of these riddles correspond to the Latin Riddles of the *Symphosius*, which has been useful in finding solutions to a number of riddles, such as *EBR* 61. See, for example, Robert DiNapoli, ‘In The Kingdom of the Blind, the One-Eyed Man is a Seller of Garlic: Depth-Perception and the Poet’s Perspective in the Exeter Book Riddles’, *English Studies* 81 (2000), 422-55.

¹⁵² For more on this, and the relationship between natural phenomena and changing religious circumstances see Edith Williams, ‘Hwa mec raere?... Hwa mec staeðþe? The Quest for Certainty in the Old English Storm Riddle’, *Medieval Perspectives* 14 (1999), 255-72.

¹⁵³ See Erika Erhardt-Siebold, ‘The Storm Riddles’, *PMLA* 64 (1949), 884–88.; Kevin Crossley-Holland, *Storm, and Other Old English Riddles* (London: Macmillan, 1970).; John Miles Foley, ‘“Riddle P” of the Exeter Book: The Apocalyptic Storm’, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 77 (1976), 347-57.; James E. Anderson, *Two Literary Riddles in the Exeter Book: Riddle 1 and the Easter Riddle* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986).; Ray Brown, ‘The Exeter Book’s Riddle 2: A Better Solution’, *English Language Notes* 29.2 (1991), 1-4.; Williams, ‘Hwa mec raere?... Hwa mec staeðþe?’.

swan;¹⁵⁴ *EBR* 8, possibly nightingale (as well as flute, pipe or other birds);¹⁵⁵ *EBR* 9, usually cuckoo;¹⁵⁶ *EBR* 29 usually sun and moon (or cloud),¹⁵⁷ *EBR* 33 ice, ice-floe or iceberg,¹⁵⁸ *EBR* 39 moon and day,¹⁵⁹ *EBR* 85 fish and river,¹⁶⁰ though this is by no means an exhaustive list.¹⁶¹ The riddles I particularly discuss are the following: *EBR* 21 (usually solved as Plough); *EBR* 26 (Book/Bible); *EBR* 34 (Rake); *EBR* 35 (Coat of Mail); *EBR* 40 (Creation); *EBR* 47 (Book-moth, maggot and psalter); and *EBR* 66 (also Creation, closely related to *EBR* 40).¹⁶² As Neville suggests, no solutions for the *EBR* are authoritatively fixed, but are arrived at by critical interpretation, and often by comparison with related Latin riddles. Those solutions listed here are likely possibilities, used purely to give an indication of poetic range, rather than to offer any sense of concrete or closed

¹⁵⁴ See Dieter Bitterli, 'Tell-Tale Birds: The Etymological Principle', in *Say What I Am Called: the Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 35-46.; Peter Kitson, 'Swans and Geese in Old English Riddles', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 7 (1994), 79-84.; Audrey Meaney, 'Birds on the Stream of Consciousness: Riddles 7 to 10 of the Exeter Book', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 18 (2002), 120-52.

¹⁵⁵ Bitterli, 'Tell-Tale Birds', pp. 35-46.; Mercedes Salvador-Bello, 'The Evening Singer of Riddle 8 (K-D)', *Selima* 9 (1999), 57-68 (especially pp. 61-63).

¹⁵⁶ Dieter Bitterli, 'The Survival of the Dead Cuckoo. Exeter Book Riddle 9', in *Riddles, Knights and Cross-Dressing Saints: Essays on Medieval English Language and Literature*, ed. by Thomas Honegger (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 95-114.; Jennifer Neville, 'Fostering the Cuckoo: Exeter Book Riddle 9', *Review of English Studies* 58 (2007), 431-446.

¹⁵⁷ John H. Joyce, 'Natural Process in Exeter Book Riddle #29', *Annuaire Mediaevale* 14 (1974), 5-13.; Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, pp. 123-39.; F. H. Whitman, 'The Christian Background to Two Riddle Motifs', *Studia Neophilologica* 41 (1969), 93-98.

¹⁵⁸ Federico Pantaleoni, 'Aldhelm's Lorica, the Leiden Riddle, and Riddle 33 of the Exeter Book', *The Medieval Translator* 15 (2013), 163-173.

¹⁵⁹ Christopher B. Kennedy, 'Old English Riddle No. 39', *English Language Notes* 13 (1975), 81-85.; Stanley B. Greenfield, 'Old English Riddle 39 Clear and Visible', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie* 98 (1980), 95-100; Paul Meyvaert, 'The Solution to Old English Riddle 39', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 51 (1976), 195-201; John Wilson, 'Old English Riddle no. 39: "Comet"', *Notes and Queries* 38 (1991), 442-43; Eric G. Stanley, 'Stanley B. Greenfield's Solution of Riddle 39: Dream', *Notes and Queries* 38.2 (1991), 148-49; Caroline Dennis, 'Exeter Book Riddle 39: Creature Faith', *Medieval Perspectives* 10 (1995), 77-85.

¹⁶⁰ See Murphy, 'Introduction', in *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, p. 19.; Orchard, 'Enigma Variations', p. 294.; Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 74.

¹⁶¹ For discussion of animals and nature in collections of Anglo-Latin Riddles see 'Latin Riddling and the Vernacular', in Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, pp. 13-34.

¹⁶² For *EBR* 21 see Bertram Colgrave, 'Some Notes on Riddle 21', *Modern Language Review* 32 (1937), 281-3.; Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, pp. 176-205; Jennifer Neville, 'The Exeter Book Riddles' Precarious Insights into Wooden Artefacts', in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Michael G. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 122-38.; for *EBR* 26 see Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, p. 184-89; Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, pp. 90-1; for *EBR* 34 see Bitterli, p. 102, Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles*, p. 171; for *EBR* 35 see Bitterli, p. 25, 125; for *EBR* 40 see Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, pp. 123-6; Murphy, pp. 154-165; for *EBR* 47 see Nicholas Jacobs, 'The Old English "Book-moth" Riddle Reconsidered', *Notes and Queries* 35 (1988), 290-2.; Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, pp. 118-19, pp. 136-137, pp. 191-193; for *EBR* 66 see Erin Sebo, 'The Creation Riddle and Anglo-Saxon Cosmology', in *The Anglo-Saxons: The World through their Eyes*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014), pp. 149-56.

interpretation.¹⁶³ All these riddles either depict geomorphic agents in animal/animate form, such as the rake, or make explicit discussion of *wyrmas*. There are of course further riddles in this collection which describe creatures that change or move the earth or water, as the above list demonstrates. Furthermore, *EBR* 28 (Baum suggests mead, as does Bitterli, p. 167 and Murphy, p. 11) and *EBR* 27 and even most of the Old English riddles with (apparently) sexual content (*EBR* 12, 20, 25, 37, 44, 45, 54, 61, 62, 63, 80, and 91), also show agricultural processes, or farmyard *weorc* (work).¹⁶⁴ A number of the bird riddles note how these animals affect or respond to their surroundings (see *EBR* 7 [swan], for example). Celestial and meteorological bodies — such as the sun, moon, wind — also abound in the riddle collections. It has been necessary, therefore, to adhere closely to the theme of geomorphic worms as an organising principle in this chapter.

Book and art history can illuminate my geomorphic readings of worms because, as I will come to show, the materiality of literature, as well as the body, is often foregrounded when worms are considered imaginatively. A number of Latin riddles reference the creation of material text—among them the “parchment” riddles of Tatwine and Eusebius.¹⁶⁵ Readings of *EBR* 26, the Bible or gospel book, take the first half of the text, as indeed the narrative voice ostensibly suggests, as prefatory to the bulk of the meaning. Dieter Bitterli’s tracking of the movement of this riddle and of *EBR* 28 (parchment), is a neat demonstration of this processing of the narrative. Travel occurs from “the bloody abattoir to the busy workshop of the parchmenter and from there to the spirited world of the scriptorium, where the dead animal skin regains life as a cornucopia of wisdom”.¹⁶⁶ Meat, however, and specifically the cast-off, meaty corpse of the calf that serves to form vellum, *does* remain as an enduring presence in the text written upon it. *EBR* 47, the moth or bookworm, uses an established ancient trope of the consumable text to explore the concept of reading. More saliently, animal death as a primary step towards rebirth as enlightened spiritual material resonates with the image of the saintly martyr, and the narrating voice of *EBR* 26 and *EBR* 28 models this behaviour. The Old English scripture-book suffers, as Craig Williamson notes, its “own kind of passion as it is ripped,

¹⁶³ For grouped solutions by subject, see Paull Franklin Baum, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1963), online at <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_Riddles_of_the_Exeter_Book>.

¹⁶⁴ Debbie Banham and Rosamond Faith, *Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

¹⁶⁵ Eusebius, ‘Enigma no. 32’; and Tatwine, ‘Enigma no. 5’, in Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, pp. 165-271.

¹⁶⁶ Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, p. 187.

stretched, scraped, cut, and scratched by the quill”.¹⁶⁷ The deliberate pain of creating a codex carries through from the butchered animals (bird, calf, perhaps a boar, fish, or pig) to the parchmenter’s strenuous task, or the scrivener’s painstakingly slow writing, and the minute crafting in the decoration of the codex, and then the reader’s struggle to digest it. The first fourteen lines of *EBR* 26 do not just enumerate the pain of the animal; its first-person narrative is used as a foundation on which to show the various pains of constructing a book. The voice tells that, *a certain enemy bereaved me of life, and took my physical strength, then wetted me and dipped me in water, took me out again, and set me in the sun where I was deprived of the hairs that I had. The hard knife’s edge, with impurities ground away, cut me. Fingers folded me and the joy of a bird with successful drops repeatedly made tracks over the bright edge. It swallowed the tree-dye, a share of streams; stepped often on me, travelled a dark path. A man hid me with protecting boards, covered me with hide, adorned me with gold, then the wondrous work of smiths decorated me, surrounded me with filigree.* (*EBR* 26, 1.1-14).¹⁶⁸ The seamless transfer of painstaking experience across this narration is facilitated in the removal of the active agents (i.e. the craftsmen) and transferral of agency to the tools used: the “wætre” *water*, “sunnan” *sun*, “seaxses ecg” *knife’s edge* (1.3-4), “fingras” *fingers* (1.6), the “fugles wyn” *bird’s joy* (a pen) and “speddropum” *lucky or successful drops* (ink) (1.7). In *EBR* 26’s description “wrætlic weorc smiþa”, the dual meaning of wrætlic, both wondrous and curious, may point to the pain of the object’s lengthy transformation, as well as to the process of decoration. “Wrætlic” is frequently used in riddles because of its dual meaning, included also in *EBR* 23 (1.2), *EBR* 31 (1.16), *EBR* 33 (1.1), *EBR* 39 (1.25), *EBR* 42 (1.1), *EBR* 47 (1.2), *EBR* 51 (1.1), and *EBR* 68 (1.2), for example.¹⁶⁹ The way that the work of smiths is described in this riddle, however, is not necessarily typical. The decoration is expressed geomorphically, as though the body is a wide landscape with the drops making tracks and streams of ink running across a surface. Before it becomes a book, the body becomes a space in order to be ‘written’ on by animal and mineral marks, illustrating Holsinger’s

¹⁶⁷ Craig Williamson, *A Feast of Creatures: Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Songs* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 171.

¹⁶⁸ Original text included in footnotes for transparency: “Mec feonda sum feore besnyþede, /woruldstrenga binom, wætte siþþan, / dyfde on wætre, dyde eft þonan, /sette on sunnan, þær ic swiþe beleas / herum þam þe ic hæfde. Heard mec siþþan / snað seaxses ecg, sindrum begrunden; / fingras feoldan, ond mec fugles wyn / geond speddropum spyrede geneahhe, / ofer brunne brerd, beamtelge swealg, / streames dæle, stop eft on mec, / siþade sweartlast. Mec siþþan wraþ / hæleð hleobordum, hyde beþenede, / gierede mec mid golde; forþon me gliwedon / wrætlic weorc smiþa, wire bifongen.”

Like Muir, I accept Grein’s emendation of the MS *hyþe* (treasure) to *hyde* (for hide). For original text see Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, pp. 303-4. For commentary see vol. II, pp. 627-8.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Wræt-lic’, *BT*. See also, for example, ‘Andreas’, in *ASPR*, vol. 2., pp. 3-51: 1.741 and 1.1202; ‘The Panther’, in Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 266: 1.9; and *Beo*, p. 32: 1.891; p. 56: 1.1650.

somewhat hyperbolic point that “medieval literature is [...] nothing but millions of stains on animal parts”.¹⁷⁰ Stain implies longevity, and it is perhaps tempting to view manuscript pages as a palpable and, as Holsinger notes, viscerally thrilling link to the medieval past. But neither those stains, however, nor the stained animal parts, have any more permanence than the flesh from which they are derived.

Phylogenetically, worms are an enormous and loosely related group, including the annelids (segmented worms such as earthworms, leeches, ragworms) and helminths (endoparasitic worms such as tapeworms and roundworms). The *OED* records worms as any “member of the genus *Lumbricus*; a slender, creeping, naked, limbless animal [...] More widely, any annelid, terrestrial, aquatic, or marine.”; “Any endoparasitic helminth breeding in the living body of men and other animals. [...] Also, the disease or disorder constituted by the presence of these parasites.”¹⁷¹ Figurative use of ‘worm’ gives a far wider range of definitions, including most creeping or slithering creatures or even snakes and dragons. It has a sense of the weak, the abject, the disgusting, and the verminous; the latter term ultimately deriving from the Latin *vermis* or worm.¹⁷² In the Early Medieval period, the category ‘worm’ was arguably wider still. The *B-T* records “a reptile, serpent”, and a “a creeping insect, a worm”, both of which are senses that are indicated above, as well as adding the specific term *inwyr*m for an intestinal worm.¹⁷³ The *inwyr*m particularly highlights the way in which a worm can reveal the geomorphic aspects of a human, in constituting its habitat, as well as altering space itself through growth and burrowing. The *MED* adds to these various possibilities. The *MED* records the earthworms, grubs, larvae, caterpillars, weevils, maggots, tapeworms, pinworms, leeches and so on, as well as the already mentioned senses of dragon-like creature, serpent (both sacred and common), any creeping creature (from frogs to scorpions to rodents), any “creatures regarded as repulsive, noxious, or venomous; vermin, pests” (including larger scavenging animals); and the illness caused by the presence of intestinal worms. The *MED* also includes the overtly spiritually figurative “name for Satan”; and “any vile creature that torments souls in

¹⁷⁰ Holsinger, ‘Of Pigs and Parchment’, p. 619.

¹⁷¹ ‘worm, n.’, *OED*.

¹⁷² ‘vermin, n. (and adj.)’, *OED*; ‘worm, n.’, *OED*.

¹⁷³ ‘wyr

hell”.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore the *MED* includes the figurative worms that are “worthless, contemptible, vile, etc.”; those, of the conscience perhaps, which “sting or gnaw at the heart” and those of impulse which enter “into the heart and incites it to sin or vice”.¹⁷⁵ Worms may be associatively linked with other, much more powerful animals. Pliny the Elder suggests that the phoenix, for example, resurrects from the tiny worm that grows from its charred bone marrow.¹⁷⁶ The Old English poem *The Phoenix*, also in the *Exeter Book*, features a beautiful worm growing from an apple as a stage of the birth sequence of the phoenix, though Carol Falvo Heffernan notes that it is likely that ‘wyrm’ has the sense of featherless chick here.¹⁷⁷ The *MED* also records a specific anatomical use of ‘worm’ to mean a small tendon beneath a dog’s tongue that was associated with rabies.¹⁷⁸

Essentially, this wealth of lexicographical data demonstrates that the term worm is semantically unstable and vast, and so a fitting exploration point for the idea of geomorphic animals, which are, by their nature, equally unstable. Furthermore, the title of this chapter also acknowledges the semantic overlap between riddles and holes in Modern English.¹⁷⁹ As a verb meaning “to fill with holes” *riddle* is attested in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and is often associated with worms or other putrefying organisms, as well as other burrowing animals as in, for example, a chaplain’s report about increased rabbit warrens in 1511: “Cunningis [...] haue riddillit all the erdis of the Linkis richt weille.” *Rabbits have riddled all the ground of the link [land enclosed within the loop of a river] extensively.*¹⁸⁰ In Old English, to riddle is strictly associated with the enigmatic, for example, in *EBR* 42, “Hwylc þæs hordgates / cægan cræfte þa clamme onleac / þe þa rædellan wið rynemenn / hygefæste heold heortan bewrigene/orponcbendum?” *Who can unlock the bar*

¹⁷⁴ For worm as a name for Satan see *The Liflade ant te Passiun of Seinte Margarete*, ed. by Emily Huber and Elizabeth Robertson (TEAMS Middle English Texts, 2016) <<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/liflade-ant-passiun-of-seinte-margarete>> [accessed 5 January 2016], 34.11: “Ich habbe isehe þe rode..hu ha þet balefule wurm & þet bittre beast made to bersten.” *I have seen the cross...how that baleful worm and that bitter beast it made burst.*

¹⁷⁵ ‘wōrm (n.)’, *MED*.

¹⁷⁶ Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, trans. by J. Bostock and H. T. Riley (London: Taylor and Francis, 1855), Book 10, ch. 2; See also Lactantius, ‘Carmen de Ave Phoenix’, in *Old English Language and Literature*, ed. by Albert H. Marckwardt and James L. Rosier (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), pp. 230-35: ll.101-8.

¹⁷⁷ ll.230-234. Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 172.; See Carol Falvo Heffernan, *The Phoenix at the Fountain: Images of Woman and Eternity in Lactantius’s Carmen de Ave Phoenix and the Old English Phoenix* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1988), p. 90.

¹⁷⁸ ‘wōrm (n.)’, *MED*.

¹⁷⁹ ‘riddle, n.1’, *OED*.

¹⁸⁰ See ‘Cuning, Cuning, n.’, DSL-DOST. Citation from *Illustrations of the Topography and Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, 3rd vol, ed. by J. Robertson (Aberdeen: Printed for the Spalding Club, 1857), p. 107. See also James Ritchie, *The Influence of Man on Animal Life in Scotland* (1920; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 251.

of the hoard-gate with the power of the key? The heart of the riddle was hidden by cunning bonds, proof against the ingenuity of men who know secrets. (11b-15a).¹⁸¹ The term from which riddle as a hole-making verb might be derived, riddle or sieve, is extant in Old English as *hriddor*.¹⁸² While it is not possible therefore to argue for riddle as directly associated with holes in Old English, a subjective association between the two can nevertheless be argued for in the signification of the worms of the *EBR*.

The medieval significance of worms is not a preoccupation confined to the *EBR*. Rather, they themselves draw on a far larger Latin tradition. In the Old English C-Text of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, the following passage encourages reflection on the basis of fleshly vulnerability in the face of flies, gnats and worms:¹⁸³

Hwæt, ge þonne magan eaðe geþencan, gif ge hit georne ymbe smeagan willað and æfterspyrgan, ðæt nanre wuhte lichoma ne bið þonne tederra þonne þæs monnes. Þæm magon derian þa læstan fleogan, ge ða gnættas mid swyðe lytlum sticelum him deriað, and eac þa smalan wyrmas ðe ðone mon ægðer ge innan ge utan wyrdað, and hwilum fulneah deadne gedoð.(ll. 49-55.)¹⁸⁴

Indeed, you can easily perceive, if you are willing to think about it diligently and investigate it, that no creature's body is weaker than a human's. The least flies can harm him, and the gnats harm him with such little stings, or also the small worms who corrupt the person both within and without, and sometimes very nearly kill him.

Worms signal embodiment, death, interrelationships that are neither comfortable nor empowering. The worm is one of the smallest kinds of geomorphic animal to be visible to the naked human eye. These minute yet vital, earth-moving, geophagic, burrowing animals pervade the *EBR*, in more ways than one. The apparent mismatch between size and power — power to irritate, to infect, to weaken and destroy — in the image of the worm seems to be that which gives it its puzzling potency. Its weakness is never fully negated, however, and also has figurative impact as, for example, in the pitting of a

¹⁸¹ See Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 317. See also Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, p. 121.

¹⁸² 'riddle, n.2', *OED*.

¹⁸³ Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was a prominent Roman scholar and statesman. *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, was written in exile c. 524, possibly in prison and under sentence of death at the end of Boethius's life after a rupture with the Gothic king of Italy.

The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See particularly pp. 3-134 for more information on Old English versions. Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* was discovered by Alcuin (c.735-804) and there are two Old English versions, the prefaces of which identify King Alfred as the author, though the truth of this has not yet been established (*OE Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, pp. 140-51). The C-Text gives a version of the Boethius that alternates between verse and prose and is extant in London, British Library, Cotton MS Otho A.vi. See *OE Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, pp. 383-542.

¹⁸⁴ 'C-text', Prose 8, in *Old English Boethius*, ed. Godden and Irvine, p. 416.

hondwyr̃m as a fitting opposite for the entire world in the comparative size pair in *EBR* 66 “Ic eom mare þon þes middan geard/ læsse þon hondwyr̃m”. *I am greater than this world, less than the handworm.* (*EBR* 66, ll.1-2)¹⁸⁵ This is a comparative pair which, through the means of a minute but invasive animal, introduces the theme of vulnerability to this vernacular adaptation of Aldhelm’s Anglo-Latin enigma *De Creatura*, or Creation. Like this pair, the poem expresses its solution through drawing contrasts between different natural phenomena, usually, as here, juxtaposing strength and weakness, magnificence and mundanity. This line is part of a list of comparative pairings and descriptions which eventually yield the solution ‘creation’. Any thing — animal, vegetable, mineral, and other immaterial and conceptual subjects (for example, Soul and Body, the most likely solution of *EBR* 43) — can be an appropriate subject for the Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition. Under such variety the category of creature becomes similarly fluid and endlessly expandable. Neville argues that there is a fundamental difference between the expectations the Anglo-Saxons had of their texts and our own, suggesting that, though the *EBR*, often formulaically, demand an attempt to answer them they provide no authoritative answer against which these attempts can be tested. For both the Anglo-Saxon scribe and the original readers a riddle travelling without an answer is apparently acceptable or even desirable. To draw conclusions about the material culture surrounding the *EBR* from the riddles themselves is, she argues, ultimately risky.¹⁸⁶ Yet it is exactly this slippery construction of what can be known, that for me invites an ecocritical probing of this group of texts.

This chapter is divided into three considerations of the worms of the *EBR*: first the worms of the earth, field and garden, such as the weaving worms of Riddle 35 (coat of mail) with consideration of *EBR* 34 (rake) and *EBR* 21 (plough) as comparative examples of other earth-moving creatures or instruments. Next I consider the flesh-worms that appear in the *EBR*, specifically the ‘hondwyr̃ms’ of the Creation *EBR* (40, 66), for whom the human body is a habitat. I look for the reasons behind this in *Soul and Body* (for the designation of the human body as merely pleasure or titbits for worms, and as being attacked by an horde of worms, which are referenced in both *Soul and Body I* and *Soul and Body II* and also in the later and unusual variation on this debate form, “A Disputacioun Betwyx the Body and Wormes” (c.1450). Finally I consider the worms that make their home in the book. I intend to use the mindfulness of vulnerability suggested in the

¹⁸⁵ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 361.

¹⁸⁶ Neville, ‘The *Exeter Book Riddles*’ Precarious Insights’, p. 124.

introductory section of this chapter to examine the uninvited, but still completely real, animals in the book: the worms that threaten its foundation. The famous *EBR* 47 (usually solved as bookmoth or maggot and psalter) and *EBR* 25 (book or Bible), of course, directly invite this question. I build here on previous criticism to reconfigure the book as a digestive system by asking whether the worm itself, rather than simply being a representative of bad or foolish reading, can in fact be considered a ruminant animal.

Anglo-Saxon Worms

Writing in the seventh century, Isidore of Seville describes “Vermin” in *Etymologies*, Book 12, 5:1-18. He too associates worms with creeping, [“like snakes the worm does not move with distinct steps, but by stretching and contracting its body”]. He defines worms as “animals that are generated for the most part from flesh or wood or some earth substance, without any sexual congress — but sometimes they are brought forth from eggs, like the scorpion. There are vermin of the earth [beetle (*cantharis*); multipede (*multipes*); snail (*limax*)], the water [leech (*sanguisaga*)], the air [spiders, “named from the air that is their nourishment”], flesh [*vermes carniium*, “that infect the intestines, head and skin”], leaves [silkworm (*bombyx*); caterpillar (*eruca*)], wood [termites (*teredones*)] and clothing [mothworms (*tinea*)].”(XII.v.1-18)¹⁸⁷ Of the latter, Isidore explains that they are “so named because they hold fast (*tenere*) and they settle in right at the place and eat away.” I highlight *tinea* here as it is the recorded solution to the source for *EBR* 47, in the Latin enigmata of Symphosius.¹⁸⁸

Isidore’s *Etymologies* suggest three associations for worms, aside from the creeping and the weakness which the *OED*, *MED* and *B-T* describe. The first association is with erosion. Isidore explains the etymology of termites in this way: “The Greeks call wood vermin *teredo* [...] because they ‘eat by grinding’ (*terendo edere*). We call them woodworms (*termes*, i.e. *tarmes*)” (XII.v.10).¹⁸⁹ The second is with internal irritation as is also cited in the *Etymologies*. The *vermes carniium* are clearly invasive and parasitic, as is the

¹⁸⁷ Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*. ed. by Stephen A. Barney and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 258-9.

¹⁸⁸ Symphosius, ‘Tinea’, *The Enigmas of Symphosius*, ed. by Raymond Theodore Ohl (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928), p. 48.

¹⁸⁹ Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 258.

blood-sucking leech and the beetle *cantharis*, which invades bladders and is described as causing irritation to the human body. Isidore also uses the known itch of worms in another of his etymologies, for the wether (*vervex*) for which Isidore provides three possible explanations. (XII.i:10): “The wether (*vervex*) is named either from its strength (*vires*) because it is stronger than other sheep; or because it is male (*vir*) or because it has worms (*vermis*) in its head. When excited by an itch they strike one another with great force.” The third association to come out of the *Etymologies* is the elemental and enigmatic nature of worms. The scorpion, being produced from eggs, is an exception to the rule that worms spring forth from matter itself. In ‘The Image of the Worm’ (1985), Andrew Patenall notes a link between worm references and an enigmatic form by which riddles are both “rich in serpentine reference and themselves indicative of a cultural taste for an elliptic, tightly knotted, and enigmatic art.”¹⁹⁰

Wyrm is an extremely slippery signifier for writers of Old English, as outlined. In response to the range of signification under the umbrella of *wyrm*, from maggot to snake to devil to dragon to weakness to conscience, Victoria Thompson calls *wyrm* a “peculiarly appropriate concept to connect with death and burial, whichever end of the wyrm-spectrum one looks at.”¹⁹¹ Thompson uses this deathly polysemy to explore the significance of the walls that are “wyrmlicum fah” *decorated [with] wormlike [patterns]* (98b) of *The Wanderer*, which she suggests are gravestones carved with zoomorphic interlace. Furthermore, Patenall notes that “serpentine decoration is the predominant motif in Anglo-Saxon art”, pointing to the worm-like decoration of the sword attained by Beowulf, for example.¹⁹² From death, and destruction, and snake-like association, the capacity of *wyrm* to carry a Christian association with the devil is clear, as in the *wyrm* of Genesis A (904b) who “þurh fægir word” *through fair word* (1.899a) urges Eve to sin. There are a great number of instances of ‘wyrmas’ in Old English literature, with, as Thompson suggests, a huge number of actual creaturely referents. In *Beowulf*, as previously referenced, the dragon is described as a *wyrm*. It has been suggested that in Ælfric’s ‘Life of Saint Æthelthryth’ the *wyrmas* emerging from her lanced tumour are worms, although it is much more likely in this context that this is a scribal error from *wyrmsan*, ‘corrupt liquid’, or

¹⁹⁰ Andrew J. C. Patenall, ‘The Image of the Worm: some Literary Implications of Serpentine Decoration’, in *The Anglo-Saxons. Synthesis and Achievement*, ed. by Jon Douglas Woods and David A. E. Pelteret (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1985), pp. 105-16 (p. 106).

¹⁹¹ Victoria Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), p. 132.

¹⁹² Thompson, *Dying and Death*, p. 143. Patenall, ‘The Image of the Worm’, p. 106.

‘pus’.¹⁹³ In the Bible too, references are numerous, moving beyond the charged and significant snake of Genesis to simpler images of corruption through sin, in, for example, Job 24: 19-20, which in the Vulgate reads: “ad nimium calorem transeat ab aquis nivium et usque ad inferos peccatum illius. obliviscatur eius misericordia dulcedo illius vermes non sit in recordatione sed conteratur quasi lignum infructuosum.” *Let him [an unrepentant sinner] pass from the snow waters to excessive heat, and his sin even to hell. Let mercy forget him: may worms be his sweetness: let him be remembered no more, but be broken in pieces as an unfruitful tree.*¹⁹⁴ Here again destruction and putrefaction are the central associations for the worm. Given the plethora of references in Old English literature to *wyrmas*, or things that are *wyrm*-like, I confine my comparative texts to those that directly complement the themes of the Exeter Riddle worms, which are small, geomorphic and possessed of the capacity to eat away and destroy earth, flesh and page.

Worms of the Earth

The earthworm is a “friend” to the modern gardener, sorting and digesting dead leaves, converting them, through its bodily functions, into fertile soil. The human gardener symbiotically benefits from these processes in much the same way as a robin benefits from the gardener’s turning over of earth, exposing potential edible species that the robin can opportunistically seize. Worms are able to be exploited through discerning the difference between helpful and harmful elements in a cultivated environment, and taking action that alters this balance in favour of the gardener’s scheme.

If we consider ‘garden’ in its most etymologically fecund sense, which includes the “Garden of Eden”, the worm’s place in the Anglo-Saxon garden is arguably the reverse: *feond* rather than *freond*.¹⁹⁵ *Genesis A*, as mentioned above, leads us to consider the worm as a moral danger in the garden, altering not waste to fertility but the deceivable soul to sinful behaviour: “Me nædre beswac. and me neodlice / to forsceape scyhte and to scyldfrece, / fah wyrm þurh fægir word, oð þæt ic fracodlice / feondræs gefremede, fæhðe geworhte, / and þa reafode, swa hit riht ne wæs, / beam on bearwe and þa blæda æt.” *The*

¹⁹³ ‘Saint Æthelthryth’, in *The Cambridge Old English Reader*, 2nd edn, ed. by Richard Marsden (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 209-14 (p. 211).

¹⁹⁴ Job 24: 19-20, *Biblia*.

¹⁹⁵ ‘garden, n.’, *OED*.

snake seduced me and urged me earnestly to crime and to guilty greed, the beautiful worm through fair words, until I shamefully made an onslaught, performed a hostility and then plundered, as it was not right to do, from the tree in the wood and ate the fruit. (ll. 897-902).¹⁹⁶ Catherine E. Karkov writes that Eve's self-awareness in this moment may be indicated by her use of the word 'fah', "meaning hostile or guilty but also beautiful or decorated in variegated colouring".¹⁹⁷ The gloss to Psalms 91.13 in MS. Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, for example, reads "ofer næddran & fahwurm þonne þu gæst & þu fortreddest leon & dracan / Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis et conculcabis leonem et draconem" *Over adder and beautiful/guilty worm you go and you tread on the lion and dragon/over the asp and basilisk you walk; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot*.¹⁹⁸ Worms and decoration are associatively linked in further examples of Old English poetry, for example *The Wanderer*, "Stondeð nu on laste leofre duguþe weal wundrum heah, wrymlicum fah" *It stands now in the track of the beloved men, the wonderfully high wall, wormlike adorned*. (ll.97-98);¹⁹⁹ and *Beowulf*, "Swa wæs on ðæm scennum sciran goldes þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod, geseted ond gesæd hwam þæt sweord geworht, irena cyst, ærest wære, wreopenhilt ond wrymfah" *So on the bright plates of gold through rune-letters it was well marked, set and told, for whom that sword was first made, the best of irons, twisted-hilt and snake-adorned*. (1694-1698a).²⁰⁰ Wormlike shapes are also commonly found in zoomorphic interlace. The Lindau gospels, for example, a highly decorated example of tooled binding in gilt, silver and enamel, created near Salzburg c.750-800, depicted on their back cover, surrounding a central cross pattée, unsymmetrical zoomorphic panels depicting several animals, including worm-like animals, most likely snakes.²⁰¹ The adorning, specifically a very literary adorning, of earth and creatures alike is a feature of the *EBR*. *EBR* 31 and 32, the common 'I saw' formula, which begins twenty-two of the riddles,²⁰² is immediately preceded by "is þes middangeard missenlicum/ wisum gewlitegad, wrætum gefrætwad"

¹⁹⁶ Krapp, G. P., 'Genesis A', in *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 1-87 (p. 27).

¹⁹⁷ Catherine E. Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England: Narrative Strategies in the Junius 11 Manuscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 75.

¹⁹⁸ J. L. Rosier, *The Vitellius Psalter*, Cornell Studies in English, vol. 42 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 1-363.

¹⁹⁹ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 218.

²⁰⁰ *Beo*, p. 57.

²⁰¹ Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.1., in *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings, 400-1600*, ed. by Paul Needham (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library; London: Oxford University Press, 1979), no. 5 and no. 6.

²⁰² *EBR* 13,19, 29, 31-2, 34, 36-8, 42, 51-3, 55-6, 59, 64, 68-9 (probably a single riddle), 75-6 (probably a single riddle), and 87; seven others begin with variants of 'ic gefrægn' *I have heard* or 'ic wat' *I knew* (*EBR* 43, 45, 47-9, 58, and 67).

this middle-earth is adorned in various ways, decorated with treasures. The opening lines of *EBR* 36 say “Ic wiht geseah on wege feran, / seo wæs wrætlice wundrum gegierwed” *I saw a creature travelling along; it was marvellously adorned with wonders.*²⁰³

Though worms may be enigmatically and potently described as *fah*, as above, or themselves used decoratively (as in *The Wanderer*, the *Lindau Gospels*, for example), the craft of worms themselves appears in the *EBR* differently described.²⁰⁴ In *EBR* 35 (coat of mail, or byrne, as Craig Williamson suggests), the worm’s behaviour is described as *wyrda cræftum*, alliterating with *wyrmas* and *wæfan*, associatively linking the worm with its weaving behaviour and the more powerful, and nebulous concept, of fate:

Wyrmas mec ne awæfan wyrda cræftum,
 þa þe geolo godwebb geatwum frætwað.
 Wile mec mon hwæpre seþeah wide ofer eorþan
 hatan for hælepum hyhtlic gewæde. (ll.9-12)²⁰⁵

Worms do not weave me with fatal crafts / which fairly adorn the fine yellow web. / Yet nevertheless the wide world over / one will call me a joyful garment for heroes.

Fate too has association with threads in other instances in Old English Poetry. Megan Cavell notes that *wyrd* and weaving occur in *The Riming Poem*, *Guthlac B* and the mail-coat riddles (*EBR* 35 above as well as the similar but earlier Leiden riddle and Aldhelm enigma 33, *De lorica*, written in Latin).²⁰⁶ The Fates in Classical tradition, of course, provide further associations between fate and weaving, which, though not evident here, appear in another of Aldhelm’s riddles *De fuso*, which reads “Per me fata uirum dicunt decerpere Parcas” *Through me, they say, the Fates determine the destinies of men* (l.5) providing, in Cavell’s words, “irrefutable proof that Anglo-Latin writers engaged with the tradition of fate deities being associated with textiles.”²⁰⁷ Within a riddle that reveals itself through negatives, the worm’s weaving contrasts with the skilled linking of iron rings by a smith. Though emphasising how the coat is *not* made, the speaking coat of the riddle emphasises that it *is* made, revelling in its own craftedness (a typical feature of the *Exeter Book Riddles*,

²⁰³ See Orchard, ‘Enigma Variations’, p. 290.

²⁰⁴ For a study of the patristic significance of zoomorphic interlace see Heather Pulliam, ‘Eloquent Ornament: Exegesis and Entanglement in the Corbie Psalter’, in *Studies in the Illustration of the Psalter*, ed. by Brendan Cassidy and Rosemary Muir Wright (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), pp. 24-33.

²⁰⁵ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 310.

²⁰⁶ Cavell, *Weaving Words*, p. 273.

²⁰⁷ Cavell, *Weaving Words*, p. 278.

and other Anglo-Saxon riddles) but at the same time explaining this through *other* kinds of crafting. *EBR* 35 has an Anglo-Latin source, as previously mentioned, in Alhelm's *Lorica* Riddle (enigma 33), which was also adapted as the Northumbrian Leiden riddle.²⁰⁸ The Leiden riddle introduces 'wyrð' in that same line "Uyrmas mec ni aefun uyrði craeftum, / ða ði geolu godueb geatum fraetuath." *Worms did not weave me with the crafts of the fates, those that the yellow precious web with ornaments adorn*,²⁰⁹ but Alhelm's riddle specifies that the work of the worm is that of *Seres uermes*: "Nec crocea Seres texunt lanugine uermes" *Nor do Chinese worms weave me from their yellow down* (1.4).²¹⁰ In *EBR* 35 the work of the worm (in this case either made by silkworm—as is more clear in Alhelm's *Lorica*,—or a spider) is very productive but also the source of suspicion. As Brian McFadden suggests, the riddler uses the ambiguity of *wiht* (thing) "to mislead the solver into making a simple object into a stranger and powerful creature that acts in wonderful ways."²¹¹ Nonetheless, though there may be underlying anxiety about animal crafts, and though by implication the human smithing of the coat of mail is perhaps superior, there is no questioning as to whether the animal processes mentioned in this riddle are crafts—their potential similarity to skilled smithing is the verbal trap on which the puzzle of this riddle rests. In these riddles the natural behaviour of silkworms and spiders is identified as deliberate industry, toying with the implied agency and forethought that should be reserved for the apparently exceptional human. Within the defamiliarising riddle-world, as McFadden implies, an animal or object momentarily increases its powers through suggestion. The worms framing the solution of *EBR* 35 are apparently aware of their creative spinning, a spinning that is elevated in its potency to the level of the Fates, even though this would not be accepted of their real life animal counterparts. This is of importance for a geomorphic animal because it shows that an animal can *actively* behave geomorphically within its literary context (if, like worms it possesses the capacity) as well as simply be passively depicted as geomorphic.

What might be called animal-like crafts are part of the puzzle of *EBR* 21 and 34, though neither, of course, is actually describing animals. These riddles fall within the

²⁰⁸ Benjamin Weber, 'The Isidorian Context of Alhelm's "Lorica" and Exeter Riddle 35', *Neophilologus* 96 (2012), 457-66.

²⁰⁹ Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 243-44.

²¹⁰ Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, p. 417. See also Thomas Klein, 'The Old English Translation of Alhelm's Riddle Lorica', *The Review of English Studies* 48 (1997), 345-49 (p. 345).

²¹¹ Brian McFadden, 'Raiding, Reform and Reaction: Wondrous Creatures in the Exeter Book Riddles', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50.4 (2008), 329-51 (p. 335).

scope of this chapter because they are deliberately zoomorphic versions of earth-shaping objects and so appear to be geomorphic animals. In this appearance alone they fall within the expanded semantic resonance of *wyrm*, which not only creeps along but bores into the earth. Such appearance is sufficient, however, for them to be considered to perform cultivating work through animal craft, like the earthworm. The rake and plough make sound judgments in their moving and carving of the earth, leaving behind green on one side, or quiet, blooming plants, as they wreak their ravaging of the ground. They are in this way comparable to an earthworm. The exploitation and domination of non-human tools is much more explicit in the *Riddles* of the *Exeter Book*. Cavell outlines an interest in the lives of slaves within the riddles and, through a reading of *EBR* 72, usually solved as ‘ox’, argues that in the alternative world of the riddles, slave suffering is given unique recognition within the context of Old English literature which for the most part, with the exception of Ælfric’s *Colloquy*, studiously overlooks non-aristocratic world-views.²¹² The Domesday Book suggests that ploughing was the most common form of forced labour slaves performed in Anglo Saxon England.²¹³ The ploughman of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* also speaks from a position of slavery (“forþam ic neom freoh” *because I am not free*), which David Pelteret argues is a rare and powerful expression of personal experience of slavery in a literature that is otherwise tellingly silent on this subject.²¹⁴ Whilst riddle-creatures can experience apparent elevation (as in *EBR* 35, above) there is an equal capacity for subjugation. The creatures described in these two riddles take the form of sharply pointed and earth-facing (or “niþerweard”) creatures. *EBR* 21 reads:

Neb is min niþerweard neol ic fere
ond be grunde græfe,
[...] ic snyþige forð,
[...] hæbbe wundra fela;
me biþ gongendre grene on healfe
and min swæð sweotol sweart on oþre.
Me þurh hrycg wrecen hongap under
an orþoncpil, oþer on heafde,
fæst and forðweard. Fealleþ on sidan
þæt ic toþum tere, gif me teala þenap
hindewardre, þæt biþ hlaford min (ll.1-15)²¹⁵

²¹² Cavell, *Weaving Words*, p. 163.

²¹³ David Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Medieval England: From the Reign of Alfred Until the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer (1995) 2001), p. 117; p. 194.

²¹⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 65.; also noted in Cavell, *Weaving Words*, p. 164.

²¹⁵ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 300.

My beak is downward and low I move /and dig in the ground. [...] I go sniffing along, [...] I have many strange ways. /I leave green on one side and black on the other. /Driven through my back there hangs beneath /a well-sharpened point; on my head another, /firm and forward-moving. What I tear with my teeth /falls to the side, if he serves me well, / my lord who behind me heeds me and guides me.

The wonder of the creature is the straightness of the furrow that it sniffs along and carves with its teeth, and with the well-sharpened point or “orponcpil” at its belly, to divide up green and black. Typically for the genre, the description of the object implies intentionality and judgment, coming as close to autonomy as it can without quite achieving it. Although the riddle does emphasise the guidance and control of the creature by a master the well-adaptedness of the creature’s bodily form and the emphasis on the strength and forward movement of its trajectory also implies deliberation, and skill.

EBR 34 goes further with such implications, describing a hunting creature, whose choices distinguish between dramatically contrasted quarry. It tracks down non-fast roots (“wyrte seceð”), distinguishing them from the shining, beautiful fast ones it leaves behind. The rake-creature of this riddle has a hunter’s mind:

Ic wiht geseah in wera burgum,
 seo þæt feoh fedeð. Hafað fela toþa
 nebb biþ hyre æt nytte; niþerweard gongeð,
 hiþeð holdlice and to ham tyhð
 wæþeð geond weallas, wyrte seceð;
 aa heo þa findeð, þa þe fæst ne biþ;
 læteð hio þa wlitigan, wirtum fæste,
 stille stonda on staþolwonge,
 beorhte blican, blowan and growan. (1.1-9)²¹⁶

I saw a thing in the dwellings of men / that feeds the cattle; it has many teeth. / The beak is useful to it; it goes downwards, / ravages faithfully; pulls homewards; /hunts along walls; reaches for roots. /Always it finds them, those which are not fast; /lets them, the beautiful, when they are fast, /stand in quiet in their proper places, /brightly shining, growing, blooming

The beaks (“neb” 21.1, “nebb” 34.3) and teeth (“toþum” 21.14, “toþa” 34.2) of these tools point into the earth, “niþerweard” (21.1,34.3), altering it geophagically, and proceed using their snouts. As suggested, the creature of riddle 34, particularly, hunts ravenously: seeking and ravaging, unlike the more controlled creature of 21 at the reins of its

²¹⁶ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 309.

“hlaford” *lord*. Although Cavell describes this as an enslaved creature,²¹⁷ it nonetheless tears the ground with its teeth. The effect of this description is that both creatures are mammal-like and possibly predatory, despite their herbivorous ‘diet’. Unlike the “wyrda cræftum” of the worms in Riddle 35, a mysterious, fatal or perhaps terrible crafting of webs, the workings of the creatures in 21 and 34 are laid bare, made familiar even as the riddling form makes these tools unfamiliar through zoomorphic form. The riddles reposition these instruments not as tools for human labour, but ravening, earth-altering creatures held in check by human dominance. The rake-creature and plough-creature are viewed with suspicion not because they alter the ground, but because the form of this alteration has the potential to be wild and destructive. Such constructions may betray a sense of responsibility about the way that the actual ground is tilled and cultivated, or perhaps at the very least an implicit censure of bad gardeners and careless geomorphic practice.

Worms of the Flesh

I will return in this section to *EBR* 66, but will first explore how flesh might be considered an environment from a worm’s perspective. The skin can be like the earth in more than one way: a host for parasites and a food source for all manner of decomposers. Augustine argued that the worm, as well as fire, will torment the body in hell.²¹⁸ Later Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274), in questions 97-99 of the *Summa Theologica* acknowledged the punishment inflicted by the worm.²¹⁹ In vernacular texts, *Soul and Body I* and *Soul and Body II* and, explicitly, in the later medieval text, *A Disputacion betwux the Body and Wormes* also face the similarity between flesh and soil. In *Soul and Body II*, the soul rebukes the body with this gruesome fact: “Hwæt, ðu huru wyrma gyfl / lyt geþohtest, [...] hu ðu on eorðan scealt / wyrmum to wiste!” *So, food for worms, you thought little...about how you will have to be a feast for the worms, in the earth* (ll. 22-26).²²⁰ It is not just the rotting corpse that is chewed by worms, the soul in hell may face the same thing. The worm here may of

²¹⁷ Cavell, *Weaving Words*, p. 164.

²¹⁸ St Augustine, ‘The City of God: Part II, book XXI’, in *The Works of Saint Augustine* (4th Release), electronic edn, trans. by William Babcock, ed. by Boniface Ramsey (Charlottesville, Virginia, USA: InteLex Corporation, 2014), pp. 463-64.

²¹⁹ Linda Rouillard, ‘Church and the Clergy’, in *Handbook of Medieval Culture*, vol. 1, ed. by Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 172-186.

²²⁰ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 277.

course have connotations of the devil, as suggested in earlier discussion of medieval definitions of *wyrm*, but the association with the real worms of the grave seems more apt, more literally visceral. The much later text, *Disputacion betwyx the Body and Wörmes* is included here to show the long resonances of the soul's rebuke to the body (its transtemporal impact, to use Felski's term). This text is illustrated by marginal watercolour drawings, the first of which shows a lady's tomb with her body beneath, riddled with worms and other animals of the grave. The caption below the tomb illustration reads:

Take hede un to my figure here abowne
 And se how sumtyme I was fresche and gay
 Now turned to wormes mete and corrupcoun
 Bot fowle earth and stynkyng slim and clay

*Take heed unto my figure here above / And see how some time I was fresh and gay /
 Now turned to worm's meat and corruption / But foul earth and stinking slime and
 clay.*²²¹

The body's eventual reconciliation with the worms is based on the belief that at Resurrection its flesh will be restored and remade whole out of its present corruption. But as Augustine wrote, "All men born of flesh, what are they but worms? And of these worms God makes angels".²²² In the end, if the body were not eaten by beasts, fish, or birds, then worms would have consumed the human body that had been promised Paradise. Joyce Salisbury questions how consumed bits of human flesh – which, as suggested by Augustine, became animal flesh when eaten — could be imagined to be reassembled in the event of the Resurrection whilst leaving the animals behind. She cites an eleventh-century mosaic in the cathedral at Torcello, near Venice, which "shows animals and fish resurrected on the last day and dutifully vomiting up the human body parts they had eaten in their lives."²²³ Wycliffite controversy over the Eucharist followed a similar logic, asking: if the Host became the body of Christ through transubstantiation, what would become of the consecrated bread if it were to be nibbled by a mouse?²²⁴

²²¹ Karl Brunner, 'Mittelenglische Todesgedichte', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 167 (1935), 30-35. See also Klaus Jankofsky, 'A View into the Grave: "A Disputacion betwyx þe Body and Wormes" in British Museum MS Add. 37049', *TAIUS* 1 (1974), 137-159; and Jenny Rytting, 'A Disputacioun Betwyx þe Body and Wormes: A Translation', *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 31.1 (2000), 217-232.

²²² St Augustine. Tractate I. 13, 'On The Gospel of St John', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers First Series, St. Augustine: Gospel of John, First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*. ed. by Philip Schaff (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 4-780 (p. 11).

²²³ Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 4.

²²⁴ For a detailed account of this see Anne Hudson, 'The Mouse in the Pyx: Popular Heresy and the Eucharist', *Trivium* 26 (1991), 40-53.

Anxiety about wholeness and permanence in the face of palpable threats to the very flesh in which humans exist, as well as earthly connections to God in Christian objects and ritual such as the Eucharist, are drawn together by the image of a worm that burrows into the body.

EBR 66 begins:

Ic eom mare þonne þes middangeard
 læsse þonne hondwyrn, leohtra þonne mona,
 swiftra þonne sunne. (l.1-3)²²⁵

I am greater than this world, less than the handworm/ brighter than the moon, swifter than the sun.

World and worm are finely balanced in terms of size — the greater than the lesser. But the moon is not the obvious image for brightness when placed alongside the sun in the following line. This may point the reader to rethinking the examples and comparisons of this Riddle. I believe that this is worthwhile in the case of the “hondwyrn”.

The “hondwyrn”, which I will now discuss, has been afforded little critical attention, though it has been the subject of brief commentary.²²⁶ Indeed, it is often an issue for translation: Orchard, for example, translates it as “earthworm”.²²⁷ In the commentary to Craig Williamson’s edition of the poem he notes the use of *hondwyrn* as gloss: “In the Aldhelm manuscripts, *handwyrme* glosses *uerme* in two cases. (Napier 23:50; Napier 25.1).”²²⁸ *Hondwyrn* otherwise appears in the longer Creation riddle *EBR* 40 in greater detail:

Mara Ic eom and strengra þonne se micla hwæl
 se þe garsecgas grund bihealdeð
 swarta anyne — Ic eom swiþre þon he;
 swylce ic eom on mægene minum læsse
 þonne se hondwyrn se þe hæleþa bearn,
 secgas searþoncle, seaxe delfað (ll.92-97)²²⁹ .

I am greater and stronger than the large whale / which looks on the spear-man’s [Poseidon’s] ground/ with dim vision; I am mightier than he /even as I am less

²²⁵ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 361.

²²⁶ I am grateful to Jessica Henderson and Megan Cavell for helpful discussion and suggestions in identifying the “hondwyrn”.

²²⁷ Orchard, *Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, p. 96; p. 382.

²²⁸ For further appearances as gloss to various Latin worms see Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 274.

²²⁹ For more on Riddle 40, see Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, “The Text of Aldhelm’s *Enigma* no. C in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C, 697 and Exeter Riddle 40,” *ASE* 14 (1985), 61-73. For Riddle 35, see Klein, “The Old English Translation of Aldhelm’s Riddle *Lorica*”.

*in my own strength / than the handworm which the sons of men / in skilful
manner dig out with a knife.*

Again the *hondwurm* is paired as an example of smallness and specifically weakness ('læsse', again) against an example of greatness and strength ('mara', 'strengra'), here not the world but the whale. O'Brien O'Keeffe notes that antithesis, "the heart of the sequence of paradoxes in Aldhelm's 'De Creatura' [on which *EBR* 40 is, of course, based] reduces the poem, in effect, to a series of couplets."²³⁰ In this latter example the whale's vision gives the impression of omnipotence in its privileged view of mysterious ocean depths, increasing the appropriateness of this image as a substitute for 'middangeard'. The 'hondwurm' is the same, and perhaps, therefore purely symbolic of smallness in general. But in this version of the riddle we have further detail: the 'hond' is apparently its parasitic habitat, in which it is a sufficiently unwanted body to be habitually extracted using a knife. Exeter Book Riddle 40 is a fairly close rendering of Aldhelm's hundredth and final Latin riddle, 'De Creatura'. This particular section is clearly elaborated from the Aldhelm source, which reads:

Grandior in glaucis ballena fluctibus atra,
et minor exiguo, select qui corpora, verme
aut modico, Phoebe raids qui vibrat, atomo
(Aldhelm 100, ll. 65-66)²³¹
*I am bigger than the black whale in the grey waves / and smaller
than the poor worm that burrows into bodies, / or the little mote that
flickers in the rays of sun.*

The detail of the knife is particular to *EBR* 40, but the burrowing nature of the worm is emphasised in both riddles. Clearly this is a member of Isidore's *vermes carnium* group (as is suggested by the prefix 'hond'). There are three other extant appearances of this compound in Old English, in the *Leechdoms* (ii.120.18 ff.), in the *Liber Medicinalis* (I. 50), and also in the Metrical charms. Although the *B-T* also cites 'handwurm' in Thorpe's 'Halgan Godspel on Englisc: the Anglo-Saxon version of the holy Gospels', it does not in fact appear here.²³² Williamson suggests that as these parasites are likely to be in the surface layers of skin they "do not seem to be the [wee worm] of Aldhelm's *Creatura*". The "corpse worms" Williamson compares are described in another section of the *Leechdoms* (ii.126.4 ff).²³³ Not recorded in *B-T* is the last reference that I noted, in the *Metrical Charm*

²³⁰ O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Aldhelm's *Enigma* no. C', p. 62.

²³¹ Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, p. 533. For a translation of the Enigmata, see *Aldhelm*, ed. Lapidge and Rosier, p. 93.

²³² For note on this see Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 274. 'Hand-wurm' in *B-T*.

²³³ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 274.

12 *Against a wen [type of sore/boil]*: “Swa litel þu gewurþe als wa linsetcorn, / and miccli lesse als wa anes handwurmes hupeban” *Become so little as a grain of linseed, and much smaller than a hand-worm’s hip-bone.*²³⁴ Once again, the *hondwyrm* is used as a paragon of smallness. But the new information here is that it is a worm with hips: and therefore probably a burrowing parasite with legs or leg-like appendages. The *MED* gives a more decisive identification that fits all these clues, in definition 8.i. of “hand” “~ worm [OE handwyrm], the itch mite (*Acarus scabiei*)”²³⁵ *Acarus scabiei* was later identified as the *sarcoptes scabiei* or scabies mite.²³⁶ Clearly, this tiny animal does not just burrow and eat away at skin: it itches. In this sense the term survives in a number of medicinal texts in Middle English.²³⁷ In *The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac* (Middle English version, c. 1425), for example, the entry reads: “Hande wormes ben smale bestes þat maken holowe waies and freten bytwene þe fleisshe and þe skyn and namely in the hondes of ydel men.” *Hand worms are small beasts that make hollow paths and corrode between the flesh and the skin and namely in the hands of idle men.*²³⁸

If this is the scabies mite it is barely visible to the human eye, a pregnant female mite measuring an average of 0.5mm across. The *hondwyrm* then, as well as being a paragon of smallness is at the same time a fearsome irritant. I read this dichotomy between size or strength on one hand and impact on the other as part of the distinctively geomorphic significance of the use of the *hondwyrm* in the Creation Riddles. Its meaning is perhaps best explained through the coopting of an often quoted saying: “If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.”²³⁹ Such reversal of ‘strength’ in the way that the *hondwyrm* is used in the Creation riddles, as contrasted with the vast world, the matchless whale, is a reminder of *human* weakness. Augustine’s use of the worm follows a similar metaphor: “if the Lord himself says, ‘But I am a worm and no

²³⁴ See ‘wen (n.)’ *MED*. ‘Wenne, Wenne’ in London, British Library, Royal MS 4. A.14., which also records this same line, including the “handworm’s hipbone”, in an older version of the same text. See F. Holthausen, ‘Zur altenglischen Literatur’, *Anglia B* 19 (1908), 214.

²³⁵ ‘hōnd(e (n.))’, *MED*.

²³⁶ Barker Beeson, ‘Acarus Scabiei’, *Archives of Dermatology and Syphilology* 16.3 (1927), 294-307.: “though knowledge of a causative parasite for the itch seems to have existed early among the people, yet, as Besnier and Doyon have aptly said, the medical brain was not prepared to accept the idea for a long time.” (p. 294).

²³⁷ See sense 8. i. “~ worm [OE handwyrm], the itch mite (*Acarus scabiei*)”, in ‘hōnd(e (n.))’, *MED*.

²³⁸ See Guy de Chauliac, *Grande Chirurgie* (19b/b), in ‘hōnd(e (n.))’, *MED*.; *The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac*, ed. by Margaret S. Ogden (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, for the Early English Text Society, 1971)

²³⁹ “The South African proverb that says: ‘If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a closed room with a mosquito’”, see Kimani Njogu, Kabiri Ngeta, Mary Wanjau, *Ethnic Diversity in Eastern Africa: Opportunities and Challenges* (Nairobi, Twaweza Communications, 2010), p. 59.

man,' who will hesitate to say what is written also in John, 'how much more is man rottenness, and the son of man a worm?' [...] because a worm springs from rottenness [...] Wholly in this sense, then, brethren, understand 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.'"²⁴⁰

Worms of the Book

The fleshly, perhaps distasteful, origin of textual materials resonates long after the meatier remains are discarded, in the folding of the book's folios, the reading of the text, and in deliberate considerations of the medieval reading process, particularly in spiritual reading. In this relationship the reader's active contemplation of death and digestion as transformative makes the apparent waste-product of the animal corpse into food for thought: a cyclical metaphor for exploring textual meaning and the reading self. Ghosts of the ruminant animal at the centre of Old English books remain, for example, in modern idioms such as the title of the magazine *Reader's Digest* and the idiomatic idea of "devouring" books.²⁴¹ The medieval book-making process is a physical manifestation of the personal, visceral — even carnivorous — relationship between reader and text.

It is not so easy to distinguish between dead and live animal in the medieval scriptorium, or even in the modern library that now houses these animal parts. Folio 1r of the Exeter book is run through with several wormholes (at least sixteen), at least some of which (and likely all) were probably made after the parchment was inscribed. There is a wormhole, for example, through the descender of an *r* in 'ærost' (first) in the fifth line of text and the edge of the first *r* in "swurrodum" (crosses suspended from the neck) in the last line.²⁴² There is, quite literally, an ecosystem where books are kept and made. *Insect Enemies of Books* (1945) surveys and catalogues references to bookworms and their kin, in

²⁴⁰ St Augustine, Tractate I. 13, 'On The Gospel of St John', p. 11.

²⁴¹ 'devour. v.', *OED*: "To take in greedily and with eagerness the sense of (a book, discourse, or the like)."

²⁴² Folio 1.r records the list of donation to Bishop Leofric. For full text see, for example, 'Appendix', in *Anglo-Saxon and Norse Poetry*, ed. by N. Kershaw (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 206. See also Gameson, 'The Origin of the Exeter Book'.

Classical, Medieval and later records.²⁴³ Aristotle, for example, makes a cursory identification of a scorpion-like creature, which Harry Weiss and Ralph Carruthers suggest is the *Chelifer cancroides*, and a number of other indeterminate book grubs similar to those found in clothes (perhaps like the *tinea* (moth)).²⁴⁴ The book is a home space for worms. Lucian writes, “what are his books but a habitation for mice and vermin”.²⁴⁵ The very practical, non-metaphorical message of this is clear: to preserve books, use them. As in Chauliac’s pronouncement on idle hands, the idle book also seems destined to be eaten by worms.

That worms eat books is the starting idea of *EBR* 47, loosely based on the *tinea* of the Latin enigmata of the Symphosius: “Littera me paut, nec quid sit littera noui. / In libris uixi, nec sum studiosior inde. / Exedi Musas, nec adhuc tamen ipsa profeci.” *Letters have nourished me, but I know not what letters are. I have lived in books, but am made no more studious thence/ I have devoured the Muses, and yet so far have not myself made progress.*²⁴⁶ Most critics take the stance that this riddle “reveals” its solution in its first half-line, and that there is a further puzzle hiding beneath such a revelation.²⁴⁷ Martin Foys has noted that “a number of critics have acknowledged that the riddle appears less interested in worms than it does in words”.²⁴⁸ The riddle is quoted in full below:

Moððe word fræt. Me þæt þuhte
 wrætlicu wyrd, þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn,
 þæt se wurm forswealg wera gied sumes,
 þeof in þystro, þrymfæstne cwide
 ond þæs strangan stapol. Stælgieſt ne wæs

²⁴³ Harry B. Weiss and Ralph H. Carruthers, *Insect Enemies of Books* (New York: The New Public Library, 1945), pp. 19-63.

²⁴⁴ *Historia Animalium*, ed. by D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 532a; 557b.

²⁴⁵ ‘Marks Addressed to an Illiterate Bookfancier’, *Lucian; with an English translation*, ed. by A. M. Harmon, 3 vols (London: W. Heinemann, 1921), vol. 3, pp. 174-211 (p. 194).

²⁴⁶ Glorie, *Variae Collectiones*, p. 637.

²⁴⁷ *EBR* 47 has often been examined in these terms. See, for example, Ann Harleman Stewart, ‘Old English Riddle 47 as Stylistic Parody’, *Papers on Language and Literature* 11 (1975), 227-41; Ann Harleman Stewart, ‘Kenning and Riddle’, *Papers on Language and Literature* 15 (1979), pp. 130-31; Fred C. Robinson, ‘The Artful Ambiguities in the Old English “Book-Moth” Riddle’, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry Essays in Appreciation*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 355-62. Another set of contexts for the literacy of the Exeter Book Riddles, here in terms of Aldhelmian sources and manuscript reception, is provided by O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Aldhelm’s Enigma no. C’.

²⁴⁸ Nicholas Jacobs, ‘The Old English “Book-moth” Riddle Reconsidered’, *Notes and Queries* 35 (1988), 290-2.; John D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).; Fred C. Robinson, ‘Artful Ambiguities in the Old English ‘Book-Moth’ Riddle’, in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. Nicholson and Frese, pp. 355-62.; Geoffrey Russom, ‘Exeter Riddle 47: A Moth Laid Waste to Fame’, *Philological Quarterly* 56 (1977), 129-36.; Mercedes Salvador-Bello, *Isidorean Perceptions of Order: The Exeter Book Riddles and Medieval Latin Enigmata* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2015), especially pp. 355-9.; Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 285-287.

wihte þy gleawra, þe he þam wordum swealg.²⁴⁹

A moth ate words. To me that seemed / a curious happening, when I heard about that wonder, / that the worm, a thief in the darkness, swallowed / a song of some man, a glory-fast speech / and its strong foundation. The stealing guest was not / at all the wiser for that, for those words he swallowed.

And through this, *ruminatio*, and the slow, savouring reading and re-reading of a text becomes the subject of this riddle, which shows a cautionary example of ingesting a consumable text through the “stælgíest” “mopþe”. From the designation of the worm as a false guest, the book may be re-imagined as a Hall in which the figurative feast of songs and words of wisdom are shared and consumed, heightening the sense of the worm’s inferior table-manners. Williamson notes that under Anglo-Saxon standards of hospitality those who stole from their friends might be put to death.²⁵⁰ Magennis notes that eating alone is a dubious activity in Old English poetry. One could compare Grendel’s hall-violation by feasting on the flesh of a retainer snatched from a “meadobence” in the hall of Heorot.²⁵¹ That this riddle is famously self-reflexive about its generic nature has been critically examined both extensively and skilfully. Mirroring the worm, the reader is not expected to leave the text intact: to be satisfied with its first, surface solution of *moððe*. However, rather than leaving behind the worm altogether, I would add that the *literary* connotations of the worm, as explored in this chapter — beautiful and simultaneously seductive, transformative and decorative—work as a metaphor for the text.

Foys suggests that riddle 47 is special within the *EBR* collection because it “redacts its humanity; the animal here is not used to make the book, but to unmake the self-proclaimed status of the human form within the proclamation.”²⁵² Following Aldhelm’s *De Creatura*, Foys suggests that the baser creature humbly exposes human fragility in both body and endeavour.²⁵³ Whilst revealing a foolish reading practice, the worm’s destruction also highlights the intrinsic reliance of the ephemeral text upon the physical page, and the word upon the initial flesh. Indeed the description of the hole in the page as a *wundor* (wonder), might lead us to consider other common pairings of *wyrm* with the

²⁴⁹ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 320.

²⁵⁰ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 286.

²⁵¹ Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites*, p. 11-12.

²⁵² Martin Foys, ‘The Undoing of Exeter Book Riddle 47: “Bookmoth”’, in *Transitional States: Cultural Change, Tradition and Memory in Medieval England, A Festschrift for Allen Frantzen*, ed. by Graham Caie and Michael D. C. Drout (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, forthcoming 2017), p. 21.

²⁵³ Foys, ‘The Undoing of Exeter Book Riddle 47’, p. 21.

wund- in Old English: as in a physical wound and an act of wrapping. In Old English poetry, ‘wurm’ appears, for example, coincident with the sense of wounding in *Beowulf* (l. 2745-2746), the sense of winding, or surrounding, in *Soul and Body I* (l.132-138a), “The Wanderer” (l.97), *Beowulf* (l.2827-2830), *Judith* (l.115), and the sense of wonder in *The Phoenix* (l.232), *Beowulf* (l.2759).²⁵⁴ It is notable that all three senses appear associated with *wurm* in *Beowulf*. The worm itself, furthermore can physically perform both wounding, through burrowing, and winding, through its wriggling movement. Rather than entirely transforming the worm into a purely figurative thing, in which the base animal body is read as a spiritually significant word (thus apparently evading the ‘trap’ of reading a worm as actually a worm), the worm’s material body — in its living, moving, invasive, *geomorphic*, presence — remains relevant to the loftier possible solutions of this riddle. As Holsinger suggests, the animal remains of the parchment also remain relevant to the solution of this riddle. It seems particularly apt that the favoured animal for insular parchment, such as that which forms the ‘stapol’ or foundation of the Exeter book riddles, was the calf, itself a ruminant animal. The intersection of physical and spiritual processes is thus further enfolded upon itself by the consideration of this aspect of book-making. Whilst the riddle is contained by the physical book-space, rumination on the text re-figures the significance of this material foundation in a feed-back loop of riddling meaning. The endlessly folding and enfolding text resonates with belief in the mysterious, multiple depths of the text which Ælfric suggests when he associates homiletic teaching with unfolding: “þis godspell is nu unfealdlice gesæd” *this gospel is now unfolded through speech* (lit. “*unfoldedly*” told).

The folding of the vellum to make folios mimics the columnated gastro-intestinal tract, reforming the flat surface into a membrane able to facilitate the breaking down and absorbing of the text. Word-meanings can open this comparison further in the aligning of reading and digestive process in the term *rumination*. In definitions taken from the *OED* this can mean, “[t]he action of revolving something in one's mind; meditation, contemplation” (1. a.) but it also refers to “[t]he action of chewing the cud; the chewing by a herbivorous animal of partially digested food from the rumen” (2. a.).²⁵⁵ Rumination is not just about thinking deeply, it also involves stomach spaces. As Janet Coleman writes, “The repeated mastication of divine words as spiritual nutrition follows the Augustinian

²⁵⁴ *Beo*, p. 93-94; ‘Soul and Body I’, in *ASPR*, vol. 2, pp. 54-9; ‘The Wanderer’, in Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 218; *Beo*, p. 96; *Judith* in *APSR*, vol. 4, pp. 99-109; *The Phoenix*, in Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 172 ; *Beo*, p. 94.

²⁵⁵ ‘rumination, n.’, *OED*.

notion that the memory is the stomach of the soul where the divine words are chewed to release their flavour.”²⁵⁶ Antonia Harbus suggests that it is this process that Bede draws on when he suggests that Caedmon, himself a cow-herd, “transforms stories into exceptionally palatable poetry”.²⁵⁷ As Harbus points out, though, the ruminant cow, and Caedmon himself, are considered a *clean* animal in their rumination.²⁵⁸ A worm, by contrast, is vermin, by its definition undesirable. It is important, however, to my reading that the bookworm is not metaphorical. Bookworms are hole-makers in their home-making. They represent and *are* the act of hole-making as they do not remain in one hole but continue to eat, decomposing the substance that houses them. They are in this way actualising Isidore’s teaching on worms, specifically his point that they are born of the material itself. The worm is deathly. Riddle 47 is about oblivion as well as knowledge: it broaches not just the difference between surface and deeper reading but also the difference between reading and nothingness.

Conclusion

The geomorphic multivalency of the worms of the *EBR* encompasses both the kind of geomorphic animal behaviour that alters and restructures its environment through weaving of the worm’s ‘fatal crafts’ in *EBR* 35 and the burrowing of the *hondwyrn* in *EBR* 40 and 66, as well as, in the case of the latter burrowing, emphasising the potential geomorphic aspects of the human body. In this chapter the human being also becomes geomorphic through its multiple relationships with animals: in the grave, in flesh, in their literary artefacts the human body co-creates. Through a symbiotic process, the human can become a space for the worm, a mortal fact which is a source of both fascination and horror.

In this chapter the coincident agency of the non-human creature is emphasised, partly as a result of genre conventions. Riddles give inanimate objects the agency to describe themselves or deliberately mislead the reader as to the creature’s personhood, where described in the third person. In the case of *EBR* 21 and 34 for example, the animalistic earth-tools described in this chapter, it is clear that realising that these are non-

²⁵⁶ Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Second Printing edition, 1992), p. 146.

²⁵⁷ Antonina Harbus, *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), p. 19.

²⁵⁸ Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, pp. 19-20.

autonomous objects is part of the riddle, a clue to which is given in the assertion that the plough-creature is subordinate to and controlled by its 'master'. The worms, on the other hand are outside of human will, and often in a position of blithe animosity with relation to them, such as the *hondwyrn* which is dug from the skin with a knife or the page-destroying *stælgeist* of *EBR* 47. Their agency, of course couched within the wider scope of Divine will, is nonetheless apparent. In their marginal position, the work of worms, whilst inferior, sometimes undesirable, even destructive, is separated from, and other than, that of human social industry and behaviour.

Geomorphic animals in this chapter function as fashioners of negative space, connoting vulnerability and permeability simply by making holes in the human and in man-made objects. Nonetheless, good-eating and bad-eating, the foolish and the wise reader, the pest and the tool, the corrupt and incorrupt, are not necessarily easily divided from each other: to enter into eating, reading, living even carries both risk and benefit, in each case coming up against the limits of the corporeal world, facing the unsettling reminder of the 'little' worm.

Chapter Two: ‘The Scripted Animal’

The central concern of this chapter is with geomorphic whales, moving from the consideration of the tiny and terranean to the consideration of the massive and marine. This chapter traces connections between two poems that are remarkable in their engagement with an animal as both agent and space. I compare different medieval whales (diatonically, diachronically and generically) and find in all three a central and indivisible conflation of the whale with fears about the sea. These whales are: *The Franks Casket*, ‘The Whale’ of the Old English *Physiologus*, and Jonah’s Whale in *Patience*, all of which show a high degree of geomorphism, in their respective forms as a casket, an island and an encircling protective body.²⁵⁹ Whilst these three examples contribute long-standing scholarly traditions of engagement with scriptural and literary interpretation of the natural world, whale-literature is also almost a sub-genre by itself. Vicky Szabo’s *Monstrous Fishes and the Mead-Dark Sea* (2008) demonstrates and circumscribes the pervasive nature and intersecting traditions of writing about whales in Classical and Medieval western literature. To illuminate the medieval whale enigmata I draw together in this chapter, I also discuss the visual tradition of the whale in manuscripts and misericords. Whales are sometimes only depicted at the margins of texts concerned with other things, sometimes visually unrecognisable, sometimes appearing only in dismembered parts but always eerily connected to the human fear of being swallowed up. This chapter is not intended as an encyclopaedic consideration of the last one thousand years of Western depictions of whales but rather offers a geomorphically-concerned case-study approach to the hermeneutic tradition of the whale.

The Franks Casket is a whale-bone casket datable to the early to mid eighth century.²⁶⁰ It is widely thought to be of Northumbrian provenance,²⁶¹ and carries

²⁵⁹ ‘Physiologus’, in Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, pp. 266-74; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Pearl; Cleanness; Patience; Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. by J. J. Anderson (London: Dent, 1996) [references to *Patience* embedded in body of the chapter]; See also, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 4th edn, ed. by Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002).

²⁶⁰ *The Franks Casket*, c. 700, whalebone, 22.9 x 19 x 10.9 cm, Anglo-Saxon, Northumbria, England (Trustees of the British Museum).

²⁶¹ R. Elliott, *Runes* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 28-30.; Elizabeth Okasha, *A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 50.; R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 24.; L. Webster, ‘Stylistic Aspects of *The Franks Casket*’, in *The Vikings*, ed. by R. T Farrell (London: Phillimore, 1982), pp. 28-30 (p. 108).

inscriptions in Old English and Latin, some of which are runic, and refer to legends of various cultural origin such as Wayland the Smith (Germanic), the Magi (Biblical), and Romulus and Remus (Classical). As both a foundation for narrative and as a casket for containment, perhaps as a reliquary,²⁶² the real whale's bone has been transformed into a spatial art object, but the casket itself refers to its cetacean origin. A runic riddle inscribed on the box reads, "the king of the sea flounders on the shore. Whale's bone." The Whale of *The Franks Casket* remains only as the bones of its living self, constituting the box, and as a ghost in the riddle describing its death carved around the edge of the box. *The Franks Casket* is whale bone made into a puzzle box of riddles, stories, languages and signs, that is made into both a riddle and a container of itself. As Webster records, this is an object concerned with the overt display of allusion: "word and image enter here a new and important Anglo-Saxon life together, in an iconographic programme which seems to be based on parallels rather in the manner of Biblical types."²⁶³

The *Physiologus* is an ancient but enduring text that takes descriptions of beasts, birds and minerals and extrapolates religious metaphors from them. It was very popular and provided the base text for the bestiaries that came after it. It was originally composed in Greek by an unknown author, almost certainly in Alexandria. The current critical consensus puts the date for its composition between AD 140 and AD 410,²⁶⁴ although Friedrich Lauchert (1889) and Ursula Treu (1966) have both argued for a date of composition before 140 AD, possibly as early as the first quarter of the second century. Max Wellman (1930), supported in this by Michael Curley (1980) places the latest date for the text's composition at 380 AD. In this year a quotation from the chapter on 'The Partridge' appears in Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*. The Latin translation of the text was certainly known by the early sixth century, as an explicit reference to it appears in the *Decretum Gelasianum*, but Curley has suggested that the text may be circulating as early as the mid-fourth century, as the above-described reference in Ambrose may be indebted to a Latin version. The Old English *Physiologus*, specifically, is a text preserved in the *Exeter Book* (which houses the riddles of Chapter One), extant at folios 95b-98. Unlike many versions of the *Physiologus* and in particular later bestiaries, the Old English *Physiologus*, like the rest of the *Exeter Book*, has no illustrations (other than large initials). Though Kenneth Sisam

²⁶² Leslie Webster, *The Franks Casket* (London, British Museum Press, 2012).

²⁶³ Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600-900* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), p. 70.

²⁶⁴ Michelle Hoek, 'Anglo-Saxon Innovation and the Use of the Senses in the Old English *Physiologus* Poems', *Studia Neophilologica* 49 (1997), 1-10 (p. 1).

has suggested that the *Exeter Book* may be a copy of an earlier anthology, possibly late ninth to tenth century;²⁶⁵ there is little possibility of dating the Old English *Physiologus* beyond the obvious fact that it must have been in existence by this point. Ann Squires notes that in vocabulary and phraseology the Old English *Physiologus* is closest to the ‘Cynewulfian’ poems, but that there are also parallels with the earlier Old English poems *Beowulf* and *Exodus*.²⁶⁶ ‘The Whale’ displays subtleties of representation as a result of culturally-specific experience of the animals in question, percolating through real encounters between humans and animals. The content of ‘The Whale’ also engages explicitly with the literary phenomenon that is the subject of my thesis: the slippage between animals and landscape in literary representation. The deceptive capacity of the whale, which is linked in the text with the Devil and earthly temptation, lies in its land-like appearance to the unknowing sailors who encounter it. Michelle Hoek discusses how the Whale entry in the *Physiologus* is in part designed as a warning. In contrast to the ‘unwær’ *unwary* (1.59) seafarers of the Whale narrative, the intended reader is equipped with the knowledge of the whale's, and by extension the Devil's true nature, or perhaps vice versa, and thus able to see through and escape this deception.

As noted, ‘The Whale’ is a poem in which the slippage between landscape and character is an explicit part of both the central allegory and the description of the animal in question. In ‘The Whale’, a grim sea-monster is described, who, by his similarity in appearance to an island, lures sailors onto his back. An island rises out of the driving rain and steep crashing waves of a storm; a welcome sight for the sea-bedraggled sailors who urge their ships towards it. But once ships are lashed to its rocky face and campfires are burning this apparently safe haven reveals its true self: when the sailors have lit their fires, the whale (in some earlier versions described as an Asp-turtle),²⁶⁷ dives to the bottom of the ocean and drowns them all. The text goes on to detail the Whale’s feeding habits, luring smaller fish into its cavelike mouth with a sweet scent. The whale does not eat humans, it drowns them. The *Physiologus* does not deal with the natural animosities of the food chain, but instead with apparently deeper-seated and Biblically-derived (and thus, under Christian ideology, primal) enmities between species. In the Old English *Physiologus*,

²⁶⁵ K. Sisam, ‘The Exeter Book’, in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (1953; reprint Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 97-108.

²⁶⁶ *The Old English Physiologus*, ed. by Ann Squires (Durham: University of Durham, 1988), p. 5.

²⁶⁷ Carolin Esser-Miles traces medieval problems with whale taxonomy in the bestiary and other related traditions. See Carolin Esser-Miles, ‘King of the Children of Pride: Symbolism, Physicality, and the Old English Whale’, in *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Stacy Klein (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies), pp. 275-301.

the 'hwæl' is by its very nature a negative iteration of geomorphism: an 'unlonde', that is *not a solid rock* in a dangerous and fluid storm. The whale's existence, and similarity to the Devil, is in its deceptive contrast with the sea that it inhabits. It appears to stand in contrast to the danger of watery depths, but in fact manifests and enacts that dangerous capacity of the sea to swallow up those travelling within it and on it.

Patience is a reworking of the story of Jonah and the Whale in order to illustrate the virtue of patience, with a prologue on the prudence of this virtue and its necessity in the face of poverty or troubling circumstances. All of the poems of the *Pearl*-manuscript, in which this text is uniquely preserved, have allegorical elements, and *Patience* follows this pattern in the depiction of Jonah and the whale. The *Pearl*-manuscript is a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century manuscript (London, British Library Cotton Nero A. x.) containing four alliterative poems, generally assumed to have been written by the same poet due to similarities of language, theme and style, in the following order: *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The poems are thought to have been written during the latter half of the fourteenth century.²⁶⁸ Like *Cleanness*, *Patience* elaborates on one of the Beatitudes, using biblical stories to this purpose, in this case the text of the Vulgate Jonah. As Anderson notes, the *Pearl*-Poet elaborates imaginatively on some of the details of the Jonah story though adhering closely to the narrative, as in, for example the appearance of the storm and the whale.²⁶⁹ In *Patience*, the whale is both the *deus ex machina* and a simulation of hell for Jonah as derived from the narrative of the biblical source of *Patience*. It is also part of an overall allegory for the value of *Patience*. The representation of the animal itself is overlaid with a wealth of biblical and exegetical symbolism. Vulgate Bible Jonah 2:1 reads, "et praeparavit Dominus piscem grandem ut deglutiret Ionam et erat Iona in ventre piscis tribus diebus et tribus noctibus" and *the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights*.²⁷⁰ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 6838B, f. 36 v. for example, contains an image of Jonah in the process of being swallowed by the whale with the *aspido testudo* and *balena* entries. The representation of the whale is highly significant for my particular critical approach, and offers some distinctive representation which is also enlightening for this topic. In this poem, a man named Jonah, displaced through his disobedience to a Divine command and travelling as a passenger on a merchant ship, is deliberately thrown

²⁶⁸ 'Introduction', in *Patience*, Anderson, p. ix.

²⁶⁹ 'Introduction', in *Patience*, Anderson, p. xviii.

²⁷⁰ Jonah, 2:1, *Biblia*.

overboard during a storm directly into the mouth of a conveniently placed and enormous whale. As small, by comparison, as a dust mote in the door of a cathedral, Jonah tumbles down the whale's throat into its vast and swamp-like stomach. Despite the powerful murk of the Whale's stomach, compared explicitly to the evil stink of the devil, the whale finds Jonah indigestible. So there Jonah lodges miserably, listening to the booming deep of the ocean on the other side of the whale's stomach wall, until God accepts his apology and has the whale vomit him unto land. This is the whale of the poem *Patience*, in which a Biblical story of a man learning to be obedient to God's commands, even when doing so will put him in danger, is retold as a musing on the virtue of patience. The whale's perceived ability to swallow up, to envelop, in a manner *like* the sea whilst remaining distinct from it, is also at the fore of its purpose in this text and at the heart of its geomorphic interest for this chapter. Both poems use their respective whale encounters for Christian exegesis, with, of course, even closer dependence in *Patience* than in 'The Whale' on the biblical narrative of Jonah and the Whale. These texts are also unusual in their exploration of the phenomenology of the whale's body as an environment.

In all these texts, the whale appears to be one thing and turns out to be another, a method of reading animals that is adopted by a number of medieval critics. Richard Barber, writes that for the bestiary-compiler, animals were "a kind of moral entity, bearing a message for the human reader",²⁷¹ as an explanation of the disparity between bestiary description and later empirical scientific expectations of writing about nature. Michel Zink, in an extreme expression of the human exceptionalism of the period, asserts that "in medieval writing the animal, like the rest of creation, is unworthy of attention except insofar as it is a bearer of meaning."²⁷² *The Franks Casket* is a concrete foil to this statement, in the sense that the whale itself is the subject of the runic riddle in its marginal inscription, an inscription which is a matched and balanced element in the overall riddling and display project of the artefact.²⁷³ Nonetheless, Zink's statement is at the same time useful in that, though I give a theoretically-driven reading of the whales of these texts as geomorphic, it is at the same time important to acknowledge that in medieval texts, animals were part of a semiotic system, seen through a thick fog of ideology. Of this

²⁷¹ Richard Barber, *Bestiary: MS Bodley 764* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), p. 7.

²⁷² Michel Zink, *Le monde animal et ses représentations au Moyen Age* (Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1985), p. 59, translated and cited in Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 70.

²⁷³ On the use of whale ivory in luxury caskets see Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Hronæs Ban: Exoticism and Prestige in Anglo-Saxon Material Culture', in *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Stacy Klein (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance, 2014), pp. 323-35.

Sarah Stanbury writes that, “[t]he reading of animals as symbols is a default practice. When an animal appears in medieval representation, it is either a tool or a sign.” She points to the vast edifice of evidence amassed by a “powerful twentieth-century iconographic machine in literary criticism and art history” which has drawn on bestiaries, illuminated manuscripts, beast fables, saints’ legends and heraldry, for example, towards the hypothesis that “animals are likely to function as signs, and chiefly signs of human behaviors and traits, especially in medieval texts.”²⁷⁴

Adamic Nature in the Medieval World

“Surge Petre, occide, et manduca”. *Arise Peter, kill and eat*:²⁷⁵ the term ecology signifies relationships between organisms and their environment, the term deriving from the study of the *oikos* or ‘home’, but a Christian medieval understanding of what we would now refer to as the ecosystem includes the relationship with God, and God’s explicit desires for the human relationship with the natural world.²⁷⁶ As briefly addressed in Chapter One, the world was considered to be God-created and intentional. In this chapter, however, the texts and genres I will address engage directly with how animals and animal representation relate to the idea of a God-created world, and so this topic merits a fuller examination here.

Aleks Pluskowski has argued that although the adoption of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon Britain intervened in some cultural animal practices causing, for example, the abandonment of animal funerals, animal ornamentation remained popular. He observes that some types of animal ornamentation were assimilated into Christian religious art, and “accompanied by a shift from a zoocentric to an anthropocentric iconography, and, I would argue, world-view.”²⁷⁷ Salisbury also states in examination of medieval belief in animal afterlife that the much later medieval thinker Thomas Aquinas, “decided that since humans in heaven would need not clothing, food, nor would they work, there was no

²⁷⁴ Stanbury, ‘Posthumanist Theory and the Premodern Animal Sign’, p. 102.

²⁷⁵ Acts 10:13, *Biblia*.

²⁷⁶ ‘ecology, n.’, *OED*.

²⁷⁷ Aleks Pluskowski, ‘The Beast Within? Breaching Animal-Human Boundaries in Anglo-Saxon Paganism’, *Saxon* 45 (2007), 1-6 (p. 1).

need for animals in heaven, so they were excluded”.²⁷⁸ According to such a world-view animal behaviours were implicitly aligned with (or, in the case of the snake, defined against) human beliefs and social order.

If the world is believed to be unchangingly and deliberately set into being by a supreme power then it follows that there must be a correct way to interact with it. The Bible records explicit instructions for human interaction with other species. The extant medieval texts that engaged most deeply and explicitly with the idea of an encounter with an animal treated them metaphorically, as we see in the case of the *Physiologus* and *Patience*. When animals were the subjects of a narrative, as in fables, the *Physiologus*, and bestiaries, it was, often explicitly, in order to represent something about human relationships and culture. For the *EBR*, examined in Chapter One, this representation was of a defamiliarised play world in which the natural order was often temporarily subverted in order to puzzle the reader. The God-created nature of the world, is less explicit in this genre as a result, though some, such as *EBR* 1, 2 and 3, do engage with the concept more directly.²⁷⁹ Even the creation riddles, *EBR* 40 and 66, take Godly presence as assumed rather than as their main literary object. Nonetheless, the idea of an Adamic, anthropocentrically-structured Eden shaped encounters with animals in medieval texts. In the Exeter Book’s *Canticles of the Three Youths*, an adaptation of the biblical songs of Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael,²⁸⁰ for example, animals, grouped by their natural habitat of land, sea and air, are simply addressed as living creatures, and therefore subjects of God, and, like humans, are included within the worshipping community.

Animal places in human lives are mostly dictated by characteristics of their species rather than the characters of individual animals. A cat is to catch rodents, a horse to ride, a dog to hunt, for example, though many species were treated as having several purposes. In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England, for example, cats might be killed and skinned for their fur or kept alive for their mousing. *Piers Plowman* records a pedlar who skins cats (ll. 257-8) and John Trevisa writes that a cat “is ofte for his fayre skynne ytake of the skynnere and yslayne” *is often for his fair skin taken by the skinner and killed*.²⁸¹ But within

²⁷⁸ Thomas Aquinas, cited in Joyce Salisbury, ‘Do Animals Go to Heaven? Medieval Philosophers Contemplate Heavenly Human Exceptionalism’, *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts* 1.1 (2014), 79-85 (p. 83).

²⁷⁹ See Williams, ‘Hwa mec raere?... Hwa mec staeðpe?’; and Foley, ‘“Riddle I” of the Exeter Book’.

²⁸⁰ Sources found in the Septuagint. Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 2, p. 452.

²⁸¹ M. Hayward, ‘Cat fur’, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles*, Brill Online, 9 February 2015 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-medieval-dress-and-textiles/cat-fur-SIM_000965> [accessed 19 July 2017].

these varied arenas for encounters with animals, or their dead and dismembered parts, they were also sometimes treated as individuals, given names and occasionally status, or made part of literary narratives.²⁸² There is, in short, substantial archaeological and anthropological evidence of frequent encounters between humans and animals — largely domesticated and native — in everyday medieval lives.²⁸³ Joyce Salisbury, writes that “[m]edieval thinkers did not believe animals had any purpose independent of their service to humans”.²⁸⁴ It is easy to surmise that relationships with animals were affected by the relationship with God because the world is God-created: reading the world as a book, seeing the *Liber quasi mundus*, is a pre-medieval generic conceit that also had influence in the post-medieval era. In the *Didascalicon*, for example, Hugh of St Victor writes, “Universus enim mundus iste sensibilis quasi quidam liber est scriptus digito Dei, hoc est virtute divina creatus, et singular creaturae quasi figurae”. *This whole sensible world is as a certain book written by the finger of God, that is, created by divine power, and the individual creatures are as figures in it.*²⁸⁵ An early modern example is Milton’s use of the “book of knowledge fair”.²⁸⁶ In this he talks of knowledge being “Expunged” and “razed” from it by his blindness. These terms are also part of the diction of the scribe, and further underline the idea of the text of knowledge as written on the natural world.²⁸⁷ Fudge’s work, for example, serves to indicate that this was not necessarily a belief actively held by all people of the Early Modern period. Her work using nonfictional documentation of relationships with animals explores how animals were seen as individuals and cohabiters. The unremittingly geomorphic representations of whales discussed in this chapter, though not disrupting these utilitarian frameworks, are not fully encapsulated by a simple framing of animal as ‘symbol’ and human as ‘reader’. The blurring between animal and space that is the central concern of my thesis is a central part of the narrative of both the Old English

²⁸² Crane, *Animal Encounters*, pp. 2-3.

²⁸³ *Breaking and Shaping Animal Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Aleks Pluskowski (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007).; Holsinger, ‘Of Pigs and Parchment’.; A. Pluskowski, ‘The Beast Within?’.

²⁸⁴ Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 2nd edn, p. 5.

²⁸⁵ Hugo de St Victore, ‘De Earumdem Pulchritudine in Quatuor’, in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 176, ed. by J. P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1854): cap. IV, col. 814b <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:pld&rft_dat=xri:pld:ft:all:Z500113105> [accessed 9 January 2017].

²⁸⁶ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2nd edn, ed. by David Loewenstein (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 22.

²⁸⁷ Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

Physiologus and *Patience*: in one case a whale uses its ability to be analogous to land in order to drown sailors and in the other a whale acts as a divinely-ordained living submarine.

Of the broad difference between the two historical moments at which these texts appear, Joyce Salisbury has asserted that “[t]here were two ways of looking at animals in the middle ages — the early Christian notion of separation and the blurring of the lines between the species that emerged in the twelfth century.”²⁸⁸ I would argue, however, that there is a profound conceptual, and literal, union between a species and its space in the way that whales are represented both before and after the twelfth century. ‘The Whale’ of the Old English *Physiologus* and the Pearl-poet’s *Patience* are two chronologically discrete but conceptually interrelated texts. *Patience* and the Old English *Physiologus* were, of course, generated by different literary and temporal milieux. The consistent engagement with the whale as space also prompts discussion of the extent to which these representations might have more to do with perceptions about the sea than about the animal itself. It is to this that I turn my analysis in the final section of this chapter, drawing together discussions of both texts in order to look at the anagogical significance of whales, Leviathan and the abyss.²⁸⁹ The strength of the engagement of both texts with the whale as defined by powerful size allows the exploration of human encounters with an animal that is simultaneously habitable space and a deadly predator. In discussing these poems together, without losing sight of the different contemporary networks of significance within which each individual text was composed and read, I aim to highlight the geomorphic similarity in how the whale is being depicted in both cases.

In the case of animals, in the medieval period the mythical or imaginary and the real were not necessarily sharply divided. As discussed, wilderness was less an empty space than a space wildly inhabited by the hostile and non-human. As discussed in the Introduction, Rudd’s exploration of wilderness in Middle English is as a dangerous but profoundly wonderful space, which is held in relationship with the cultivated. She writes that wilderness combines a sense of tangible, identifiable place. In this, she suggests, wilderness is potentially responsive to management and demarcation. The “wildness” that goes beyond the material specifics attached to wilderness, she also finds to be integral to the concept of wilderness, “to use Evernden’s phrase, ‘wildness, otherness, is mystery

²⁸⁸ Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 2nd edn, pp. 8-9.

²⁸⁹ Genesis, 2:1; Revelations, 9:1, *Biblia*.

incarnate’.”; it is “a quality which directly confronts and confounds our designs”.²⁹⁰ Wilderness, as Rudd implies, and later explicates in her discussion of gardens (and their ultimately Edenic symmetry) was not just confined to spaces outside the fences of human settlement.²⁹¹ Encountering a medieval animal in a text, rather than in life, was an equally valid way of developing knowledge. Some witnesses to animal encounters had been read through pre-established and scholastic frameworks, such as those of the *Physiologus*, and were largely textual. Others, such as those that zooarchaeological evidence can offer us, are lived relationships, or those we can surmise from law codes or other incidental written descriptions of working relationships with particular species. The purpose of texts in this latter group of witnesses is not aligned with those in the former. Salisbury has stated that, for people in the Middle Ages, the rich metaphorical meanings behind perceptions of animals “probably did not change the way they looked at the many real animals that were serving them.”²⁹² But texts such as Ælfric's *Colloquy*, in which animals are not subjected to typological interpretation, see animals within a pedagogical framework, concerned with the learning of language and grammar, in which the animals themselves are only of incidental, surface importance. This purpose is entirely different from that of the *Physiologus*, in which the literal behaviours and interactions between types of animals and humans are pretexts for Christian moral instruction. Knowledge of other species was a more faith-based than empirically supported activity: “seeing was not required for believing”.²⁹³ In her study of animal representations in misericordia from the fourteenth to seventeenth century, Sarah Wells points out that, “the unicorn's existence remained seriously unquestioned until the sixteenth century.”²⁹⁴ Experience of an animal did not have to entail a physical encounter, despite the fact that physical encounter with some kinds of animals was likely and commonplace. An animal might also be met in writing or in visual art, or often, in the case of the popular illustrated bestiaries of the middle ages, both. Such an attitude is evident in medieval natural philosophy. Mary Franklin-Brown, in *Reading the World* describes the era of scholastic encyclopaedism — which she puts as between 1100 and 1400, noting that there is some scholarly contention about the exact

²⁹⁰ Neil Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p.121., cited and discussed in Rudd, *Greenery*, pp. 91-92.

²⁹¹ Rudd, *Greenery*, p. 165.

²⁹² Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, 1st edn (London, Routledge: 1994), p. 9.

²⁹³ Sarah Wells, ‘Seeing is Believing’, in *Breaking and Shaping*, ed. Pluskowski, pp. 65-79 (p. 71).

²⁹⁴ Wells, ‘Seeing is Believing’, p. 71.

dates — as having a “highly polyvocal nature and tolerance of dissent, even outright inaccuracy”.²⁹⁵

Sometimes texts also hint at working and living relationships held with many species, often by those who were illiterate, and reveal that in an economy and society that relied so heavily upon nonhuman species, the majority of ways of interacting with animals are unwritten and unrecorded. There are descriptions of animals that are literal, not overlaid with allegorical significance; animals populate texts in which they are not the central subject. In light of this, whilst Barber’s earlier-quoted explanation of animals as a “moral entity” is a useful distinction for the modern reader of the bestiaries, I would seek to reject the implication that animals outside bestiaries were always viewed in this way; and reject the idea that medieval thinkers never experienced or considered animals in an unmediated, uninterpreted way.²⁹⁶ Nonetheless non-allegorical animals *are* marginalised in medieval literature. The unsignifying animal is rarely if ever the important part of a text. Suggestions of this can be found in the idiosyncrasy and whimsical nature of animals in marginal illustrations, that are lower in the epistemological hierarchy and outside of the central text block. Subjects such as animal drolleries are allowed in the margins that would not be allowed in the main block of the text, for example, the monkey riding a stork-hybrid in the margin of folio 12 of the Alphonso Psalter.²⁹⁷

Textual examples of these working relationships are recorded in Ælfric’s *Colloquy*, a text for the learning of language, with no explicit interest in animals either for their own sake or for exegetical purposes. It is filled with animal encounters, and the words for talking about them: its organisation into different occupations also means that it is organised according to different relationships with animals, by virtue of the fact that working life almost always involved domestic animals. In this text animals are plainly seen, but not scrutinised. Because the landscape of the *Colloquy* is equally populated by animals and humans, reference to animals is necessary, society cannot be constructed or imagined without animals. In Ælfric’s *Colloquy* there are the ‘yrþlinʒc’ *arable farmer/cultivator* (1.20), the ‘oxanhyrde’ *oxherd* (1.22), the ‘hunta’ *hunter* (1.23) the ‘fiscere’ *angler/fisherman* (1.26); and the ‘fuʒelere’ *fowler* (1.30), amongst others, who discuss their daily practices and interactions

²⁹⁵ Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 4.

²⁹⁶ This is also an argument that Fudge has made about conceptions of animals in Early Modern Britain in her reading of Ralph Jocelyn’s extensive diaries in Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’.

²⁹⁷ London, British Library, Additional 24686, f. 12 [‘The Alphonso Psalter’]. Marginal scenes of a lion and a stag fighting dragons and a monkey riding a hybrid stork, England (London/Westminster), c.1284, England (East Anglia?), c.1297-1316, 245x165mm.

with various animals, such as the dogs that drive the deer and other quarry towards the hunter,²⁹⁸ or the whale that the fisherman fears when he puts to sea in search of saltwater fish such as herring. These descriptions, put together for the purposes of pedagogical instruction in vocabulary and grammar, give brief practical details about working relationships between particular humans and particular animals – their co-workers, or even colleagues, or potential foes. This is evidence of man presiding over the economy of animal behaviour, using their natural antagonism to his advantage. This is an incidentally revealing text which also contains underlying and completely different discussion of animal roles in human social life, as well as the ostensible issue of grammar.

In the case of the whale, the relationship with humans is characterised by peril. Our witnesses for this come broadly from two bodies of evidence: contemporary literature, including law codes, and archaeology. There is archaeological and artifactual evidence to suggest that whales were killed and butchered in the Anglo-Saxon period.²⁹⁹ There is also literary evidence of this practice in Alfred's *Orosius*, in which Otthere describes the whale-hunting of his country: “[. . .] ac on his agnum lande is se betsta hwaelhuntað: þa beoð eahta and feowertiges elna lange, and þa maestan fiftiges elna lange; þara he saede þaet he syxa sum ofsloge syxtig on twam dagum” *but in his own country is the best whale-fishing; there are [whales] eight and forty ells long and the largest fifty ells long — of those he said that he, as one of six, killed sixty on two days.*³⁰⁰ There is also literary evidence of the recognition of the whales as a competing and dangerous predator intervening in the fisherman's relationship with fish in, for example, the Ælfric's *Colloquy*, “Forþam leofre ys me 3efon fisc þæne ic mæ3 ofslean þonne fisc, þe na þæt an me ac eac swylce mine 3eferan mid anum sle3e he mæ3 besencan oþþe 3ecwylman.” *Because it is better for me to catch fish than to kill a more powerful one, as it could drown and kill with one blow, not only me but my friends as well* (l. 26).³⁰¹ In both this living context and its Christologically defined

²⁹⁸ All references to *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. by G. Garmonsway (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1991).

²⁹⁹ O. Lindquist, ‘Whaling by Peasant Fishermen in Norway, Orkney, Shetland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norse Greenland: Medieval and Early Modern Whaling Methods and Inshore Legal Régimes’, in *Whaling and History*, ed. by B. Basberg, J. E. Ringstad and E. Wexelsen (Sandefjord: Sandefjordmuseene, 1993), pp. 17-54 (p. 22); Charles Johnson, ‘A Claim to “Royal Fish” Stranded off Dungeness’, *Archaeologia Cantiana* 47 (1935), 105-106.; M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); M. Gardiner, ‘The Exploitation of Sea-Mammals in Medieval England: Bones and their Social Context’, *Archaeological Journal* 154 (1997), 173-95.; Szabo, *Monstrous Fishes*, p. 14.

³⁰⁰ *Two Voyages at the Court of King Alfred*, ed. by N. Lund (York: William Sessions Ltd, 1984), p. 20.; Szabo, *Monstrous Fishes*, p. 58.

³⁰¹ As well as later texts: in Letaldus of Micy's *De Quodam Piscatore Quem Ballena Absorbuit*, written in France in the tenth century, the whale is the enemy of the human — swallowing him and partially digesting his hair, nails and damaging his eyesight. See Jan Ziolkowski, ‘Folklore and Learned Lore in Letaldus's Whale Poem’, *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 15 (1984), 107-18.

framework, the whale has negative associations. This consistency between frameworks is not the case with all species. Cats, for example, had both positive and negative connotations, depending upon their framing. But within these overlapping interpretative frameworks the nuanced engagement of ‘The Whale’ and *Patience* with the pre-scripted narratives of their respective sources suggests a complicated cultural relationship with whales in medieval Britain.

The False Island

The framework for organising knowledge about the natural world in the *Physiologus* has altered throughout the process of its translation and circulation. The sources of the *Physiologus* include folk-tales from many Early Mediterranean cultures, as well as Pliny’s *Natural History*. Barber adds to this list “the Greek philosophers and their Latin followers, notably Aristotle, Pliny and lesser luminaries such as C. Julius Solinus and Lucan”, although the Anglo-Saxon Christian knowledge of such sources is not as linear as he implies, and came via Arabic sources. Barber writes that “these [...] texts [were] scientific or poetic descriptions of the natural world, based on observation, a hesitant attempt to collect data from which an analysis of man’s environment might begin”.³⁰² He emphasises that the original textual sources of the *Physiologus*, having their basis in observation, are closely aligned with an empirical attitude towards the natural world that contrasts with the explicitly allegorical attitude of the *Physiologus*.³⁰³ The legends which go to make up the descriptions of the *Physiologus*, notwithstanding the Christian allegorical lens that the Early Christian author applied to them, therefore come from two ideologically separate epistemes: early empirical observation and largely orally transmitted folkloric beliefs and stories.

Despite the implication of its title — translated literally as ‘the naturalist’ — Curley writes that the “*Physiologus* was never intended to be a treatise on natural history. [...] Nor did the word [...] ever mean simply “the naturalist” as we understand the term, [...] but one who interpreted metaphysically, morally, and, finally, mystically the transcendent significance of the natural world.”³⁰⁴ In contrast to the treatment of animals within encyclopaedias, the *Physiologus*, and to an extent the bestiaries, explicitly involve

³⁰² Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 9.

³⁰³ Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 9.

³⁰⁴ M. J. Curley, *Physiologus: A Medieval Book of Nature Lore* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1979), p. xv.

them in a narrative rather than a description, framing them within stories rather than catalogues of observation. Like Curley's, Barber's definition of "bestiary" explains that in order to understand the significance of the text, descriptions of the natural world should not be measured for their verisimilitude, realism or indeed scientific approach. The descriptive details are "very rarely based on observation, on the experiences of the everyday world. Instead, the text is taken from *auctores* [...] the appeal is not to the evidence of our eyes, but to the books in the scribe's library."³⁰⁵ There is a notable gap between the way in which the initial group of texts approaches animals and the way in which bestiaries and the *Physiologus* treat them: a transformation by which they acquire significance but lose reality. In the former the central subject is the animal, whereas in the latter the central subject is the animal-text.

The history and provenance of the *Physiologus*, and its descendant bestiaries, involve endless transformation of older sources into new cultural contexts and textual types. In appropriating the content of the original philosophical descriptions of animals, the *Physiologus* and bestiaries have changed the nature and purpose of the quoted texts and thus the subject matter within them. Crane, writing on the second-family bestiaries, suggests that there was no apparent "governing principle [...] shaping the natural lore [bestiaries] drew from Classical writers, including Aristotle (through intermediaries) on the one hand, and on the other, the mystical and didactic readings of nature they adapted from *Physiologus* and Ambrose's *Hexameron*."³⁰⁶ Franklin-Brown's observation about the coherence of medieval encyclopaedias might be brought to bear on bestiary collections of information about animals from various textual traditions and epistemes: "if the subject and object of knowing shift between discourses, the encyclopaedic text will struggle to provide a coherent space for them to inhabit."³⁰⁷ Like Crane, I suspect that bestiaries bear witness to the fact that animals could signify many, apparently contradictory things simultaneously, although without direct personal accounts this is almost impossible to trace.

As discussed, the *Physiologus* and to an extent the later, related, bestiaries, are texts in which animals have meaning only through their typological significance. Crane notes that Jacques Voisenet approves the bestiaries' gradual rejection of "that signifying dross that the *Physiologus* had imposed on animals". Crane puts forward the idea that, in

³⁰⁵ Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 7.

³⁰⁶ Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 71.

³⁰⁷ Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World*, pp. 215-218.

contrast, “second-family manuscripts articulate a double purpose that investigates both physical and spiritual causes.”³⁰⁸ In the *Physiologus*, the world is presented as a living embodiment of moral, spiritual and metaphysical truths. Exegetical framing of animals as script reconfigures the encounter between human and animal as one between reader and text, negating the distance of impossible comprehension that necessarily exists between two members of different species. As in the sacred texts that the *Physiologus* uses to decode and explain the hidden information within the natural world, the non-human animal is also hermeneutically allotted surface and deeper meanings. Each species included in the *Physiologus* is described through the conceit of an archetype, which in itself is a paradigm for a type of Christologically significant behaviour. As Barber notes, in later bestiaries, in which compilers would add extra pieces of information under each entry, the ultimate significance of each animal could become somewhat ambiguous if, as is the case with the Partridge, for example, there were Bible entries which associated them both with the Devil and with Christ.³⁰⁹ Though they do not usually include the explicit moral explanations that are conventional in the *Physiologus*, later bestiaries still present animals as texts; the ‘description’ of a lion, for example, actually describes the Christianised representation of the lion: the archetype of the species. The *Physiologus* makes the implicit assertion that all animals of a species are the same.

Squires suggests that the Old English *Physiologus* is equally indebted to (and also diverges significantly from) both the Y and B versions of the text constructed by Carmody. Y is taken from Munich, Latin MS 19417, Munich Latin MS 1388 and Bern Latin MS 611. B is taken from five manuscripts, the chief and oldest Bern Latin MS 233. B is the influential version in the West and the main source for later Latin versions. In the Y version the Whale is explicitly also referred to as an Asp-Turtle: “De ceto id est aspidocoleon” *the whale is the asp-turtle*. In the B version its title is simply “aspidocoleon”, though the text of the entry does still call it a whale and a fish. The Old English ‘Fastitocalon’, though, as Hoek suggests, probably a corruption of the Greek, has no real hint of its connection to the original Aspidocoleon, presented instead as a name or title of the Whale, rather than an alternate species identity.³¹⁰ In most versions the intention of the whale’s dive is to cool itself, it is only in the Exeter book that the Whale wishes to drown the sailors. The entry then describes how a sweet smell from the Whale’s open jaws

³⁰⁸ Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 71.

³⁰⁹ Barber, *Bestiary*, p. 8.

³¹⁰ Hoek, ‘Anglo-Saxon Innovation’, p. 3.; *Physiologus*, Squires, pp. 25-27.

lures in fish which the Whale then swallows and eats, almost cannibalistically as the classification of the Whale as fish often continued to be acceptable up until the nineteenth century.³¹¹ The entry explains both of these behaviours through the lens of the Devil and his use of earthly pleasures to seduce and then betray human souls. Whilst the animal is a paradigm, it is at the same time individualised and treated as a character, whereas the people in the poem, by contrast, are a faceless group. The Whale, as its physical description implies, can be mistaken for an island by sailors, who land on its back and make fires. The creature then dives into the sea and drowns them. In physical appearance, “Is þæs hiw gelic hreofum stane / swylce worie bi wædes ofre” *his appearance is like rough stone such as crumbles by the water’s edge* (l.8-9). Hoek notes that ‘hreofum’, as well as ‘roughness’, may also have the connotation of ‘rottedness’; pitted in the manner of diseased flesh. She suggests that this description may be intended to generate readerly disgust, fixing associations of the Whale with the Devil. This description carefully takes the form of a simile, as is the case with each new descriptor. The implication is that the animal only *looks* like an island. Nonetheless, the poem later goes on to explain that it does have tangibility: “ond þonne gehydað heahstefn scipu / to þam unlonde oncyrrapum” *and then they moored their high-prowed ships to that false land with anchor-ropes* (l.13-14). More than just looking like land, the Whale can also be landed upon: it is able to function as land for the mistaken sailors. It is important to its description that it is not just not-land, but anti-land; mirroring land, or safe Christian haven, even as it serves to represent its negation (or falseness in the worldly space). Part of the whale’s nature as a monstrous animal is that as well as being a creature it is also a space. Its Leviathan-like size and abyss-like habitat are part of the reason that this is possible.

The Leviathan-association of the whale is not a trope specifically of *Physiologus* description but does relate to the way that the whale is described within the *Physiologus*, as it is part of its network of biblical associations. The Book of Revelations describes the creation of the Leviathan, a sea creature so great as to dwarf anything on the human scale of experience.³¹² The Leviathan, too, we might describe as geomorphic through the pure impact of its size. The literal translation of Leviathan is ‘we multiply’. The species of the Leviathan, like the species of the original entry under ‘Aspidoclean’, later Whale, is indeterminate, and like the Latin *Physiologus* entry for the whale, the Leviathan had some association with a sea-dragon type creature (similar perhaps to the Dragon that is the only

³¹¹ Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 73.

³¹² Revelation 12:1-17, *Biblia*.

enemy of the Panther). The dragon is one of the animal forms of the Devil in Old English writings, though there are others mentioned also.³¹³ The interconnection between these two Exeter *Physiologus* texts, such as the unsettlingly similar sweet breath of the devil-type whale and the Christ-type Panther, raises the question as to whether this is the only way that it can be read, and indeed was read. The fragmented and incomplete survival of this part of the Exeter book makes conclusion difficult, but although some of the *Physiologus* ordering has been preserved, it is very likely that the Exeter Book did not include it in its entirety. As Squires notes, the incidence of these three animals alongside each other in both the Y and B versions, suggests that the original poet may have been working from a fragment, but the thematic unity with which the three poems are presented suggests to her that adherence to the structure of the fragment may have been more through artistic choice than simple necessity. She suggests that a possible fragment may have first inspired the poet to create the trinity of earth, water, air; beast, fish, bird; and Christ, devil, man, in the Old English *Physiologus*. Of course the fragmentary nature of the Partridge makes its identification difficult, but Squires argues for the entry being Partridge on the basis of the usual ordering of the *Physiologus*. In the B and Y versions the Partridge's foolish behaviour aligns it with easily-tempted man. The inclusion of 'The Whale' may then be reliant on its position as part of this trinity, suggesting yet another dimension of symbolic resonance.³¹⁴

Nonetheless, in the *Physiologus*, the Whale is characterised not a symbol, but as an individual and introduced by his given name, "Fastitocalon":

Nu ic fitte gen ymb fisca cynn
wille woðcræfte wordum cyþan
þurh modgemynd bi þam miclan hwale.
Se bið unwillum oft gemeted,
frecne and ferðgrim, fareðlacendum,
niþþa gehwylcum; þam is noma cenned,
fyrnstreama geflotan, Fastitocalon.
Is þæs hiw gelic hreofum stane,
swylce worie bi wædes ofre,
sondbeorgum ymbseald, særyrica mæst,
swa þæt wenap wægliþende
þæt hy on ealond sum eagam wliten, (ll.1-12)³¹⁵

*Now will I yet make a poem known with verse-craft, about a race of fish, in words,
through intelligence, concerning the great whale. Men who sail often unwillingly meet*

³¹³ See Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites*, p. 67.

³¹⁴ *Physiologus*, Squires, p. 17-18

³¹⁵ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 270.

that [whale], fierce and grim of heart; to the ocean-floater is given the name Fastitocalon. His appearance is like rough stone, reeds moving by the shore, as if there were an ocean-reef surrounded by sand dunes, so that seafarers believe that they gaze on an island.

This name both individualises the animal and at the same time recasts it as a mythical hero, or anti-hero, figure. The Whale, appropriately for an anti-hero, also apparently has a strong personality. As well as being mighty, the Whale is also active, and skilled, in evil. He is deceptive “*facnes cræftig*” *crafty in his deceit* (l. 24)) as well as fierce and grim of heart (“*frecne ond ferðgrim*” *dangerous and fierce of heart* (l. 5)). There is a contrast between how the appearance of the Whale is represented and the fact that it is given a character: the former is explained with deliberate simile, whilst the latter is described in a way that is at the very least metaphorical, if not quite psychological. In other words, though it is only ‘like’ land in its interpretation by the sailor’s compromised sight, it ‘is’ evil in its fundamentals. In this poem the Whale displays greater agency in its wrongdoing towards the sailors than in any other version, in which the motivation for drowning the sailors is often the wish to quench the fires lit on its back.

The whale of the Exeter book emerges as a hybrid. The detail of its behaviour far exceeds what an exegetical reading would require. It does and does not fit its religious scripting. As discussed, the *Physiologus* source dictates that the whale dives when fire is lit on its back. But its malice, its crafty nature (l. 24), its name, Fastitocalon (an individual name not a species label like *aspidocoleon*) are interpretive layers added by the Old English *Physiologus*. The whale has significantly more personality in this poem, a personality that is less apparent in later iterations of the whale entry in the first and second family bestiaries.

The zoomorphic compounds used for the sailor's ships — “*sæmearas*” *sea-steeds*, and “*yðmearas*” *wave-steeds* — also complicate the whale’s portrayal. The agency implied for the objects/vehicles by their association with the sailors has a number of effects. The dramatic tension surrounding the vulnerable sailors is mirrored by the implication that their ships, zoomorphised as horses and tethered to the Whale, are also fallible, and can be drowned. The trusty steeds that the seafarers should be ‘riding’ across the sea make a sharp contrast with the untrustworthy back of the Whale that they unwittingly exchange for them. There is implicit comparison between the “*sæmearas*” *sea-horses [ships]* and Fastitocalon, both as boundaries between the seafarers and the sea and also as animals (though only figuratively in the kenning). This comparison is riddle-like because whilst the whale is an animal, the horses are only animal-like ships. And ultimately the framing of ‘The Whale’ as a *Physiologus* entry interprets the whale as a metaphor for the devil. Both

kinds of animals in ‘The Whale’ are signs for something else. The horses and the whale thus both do and do not operate on the same metaphysical plane. The horses emerge in kennings, existing only within the micro-narrative that is the highly conventional idea of a ship as a sea-horse. The whale is an allegory, and therefore an animal only temporarily within the narrative of the *Physiologus* entry, up until its conversion into a figure for the devil. There can be no real interaction between the horses and the whale and yet the whale does drown the men and the horses together: “se micla hwæl, / se þe bisenced ð sælipende / eorlas ond yðmearas” *the great whale who sinks seafaring men and their wave-steeds* (ll. 47-9).³¹⁶ Literalism and metaphor are unfixed and sliding in ‘The Whale’, to an even greater extent than might already be expected of a *Physiologus* entry, a text that, in its reworking of classical observations and folklore, has already destabilised the epistemological status of the animals it describes. The whale’s status is unclear. It spills out of its prescribed framework, as well as across clear distinctions between body and space.

Inside the Whale

The whale of *Patience* engages too with the prescriptive framework of the bestiary and physiology tradition, but far more allusively. The whale enters the poem by apparent happenstance, or “Wyrde” *fate* (l.247), as a “wylde walterande whal” *wild tossing whale* (l. 247) driven from the depths by the storm to the exact point and moment Jonah is thrown overboard.³¹⁷ There is no mention of actual Divine intervention until later in the narrative (l.337) when God commands the fish to vomit Jonah onto the shore of Nineveh.³¹⁸ The description does not attach the label of divine tool to the whale until it has already served its purpose. The description of the Whale in *Patience* appears to draw on bestiary lore as well as Biblical depiction in order to describe the whale.³¹⁹ Rather than simply drawing the whale up by direct command, it is specified in *Patience* that God uses

³¹⁶ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1, p. 270.

³¹⁷ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 151.

³¹⁸ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 155.

³¹⁹ Sebastian Sobecki also briefly notes this. See Sebastian Sobecki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), p. 126, n. 18.

stormy seas in order to accomplish this. In the bestiary of Arundel 292 the whale entry (cetegrande) reads: “this fis wuneth with the se grund, / and liueth ther euer heil and sund, / til it cumeth the time / that storm stireth al the se, / thanne sumer and winter winnen; / ne mai it wunen ther-inne, / So droui is te sees grund, / ne mai he wunen ther that stund / oc stireth up and houeth stille;” *this fish dwells at the sea bottom, / and lives there ever hail and sound, / til it comes the time / that storm stirs all the sea, / then summer and winter struggle / it may not stay therein, / so stirred up is the sea’s ground, / it may not stay there upright / but stirs up and goes forward silently*; (517-525).³²⁰ This reference to the *environmental* reasons why a whale might be at a shallower depth of the sea suggests a consultation of the bestiary for information about how the animals presented move within their environment; their ecological relationships. As a reading of the bestiary this small instance of detail about how a whale might use or experience the space of the sea suggests that the bestiary animals might be seen as more than simply taxonomical categories, and that the whale of *Patience* straddles a generic relationship between scripture and something that reaches closer to realism (a suggestion which has been previously made about the *Pearl*-poet’s depiction of ships).³²¹

The agency of the whale, and to a degree its relationship with God, is further complicated by the central description in which the Whale is explored by Jonah as a space. *Patience* engages as explicitly as ‘The Whale’ of the Old English *Physiologus* with the idea of the whale as place, although not as an island in this case, but rather an enclosed cavern. In *Patience* as in ‘The Whale’, there is a highly geomorphic depiction of the whale.

In both *Patience* and ‘The Whale’ depiction of a whale is apparently bound up with an anxiety about being engulfed, and swallowed, and a terror of an animal so much larger than the human. Massiveness can be a metaphor for the anagogical significance of God’s judgement of man, and in the case of Leviathan, its great size stands as emblematic of the pride and power of the Devil. In the description of *Patience*, this hugeness is foregrounded throughout. Jonah’s body makes no contact with the sea in this poem: “his swolw opened / The folk yet haldande his fete, the fysch hym tyd hentes” *his gullet opened / The folk [sailors] were still holding his feet, when the fish took hold of him* (1.251).³²² The famous

³²⁰ *An Old English Miscellany containing A Bestiary, Kentish Sermons, Proverbs of Alfred, Religious Poems of the thirteenth century, from Manuscripts in the British Museum, Bodleian Library, Jesus College Library, etc.*, ed. by Richard Morris (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by N. Trübner & Co., 1872), pp. 16-17.

³²¹ William Sayer, ‘Sailing Scenes in Works of the Pearl Poet (Cleanness and Patience)’, *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 63.1 (2007), 129-55.

³²² Anderson, *Patience*, p. 151.

descriptor of Jonah as a “mote in at a munster dor” *mote [of dust] in at a Minster door* (l.268) pitches this tiny speck of a human being into an enormous, and indeed, holy, space.³²³ The Whale’s stomach constitutes Jonah’s environment, in which he can move around and explore the best place to take shelter. Unlike Fastitocalon, this whale has more realistic vile sludge, rather than sweetness, in its belly. It is God, not the whale, that is “swete” *sweet* in *Patience* (l.280).³²⁴ The *Pearl*-poet gives detail to the physical experience of the whale’s gut as surroundings, as well as the emotional and spiritual despair that Jonah feels as the exegetical ‘point’ of the Whale. The muck and texture of the stomach is explored “he lurkkes and laytes where watz le best / In uche a nok of his navel, bot nowhere he fyndes [...] bot ramel and myre [...] he hitte to a hyrne [...] Ther no defoule of no fylthe was fest hym abute.” *he goes stealthily and seeks where shelter was best / In each nook of his (the whale’s) navel, but nowhere he finds [anything] but rubbish and swamp [...] he made his way to a corner [...] There no pollution of filth was festering around him* (277-290);³²⁵ the “merk” *darkness* (l.291);³²⁶ the space “as brod as a halle” *as broad as a hall* (l.272);³²⁷ and the smell “his stomak that stank as the devel / Ther in saym and sorwe that savoured as helle” *his stomach that stank as the devil / There in filth and sorrow that tasted like hell* (ll.274-275).³²⁸ It is interesting that, except in the latter description, the poet does not explicitly link Jonah's sensory experience of his new “bour” *bower* (l.276) with its allegorical counterpart of hell, the “hellen wombe” *hellish stomach* (l.306).³²⁹ The whale’s body is experienced, as well as the scriptural meaning that it represents, but this embodied experience is perhaps partial: the miracle of the whale’s stomach is that Jonah is not digested. It is crucial, of course, to the story, that Jonah is not actually digested by the whale, but it also maintains the inexplicit hierarchy of man as more valuable than an animal, despite the power of the animal in question.

The whale's reaction to Jonah as a kind of ‘bad food’, or allergen, to use an anachronistic but nonetheless relevant descriptor, contextualises his human, and Christian, experience of the whale’s stomach, in ecological terms as a potential link in the food chain. The whale's sickness, foreshadowing the later ejection of Jonah onto the

³²³ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 152.

³²⁴ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 152.

³²⁵ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 152.

³²⁶ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 153.

³²⁷ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 152.

³²⁸ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 152.

³²⁹ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 152; p. 153.

Niveneh shore, nonetheless also disrupts this disturbing idea of Jonah as food: “Thagh hit lyttel were hym wyth to wamel at his hert.” *though it [Jonah] was little in comparison with him [it made him] sick at his heart* (l.300)³³⁰ The poet, in *Pearl*, has already foregrounded littleness as deceptive, the innocent Pearl is at once little and impactful, a Queen amongst many. This reversal of the significance of size can also operate metaphorically, as emblematic of the value of small, contained acts of Christian individual virtue in the face of great forces of evil. The two allegorically significant creatures, Whale and human, nonetheless, do not communicate directly with each other — both are isolated in the parts they play in their shared experience. The silence of the whale, an unquestioning servant of God in this poem, contrasts with the garrulousness of the disobedient Jonah. A vast difference in scale between these two creatures negates any possibility of interaction between the two as individuals. Jonah experiences the whale as a hellish, prison-like environment. The whale experiences Jonah as an invading micro-organism. The relative size of the whale and the human necessitates that their awareness of each other is sensory and phenomenological.

As well as Jonah’s experience of smell, touch and discomfort, and the whale’s sickness, the whale’s progress through its environment, the ocean, is part of Jonah’s auditory experience: “Ande ever walteres this whal bi wyldren depe [...] ay sekerly he herde / The bygge borne on his bak and bete on his sydes” *and ever tosses this whale by the wild deep [...] and surely he (Jonah) heard / The great sea on his back and beating on his sides* (ll. 297-302).³³¹ He later references this in his prayer from “the dymme hert [of the depe se]” *the dark (gloomy) heart of the deep sea* (l.308).³³² The Whale itself, with its explicit resemblance to hell and indeed dim dankness, may be here described as the dark heart of the sea, although this description may also reference the depth at which the whale swam. The latter seems more straightforward, but the slippage between “hert” *heart* and “wombe” *womb* and “stomak” *stomach* blurs the boundary between being and space, between the animal’s body and the deep sea, generating the allegorical abyss of the Hell with which it is associated.

The bower, to which Jonah later comes in *Patience*, is apparently a reiteration of the lessons of the Whale’s stomach. God creates a bower for Jonah to rest, to protect him from the elements, and Jonah is then upset when this shelter is taken away from him

³³⁰ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 153.

³³¹ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 153.

³³² Anderson, *Patience*, p. 153.

through the gnawing of a worm, again sent by God (l. 467).³³³ As in *EBR* 40, *EBR* 66 and Aldhelm’s Enigma C, in *Patience* too, a burrowing worm is a tiny counterpart to an enormous whale. Like Jonah within the whale, the worm cannot communicate directly with the much larger human, but Jonah nonetheless experiences its spatial effects. As in the riddles, the worm here behaves geomorphically, dismantling Jonah’s shelter space. Jonah, in his dismay, receives another explanation and reprimand from God about patience and the acceptance of his God-ordained fate. The emotional experience of relief, not misery, is perhaps the teaching tool at the heart of *Patience*. The *OED* only cites *Patience* under the first definition: the calm, uncomplaining endurance of suffering, but perhaps it is more comparable to the sense of simple acceptance found in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*, “Take al in pacience Oure prisoun, for it may noon oother be” (l.1084) *Take our imprisonment patiently, for it cannot be otherwise.*³³⁴ Jonah is penitential whilst in the whale’s stomach, but evidently is not the right kind of grateful whilst in the bower. The opposite of the whale, the bower is a pleasant, dry container, its mirror-opposite on land that acts as a protective space for Jonah: not an abyss but a haven. It too is living, created from growing vines: another demonstration of the manipulation of the natural world by God. It too is impermanent, because earthly. One of the critical differences of this change in species is that the bower is stationary, however. Jonah is involuntarily inserted and removed from both these spaces. It is true that Jonah has free-will, but it is evident also that he only has one path — through the Ninevites; should he choose to deviate he will be picked up and pulled back onto this path by God’s pods in the form of the whale and ocean and the bower and worm.

Conclusion

In both ‘The Whale’ and *Patience*, the whales serve as temporary boundaries and contact points between the sea and humans. At the same time they are themselves a part of that seascape. The whale in *Patience* is as wild and “walterande” (l. 246), or rolling, as the stormy waves it inhabits. Whale bodies and biological behaviours mean that they necessitate the introduction of deep sea, and inherent associations of expanse and often danger, to such an extent that in both *Beowulf* (l.10) and *Andreas* (l.634a, l.821a), the

³³³ Anderson, *Patience*, p. 161.

³³⁴ ‘patience, n.1 (and int.)’, *OED*.

kenning “on hronrade” *on whale-road* is used to refer to risky travel across the ocean.³³⁵

Whale representation is shaped in response to the exceptionality of the animal, namely their size (both inside and out!) and association with the unfathomable ocean. Juliet Mullins finds a separation between the metaphorical capacity of the sea for Irish ecclesiasts and for Anglo-Saxon religious literature. Whilst the former could think of the sea as a place of ascetic refuge equivalent to the desert of the Eastern fathers, for the latter, maritime imagery was generally used conversely, to denote spiritual turmoil that is antithetical to monastic *stabilitas*.³³⁶ It is such spiritual turmoil I draw on here.

In his study of sea kennings, ‘From Whale-Road to Gannet’s Bath’, Robert Schichler suggests that:

[i]n the ‘whale-road’ we have indeed an appropriate image of this uncertain or terrifying aspect of the sea [...] [T]he whale and its domain, however, do not always specifically represent evil. At times a ‘whale’ term may be used simply to suggest the idea of the sea’s ‘vast expanse’, as both Oshitari and Caroline Brady agree is the case with ‘geond hronrade’ at Genesis 205a.³³⁷

In support of this statement, Schichler also notes that Brady groups “hronrade” *whale-road* with “hwæles eðel” *territory of the whale* and “hwælmere” *whale-sea* as synonyms for deep sea.³³⁸ The vastness of the whale is so much a part of its associated characteristics that the whale can stand as a metaphor for massiveness itself. In Schichler’s article, the swan is discussed as a symbolic counterpoint to the Whale, a good omen to its bad. Schichler argues that the seabird-kennings of *Beowulf* are associated with peace and Heorot, and the whale-kennings with Scyld Scefing, perilousness and doomed empire.³³⁹

The sea and sea faring is an emotive and frequently explored subject in the extant Anglo-Saxon literature and even more so in Old Norse, into which extensive study has already taken place.³⁴⁰ The lesson that spaces can signify, or to use Zink’s phrasing, “bear meaning”, in the same way as animals in literature is clearly the case, and such an

³³⁵ *Beo*, p. 3.; *ASPR*, vol. 2., pp. 3-51

³³⁶ Juliet Mullins, ‘*Herimum in Mari: Anglo-Saxon Attitudes Towards Peregrinatio and the Ideal of the Desert in the Sea*’, in *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Stacy S. Klein and William Schipper (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), pp. 59-73.

³³⁷ Robert Schichler, ‘From Whale-Road to Gannet’s Bath: Images of Foreign Relations and Exchange in *Beowulf*’, *Reading Medieval Studies* 28 (2002), 59-86 (pp. 60-61).

³³⁸ Schichler, ‘From Whale-Road to Gannet’s Bath’, p. 62.

³³⁹ Schichler, ‘From Whale-Road to Gannet’s Bath’, p. 60-1.

³⁴⁰ Marijane Olson, ‘Venturing upon Deep Waters in *The Seafarer*’, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 79.1 (1978), 1-6.

awareness needs to nuance any understanding of medieval geomorphism. This association between the sea and travel is in itself charged with Christian (and more ancient) resonances in Old English poetry. Kinshiro Oshitari writes of the sea in *Beowulf* that “the sea is pregnant with unknown perils”.³⁴¹ The sea is often figuratively read as the *mare vitae* in the *navigatio* form and its danger utilised as a method of placing faith in God in the Irish *peregrinatio* tradition, drawn upon in the *Seafarer*, and indeed, *Patience*.³⁴² In *Andreas*, the sea, described as a whale-mermaid (l.370a) is synonymous with trial. To be on “hro(a)nrad” *whale-road* (l.634a, l.821a) is to follow a path of spiritual tribulation.³⁴³ The association of the sea with the *abyss* and depths of human sinfulness is made explicit by Sebastian Sobiecki’s interpretation of the medieval sea as pre-existing creation: controlled rather than created by God.³⁴⁴ The representation of Leviathan in Job also makes explicit ideas of the Godly control of almost insurmountable power, that would dwarf humans (making them like a mote in a Cathedral door).³⁴⁵

Alfred Hiatt, writing on the thirteenth century Hereford Mappamundi, asserts that “[t]he most monumental of surviving medieval world maps strive for a comprehensiveness of both spatial and temporal signification, frequently linking origin with end by depicting events and personages from Adam and Eve to the Last Judgment.”³⁴⁶ Description of space across time on the scale of epochs, whilst still in relation to human activity, has also emerged in ecocriticism through engagement with concepts of deep time. Timothy Clark’s theory of environment’s resistance to representation argues that environmental change is resistant to narrative because it disrupts an anthropomorphic sense of scale.³⁴⁷ Climate change is perceived to be out of scale to the individual, and large in both space and time. The hyperbolic size of the whale depictions I have discussed seem to similarly defamiliarise the proportions of the humans who come into contact with them in relation to the world, dwarfing them, and emphasising their relative insignificance. In doing so, the whale depictions do not just behave as spaces but also alter human relationship to other

³⁴¹ Kinshiro Oshitari, ‘The Sea in Beowulf’, *Studies in English Literature* 50 (1973), 3-18.

³⁴² Olson, ‘Venturing upon Deep Waters’, p. 2.

³⁴³ *ASPR*, vol. 2., pp. 3-51.

³⁴⁴ Sobiecki, *The Sea*, p. 38.

³⁴⁵ Job, 41:1-34, *Biblia*.

³⁴⁶ Alfred Hiatt, ‘Blank Spaces on the Earth’, *Yale Journal of Criticism: Interpretation in the Humanities* 15 (2002), 223-50.

³⁴⁷ Timothy Clark, ‘Derangements of Scale’, in *Telemorphosis: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, vol. 1, ed. by Tom Cohen (Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2012), pp. 148–66; Farrier, ‘Reading Edward Thomas’.

spaces. Like the worm depictions of Chapter One, the whale depictions in this chapter are geomorphically multivalent.

Despite an accepted idea of God's authority over the earth, and man as the dominant creature in God's image, the non-human world was at the same time often depicted as an uncertain, mysterious, and indeed, largely unknown place. The animal inhabiting the margins was not only a sidelining of the less important non-human concerns and stories. The margins were also border spaces: the empty spaces on maps. In both *Patience* and 'The Whale' hostility towards the human protagonist(s) does not just result from the apparent natural animosity of the whale, both literally as an apex predator and metaphorically as a type of the Devil. The space — the deep and stormy sea — in which they encounter the whale is also hostile. More than this, though (and it is in this that Rudd's earlier outlined specification of medieval wilderness as "otherness" and "mystery incarnate" becomes particularly useful) at the climax of both of these poems) the whale itself literally becomes a hostile space for the human to endure (or be killed in). This sliding then, between whale and sea, between wild animal and wild space, between wildness and wilderness, produces an incarnation of hostile otherness that signifies something more for those non-human objects of the world that are "susceptible to (Adamic) identification and management", becoming — more than a symbol for the Devil — a manifestation of the abyss, and the chaos of primordial evil. Indeed, as Gary D. Schmidt has demonstrated, images of hell mouths increasingly took the form of a whale's jaws in Medieval frescos, sculpture and manuscripts, beginning in private devotional forms but elaborating across more public texts.³⁴⁸ The medieval figuration of hell as devouring jaws, furthermore, strengthens the typological interpretation of Jonah's experience in the whale as a prefiguration of the harrowing of hell.³⁴⁹ The terror of the engulfing abyss, prefigured in the drowning *unlonde* and "the dymme hert [of the depe se]" *the gloomy heart of the deep sea*, lies in the impossibility of its management or even comprehension in anything approaching human terms. My emphasis here is on the *wildness* Rudd finds in medieval wilderness, rather than its cultivatable aspects. A very clear reason for such an emphasis is the relative resistance of sea to cultivation: despite establishment of territory, tradeways, and paths, the sea itself remains unpredictable and dangerous: it is untameable. The collapsing of distinction between animal and environment allows for such

³⁴⁸ Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (London: Associated University Press, 1995), p. 14.

³⁴⁹ Sobecki, *The Sea*, p. 120.; Malcolm Andrew, 'Jonah and Christ in *Patience*', *Modern Philology* 70 (1977), 230-33.

a representation of what I see as 'evil space': the cetacean manifestation of the *abyss*. In the reading of these whale texts the very definition of geomorphism is nuanced by a sense in which the space to which the whales are related in their depiction *already* has some beastly, perhaps even animate connotations, and it is such an association which allows for such easy blurring between whale and sea.

Chapter Three: 'The Ghost Animal'

In this chapter I consider how animal presence constitutes and performs specific spaces, in theatre about animal collections: zoos and zoologically-orientated museums. The previous two chapters looked at the physicality of animate landscapes in poetry: the first at earth-movers and the holes they make in the Exeter book, the second at 'unlondes' — enormous animal islands and animal vessels — in the Medieval sea. Both chapters traced an exchange between the geomorphic animals and the zoomorphic spaces within the material and literary content of their texts. Returning to the considerations of performativity in space as outlined in my introduction, this chapter considers more performance-orientated set of texts. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century theatrical texts, as well as an attendant consideration of film, are the subject of the following two chapters where animals demonstrate geomorphism in a constructed space through their status as the vital elements of that space. Una Chaudhuri notes that, "Even the most powerful animal presences on stage have a hard time resisting [...] symbol[ism] of human behavior and allegories for human preoccupations. So Albee's *Goat* is 'really' (as some people have insisted to me) 'about homosexuality,' just as Ionesco's *pachyderms* are really fascists, O'Neill's hairy ape is really the proletariat, and Peter Shaffer's *Equus* is really a pagan god."³⁵⁰ As Chaudhuri implies, and the following chapters demonstrate, there is more to staged animals than straightforward symbols or stand-ins for "all that is repressed by culture".³⁵¹

Theatre takes place in a fixed and unfixed space which is both living and fictional, making it an ideal arena for exploration of my theoretical questions. Film, by contrast, whilst employing the impact of visual and aural presence, is necessarily technologically mediated. The control of images, ways of looking and spectacle can therefore be more comprehensive in film, through focus, framing, panning, zooming, for example. In this chapter, as well as my final chapter, my engagement with film is intended to support my central interest in how geomorphism can appear in theatre. This chapter reveals the joint responses of fascination and revulsion to geomorphic spaces in the plays studied,

³⁵⁰ Una Chaudhuri, 'Animal Acts for Changing Times', *Hot Review*, Hunter Department of Theater, 2010 <<http://www.hotreview.org/articles/animalacts.htm>> [accessed 24 September 2016].

³⁵¹ Chaudhuri, 'Animals Acts'.

responses to which the greater control of *looking* in cinema naturally has a particular relevance. Bachelard holds that the outer and the inner can be designated only in relation to each other; for me too, like a Möbius strip, inner and outer are continuous in their relationship.³⁵² Theatre, as well as poetry, deepens such a relationship. This is not to say, however, that outer/inner designations—space/agent, character/setting, inner/outer—cease to have meaning. The difference is in emphasis, in how the worlds on the page are read. Evan Horowitz writes that “Literature is largely invisible. Unseen. Unlike film, which relies so heavily on visual images, literature hides its images from the eye. When we read, we see one thing (rows of letters) and visualise another (fictional worlds, poetic imagery, or otherwise). And in that gap there is a great deal of aesthetic power.”³⁵³ Horowitz sees this power come to potency in the adaptation of monsters from novel to film, focusing particularly on the play of perception in Rouben Mamoulian's 1932 adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde*. As Horowitz explores, visibility comes in many forms, and repeatedly he finds in the adaptations he reads, even as images are present to the audience, a “shared” experience. As he explains, the invisible imaginings of the mind’s eye nonetheless impinge on film’s narrative, and remind the viewer that the act of looking, like reading, is an interdependent and beginning-less coalescing of the (external) subject and (internal) how the subject is seen. Geomorphic animals in film texts on a wider scale are of course a fertile and valid arena for exploration, but not within my chosen scope here.³⁵⁴ Drawing on, rather than following, a number of recent theatre critics who discuss the implications and contributions made by real animals on stage, I focus on fictionalised and performed animal presences in zoos, through description, image, object, puppetry, and other forms of theatre and film craft.³⁵⁵

Theatre is a live encounter in a shared space between audience and actors. This also includes any other beings who happen to intrude on that theatre space — mice, rats, flies,

³⁵² Bachelard, *Poetics*, p. 212.

³⁵³ Evan Horowitz, ‘Literary Invisibility’, *New Literary History* 45 (2014), 463-482 (p. 463).

³⁵⁴ For work on the reading of animals in film see, for example, Randy Malamud, *Reading Zoos: Representations of Animals and Captivity* (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1998); Jonathan Burt, *Animals in Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002); Catherine Simpson, ‘Australian Eco-Horror and Gaia’s Revenge: Animals, Eco-Nationalism and the “New Nature”’, *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 4.1 (2010), 43-54.; Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, ‘Animal Ontologies and Media Representations: Robotics, Puppets, and the Real of War Horse’, *Theatre Journal* 65 (2013), 373-393 (p. 384); Colin Gardner, ‘Out of the Labyrinth, into the Métro: Becoming-Animal, the Waking Dream and Movements of World in Raymond Queneau and Louis Malle’s *Zazie dans le Métro*’, in *The Animal Catalyst: Towards Ahuman Theory*, ed. by Patricia MacCormack (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 81-90.

³⁵⁵ See, for example, Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Lourdes Orozco, *Theatre & Animals* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jane R. Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002); Special Issue: ‘On Animals’, ed. by Alan Read, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 5.2 (2000).

woodlice perhaps: any number of that group of non-human species who occupy domestic spaces incidentally to the purpose of those spaces as designated by humans— such as the appearance of an unexpected mouse in a 2001 production of Harold Pinter’s *The Caretaker* discussed by Nicholas Ridout.³⁵⁶ Like Carl Lavery, I find the ecocritical impact of theatre to be in “its immanent capacity for affecting bodies, individually and collectively.”³⁵⁷ Whilst Lavery comments in response to the potentially activist contributions of theatre to ecocritical concerns, my particular interest comes from considering how animals, in their capacity as bodies and agencies, may affect fictionalised space that is staged in the present moment. Theatre is a paradoxically immediate form of mediation. As David Williams observes, an animal on stage creates a face-to-face encounter.³⁵⁸

While theatre is a live encounter within a performance space co-created by both the performers and their audience, there are also a number of other spaces that have a theatre dynamic.³⁵⁹ Examples might include a range of public spaces like zoos, aquariums, market-places, pet-shops, race courses, circuses, dog-tracks, or bull-rings; more privately controlled spaces like private menageries, laboratories, veterinary surgeries; as well as less institutionalised, illegal or clandestine spaces for cultural activities such as bull-running, bull-fighting and dog or cock-fights.³⁶⁰ Because they are enclosed and framed, animal exhibitions straddle a division between actor and scene. Zoos are therefore both a display space and a contact space: the live exhibition of animals to (human) animals, housed in artificial habitats with labels and pathways for the navigation of visitors. Like Derek Lee Barton, who theorises that the goal of the production and consumption of nature exhibits [in zoos] is “to recapture a pastoral, pre-industrial, inviolate nature,”³⁶¹ I would argue that zoos are a type of stage, particularly if it is recognised that to be put on stage is not always a consensual occurrence.³⁶² Many zoos explicitly put on shows of the animals. ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, for example, includes a ‘Lemur Breakfast’, ‘Birds of the

³⁵⁶ Ridout, *Stage Fright*, p. 95.

³⁵⁷ ‘Performance and Ecology: What Can Theatre Do?’, ed. by Carl Lavery, *Green Letters* 20 (2016), p. 230.

³⁵⁸ David Williams, ‘Performing Animal, Becoming Animal’, in *Body Show/s: Australian Viewings of Live Performance*, ed. by P. Tait (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 44–59 (pp. 55-56).

³⁵⁹ ‘theatre | theater, n.’, *OED*.

³⁶⁰ see also, Chaudhuri, ‘Animal Geographies’, pp. 103-4.

³⁶¹ Barton, *Staging Nature*, Diss., p. 12. Here Barton, as he notes, engages with the idea of performance as “restored behaviour” put forward by Richard Schechner. See Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 28.

³⁶² See, for example, Steve Baker, *Artist/Animal*.

World' and 'Farm Animal Demonstration' on its daily running schedule, in which visitors are invited closer to or to interact with animals.³⁶³

The performance inherent in zoo life is furthermore drawn to the surface, and complicated, by theatre projects taking place within zoos, such as, for example, Baz Kershaw and Sandra Reeve's 2005 creative performance-as-research project "Being in Between" in Bristol Zoological Gardens. This project, about "[t]wo trans-humans, not quite sure who or what they might be, [...] stranded on a seductive zoo-garden island populated by fascinating creatures", which, through outdoor theatre, movement and dance, music and interacting with the audience, sought to underline the symmetry between primate species and specifically between zoo-visitors and zoo-inhabiters as present to perform for each other in equal measure.³⁶⁴ The repeat performances were embedded in the goings-on of the zoo to avoid deliberately drawing spectators' "attention away from [the] amazing creatures"; they were located at four primate enclosures, "— black-headed spider monkey, lowland gorillas, mongoose lemurs, owl monkeys."³⁶⁵ Kershaw explains how, over three days, "lengthening, and apparently interactive, movement sequences developing between the monkeys, apes and human performers [...] co-primate 'dances'."³⁶⁶ Kershaw's use of 'dance' here is in its most communicative and theatrical capacity: participants choosing to join in with the patterns of movements of others. What was communicated cannot be clear, but such performance (by both actors and other primates) indicates the unpredictability and development of encounters: over time some of the simians chose to interact with the performers. The clearest implication here, I think, is that the performers were being watched by the exhibits as well as by the visitors.

The interest of zoos to the exploration of geomorphism is that they are spaces which are nominally constructed around the presence of living animals, as suggested in the Introduction. Rather than locating wild animals in "the wild", zoos frame real animals, animals whose homes are the habitats and exhibits within which they live, within the theatrical construction of spectacle. The bodies of the acting humans and exhibited

³⁶³ 'ZSL Whipsnade Zoo daily activities', *ZSL Whipsnade Zoo*, The Zoological Society of London <<https://www.zsl.org/zsl-whipsnade-zoo/visitor-information/zoo-activities>> [accessed 23 September 2016].

³⁶⁴ 'Being In Between', *Bristol Zoo*, October 2005 <http://www.moveintolife.com/uploads/1/3/9/6/13969833/4506778_orig.jpg?0> [accessed 23 December].

³⁶⁵ Baz Kershaw, "'This is the way the world ends, not ...?': On Performance Compulsion and Climate Change", *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 17.4 (2012), 5-17 (p. 9).

³⁶⁶ Kershaw, 'This is the way the world ends', pp. 9-10.

animals enter into a cultural system of representation —in the case of zoos the animals are present both as themselves and as representatives of a species or indeed an “other” or exotic place, often framed through the use of explanatory text. French film-maker Alain Fleischer claimed that “[y]ou don’t go to a zoo to see a lion, but rather to see a *mise en promiscuité* of African lions, polar bears, Bengal tigers, Australia kangaroos.”³⁶⁷ Crowding, almost in a candy shop-like array, is crucial to Fleischer’s conception of zoos, which disrupts any received hierarchy of animals, or orders of knowledge associated with that hierarchy. Zoos and theatre both combine liveness and immediacy with a constructed consideration of display. In this way a zoo is comparable to the careful and artificial construction of wilderness which I explored in my introduction, in which the cultivation of wildness as simultaneously marvellous and also associated with pleasure and leisure was indicated.³⁶⁸ A zoo of apparently wild animals separates them from wild places but frames them, often through educational labelling, as though they still represent their species’ wild habitats. As has been discussed in relation to cultivated wilderness, King notes the increasing overlapping of aesthetics and scientific exploration of the natural world in her study of Hogarth, which is also an epistemological exchange that implicitly informs the history of zoos.³⁶⁹

Una Chaudhuri asserts that in Western culture, from the eighteenth century onward, a new animal discourse was diligently constructed, “within which the zoo eventually emerged as an exemplary site of serious, even scientific public knowledge about the natural world.”³⁷⁰ Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart suggest that, as a result of this, theatre, like traditional science, can be understood to frame the spectator as a “separate cogito surveying and dominating what is now ‘nature’ as object”. They qualify this statement by noting that, at the same time, theatre and other staging practices can also overturn this position of surveillance, and in doing so evaluate their own limitations “as apparatuses of visual representation”.³⁷¹ This “animal discourse” has also historically

³⁶⁷ Alain Fleischer quoted in Chris Dercon, *Theatergarden Bestiarum: the Garden as Theatre as Museum*, trans. by Bruno Groeneveld (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990), p. 19.

³⁶⁸ See Introduction, pp. 14-17.

³⁶⁹ King, *Bloom*, pp. 91-92.

³⁷⁰ Una Chaudhuri, ‘Zoo Stories: “Boundary-Work” in Theatre History’, in *Redefining Theatre History*, ed. by W.B. Worthen and Peter Holland (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 136-150 (p. 137).

³⁷¹ *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*, ed. by Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 35. On the link between vision, display and cruelty, see Jonathan Burt, ‘The Illumination of the Animal Kingdom: The Role of Light and Electricity in Animal Representation’, *Society and Animals*, 9.3 (2001), 203–228.

involved humans, in, for example, the racist European science of the nineteenth century. Exhibit A (later Exhibit B), a piece by conceptual theatre artist Brett Bailey, which dramatised a human zoo, recently shed new light on this historic, dehumanising cultural practice by seeking to perform and subvert it using a group of actors.³⁷² “Exhibit B”, created by the South African playwright and installation artist Brett Bailey, is a travelling live art installation about the colonial “human zoos” of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The installation travelled a circuit of European countries, drawing many thousands of visitors, and faced anti-racism protests and eventually cancellation in London and Paris in late 2014.³⁷³ Jason Kehe wrote of the experience that, “living, breathing African men and women were on display, complete with info placards explaining their origins in dehumanizing, scientific terms [...] Every time you looked one of the ‘specimens’ in the eye, you would confront a fierce, incriminating, desperately sad look back.”³⁷⁴ Bailey insisted on the actors performing this power of gaze, “victimiz[ing] the spectator as [Bailey] empowers the spectacle. As he told his actors during rehearsal: “You are the audience, they are the performers.”³⁷⁵ In a far more visceral and devastating manner than the “co-primate dances” of Kershaw and Reeves’s “Being-in-Between”, Exhibit B emphasises that to visit, to look is also to perform: those who come to a zoo are also on display.

Increasingly in recent literary and cultural criticism, zoos have been the subject of ground-breaking pieces of criticism as well as practice-as-research projects.³⁷⁶ Stephen Spotte’s analysis of the semiotic workings of zoos (including both zoological gardens and public aquariums in this category) suggests that there can also be many practical similarities between zoos and theatre. He suggests that the use of backdrops and lighting

³⁷² Daisy Wyatt, ‘Exhibit B ‘human zoo’ Show Cancelled by the Barbican Following Campaigner Protest’, *The Independent*, 24 September 2014 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/exhibit-b-human-zoo-show-cancelled-by-the-barbican-following-protest-9753519.html>> [accessed 23 December 2016].

³⁷³ Doreen Carvajal, ‘On Display, and on a Hot Seat: ‘Exhibit B’, a Work About Human Zoos, Stirs Protests’, *The New York Times*, 25 November 2014 <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/26/arts/exhibit-b-a-work-about-human-zoos-stirs-protests.html?_r=0> [accessed Thursday 31st March 2016].; Hugh Muir, ‘Slavery Exhibition Featuring Black Actors Chained in Cages Shut Down’, *The Guardian*, 24 September 2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/sep/24/slavery-exhibition-black-actors-cages-shut-down>> [accessed Thursday 31st March 2016].

³⁷⁴ Jason Kehe, ‘Cultural Exchange: “Exhibit A” at National Arts Festival Stirs Emotion Through Racism’, *Special to the Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 2012 <articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/28> [accessed 22 Dec 2016].

³⁷⁵ Kehe, ‘Cultural Exchange: “Exhibit A”’.

³⁷⁶ See ‘Animal Geographies: Zooësis and the Space of Modern Drama’, *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*, ed. by Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart (Berne: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 103-18.; Baz Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).; Baz Kershaw, ‘Dancing with Monkeys? On Performance Commons and Scientific Experiments’, in *Readings in Performance and Ecology*, ed. by Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 59-76.

to frame zoo exhibits resembles the staging strategies used in theatre. He argues that the decoration is largely for the benefit of the spectators and suggests that, as a result of these considerations, zoos share with theatre a “notion of dramatic place.”³⁷⁷ As Spotte acknowledges, though zoo enclosures can be analogous to the locus dramaticus, animals do not translate so easily.³⁷⁸ The disturbing quality of zoos, he suggests, is about the presentation of the animals themselves “in real time”, therefore disrupting their framing as objects of enquiry or interest.³⁷⁹ They are not the same kind of actors as humans, Richard Schechner, for example, suggests that animals do not perform the ironic exchange between the self as performer and performing self generated by the acted role.³⁸⁰ Animals too, can be perceived as failing to perform, and frustrate the spectators by not being sufficiently present or interesting: there are stories of animals being disturbed or even killed by impatient visitors in an attempt to provoke reactions or more interesting movement. Marc Bekoff, for example, argues that a high proportion of zoo visitors taunt or otherwise mistreat the animals they encounter.³⁸¹

In a zoo, too, there are dynamics of the theatrical, on a simplistic level: the zoo-visitors come to see the animals, to see what they do, perhaps to connect with them, sometimes producing behaviour which varies in its level of aggression such as talking to or shouting at animals, tapping on glass enclosures or throwing things. This exchange need not, and perhaps should not, be configured as unidirectional. The animals of a zoo observe their visitors and their behaviour and can choose to attempt to connect with particular individuals. Though John Berger has famously argued that “nowhere in a zoo can a stranger encounter the look of an animal [...] They have been immunised to encounter”, the continued experiences of visitors zoos defy this assertion.³⁸² Though a zoo necessitates enclosures and separations to divide up different animal habitats and to enact separation between humans and animals for the safety of both and the captivity of the latter, the assumption that the animals therefore always maintain their critical distance from humans is not borne out in the experience of actual zoo-goers. Events at the

³⁷⁷ Stephen Spotte, *Zoos in Postmodernism: Signs and Simulation* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), pp. 95-96.

³⁷⁸ Spotte, *Zoos in Postmodernism*, pp. 96-100.

³⁷⁹ Spotte, *Zoos in Postmodernism*, p. 91.

³⁸⁰ Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York, London: Routledge, 1988), p. 225; p. 248.

³⁸¹ Marc Bekoff, *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footprint* (San Francisco: New World Library, 2010), p. 162. On this subject see also Malamud, *Reading Zoos*.

³⁸² John Berger, ‘Why Look At Animals?’, in *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 26.

Cincinnati Zoo in May 2016 in which a four-year-old child fell into a gorilla exhibit, resulting, tragically, in the shooting of a West Lowland Gorilla named Harambe after he picked up and dragged the child, show that these boundaries are not absolute or impermeable.³⁸³ They can be broken, wilfully or accidentally, with unpredictable results. In 1986, for example, when a five-year-old boy fell into the Gorilla Enclosure at Jersey Zoo, Jambo, a male Silverback Gorilla, guarded the unconscious body from the curiosity of the other gorillas until the boy was retrieved. A video of the incident is held online by Brian Le Lion, who writes of the incident, “[I]ttle was I to know how the video I took would change the public’s perception of the species dispelling the ‘King Kong’ theory.”³⁸⁴ This comment suggests how the genre-based literary associations of animals can shape human perception during live encounters, and, crucially, vice versa. These two gorillas gave very different responses to a child breaking the boundary between visitor space and gorilla space; there can be no way of saying exactly how individual animals alter their behaviour or perception according to their living in zoo captivity, but it seems impossible for the terms of any accidental encounter to be controlled.³⁸⁵ Captive animal presence as an imperative part of zoo space therefore ensures both an atmosphere of controlled taxonomy *and* unpredictability.

In art too, contact between visitor and exhibit is unpredictable. Alongside critical work, in recent decades, there has been a large number of creative responses to zoos. Some focus particularly on the troubling slippage, and history, of the drawing of human/animal, and viewer/object, distinctions in zoo-creation. *The Giraffe* (1995), for example, a novel originally written in French by Marie Nimier, tells the story of a keeper at Vincennes Zoo, Paris, who falls in love with a kept giraffe, Solange, and then in jealous passion kills her mate, another captive giraffe.³⁸⁶ In Jon Amiel’s 2009 film *Creation*, a biographical drama about Darwin’s completion of *On the Origin of Species* and his relationship with his family, the story of Jenny, an orang-utan brought to the London Zoo, forms the basis for one of the defining moments, and images of the film — the primate

³⁸³ The child survived with minor injuries.

³⁸⁴ Brian Le Lion, ‘Jambo at Jersey Zoo in 1986’, *Brian Le Lion*, online <<http://lelion.co.uk>> [accessed 2 July 2016].

³⁸⁵ For more on primate behaviour see G. Hosey and P. Druck, ‘The Influence of Zoo Visitors on the Behavior of Captive Primates’, *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 18 (1987), 19-29. For zoo behaviour in general see D. Marcellini and T. A. Jensen, ‘Visitor Behavior in the National Zoo’s Reptile House’, *Zoo Biology* 7 (1988), 329-38.; Bob Mullan and Gary Marvin, *Zoo Culture: The Book About Watching People Watch Animals*, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998).; D. L. Rhoads and R. J. Goldsworthy, ‘The Effects of Zoo Environments on Public Attitudes Toward Endangered Wildlife’, *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 13 (1979), 283-87.

³⁸⁶ Marie Nimier, *The Giraffe*, trans. by Mary Feeney (London: Headline, 1996).

reaching out a hand to touch the tip of Darwin's finger (played by Paul Bettany). Darwin did visit Jenny, the first orang-utan at London Zoo, on several occasions, and though this particular scene is invented, Jenny is mentioned a number of times in his notebooks, playing with sticks, Darwin's handkerchiefs and interacting with humans "like a child".³⁸⁷ (Darwin's experience of orang-utan behaviour seems to have been important in his consolidation of humans as simply animals, indicated by his infamous comparison of the intelligent, affectionate expression of orang-utans with "the ['naked, artless'] savage").³⁸⁸ This scene of *Creation* alludes visually to Michelangelo's famous *Creation of Adam* reflecting the film's concern with Darwin's religious anxiety about *Origin*, which added the mechanism of evolution to the scientific weight against the Church's dogma that the earth was created in its current state only thousands of years ago.³⁸⁹ In this scene there is the important difference that, rather than preserving the significant inch of space between the fingers of God and Adam, Darwin and Jenny actually make physical contact; unlike Michelangelo's work there is no connotation of hierarchy or hesitant creation moment. The contact here is a farewell, not an act of inception as in Michelangelo's painting. This is the moment when Darwin attempts to say goodbye as he leaves Jenny's cage, and, as the framing device for this scene is a later Darwin telling a story to his daughter, it is the last moment she is seen. In comparing the film still and the section of "Creation of Adam", however, though the similarity of haptic gesture is powerful: as outlined, there are geomorphic differences revealed through attention to genre and staging between this film and painting. Behind Darwin (Bettany) and Jenny (Orang-utan) there are bars, of the cage in which Darwin and Jenny sit, and of the cages behind them housing other primates. The God and Adam of Michelangelo's painting float free, sky-bound, literally, by the situation of the painting on the ceiling, necessitating that spectators look up to view it.³⁹⁰ The bars, on the other hand, mark incarceration but also a permeable space of negotiation, into which Darwin enters not only as scientific spectator but as guest. The

³⁸⁷ DO-N [accessed 28 December 2016], p. 13.: "8th October [...] Jenny was amusing herself by getting out ears of corn with her teeth from the straw, & just like child not knowing what to do with them, came several times & opened my hand, & put them in".

³⁸⁸ DO-C, p. 79.

³⁸⁹ Michelangelo di Ludovico Buonarroti Simoni, *Creation of Adam*, c. 1511, fresco, 280 × 570 cm, Sistine Chapel, Rome.

³⁹⁰ For further discussion of the physical context of this painting see Robin Richmond, *Michelangelo & the Creation of the Sistine Chapel* (London: Barrie & Jenkins in association with Belitha Press, 1992).; for discussion of aesthetic and allegory see Paul Barolsky, 'Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" and the Aesthetics of Theology', *Notes in the History of Art* 20.4 (2001), 9-11.; and Paul Barolsky, 'The Genius of Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" and the Blindness of Art History', *Notes in the History of Art* 33.1 (2013), 21-24.

territory seems then to be that of the caged primates, including Jenny; their presence (though it is involuntary captivity) defines the space, a space in which an important realisation about the link between man and primate apparently occurs within the narrative of the film. The hands of both actors meet in similar form and apparently similar intention: recalling Fudge's "dance of relating" in their communication, implying an understanding of *each other* that makes Jenny more than a scientific object.

Creation narrates a life story from a time at which fundamental beliefs and scientific consensus about the nature and age of the planet, and the human place within it, had undergone and continued to undergo the pressure of revision and change. In *The Earth on Show*, Ralph O'Connor examines how scientific advances in the nineteenth century understanding of geological history were imaginatively represented and dramatised as narrative spectacle for "an audience hungry for simulations of distant objects."³⁹¹ By the late nineteenth century the development of "a rhetoric of spectacular display" amongst geological writers in the years before 1830 had produced, through promotion of geology among a wider middle-class readership, "panoramic visions of the ancient earth [that] blended human, sacred, and natural history to point towards a single cosmic pageant, dimly discerned behind the visible universe."³⁹² O'Connor asserts that nineteenth-century literary culture embraced science writing as an integral genre of literature.³⁹³ The necessity of constructing visions of nature, and indeed understandings of the world as a whole, underpins O'Connor's work on this period. Furthermore, the zoo as a site of transformative vision, or as a site in which such a vision fails to be obtained, is another uniting concern of the plays studied in this chapter.

I argue that animal collection is just such a crafting process: the extracting of animals, dead or alive, and planting them in artificial space, made for and made up of animals.³⁹⁴ 'Planting' is a word deliberately chosen here for its duality of meaning: the *OED* records that a zoo is "a garden or park in which wild animals are kept for public exhibition" and notes the etymological journey of this word from "the gardens of the London Zoological Society, situated in Regent's Park, London, in which the society's

³⁹¹ Ralph O'Connor, *The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science, 1802-1856* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 26-27.

³⁹² O'Connor, *The Earth on Show*, p. 27.

³⁹³ O'Connor, *The Earth on Show*, p. 13.

³⁹⁴ Benjamin Schmidt has discussed palm tree imagery as pervasively symbolic of "a vaguely situated generically tropical culture". Benjamin Schmidt, 'Collecting Global Icons: The Case of the Exotic Parasol', in *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchange in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. by Daniela Bleichmar and Peter Mancall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 31-57.

collection of wild animals is housed”. ‘Zoological Gardens’ was formerly abbreviated in colloquial use as ‘the Zoological’, and later further shortened to ‘the Zoo’.³⁹⁵ Paris’s Jardin des Plantes also maintains this horticultural origin, both in its name and its history. Lisa Gates notes that in an anonymous painting of 1798 depicting the famous planting of a Lebanese cedar tree in 1734, (my emphasis) “a group of astonished onlookers gaze at the small sapling, a camel looks on from the background, *completely unnoticed*. The camel — not slated to arrive at the zoo until the next century — becomes a harbinger of things to come.”³⁹⁶ Gates points out that the unseen camel (or, perhaps, camelopard)³⁹⁷ in the painting is symbolic of the fact that exotic animals have not yet been “seen” or rather, exhibited to the public in this setting.³⁹⁸ The camel in the painting is non-diegetic: present from the perspective of the painting’s viewer, but absent as far as the depicted spectators are concerned. Painted in a year in which a campaign was underway in earnest to bring animals into the Jardin, the implication of such a painting is that the garden visitors ‘ain’t seen nothing yet’, that the camel, as an exotic animal, is even more marvellous than the exotic tree. An indication of corresponding potential fervour is in Shepherd-Barr’s discussion of the parade of a camelopard, one of two baby giraffes given as gifts by Egypt to the king of France and the king of England: “[t]he cameleopard was all the more breathtaking because it was the first living specimen the public had seen of a giraffe — hence the pomp surrounding its arrival [...] The reporter notes that since its arrival ‘more than 10000 persons have been to view it’ [...] Such vivid reports were fodder for the theatre. A few months later, in October 1827, an extravaganza called *The Giraffe; or, The Cameleopard* was performed at Sadler’s Wells.”³⁹⁹

As discussed in my introduction, a garden implies a cultivation of the natural or wild.⁴⁰⁰ A more naturalistic enclosure has clear implications for the needs of the animal inside it, but this is not necessarily the only consideration, as Spotte implies. A zoo’s penguins, for example, are expected to be presented in an enclosure that, as well as water, has white scenery that necessarily mimics ice in appearance only. This provokes a question similar to one asked of this topic at “Looking”, a meeting of the British Animal Studies

³⁹⁵ ‘zoo, n.’, *OED*

³⁹⁶ Lisa Gates, ‘Rilke and Orientalism: Another Kind of Zoo Story’, *New German Critique* 68 (1996), 61-77 (p. 68).

³⁹⁷ ‘camelopard, n.’, *OED*.

³⁹⁸ Gates, ‘Rilke and Orientalism’, p. 69.

³⁹⁹ Shepherd-Barr, *Theatre and Evolution*, p. 27.

⁴⁰⁰ See Introduction, pp. 16-17.

Network: “who is the scenery for?”⁴⁰¹ Though anecdotal, the question points to animal habitats needing to perform the functions of containing, supporting and particularly framing the animals inside.⁴⁰² Ted Finlay’s study of zoo environments in the late 1980s explores zoo spaces at a time when “zoo exhibits range[d] from small, barred, prisonlike cages to open expanses of natural terrain.” Robert Sommer’s claim that “the sight of caged animals does not engender respect for animals”,⁴⁰³ whilst not universally applicable, nevertheless draws attention to the idea that the zoo space may have more influence on contact with an animal than the animal itself.

I argue that the following four twentieth-century plays and a film most profoundly exploit the dynamics of zoo as theatre and in so doing demonstrate the role of the geomorphic animal. I discuss stage and film representations of animal collections – zoos, and to a lesser extent the institutional hinterland of museums – specifically in the plays, Eugene O’Neill’s *The Hairy Ape* (1922); Edward Albee’s *The Zoo Story* (1958); Terry Johnson’s *Cries From the Mammal House* (1984); the film, Peter Greenaway’s *A Zed & Two Noughts* (1985); and Robin French’s *Gilbert is Dead* (2009). Like Jerry in Edward Albee’s *The Zoo Story*, who explains that [he] “went to the zoo to find out more about the way people exist with animals”, I examine the depiction of the immediacy of zoo experience in relation, or sometimes opposition, to their professed purpose of collecting and preserving animal lives.⁴⁰⁴ Each uses the dramatic locus of zoo-space to express a moment (or life, in the case of French and Johnson) of deep, raw, simmering frustration. Preservation, for Johnson and French, for example, sits uneasily with living. Rather than sharing a historical moment, these plays share a probing of the reality or fictionality of zoos and the animal-human encounters that play out within them, within wider narratives of disillusionment. Anne, wife of the zoo’s current owner, states in the opening monologue of *Cries From the Mammal House*, “[w]e sit in our enclosures, our horizons painted on glass”.⁴⁰⁵ Death is a recurrent theme in these plays as it is, along with preservation and frustration, in zoos.

⁴⁰¹ ‘Looking’, *BASN*, Spring 2013, Friday 26 April and Saturday 27 April 2013, in the McCance Building, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow <<http://www.britishanimalstudiesnetwork.org.uk/PastMeetings/Looking.aspx>>

⁴⁰² See, for example, Ted Finlay, ‘People’s Perception of Animals: The Influence of Zoo Environments’, *Environment and Behavior* 20 (1988), 508-28.

⁴⁰³ Robert Sommer, ‘What Do We Learn at the Zoo?’, *Natural History* 81.7 (1972), 26-29; 84-85 (p. 26), quoted in Finlay, ‘People’s Perception of Animals’, p. 509.

⁴⁰⁴ Edward Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, in *The Zoo Story and Other Plays* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962), p. 135.

⁴⁰⁵ Terry Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, in *Plays: One*, ed. by Rob Ritchie (London, Methuen: 1993), pp. 137-209 (p. 139).

In *The Hairy Ape*, a play that troublingly merges class and evolutionary themes, a physically powerful but brutish labourer called Yank searches for a sense of belonging in a world controlled by the rich. The play draws on expressionism for its powerful scenes of workers' coal-stoking and the blunt, grunting laughter of the fore-castle scenes, as well as for the extravagant display of Fifth Avenue, populated by the marionette-like rich and wealthy. Yank repeatedly adopts the gesture of Rodin's 'The Thinker' at points throughout the play. The first four scenes take place on a cruise ship in which Yank is one of the coal stokers deep in the engine room. A rich girl visiting the stokehold, Mildred Douglas, is so shocked by Yank's appearance that she calls him a "filthy beast" and faints. Though he is proud of his work, these words haunt Yank and he undergoes a crisis of identity which takes him to Fifth Avenue and results in his arrest after attacking a wealthy gentleman. Whilst in Blackwell's Island prison for the crime the bars puzzle Yank causing him to draw out the similarity between jail and zoo: "(Suddenly starting as if awakening from a dream, reaches out and shakes the bar – aloud to himself, wonderingly) Steel. Dis de zoo, huh?"⁴⁰⁶ During his sentence Yank hears about the IWW, a leftist worker's union, which he seeks out upon release, only to be rejected by them on suspicion of espionage when he says he wants to blow things up. The last scene takes place in the monkey house at the Zoo in the twilight of the next day. O'Neill specifies that:

[o]ne spot of clear gray light falls on the front of one cage so that the interior can be seen. The other cages are vague, shrouded in shadow from which chatterings pitched in a conversational tone can be heard. On the one cage[:] a sign from which the word 'gorilla' stands out.⁴⁰⁷

When Yank enters a chorus of "angry chattering and screeching" immediately breaks out. The gorilla "turns his eyes but makes no sound or move."⁴⁰⁸ Yank approaches the gorilla with fraternal openness who, played by a human actor, first appears in the attitude of Rodin's 'The Thinker'. Yank seems to see his own likeness in the gorilla's bodily form, saying, with genuine admiration: "Some chest yuh got [...] I bet yuh got a punch in eider fist dat'd knock 'em all silly! [...] [*The gorilla, as if he understood, stands upright, swelling out his chest and pounding on it with his fist. YANK grins sympathetically.*]"⁴⁰⁹ Chest-pounding, whilst a famous and stereotyped animalistic gesture, is also, however, a demonstration of aggression and dominance amongst gorillas. Yank frees the "gigantic" animal from its

⁴⁰⁶ Eugene O'Neill, 'The Hairy Ape', in *Early Plays*, ed. by Jeffrey H. Richards (New York: Penguin, 2001), p. 407.

⁴⁰⁷ O'Neill, 'The Hairy Ape', p. 423.

⁴⁰⁸ O'Neill, 'The Hairy Ape', p. 423.

⁴⁰⁹ O'Neill, 'The Hairy Ape', p. 424.

cage and it kills him in a crushing embrace. Yank dies in the animal's cage to a frenzied chorus from the other primates in the Monkey House.

In *The Zoo Story*, two characters, Peter and Jerry, meet when Jerry approaches Peter on a park bench in Central Park (New York), announces that he has “been to the zoo”, and engages Peter in a rambling prefatory conversation to the story of what happened there. The zoo in this play is entirely conjured through Jerry's story-telling, and is pushed to the margins by Jerry's central story of the dog. It is important in this play as a framing device and as an institution of intra- and interspecies interaction. The two men have very different backgrounds. Peter is a middle-class publishing executive with a wife, two daughters, two cats and two parakeets. Jerry is an isolated and disheartened loner living in a boarding-house. He gradually interrogates Peter and tells him stories about his life, and particularly his attempts to win the affection of, and then subsequently to kill, his landlady's menacing dog. He calls this narration ‘The Story of Jerry and The Dog’. Eventually Peter tries to leave. Jerry begins pushing Peter off the bench and challenges him to fight for his territory. Jerry pulls out a knife which he then drops to the ground for Peter. When Peter holds the knife defensively, Jerry charges him and impales himself on it. Bleeding to death, Jerry finishes his zoo story by bringing it into the immediate present: “Could I have planned all this. No... no, I couldn't have. But I think I did.”⁴¹⁰ A horrified Peter runs away and Jerry dies.

Cries From the Mammal House consists of three acts alternating between a bankrupt and rotting private zoo in England and the island of Mauritius. David, who has returned to the zoo for their father's funeral, is brother to Alan, an embittered vet, whom he finds consumed by self-pity in the midst of the decrepit zoo, which their father has sold to a South African cartel. Alan's wife, Anne, really in love with David, is enraged by her husband's paralysis: she gave up her career as a psychotherapist when she fell in love with Alan, a patient. Their teenage daughter, Sally, is preoccupied with animal matings and wants her boyfriend Mick to enact them with her, but refuses all attempts at traditional human sex: she simulates being a praying mantis by holding a knife to his throat, for example. In the second act David leaves for Mauritius, where he intends to breed and so save the endangered pink pigeon. The pink pigeons, however, apparently refuse to mate. The people he meets include lovers, Nirad and Lei, who unsuccessfully seek approval for their union from Lei's parents and beg David to help them leave Mauritius for a new life in England; Victor, who believes in voodoo; Mr. Palmer, an eccentric English overseer,

⁴¹⁰ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, p. 137.

and his racist, ostentatiously Christian wife; and finally the mysterious Ngema, who not only finds David his pink pigeons but also leads him to an unhopd-for discovery of the dodo, still living, in the jungle. In the third act, Alan administers a lethal injection to the remaining animals in the zoo and admits to Anne that he saw his father abuse his teenage granddaughter (Sally) in the mammal house and did nothing to stop him. He then kills himself using the syringe. On their arrival at the zoo, Nirad, Lei and Victor find Anne and Sally liberated and preparing to leave. David's arrival with the dodo brings a vague sense of hope for the dead zoo, and, it is implied, potentially for the people whose lives it touched. Palmer speaks the final words of the play standing in a spotlight: "And today, well spent,/ Will make all yesterdays a dream of happiness,/ And all tomorrows an ecstasy of hope./ Thus is the salutation of the dawn."⁴¹¹ The play entertains the powerful notion of reversing extinction, a theme popular in films such as Stephen Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993) as well as a prominent concern in the narrative arc of *Gilbert is Dead*, the final play to be considered here.

Gilbert is Dead is not strictly set in a zoo, but rather in a private museum. The stage direction for the first scene resonates, nonetheless, with an interplay of dead, drawn, stuffed and imagined animals similar to the dynamics of *Cries From the Mammal House*: "As many stuffed animals as possible. Weird and wonderful wildlife from all corners of the globe stare eerily out at us."⁴¹² The play interweaves scenes in London following Lucius Trickett, London's most celebrated taxidermist, mourning for his dead wife, and his inventive but socially-isolated daughter Lucille, with increasingly surreal scenes relating the exploits of Gilbert Shirley, an invented explorer who 'writes' to Lucius (the author is really Lucille). Gilbert Shirley, a hero of Queen Victoria, determined to disprove Darwin's theory of evolution by securing a specimen of the mysterious ghost loris, a creature suicidal enough to disprove the theory that every animal struggles for survival: "In one moment they view their future clearly, and they let go of the branches."⁴¹³ Lucille, whose main social encounters in the play are tense verbal spats with her maid, is taken to stay with friends of the family, and then cruelly left out on the snowy balcony at a dance by the eldest son, her wheelchair freezing to its surface. Lucius reveals the ghost loris, a tiny stuffed specimen, to his friend Meriwether and explains Gilbert's letters and what they mean both for Darwin's theory and Lucius's faith and will to live. On her return to the

⁴¹¹ Johnson, 'Cries From the Mammal House', p. 209.

⁴¹² Robin French, *Gilbert is Dead* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009), p. 5.

⁴¹³ French, *Gilbert*, p. 25.

museum Lucille confronts her father (“you left me to rot”⁴¹⁴) and confesses that she herself wrote the letters as an attempt to connect with him. He attacks her in rage, and she kills herself using her taxidermist’s arsenic paste.

In *A Zed & Two Noughts* Oswald and Oliver Deuce, brothers and zoologists, lose their wives in a strange car accident involving a large swan driven by a woman named Alba Bewick. Alba survives but loses her leg and pregnancy in the process. The brothers, it emerges are really twins, and furthermore were born conjoined, and the film tracks a gradually regained closeness between them as they struggle through their grief to come to terms with human mortality. They spend time with Alba, and her young daughter, Beta, soon becoming Alba’s lovers, and eventually fathering her twins. The zoo is run by mercenary characters such as Plate and Van Hoyten, who apparently occasionally kill or allow the zoo animals to be surgically altered or killed. It is owned by the mysterious amputee Felipe Arc-en-Ciel, and frequented by the sex-worker and short story writer Venus de Milo. Spliced into the film at regular intervals are non-diegetic, and very occasionally diegetic, time-lapses of the decay photography that Oliver and Oswald are making of animal corpses. Their obsession draws them ever closer to a time-lapse of the decay of a human corpse. Alba, who intends to kill herself, initially promises them her body, but her daughter and Felipe Arc-en-Ciel, to whom Alba has given the legal fatherhood of Beta and the Deuce’s twin babies, resist the idea. Oliver and Oswald instead return to Alba’s home, the aptly named L’Escargot, and set up equipment and a platform to film themselves. They administer hypodermics and die. The snails of L’Escargot cover their bodies and equipment and by morning have short-circuited the project.

All four plays and Greenaway’s film address failures of communication, and the resulting strategies to circumnavigate those obstacles—be it class barriers, physical bars, or other people’s refusal—to fulfil the desire for meaningful contact, however partially. More than this, however, these zoo stagings present excellent opportunities for discussion in terms of geomorphism, not just in the way that they interrogate what a collection of animals may signify, but more precisely because of a shared concern with the manner in which they form that space. The visuality and soundscapes of *The Hairy Ape*, *Cries From the Mammal House*, *A Zed & Two Noughts* and *Gilbert is Dead* all have implications for how animals are staged, whether living, dead, stuffed, or in advertisement and other images. Similarly a prevailing concern with the fluidity of time and narrative is at the forefront of

⁴¹⁴ French, *Gilbert*, p. 48.

all five selected texts and is, I believe, important to the intersection between zoo and theatre. In this last respect they also address the temporal themes I discussed in my earlier chapters: the mutable and mortal connotations of worm presence in riddles in Chapter One and the abyss-like danger and landscape of the deceptive whale in Chapter Two.

Closeness in *The Hairy Ape* and *The Zoo Story*

The final scene (and title) of O’Neill’s *The Hairy Ape* points to slippage or mutability between primate and human (or, more specifically, man). Jane R. Goodall begins her study *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (2002) with an examination of an 1849 Punch cartoon “An Awful Incidence of Perception on the part of an infant prodigy”, in which a (“prodigious”) child points to a monkey in clothes and exclaims “Mamma! Look! Dere, dere Papa!”⁴¹⁵ Goodall uses this instance to highlight parallels between the subjects of popular fascination, humour and entertainment and the subjects of contemporary scientific study, and also to indicate that such fascinations existed before, rather than originating with, the publication of Darwin’s *Origin*. The title of this cartoon, the ‘awful incidence’, however, hints at a darker fascination with the subject. The adjective “awful” invites horror at the hybridity of the human form itself arising from the inescapable connectedness of humans with a supposedly baser species.

A sense of the permeable boundary between animal and human is not confined to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but is thousands of years older. Rebecca Stott’s history of ideas, detailing the works and concepts on which Darwin drew, indicates classical origins for this view. Darwin’s revised third English edition of *Origin* included thirty men on his list of predecessors: “Aristotle was now the first man on Darwin’s list and the last man to enter it.”⁴¹⁶ Goodall notes that the animality of humans is one of the oldest concerns of both drama and “non-dramatic performances such as acrobatics, clowning acts and monster shows, where humans and animals often worked together.”⁴¹⁷ This theatrical genealogy and Ovid’s enduring and much-adapted *Metamorphoses* give evidence of a fascination with shifts in organic form. ‘Aping’ had meant mimicry since the

⁴¹⁵ Goodall, *Performance and Evolution*, p. 2.

⁴¹⁶ Rebecca Stott, *Darwin’s Ghosts: The Secret History of Evolution* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2012), pp. 12-15.

⁴¹⁷ Goodall, *Performance and Evolution*, p. 1.

seventeenth century and signalled parallels between man and monkey even within the figurative use of language.⁴¹⁸

In *The Hairy Ape* it is the kind of labour Yank does that has exacerbated his ape-like, highly specialised form. But Yank is isolated by his exceptional strength. The opening scene marks this with the respectful fear and slight horror of his peers, who defer to his power; he is effectively chief amongst them, and works the best and hardest in their labour of shovelling coal. Yank's impassioned and rhetorically-elaborate speeches assert an alliance between working class labouring flesh and the mechanical energy and work of "steel and steam", and form the basis of his claim both to outsider status and to connectedness with vivacity, realness and the world as a living entity:

I start somep'n and de woild moves! It – dat's me! – de new dat's moiderin' de old!
I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin; I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting
in noise dat makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and
factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron
into steel!"⁴¹⁹

As Deanna Beard describes, “[t]he strongest aural element of *The Hairy Ape* is Yank's exaggerated dialect and expansive monologues”.⁴²⁰ Resonating with these speeches are the echoes of Yank's shipmates of a word that he has shouted, in the earliest scenes in the forecandle, as specifically described in O'Neill's stage direction: “The chorused word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a general uproar of hard, barking laughter”⁴²¹ a framing of Yank through sound that almost seems to prove Yank's assertion that “I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh hear it”.⁴²² The metallic quality of the shipmates' voices finds further symmetry in the “tumult” of mechanical noise as the firemen work in the fiery stokehole: “This clash of sounds stuns one's ears with its rending dissonance. But there is order in it, rhythm, a mechanical regulated recurrence, a tempo”.⁴²³ This self-conscious display is in the *mise-en-scene* of the

⁴¹⁸ Goodall, *Performance and Evolution*, p. 1.; ‘aping, n.’, *OED*.

⁴¹⁹ O'Neill, ‘The Hairy Ape’, p. 365.

⁴²⁰ Deanna M. Toten Beard, ‘American Experimentalism, American Expressionism, and Early O'Neill’, in *A Companion to Twentieth-Century American Drama*, ed. by David Krasner (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), Blackwell Reference Online <http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405110884_chunk_g97814051108848> [accessed 23 September 2016]

⁴²¹ O'Neill, ‘The Hairy Ape’, p. 360.

⁴²² O'Neill, ‘The Hairy Ape’, p. 365.

⁴²³ O'Neill, ‘The Hairy Ape’, p. 370.

play, as well as Yank's spoken imagery. Michael Billington's review of the 2015 Old Vic, London, Richard Jones production, for example, highlights the debt to Expressionism in the play. He locates the play's power in visuality and dynamic movement, "a series of unforgettable images, including the sulphurous hell of the ship's stokehole, the ghoulish parade of the masked New York bourgeoisie and the antiseptic orderliness of the union headquarters, [...Bertie] Carvel [as Yank] [...] has an extraordinary physicality [...] whether shovelling coal into a ship's furnace or swinging from a steel girder on Fifth Avenue"⁴²⁴ Nonetheless, Yank's rhythmic speeches and potent physicality are undermined by the fact that his protests go unheard by those against whom they are directed. Yank seems less loud and imposing when outside of his steam and steel element of the ship scenes, though he continues to reiterate his alliance to edifices of steel and iron: "Youse guys live on it [tower block] and tink yuh're somep'n. But I'm in it, see!"⁴²⁵ The encounter in the engine room where he first picks up his label of "Hairy Ape" is one-way: Mildred communicates her disgust and fear to him, but his effect on her beyond the swoon in that moment is irrelevant in the rest of the play. Yank never has the chance to articulate his hatred to her.

Chaudhuri highlights the underlying (and sometimes explicit) messages of working-class oppression and dissent in O'Neill's play. The final encounter of the play, between Yank and a Gorilla, is staged by a human actor who plays a character with the eponymous ape-like attributes and a human actor in a clearly labelled cage and costume that designates him as an ape. Yank breaks the dividing bars between them in a display of activism, and to an extent misguided kinship. When the gorilla (like many other characters not responding to Yank's words) kills him, Yank dies on the other sides of the bars: "[h]e slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs."⁴²⁶ The conclusive quality of the final direction of the play is undermined by the fact that a clearly violent gorilla is now roaming free in a city environment, rather the "wilds of –" to which Yank paradoxically refers when he casts himself as a circus attraction in his dying words. Of this moment, Erika Rundle suggests that Yank internalises the 'imperialist gaze' in his final effort at self-determination. She sees this internalisation as prefigured in the speech-interrupting "em-

⁴²⁴ Michael Billington, 'The Hairy Ape Review – an Expressionist Spectacle of Caged Humanity', *The Guardian*, Thursday 29 October 2015. <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/oct/29/the-hairy-ape-review-old-vic-bertie-carvel-eugene-oneill>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁴²⁵ O'Neill, 'The Hairy Ape', p. 403.

⁴²⁶ O'Neill, 'The Hairy Ape', p. 425.

dash in the middle of his last sentence”, a gap which “coincides with would have been the word ‘Africa’”. She argues that this silence transfers Yank’s invitation from an imagined zoo/circus audience onto the *actual* theatre audience, “bringing their powerful positions as spectators to the fore while tempting them to complete his unfinished sentence.”⁴²⁷

This end is therefore ambiguous. Rather than a completed sentence, or indeed any closure (beyond the final but rather opaque close of death) for Yank’s journey, the last sound of the play is the monkeys’ wails, underlining Yank’s failure of speech, but at the same time offering a note of, if not unambiguously sympathy, at least recognition of his death. Shepherd-Barr, however, draws attention to the generic tensions underlying this seemingly tragic final scene, drawn from the comical connotations of staging this moment, i.e. by a man in a monkey suit, which she notes had a strong history in circus, vaudeville and farce. She writes, “for all the seriousness with which his scene is discussed, and all its tragic import, the reality is that it held potentially comic associations; it was daring, in other words, to disrupt this tradition and depart from the audience’s expectations of men in monkey suits”.⁴²⁸ This scene is therefore a renegotiation and opening up of the generic limitations of staged apes, although perhaps ultimately never an entirely successful one. It anticipates, too, *King Kong* (1933) in Mildred’s dehumanising, disarming swoon, and the misunderstood aggression of both Yank and later the actual gorilla. This is a resonance that is picked up in many reviews of later productions.⁴²⁹ It is perhaps in this very awkwardness that its power lies: as Lavery suggests, “theatre’s doing [...] is always to some extent an ‘undoing’, a coming to terms with weakness and inadequacy.”⁴³⁰

Inadequacy, or rather a failed attempt at connection and contact, forms the basis of animal encounters in *The Zoo Story*. *The Zoo Story* is now part of Albee’s 2004 two-act play *At Home at the Zoo*, which adds a first act about Peter’s home and marriage and reveals a sad context for Peter’s distracted mindset at the beginning of *The Zoo Story*. In *Homelife*,

⁴²⁷ Erika Rundle, ‘The Hairy Ape’s Humanist Hell: Theatricality and Evolution in O’Neill’s “Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life”’, *Subversive Theatre Collective*, online <http://www.subversivetheatre.org/productions/hairy_ape/essay_social_issues.htm> [accessed 24 September 2016].

⁴²⁸ Shepherd-Barr, *Theatre and Evolution*, p. 233.

⁴²⁹ Ben Brantley, ‘A Lug Against the Universe In Up-to-the-Minute O’Neill’, *The New York Times*, 4 April 1997 <http://www.omeill.com/artifacts/reviews/ha3_times.htm> [accessed 13 July 2017].; David Finkle, ‘Industrialisation is the Enemy in this Anguished Work about Man’s Struggle to Maintain his Natural Dignity’, *Theater Mania*, 8 October 2006 <http://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city-theater/reviews/10-2006/the-hairy-ape_9192.html> [accessed 13 July 2017].; Alice Singleton, ‘Review: Eugene O’Neill’s “The Hairy Ape”’, *Pop Matters*, 12 February 2009 <<http://www.popmatters.com/review/70424-eugene-oneills-the-hairy-ape/>> [accessed 13 July 2017].

⁴³⁰ Carl Lavery, ‘Introduction’ in *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* 20.3 (2016), 229-236 (p. 233).

Peter has just had a revelatory conversation with his wife Ann in which she lays bare the frustrating inadequacy of the careful, caring life they have together. In explanation, and perhaps defence, Peter admits a darker moment of his past — a sex accident in which he hurt someone through lack of restraint. Eventually Ann slaps him, not to hurt him, but to “astonish”⁴³¹ They speak figuratively, at the close of *Homelife*, of the imagined violent “fearful symmetry” (echoing William Blake’s “The Tyger”)⁴³² of their life tumbling down in the wake of a tornado which would free the birds to be eaten by the cats, who would in turn be eaten by the “girls” who would then be eaten by Ann and Peter.⁴³³ This co-narrated vision anticipates Peter’s giggling fit in which he describes his “own zoo” of parakeets laying the table and cats making dinner.⁴³⁴ Ann too, refers to their home as “a menagerie”.⁴³⁵ In Albee’s revision, Peter’s admitted details and giggled outbursts in *The Zoo Story* are revealed to be the tendrils of deep roots of buried anxieties and inadequacies, and also hint at the connection that he has with his wife: their shared humour, that masks, both plays suggest, frustration beneath social conformity.

As outlined, in *The Zoo Story*, Jerry, an outsider, encounters Peter, a figure of establishment on a bench in Central Park, and announces “I’ve been to the zoo!”. He proceeds to antagonise and bewilder Peter, questioning him about his family and telling him about his own (Jerry is orphan to a mother who left the family and a father who committed suicide) and a little of his past and present (the items he owns; the boy he loved, or merely loved having sex with, as a teenager; the “little ladies” he likes to have sex with now). Before telling Peter his zoo story, however, Jerry insists that it is important that he theatrically tells “The Story of Jerry and the Dog” — a macabre account of a power struggle between Jerry and his amorous, gin-addled Landlady’s pet. The dog is repulsive and vicious at first, arresting Jerry’s attention in a rooming-house that also contains “the poor monster [...] an old dog [...] it’s certainly a misused one [...] which] almost always has an erection [...] of sorts.”⁴³⁶ Through living in the same cramped space as the dog, as well as a number of other tenants — a loud family, crying woman and “black queen

⁴³¹ Edward Albee, ‘Homelife’, in *At Home at The Zoo* (New York, London: Overlook Duckworth, 2011), p. 55.

⁴³² William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, ed. by Todd Ruthven (1794; reprint New York: United Book Guild, 1947)

⁴³³ Albee, ‘Homelife’, pp. 56-57.

⁴³⁴ Albee, ‘Homelife’, pp. 84-85.

⁴³⁵ Albee, ‘Homelife’, p. 24.

⁴³⁶ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, p. 76.

[...] who wears a kimono”⁴³⁷— the dog tries to attack Jerry every time he comes through the door, Jerry comes to a decision to manipulate the dog’s feeling towards him. He will attempt to win the dog’s favour but if unsuccessful he will simply kill it. Jerry feeds the dog hamburgers each day, which it enjoys, but there is no reduction in the dog’s animosity. Jerry’s reaction is personal and he fills a hamburger patty with rat poison for the dog. The dog, once poisoned, struggles for its life, and Jerry truly and fervently, he emphasises, wished that it would live: “You must believe me; it is important. We have to know the effect of our actions. [...] I was heart-shatteringly et cetera to confront my doggy friend again [...] during that twenty seconds or two hours that we looked into each other’s face, we made contact.” The contact made is a kind of wary understanding, which Jerry describes as the teaching experience of cruelty and kindness combined. Jerry wins unmolested access to the hallway, but it is not what he claims that he desired: “Now, here is what I had wanted to happen: I loved the dog now, and I wanted him to love me.”⁴³⁸ The result, is a compromise, but a lonely one.

Jerry is not simply reliving this story, however, but performing it: manipulating a past experience into Story. It is perhaps the case that what is important to Jerry is not how he feels in telling the story, but Peter’s reaction and what he is persuaded to feel, or rather what he is taught. “From the beginning”, Rakesh H. Solomon writes, in discussion of Albee’s direction of *The Zoo Story*, “Albee stressed that Jerry was manipulative”,⁴³⁹ but Solomon also notes that Albee insisted that Jerry is “a teacher”.⁴⁴⁰ A possible alliance between style and deeper intention can be discerned in these remarks. Markers of this appear in “The Story of Jerry and the Dog”, like the billboard style reading, “(As if from a huge billboard)”⁴⁴¹, pseudo-Biblical locution (“and it came to pass that the beast was deathly ill”) and gestures of its title. Jerry’s insertions and ellipses such as “etcetera”, above, underscore a narratorial self-consciousness which aligns Jerry and Peter with the roles of Storyteller and Audience respectively. In “etcetera” it is as though Jerry alludes to story-telling conventions that he expects Peter not only to understand as he does, but to

⁴³⁷ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, p. 69.

⁴³⁸ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, p. 82.

⁴³⁹ Rakesh H. Solomon, *Albee in Performance* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 61.

⁴⁴⁰ Solomon, *Albee in Performance*, p. 55.

⁴⁴¹ Solomon, *Albee in Performance*, p. 76.

expect. The story has been called a beast fable by Carol A. Sykes⁴⁴², and compared to the “cat story” of *A Delicate Balance* by several critics.⁴⁴³ That “The Story of Jerry and the Dog” can be read as a fable, a didactic tale with no emotional investment from its teller, might suggest too that the zoo may be metaphorical. Sykes reads it as a metaphor for full life experience: “he is saying he has experienced this world, contemporary America, New York City”.⁴⁴⁴ Rose Zimbardo, too, interprets the zoo as metaphor for a world of isolation in which people are held apart from each other.⁴⁴⁵ I suggest here, however, that Jerry’s experience at the zoo itself is presented as important in literal terms, from the attention paid to its structure, which parallels that of the boarding-house in which most inhabitants remain behind shut doors. Jerry asks, “was the dog’s attempt to bite me not an act of love? If we can so misunderstand, well then, why have we invented the word love in the first place?”. It is with this carefully opened and augmented definition of ‘love’, ‘friendship’ and ‘living together’, that Jerry goes to the zoo, and it is only with these definitions in place that Jerry comes to finally tell Peter “what happened at the zoo”:

JERRY: [...] first, I should tell you why I went to the zoo. I went to the zoo to find out more about the way people exist with animals, and the way animals exist with each other, and with people too. It probably wasn't a fair test, what with everyone separated by bars from everyone else, the animals for the most part from each other, and always the people from the animals. But, if it's a zoo, that's the way it is. [He pokes Peter on the arm.] Move over.

PETER: [friendly] I'm sorry, haven't you enough room? [He shifts a little.]

JERRY: [smiling slightly] Well, all the animals are there, and all the people are there, and it's Sunday and all the children are there. [...] And it's a hot day, so all the stench is there, too, and all the balloon sellers, and all the ice-cream sellers, and all the seals are barking, and all the birds are screaming. [...] And I am there, and it's feeding time at the lion's house, and the lion keeper comes into the lion cage, one of the lion cages, to feed one of the lions. [Punches Peter on the arm, hard.]
MOVE OVER!⁴⁴⁶

This jostling and encroaching continues and ends with the fatal stabbing of Jerry. “This is what happened at the zoo, I think”, he tells Peter as he dies. Various, critics have read

⁴⁴² Carol A. Sykes, ‘Albee’s Beast Fables: “The Zoo Story” and “A Delicate Balance”’, *Educational Theatre Journal* 25.4 (1973), 448-55 (p. 449).

⁴⁴³ W. E. Bigsby, *Albee* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1969), p. 103; Ruby Cohn, *Edward Albee* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 38.

⁴⁴⁴ Sykes, ‘Albee’s Beast Fables’, p. 449.

⁴⁴⁵ Rose A. Zimbardo, ‘Symbolism and Naturalism in Edward Albee’s “The Zoo Story”’, *Twentieth Century Literature* 8.1 (1962), 10-17 (p. 10).

⁴⁴⁶ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, pp. 135-136.

this moment as a desperate and warped plea for contact. In my view, the jarring moment of realisation here is also that, rather than being an audience to a zoo story that happened in the past, Peter has geomorphically become an animal participant in a story unravelling in the present.

Chaudhuri asserts that there is “no zoo in *The Zoo Story*, at least no zoo is seen in it, and in fact there is no zoo story either. Although Jerry keeps promising a zoo story, he never actually gets to it.”⁴⁴⁷ The “zoo” of the play is a metaphor for segregation and separation: the bars between species, and particularly between the people and the animals because “that's the way [a zoo] is”, as Jerry puts it. But its environment is a sensory cacophony, a polysyndeton of heat, stench (“all the stench”, as Jerry puts it), barking seals, screaming birds and a superfluity of beings (‘all’ occurs in the description eight times). There is a sense of cramming in: the itemised superfluities of beings and objects are situated at once with deictical emphasis and vagueness: “all the animals [etc] are *there*” (my emphasis), as though each mass of nouns is laid on top of the previous one. This latter syntactical structure, both anaphora and antistrophe, *all the [x] are there*, furthermore, is the basis for the parallelism in Jerry’s speech. Each additional moment of speech overlays the same (or in some cases similar) structures onto the list. Even grammatically, presented through this parataxis within which there is no hierarchy (recalling Fleischer’s *mise en promiscuité*, above) Jerry’s zoo is packed full of diverse things uniformly presented. This packed inventory is reminiscent of his listing of his possessions, and Peter’s, which Jerry reduces from people and animals to objects, — in a previous scene: “I don’t have one wife, two daughters, two cats, two parakeets. What I do have [...] toilet articles, a few clothes, a hot plate I’m not supposed to have [...] a knife, two forks, two spoons [...] two picture frames, both empty [...] a strongbox without a lock, which has in it...what? Rocks! [...] under which...weighed down... letters”.⁴⁴⁸ Jerry’s hoard speaks, however, through the picture frames and the “when” letters and the later “please” letters, of the weight of time, gradual loss and avoided contact and obligations. It may be then that we can expect the hoard of zoo objects to speak as well.

The effects of this repetition are twofold. Punctuated by the escalating aggression towards Peter, the grammatical repetition and simplicity of Jerry’s description gives the impression of the story being made up on the spot. Though he presents the story to Peter as though recounting an experience (“I’ve been to the zoo!”), Jerry’s zoo could actually be

⁴⁴⁷ Chaudhuri, *The Stage Lives of Animals*, pp. 77-78.

⁴⁴⁸ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, p. 121.

either a place that he recalls or a place that he is inventing as he speaks, or —simply—the world that he inhabits. The ‘Story of Jerry and the Dog,’ (“it’s why I went to the zoo today”, Jerry says) has demonstrated a theatrically self-aware platonic ideal of storytelling — explicit character development and alignment, scene-setting, suspense, dénouement, the convincing weight of past tense: what “happened at the zoo” has none of these.

Jerry’s demand, “Move over!”, is more than a reason to poke and punch Peter: it is a direct response to cramped conditions, the sort we know that he already experiences in his “laughably small” room between Columbus avenue and Central Park West. In Jerry’s description, the zoo is a place without enough space in it. Not even having sufficient space to be able to contain “what happened at the zoo”; Jerry has to move elsewhere, to a park (another staged ‘natural’ space) for the ‘happening’ to occur. Una Chaudhuri points out that “In *The Zoo Story*, Albee pointedly contextualises alienation within another paradigmatic eco-site: the city park [...] The displacement of the zoo by the park in the play (and vice versa in the play’s title) is a key to its account of modern metropolitan experience.”⁴⁴⁹

In the zoo monologue, the jostling of Peter seems to break out of the narration of Jerry’s ‘story’. It is a multifunctional action in the scene: first, this is Jerry’s provocation of Peter, increasing his anger by degrees, breaking through his politeness until he is prepared to fight. It is necessary to goad Peter gently in order to come to the cathartic fight, and death, that is Jerry’s apparent response to the zoo. As well as this, the poking and punching can themselves be signifying acts. The poking evokes childish antagonism — it is comic, even cute, an unthreatening aggression permissible between friends, if not quite strangers or acquaintances. Like the tickling, though potentially painful, it can be brushed off. The punch, however, is unambiguous assault. Furthermore, the prodding serves to distract from Jerry’s story, the words Jerry speaks compete with the prodding because they are seemingly unconnected, as though what’s ‘really’ going on is mutely, primally, a physical violation of territory, that Peter’s politeness fails to mollify or even hold back. As well as competing with the speech, however, the jostling also punctuates Jerry’s list and zoo picture, imposing rhythmical increases of violence and tension. The speech is split then into units — the first describes the bars, the ‘nature’ of the zoo; the next unit brings in the crowds; the third unit brings in sensory cacophony; the last the lion’s cage and feeding time — and a broken boundary: a keeper inside one of the lion cages. What happened inside the lion cage? Whether climactic or anticlimactic, the moment is one of

⁴⁴⁹ Chaudhuri, ‘Animal Geographies’, p. 111.

potential danger. For example, the Big Cat Rescue, states that “U.S. incidents have resulted in the deaths of 24 humans, 17 adults and 5 children, the additional mauling of 259 more adults and children, 274 escapes, the killing of 146 big cats, and 133 confiscations.”⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore the lion cage is a moment that echoes the liminal contact space of the doorway in “The Story of Jerry and the Dog”. Jerry’s hamburgers at the doorway are the vehicle for his “teaching emotion”, the delivery of “kindness and cruelty [...] combined, together, at the same time”. For Jerry this learning impulse, and ultimately the “loss” that he experiences from it, is what he seeks at the zoo: he seeks knowledge about “the way people exist with animals”, and it is the lack of personal, individual knowledge in the zoo space that drives him away from it and towards the park bench.

This play contributes to my argument about geomorphism by delivering the sense of a space shared by collected captive animals as a sensory impression rather than a narrative. The lion house is so small a detail in this apparently narrative-less list that it might be missed, though Albee has stressed that this is “a very important line”, insisting, in rehearsal for its 1959 American premiere, on the emphasis “And *I* am there, and it’s feeding time at the lion’s house”.⁴⁵¹ That Jerry needs to emphasize that he participates in the zoo experience, and that he is part of the crowd as well as the focaliser and narrator of his story, suggests that his inclusion is important. That he bears witness to the keeper entering the lion cage (“one of the lion cages”, as he corrects himself) also seems to be important, though it is never made clear exactly why. That such a detail might be missed, I argue, is the point. Habitual isolated segregation disrupts how human attention can comprehend narrative journeys: potential participants are reduced instead to objects in a list. *The Zoo Story* delivers a sense of zoo-space as the habituation of animals (human and non-human) not just to their cages but to restrictive categories, including species categories: the claustrophobic parataxis of Jerry’s lists comes to draw out the overt analogy between rooming house and zoo (walls=bars) and in doing so shows symmetrical pressure on the only, small, negotiable threshold spaces of doorway, bench, and door to the (lion) cage. Though other works in this chapter explore some of the elements used in *The Zoo Story*, such as the nested narrative in *Gilbert is Dead*, my geomorphic reading here suggests that compression of the zoo space prevents and obstructs the narrative flow. Randy Malamud has suggested that such displacement in zoo stories is typical, and that

⁴⁵⁰ Big Cat Rescue, ‘Big Cat Attacks’, *Big Cat Rescue*, 2016 <<https://bigcatrescue.org/big-cat-attacks/>> [accessed 10th January 2016].

⁴⁵¹ Solomon, *Albee in Performance*, p. 57.

most zoo narratives have a fraught relationship with the forms of narration inherent within the zoo's own taxonomy, which says, in its own kind of storytelling, "here is a zebra".⁴⁵² The static restriction of animals and people reduces Jerry's story to a list of elements. Rather than describing what *happened* at the zoo, his charismatic story-telling stiffens up. Though animals are living agents, the way that Jerry depicts them is as though they are simply the building blocks of the zoo setting, and hence, geomorphic. The frustration of such an experience, given Jerry's painful desire for true contact with another being, is expressed through his physical punctuation of his story by hitting Peter, a desperate attempt to be heard and acknowledged which leads, shockingly yet inevitably, to the suicidal stabbing.

Ghosts in *Cries From the Mammal House* and *Gilbert is Dead*

The futile attempts at closeness and the deaths of individuals feature in *The Hairy Ape* and *The Zoo Story* (as well as, as I will alter discuss, *A Zed & Two Noughts*) but for *Cries From the Mammal House* and *Gilbert is Dead*, species extinction permeates the narratives. Robin French and Terry Johnson are British playwrights separated by about thirty years. Johnson's *Cries From the Mammal House* (1984) has been read as an exposé of failed Thatcherite materialism,⁴⁵³ but the zoo itself is not just political metaphor: "the play's sense of desperation was sparked by Johnson's wanderings through a vacated, crumbling zoo near Manchester ('The animals had been gone for six years, yet their presence haunted the place')".⁴⁵⁴ Johnson also makes it clear that the setting needs to engage with the work of Gilles Aillaud, whose zoo-focused paintings bear a fascination with the enclosures of animals at the zoo as well as the specimens within them. The sketches Mick, amateur artist-cum-butcher and boyfriend of Sally, paints in the empty zoo seem to be a reference to this fascination in Aillaud's work.⁴⁵⁵ The result in Aillaud's paintings is a disturbing disruption of the view of the animal. *Gilbert is Dead* was written in the wake of

⁴⁵² Malamud, *Reading Zoos*, p. 55.

⁴⁵³ D. Keith Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties* (Westport, Conn.; London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), p. 202.

⁴⁵⁴ Robert Koehler, 'News From the Human Zoo: English Playwright Terry Johnson's "Cries From the Mammal House" Will Have its U. S. Premiere Tonight', *The Los Angeles Times*, 28 August 1992 <http://articles.latimes.com/1992-08-28/news/va-5956_1_mammal-house> [accessed 13 July 2017].

⁴⁵⁵ Johnson, 'Cries From the Mammal House', pp. 202-3.

Darwin celebrations in 2009, a time which Shepherd-Barr characterises as producing “momentum [...] which focused both scholarly and popular attention on evolutionary theory as never before”.⁴⁵⁶ Whilst not explicitly staging a zoo-space, it probes the boundary between aliveness and deadness in the amateur taxidermist and dreamer Lucille, trapped by both familial grief and the circumstances of her disability. Her widowed father Lucius myopically insists, for example, that, “The museum is perfectly safe [...] And the world a prison outside it.”⁴⁵⁷ Public discourse about extinction at the turn of the twentieth century has intensified in the wake of increasing evidence about climate change,⁴⁵⁸ and the term ‘anthropocene’ has now been popularised by chemist Paul Crutzen (though the term has some earlier usages)⁴⁵⁹ to refer to a geological epoch characterised by human impact on the earth’s geology and ecosystems.⁴⁶⁰ Though present day perception of extinction is largely negative, it is worth mentioning that extinction has not always had such connotations: for Darwin, for example, writing in 1876, contemporary with the period evoked by French’s play, it is simply a fact of nature: “After the lapse of time, under changing conditions, if any part comes to be injurious, it will be modified, or the organism being will become, as myriads have become, extinct. [...] And we see that this is so in nature.”⁴⁶¹

Extinct animals are powerfully evoked in both plays. In performances, zoos, and collections an extinct animal is not quite gone because it is animated and preserved in its individual manifestation on versions of a stage. And yet its extinction is not negated by such a manifestation. It is in between, haunting perhaps, a term that is useful here too because it denotes fixity to place, and a habitual familiarity and customary resort.⁴⁶² Extinction is central to both plays: rather than being the echo of an animal lost, French’s ghost loris is ultimately the shadowy presence of an animal conjured up. The dodo’s

⁴⁵⁶ Shepherd-Barr, *Theatre and Evolution*, p. 8.

⁴⁵⁷ French, *Gilbert*, p. 35.

⁴⁵⁸ See, for example, suggestions that large majorities believe that global warming is already or will occur within their lifetimes in R. E. Dunlap, ‘Lay Perceptions of Global Risk: Public Views of Global Warming in Cross-National Context’, *International Sociology* 13(1998), 473-98.

⁴⁵⁹ Andrew C. Revkin, ‘Confronting the “Anthropocene”’, *The New York Times* <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/11/confronting-the-anthropocene/?_r=0> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁴⁶⁰ See also Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, ‘Defining the Anthropocene’, *Nature* 519 (2015), 171–180.

⁴⁶¹ *Origin*, p. 164.

⁴⁶² ‘haunting, n.’, *OED*.

return in *Cries From the Mammal House* heralds “an ecstasy of hope”.⁴⁶³ Yet both animals are characterised by a darkly comic suicidal quality, as, almost equally, are a number of the people around them.

In *Cries From the Mammal House* and *Gilbert is Dead*, sound plays a part in the unravelling of the “rational”, as *Cries From the Mammal House* describes the experience of Mauritius in its stage directions. The aural, as opposed to the visual, is a different, perhaps more intrusive, kind of presence, in the sense that it is easier to shut one’s eyes than completely to block one’s ears. In *Gilbert is Dead*, the interactions between Gilbert and Queen Victoria are framed by surreal intermixes of sound: the Queen’s virtuosity on the trumpet, and “bright lights [and] the sound of nightingales”⁴⁶⁴ — the latter both pastoral and unrealistic (in that nightingales are not midday singing birds). Back in the museum, Lucille dreams of another sound; the Maribou in flight (“even from the ground you can hear them singing”).⁴⁶⁵ The contrast between these performed or described sounds and the silent animals Lucille has preserved using taxidermy is stark and eerie, comparable to the disparity between the greys of Britain and the brightness of Mauritius in *Cries From the Mammal House*, but on an aural scale.

The call of the dodo is perhaps the most evocative sound of all. A bird-cry is more likely to be called “song” than many other kinds of animal call. It is used in the title of Kris Ellingsen and David Quammen’s *The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions* (1996), a call to arms against the fragmentation of biogeographies.⁴⁶⁶ In *Cries From the Mammal House* the idealistic use of the Dodo’s song is more vague, a “new lease of life” as Anne puts it (the ‘lease’ a politically charged and therefore potentially bittersweet term) and yet still palpable. The dodo as emblem of extinction has a tragic heritage which is intensified in Johnson’s deliberately comic dodo call: “it opened its beak and it made the daftest sound I’ve ever heard [...] From the crate there issues an absurd cry which echoes around the mammal house”.⁴⁶⁷ The absurd sound mirrors but also contrasts with Sally’s animal, soul-wrenching scream in Act Three, just before Alan reveals to Anne what his

⁴⁶³ See, Chaudhuri’s discussion of the postmodern draw of the ungainly animal in ‘AWK!’, Extremity, Animality and the Aesthetic of Awkwardness in Tennessee William’s *The Gnädiges Fräulein*, in *The Undiscovered Country: The Later Plays of Tennessee Williams*, ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 54-67 (p. 55).

⁴⁶⁴ French, *Gilbert*, p. 26; p. 20.

⁴⁶⁵ French, *Gilbert*, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁶ David Quammen and Kris Ellingsen, *The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions* (London: Hutchison, 1996).

⁴⁶⁷ Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, pp. 208-9.

father did to her as a child: “she breaks away. Pins herself against a wall, lifts her chin and gives a scream, a howling, chilling, echoing sound.”⁴⁶⁸ That an echoing cry (specifically used in relation to the dodo, above) is a charged sound in this play is obvious from the play’s title. The use of the comic to undercut the tragic and horrifying offers a bittersweet redemption. As with O’Neill’s monkey-suited gorilla, the association of the animal with comedy both undermines and paradoxically intensifies the dignity of their sadness, in a moment that evokes both pathos and bathos through an embodied animal symbol.

Crucially we do not see the dodo; we only hear it. *Cries From the Mammal House* actualises the tension between animate creature and dead object (as well as physically manifesting the spectre of extinction, later undercut by the ‘discovery’ of the live dodo bird), as Johnson’s note on the text specifies that all live animals are to be intimated, whereas all dead ones are to be literally staged, in stuffed or other forms.⁴⁶⁹ In both plays the physical presence of dead animal matter underlines the intangible quality of the action that the animal has ‘performed’ in the play: evoked by the dialogue of the actors, it exists only verbally, but at the same time remains distinct from the other actors. This mimics the state of extinction in the sense that the audience therefore have to visualise this extinct species through their imaginative faculties. Johnson is using theatrical absence as a metaphor for the real absence of the extinct dodo. Shepherd-Barr’s discussion of theatre itself as a metaphor for extinction can broaden this function of Johnson’s dodo. She writes that “theatre consistently and deliberately flouts adaptation to its environment, for example in the ‘self-annihilating’ productions of avant-garde theatre [...]; to create new forms, theatre continually attacks itself, threatening its own extinction.”⁴⁷⁰ The performed absence of the dodo’s body points to the self-destructive and self-renewing capacity of theatre itself, simultaneously both undermining and affirming the idea that an entire zoo full of dead animals can be hoped back into life through the power of the unseen dodo.

In *The Earth on Show*, Ralph O’Connor writes that, “[n]owadays, the staging or restoration of extinct monsters tends to lean heavily on pictures or models, often moving ones. Steven Spielberg’s film *Jurassic Park* (1993), Tim Haines’s BBC documentary *Walking with Dinosaurs* (1999), and the animatronic creatures found in numerous museums all make some use of words and texts, but in a subordinate position to the visual material.”⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, p. 197.

⁴⁶⁹ Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, p. 140.

⁴⁷⁰ Shepherd-Barr, *Theatre and Evolution*, p. 12.

⁴⁷¹ O’Connor, *The Earth on Show*, p. 3.

Alongside their similar uses of sound, emphasis on the visual permeates the staging of both plays. Both *Gilbert is Dead* and *Cries From the Mammal House* have dream-like, almost paradisiacal scenes, those of Gilbert dramatise the faked letters, and thus are actually fantasy. But Mauritius in *Cries From the Mammal House* is also described as ‘dreamlike’. The failed zoo in England is conveyed by “enormous flat surfaces of concrete and pastel-painted steel as used in zoos of the fifties [and the work of Gilles Aillaud]”⁴⁷²— like Sommer, Johnson is attentive to the enclosure of animals acting as their framing, and thus altering encounters with them. Situated within such literally concrete framing are the animal characters; “live animals should be invisible, and mimed by the actors. All dead animals, in whatever condition, should be present”.⁴⁷³ The zoo appears empty and we are invited to see through the characters’ actions. By contrast, [Mauritius] should have “a dreamlike quality, not to indicate an idyll, but to suggest the less rational areas of the mind at work.”⁴⁷⁴ Furthermore in *Gilbert is Dead* even the ‘real’ spaces are marvellous: French writes that the staging of the play should be “ambitious in terms of set. It should be visually bold; it must provide spectacle”.⁴⁷⁵ The stage directions of the first scene reflect this: “As many stuffed animals as possible. Weird and wonderful wildlife from all corners of the globe stare eerily out at us”.⁴⁷⁶ Such a crowded array is suggested by Fleischer’s earlier discussed statement that zoos house a *mise-en-promiscuité* of animals transplanted from exotic environments, and the effect of the gaze of such an assembly, French suggest, is eerie. Eeriness, like dreams and ghostliness, is explicitly foregrounded in French’s play. The word dream itself is polysemous; in some contexts it carries with it a sense of hoped-for circumstances, defined in the *OED* as “[a] series of images, thoughts, and emotions, often with a story-like quality, generated by mental activity during sleep”; “[s]omething imagined or invented; a false idea or belief; an illusion, a delusion” as well as “[a] vision or hope for the future”.⁴⁷⁷ It is perhaps all these senses that the close of *Cries From the Mammal House* highlights in Palmer’s almost jarringly hopeful response to David’s return to the dead zoo, miraculous and ridiculous dodo in tow: “And today, well spent, / Will make all yesterdays a dream of happiness / And all tomorrows an ecstasy of hope / Thus is the

⁴⁷² Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, p. 140.

⁴⁷³ Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, p. 140.

⁴⁷⁴ Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, p. 140.

⁴⁷⁵ French, *Gilbert*, p. 5.

⁴⁷⁶ French, *Gilbert*, p. 5.

⁴⁷⁷ ‘dream, n.2 and adj.’, *OED*.

salutation of the dawn.”⁴⁷⁸ Johnson later said of this hopeful note that he was inspired by naturalist Gerald Durrell’s book, “Golden Bats and Pink Pigeons.”⁴⁷⁹ And yet the symbolism of the dodo’s return necessarily foregrounds the reality of its extinction; it was last sighted in 1662. Shepherd-Barr calls the dodo “a cultural marker not only of extinction but also of evolution more broadly and above all of the devastating consequences of human invasion of natural habitats.”⁴⁸⁰ Gilbert’s quest is ultimately anti-Darwinian: the existence of the ghost loris, a creature so utterly maladapted for life, would fly in the face of evolutionary theory. If extinction is not catastrophic and sad but just a natural evolutionary process, then its reversal (in the case of an animal that ‘should’ become extinct), disproves the process on which the theory is based. That the loris, the quest, even Gilbert Shirley himself, turn out to be purely Lucille’s creations, created in an attempt to cross the emotional boundaries of grief between her and her father, eventually transforms evolution itself, not just the loris, into a metaphor for painful reality. In a way, ‘painful reality’ is an accurate description of the process of evolution, which proceeds necessarily through death and pain, as well as also being the supposedly depressed living-state ascribed to the ghost loris. The ghost loris, in more ways than one, then, is a theatrical metaphor for the cruelties of evolution.

Nonetheless, the museum itself is by no means an antithetical bastion of protection from the brutal conditions of survival. Dr Meriwether describes Lucius Trickett’s museum as a “temple of death”, referring both to Lucius’s self-absorbed mourning and to the museum’s display and celebration of stuffed animals, a number of which were brutal predators when living, such as the Maribou Stork.⁴⁸¹ The museum’s entangled concerns with loss and preservation are emphasised through Lucille’s suicide method in response to the discovery of her scheme and her father’s resultant anger.⁴⁸² She covers herself in the arsenic paste used to preserve her specimens which suffocates her. Lucius discovers her utterly rigid and dead in her chair. French specifies a “*strange crack*” when an anguished Lucius drops her body.⁴⁸³ Having previously accused Lucius of leaving

⁴⁷⁸ Johnson, ‘Cries From the Mammal House’, p. 207.

⁴⁷⁹ Koehler, ‘News From the Human Zoo’.

⁴⁸⁰ Shepherd-Barr, *Theatre and Evolution*, p. 66. See also, Quammen and Ellingsen, *The Song of the Dodo*; and Mark V. Barrow Jr, *Nature’s Ghosts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁴⁸¹ French, *Gilbert*, p. 35.; pp. 14-15.

⁴⁸² French *Gilbert*, pp. 58-61.

⁴⁸³ French, *Gilbert*, p. 62.

her “to rot”, Lucille’s death literally solidifies the association of preservation with imprisonment in the play, and the stronger association of grief with slow decaying death.⁴⁸⁴ As if to subvert the onslaught of decay, however, Lucille’s body becomes a fossil, ready for the museum display to which she once cruelly joked she would subject her maid Maisy (in an unnerving echo of the dehumanising discourse surrounding the display of Sara Baartman at the Musée De L’Homme in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries): “In an hour she’ll be as stiff as one of the specimens [...] I’ll undress her, and she’ll sit there in the exhibition all fat and red [...] the prize of the greater primates — Maisy Fellows!”⁴⁸⁵ Lucille’s suicide aligns her with the specimens and makes her a permanent *part* of the museum, in every sense.⁴⁸⁶

In this chapter I have postulated that zoo spaces have multifunctional boundaries, which imply spatial and functional binaries — safe, not safe; confined, free; wild, human; offering positions of observed and observer. In the transgression of these boundaries, or the crumbling of the zoo space itself, these distinctions are revealed as false impositions. A recurrent theme of these four plays has been not the conservationist purpose of zoos as envisaged by David himself but instead the opposite: mutability and death. Though the zoo on stage is defined and constructed through the collecting together and framing of animal presence — whether through image, prop or mime — the animal death in these plays offers another opportunity to consider animals, and humans, geomorphically, as organic agents. From the rotting toad and mouldy toucan of *Cries From the Mammal House* to the steady, ageing vulnerability of Jerry’s dog, these plays offer a rich array of images of decay and its incipient partner, renewal and life.

A further perspective on these themes is provided by Peter Greenaway’s *A Zed & Two Noughts*, the title itself referencing “zoo” as well as the themes of twinning, taxonomy and nothingness. Though a film rather than theatre, Greenaway’s script engages with all of the themes thus far explored in this chapter: taxonomy, absence, presence, meaningful contact, the passage of time, cages and other claustrophobic living spaces, the zoo’s own narrative, death, loss (in particular the ghostly nature of grief), preservation and performative animal presences.

⁴⁸⁴ French, *Gilbert*, p. 58.

⁴⁸⁵ French, *Gilbert*, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁸⁶ See Sadiya Qureshi, ‘Displaying Sara Baartman, the “Hottentot Venus”’, *History of Science* 42 (2004), 233–57 (pp. 233-34).

In *A Zed & Two Noughts* zoologist brothers Oswald and Oliver Deuce lose their wives in a bizarrely symmetrical car accident on Swan's Way involving a large swan driven by a woman named Alba Bewick who survives but loses a leg and a pregnancy. The film roams across several taxonomic systems: the Greek and Roman alphabets, colours, animals, letters and Greek Mythology. The film also considers both animals and alphabets together, as Amy Lawrence notes, "evoking the ingenuousness of a child's primer [...and t]he whimsical arbitrariness of the connection between the letter and the animal it stands for."⁴⁸⁷ There is symmetry between animals too: the fish and the animals they are named after —ratfish, elephant fish, zebra fish —; the sex-worker/writer (Venus de) Milo (who wears only black and white) and the black and white animals; between the brothers, who are twins; and between iterations of real animal and animal symbols, such as the living, pacing tiger of the zoo, and its appropriated likeness pasted to an advertisement board in the film's prologue.⁴⁸⁸

Decay too, effects the disruption of taxonomy and any hierarchy of the chain of life. Oliver, for example, extols the virtues of the primitive life form of the snail, and the pointless accident of evolution is emphasised by Oswald, Oliver and Alba. In a note to the script Greenaway asks: "Are animals like car-crashes—Acts of God or mere Accidents—bizarre, tragic, farcical, plotted nowadays into a scenario by an ingenious storyteller, Mr. C. Darwin?"⁴⁸⁹ In grief, Oswald and Oliver disengage from their usual functions within the zoo documenting the living specimens, and become obsessed instead with the staging and exhibition of growth and decay, watching films about life origins (including, at points, David Attenborough's *Life on Earth*) and also photographing decomposing life forms in order to make time-lapse films.⁴⁹⁰ The first of these is a green apple, bitten into by Oliver; the second is a plate of prawns. They take advantage of their contacts at the zoo, itself full of institutionalised corruption, to acquire bodies and create decomposition videos of more and more complex animals, including an angelfish, a crocodile, a swan, a dalmatian and a zebra. Oliver also frees a number of animals including snails, butterflies, flamingoes and a rhinoceros. The brothers' project is shown to progress to the recording of human decay, and it is implicit that they want a woman's body for this purpose. Oswald has repeatedly said in grief that he cannot stand the idea of his wife "rotting away" for no

⁴⁸⁷ Amy Lawrence, *The Films of Peter Greenaway* (Cambridge: Cambridge Film Classics, 1997), p. 79.

⁴⁸⁸ Peter Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 15.

⁴⁸⁹ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 14.

⁴⁹⁰ As seen in the prologues: Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, pp. 15-16.

reason.⁴⁹¹ In the spectacle of death, rather than life, the brothers are seeking answers to make sense of their loss.

In *A Zed & Two Noughts*, Clive Scott suggests that the zoo is increasingly elaborated to become a microcosm of all modern spaces of social interaction and restrictive taxonomy: hospitals, restaurants, hotels, art gallery, laboratory and circus. I would add to that list, perhaps, school (through the references to Beta's education, children's alphabet books and her make-shift zoo of jars of insects) and cinema, which is a space in which several scenes take place, while Oliver and sometimes Oswald and other zoo staff watch films about nature. Scott suggests that Greenaway's use of time-lapse technology seeks to isolate resonances and symmetry between connected things.⁴⁹² The zoologists' explicit quest is to understand the relationship of life and death in order to come to terms with not only the deaths of their wives, but also the attendant fact that their bodies are rotting in the earth.⁴⁹³ Though Scott's suggestion that the work of the time-lapse camera isolates is apt, and describes too how the decay time-lapse films are interpolated within the narrative as short punctuating vignettes, I would suggest that there is an equal drive at play in the film towards connection. Not only do the twins, conjoined at birth but now separated, seek a rejoining with each other (in the last scene they wear a two person suit) but the contact between species also intensifies on a visceral level, which is also sometimes sexual as in Milo's stories about bestiality.⁴⁹⁴ The snails at the close of the film, crawling calmly, and perhaps, for the viewer, maddeningly, across the twins' bodies (one crawls gently into the open mouth of one of the men), have been set up already as sexual. Alba, who hates them, has complained of the snails covering bikes left outside at L'Escargot when she was younger, licking the sweat from the seat.⁴⁹⁵ And earlier still, in a scene between Milo and Oliver, Oliver has a plate of freed snails from the zoo which he is placing onto his bare skin. Milo calls him a dirty old man.⁴⁹⁶ The sexual symbolism of the

⁴⁹¹ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 35; p. 43.

⁴⁹² Clive Scott, *Spoken Image: Photography and Language* (London: Reaktion, 1999), p. 173.

⁴⁹³ See also Douglas Keesey, *The Films of Peter Greenaway: Sex, Death, and Provocation* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2006), p. 36.

⁴⁹⁴ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, pp. 45-47; p. 49; pp. 83-84; p. 91.

⁴⁹⁵ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 63.

⁴⁹⁶ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 47.

snails is entirely anthropocentric as the snails themselves are apparently oblivious. Snails are hermaphrodite, meaning, as Oliver states, that they can satisfy themselves.⁴⁹⁷

The brothers' obsession with decay leads them to a sexualised life-and-death negotiation with Alba which, telling, ultimately falls through. Oswald and Oliver's recordings, in the end, "come[...] to nought", as was apparently always inevitable.⁴⁹⁸ This failure is further mirrored at the film's close, in which the snails of L'Escargot, oblivious again to human desires and endeavours, slowly short-circuit the last recording of the brothers' project. Snails in their name are both a noun and animal, and a verb describing their movement (or that of another being at a similar pace).⁴⁹⁹ It is in this determined oblivious crawl that I read them as geomorphic, a steadily moving mass that seems to stand for the onward uncaring march of life and death which the twins find so fascinating and unsettling. The enormous group of snails at the close of the film, then, while short-circuiting the project the twins died for, also bring with them the assertion of the connection between all organic life, paradoxically giving meaning to the futility of the brothers' last act.

Conclusion

The plays and film examined in this chapter explicitly affirm that hierarchies of animal life, including the human, are voided in death. Dead bodies (as discussed in Chapter One) are geomorphic through natural composition. That death and decay nullify hierarchy and even taxonomy is a concept that comes through most clearly in *Cries From the Mammal House*, and *A Zed & Two Noughts*, but has resonance in the treatment of death in all of these plays. All life is mutable and mortal in *A Zed & Two Noughts*; Yank "finally belongs" in *The Hairy Ape*; Jerry finds a kind of comfort and communication in violent death in *The Zoo Story*; zoo animals and keepers rot in *Cries From the Mammal House* and *Gilbert is Dead*. Rot is a primary concern of Greenaway's film: in its first full conversation the bereaved Oswald asks his identically bereaved brother (with reference to his dead

⁴⁹⁷ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 46.

⁴⁹⁸ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 101.

⁴⁹⁹ 'snail, n.' and 'snail, v.' *OED*.

wife): “how long does it take a woman to rot?”⁵⁰⁰ The two brothers gradually obsess over decaying processes and life form types in their pursuit of grief. In decay, a dead body becomes a site for other life, as shown by the stop-motion films of animals rotting: crustaceans, flies, maggots, eventually snails scuttle over the surfaces of the dead in this film, making them both food and landscape in a geomorphic manner directly analogous to the activities of the riddling worms of Chapter One. Such evocations of rot, decay, and disease, concretely develop the sense of loss —of identity, connection, home— pervading these five performances. Decay, emphasised by the incremental shutter-click of Greenaway’s time-lapse photography and Michael Nyman’s staccato score in *A Zed & Two Noughts*, is slow. Unlike the dichotomy of liveness and death, decay is a process which repeatedly marks the presence of a body even as it slowly breaks it apart. Resistance to decay and death, though ultimately futile, can seek to hold bodies in time or space, such as cages, taxidermy or time-lapse photography. The necessity of decay for life, however, means that these resistances do not preserve life itself but rather a ghost of it: animal presences that are unable to move on from their haunt. In these zoo depictions, animals are both hyper-present, through the matching up of their own captive selves and their clearly labelled habitats, and yet also isolated from natural immersion within the wider ecosystem. Like ghosts, Geomorphic animals in zoo performance are poised between presence and absence. Zoos (and animal museums) as sites for conservation, paradoxically become powerful emblems of everything that conservation seeks to remedy. They thus are ultimately haunted loci occupied by the ghosts of extinct and imagined presences, the living bodies of isolated animals, and the painful fixations of their grief-ridden human keepers.

⁵⁰⁰ Greenaway, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, p. 35.

Chapter Four: 'The Mediated Animal'

My work has thus far demonstrated that geomorphism can camouflage animal presence, sometimes quite literally (for example, in the case of the whales of the *Physiologus* and bestiary in Chapter Two). A tension between absence and presence is therefore at the heart of geomorphism. The liveness and visuality of theatre brings this doubleness sharply into the foreground. Many critics have discussed the implications of mediation, and its relationship to liveness and presence in the context of this particular medium.⁵⁰¹ Performance exploits and demonstrates the instability of textual meaning by *showing* how a text can be read and reread in manifold ways; it is different, indeed, in every iteration. There is a necessary collaboration of acting company, script and audience in mediating and producing the world of the text. A play read is not the same as a play watched. Nonetheless, as Martin Meisel points out in *How Plays Work* (2007), the reading of a play is also not the same as the reading of a non-theatrical text: “[a] competent reader of plays will experience a sensation of visuality, tied less to an idea of the mediating stage than to the world directly evoked by the text of the play.”⁵⁰² Reading a theatrical text does not require the mental construction of a stage but rather enlists the perceptual capacity of the reader to pick up and digest the sensory signals of the play, and to respond to them imaginatively, allowing the world of the text to simulate the three-dimensional world.

For critics concerned with the multiple perspectives and ideas about extra-human ontologies that animal studies and ecocriticism examine, drama can present a fertile arena for discussion. Such biocentric critics, to use Norris’s term, have only recently explored what performance and theatricality can offer in this respect. Prominent amongst these is Una Chaudhuri, and Shonni Enelow’s work on “The Animal Project” (2006): a performative exploration in collaboration with NYU theatre students and a playwright (Steven Drukman) to examine the alleged state of “becoming-animal” posited by

⁵⁰¹ See for example, Michael Issacharoff, ‘Postscript or Pinch of Salt: Performance as Mediation or Deconstruction’, in *Performing Texts*, ed. by Michael Issacharoff and Robin F. Jones (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp. 138-43.; Rachel Price, ‘Animal, Magnetism, Theatricality in Ibsen’s *The Wild Duck*’, *New Literary History* 37.4 (2006), 797-816.; Julie Wilson-Bokowiec and Mark Bokowiec, ‘Sense & Sensation: The Act of Mediation and Its Effects’, *Intermédialités: Histoire et Théorie des Arts, des Lettres et des Techniques/History and Theory of Arts, Literature, and Techniques* 12 (2008), 129-142; 208-209.; Nick Kaye and Gabriella Giannachi, ‘Acts of Presence: Performance, Mediation, Virtual Reality’, *The Drama Review: A Journal of Performance Studies* 55.4 (2011), 88-95.; Susan Davis, ‘Liveness, Mediation and Immediacy-Innovative Technology Use in Process and Performance’, *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 17.4 (2012 Nov), 501-516; 618-620.

⁵⁰² Martin Meisel, *How Plays Work: Reading and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 43-45.

philosophers Deleuze and Guattari in their 1980 work *Mille Plateaux*.⁵⁰³ Deleuze and Guattari discuss how the human performance of turning into or becoming an animal, whilst an ultimately irresolvable process that cannot be completed, is nonetheless a material part of human experience: “here is a reality to becoming-animal, even though one does not in reality become an animal”.⁵⁰⁴

Like Chaudhuri, Enelow and Drukman, as well as Lisa Kiser, who addresses the ovine “secular typology” of the *Secunda Pastorum*,⁵⁰⁵ I have found interesting expressions of relationships between animals and space in drama, though the plays I address are much later than Kiser’s material.⁵⁰⁶ As briefly discussed in my introduction (p. 33), Kiser explores how the “radically differing” economic and environmental circumstances of the Chester and the Wakefield plays affect their depictions of sheep. In noting how Mak’s placing of a literal lamb in the cradle is a metaphorical foreshadowing of the Christ child or, “lamb of God”, Kiser’s ecocritical approach introduces a wider picture. She uses the contemporary advent (pun intended) of the Enclosure acts, with which came the loss of common grazing rights, to argue that the Shepherds are represented as though “on the cusp of massive ecological and economic change”. She suggests that this abrupt and monumental change is analogous, in her view, to the transition from Old Testament to New precipitated by Christ’s birth.⁵⁰⁷

As well as performing symbolism (as in the case of Mak’s lamb in the cradle in the *Towneley Second Shepherd’s Play*), drama offers a special opportunity to problematise the subjective gaze and the viewer’s judgment. The audience is prompted to visualise those absent parts of the play’s action through verbal and physical prompts, as well as through other visual stimuli of the stage, such as the curry comb of *Equus*’s sensorially-charged grooming scene.⁵⁰⁸ At the same time boundaries are predefined and visibly demarcated in the four walls of the theatre space, within which it is necessary to suggest rather than literally to represent: the ephemeral, artificial nature of the vision presented is a basis for the performance. The purely aural dodo of *Cries From the Mammal House*, discussed in

⁵⁰³ Una Chaudhuri, Shonni Enelow, ‘Animalizing Performance, Becoming-Theatre: Inside Zooesis with The Animal Project at NYU’, *Theatre Topics* 16.1 (2006), 1-17

⁵⁰⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 273.

⁵⁰⁵ Kiser, ‘Mak’s Heirs’, p. 358.

⁵⁰⁶ These plays span nearly fifty years of contemporary Anglophone theatre: *Night of the Iguana*, 1961; *Equus*, 1973; *Strider Story of a Horse*, 1975 (1984 in England); *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*, 2002; *War Horse*, 2007.

⁵⁰⁷ Kiser, ‘Mak’s Heirs’, p. 356

⁵⁰⁸ Peter Shaffer, *Equus*, ed. by Adrian Burke (Harlow: Longman, 1993), pp. 77-79.

Chapter Three (pp. 129-130), is an example of such suggestive, yet powerful, staging. Nonetheless, theatre is irrevocably material, its meaning deeply embedded in the physical and the present. This tension can be exploited to subvert expectations of narrative completeness, mimetic representation and authoritative narration (in theatre).

Mediating Animal Presence

Building on the previous chapter, in this chapter I examine drama in which both animal presence and absence is centrally important, and in which animals are used to express aspects of mind, passion and frustration. Methodologically I draw on the previous chapter in which the nominal, enclosed animal presence has been shown to be formative and necessary to the function of zoos, thus lending itself to the discussion of geomorphic animals. There are also, of course, points of contact and symmetry between the texts of the previous chapter and those examined in this one. The analytical function performed by Anne in *Cries From the Mammal House*,⁵⁰⁹ is mirrored by that performed by Dysart in *Equus*.⁵¹⁰ Both analysts, suffering a failure of spirit, engage with animal behaviour to make sense of human minds. The previous chapter, in its discussion of evocations and performances of zoo and museum in four plays and a film, examined how the work of their authors differently engages with the assumption that there is animal presence in a zoo as part of the play's setting, even as they disrupted, questioned and in several places literally disintegrated animal (and human) aliveness. Accidents and escapes aside, animals cannot leave zoos, which are by their very nature gardens defined by enclosure, and a zoo cannot be such without the presence of exhibits. As the previous chapter has shown, zoos are also spaces of intersubjectivity, contact and, crucially, failed contact. Theatre, as a mediated, performed encounter between audience and text, is explicitly concerned with such phenomena. In this chapter I develop the concept of the geomorphic animal through an examination of the mediation of animals as both "there" and "not there" on stage in a group of British and American plays of the mid-to-late twentieth and early twenty-first century: Tennessee Williams's *The Night of the Iguana* (1961); Peter Shaffer's *Equus* (1973); *Strider: Story of a Horse* (1984), translated for English language stage production by Peter Tegel from Mark Rozovsky's 1975 adaptation of an earlier adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's short story "Kholstomer" (1886); Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is*

⁵⁰⁹ Johnson, 'Cries From the Mammal House', p. 159.

⁵¹⁰ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 33.

Sylvia? (2002); and Nick Stafford's *War Horse* (2007) adapted from Michael Morpurgo's children's novel of the same name (1982). Three of these plays feature a named horse character (or several horse characters) requiring one or several human actors to stage. *The Night of the Iguana* and *The Goat* both feature animals who remain off-stage but are closely involved in on-stage action. Chaudhuri notes that the iguana of *Night of the Iguana* is "typical in one way: animals tend to be heard rather than seen on the stages of Western theater."⁵¹¹ As well as engaging in this chapter with Chaudhuri's critical work on zooësis in performance my approach here has some symmetry with Lourdes Orozco's studies of the significance of live, real animals in dramatic performance. Orozco argues for performance as a "productive space to reflect on human and animal subjectivity" and highlights the unpredictability of live animal actors,⁵¹² illuminating their ability both to participate in and at the same time challenge human systems of performative signification.⁵¹³ Though complementary to Orozco's methodology, I, by contrast, explore performances of animal characters by humans, in plays that probe the functional void between animals and performed animality.

I explore in this chapter how staged animals function as part of the environment of their play by providing an affective, Other presence which contextualises the behaviour of the human characters. In these same plays, however, many of these animals are also named, cast, and embodied characters. The geomorphic aspects of these animals then consist in their being able to function as both character and setting. The real animals on which theatrical representations draw are, of course, still of relevance, particularly in the possibility that animals may themselves have no concept of absence. Absence, presence and memory are anthropocentric concepts. Gabriella Gianacchi argues that readings of presence, in particular, may respond differently to approaches from a more ecocritical or a broadly animal studies perspective: "an environmental interpretation of presence foregrounds the set of circumstances that surround the occurrence of presence, while an ecological reading of presence foregrounds how presence may operate as a relational tool between organisms."⁵¹⁴ Between these two separated approaches is the sense that a single

⁵¹¹ Una Chaudhuri, 'Becoming Rhinoceros: Therio-Theatricality as Problem and Promise in Western Drama', in *The Stage Lives of Animals: Zooësis and Performance* (Oxford, New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 113-132 (p. 113).

⁵¹² Orozco, *Theatre & Animals*, p. 25.

⁵¹³ Orozco, *Theatre & Animals*, p. 25.

⁵¹⁴ Gabriella Giannachi, 'Environmental Presence', in *Archaeologies of Presence: Art, Performance and the Persistence of Being*, ed. by Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, and Michael Shanks (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 50-64 (p. 50).

occurrence of presence has a relationship with its circumstances, which we may take to include space and time. Attention to the relationship between one single presence and another is likely to disrupt the apparent fixity of those circumstances meaning that the environmental interpretation slips from critical view. In attempting to reconcile these critical conditions, Giannachi reaches towards the mediative capacity of performance, through which senses of both the remote and the immediate may be held simultaneously.⁵¹⁵ Though we exist on the same temporal plane, animal and human understandings of time may be very different. Rupert Sheldrake's explorations of animal telepathy, in phenomena such as apparent foreknowledge of natural disasters or pets knowing when their owners are coming home, are pertinent to this consideration. He suggests that to animals the concept of “now” may be somehow “thicker” than is conventionally imagined.⁵¹⁶ In this argument, animal understanding of absence and presence may in fact be more finely tuned than that of humans. Sheldrake is careful to stipulate of his investigations, however, that it is pets – animals domestically and intimately linked to specific humans — in which this phenomenon is observable. His investigations highlight the individuality of animal-human encounters, and in doing so problematise the inherent assumption that there is a simple dichotomy between animal and human consciousness. He, like most animal studies theorists, argues for a scale of different types of experience both between and within species.

Defining consciousness, like defining nature, is, as Marian Stamp Dawkins writes, “problematical not just because of the elusive, will-o-the-wisp nature of the phenomenon itself but because we can mean so many different things by the one word.”⁵¹⁷ As Dawkins explains “many people maintain that the study of consciousness is quite impossible”⁵¹⁸. “But”, she writes, “there is a chink [in the impassibility of the boundary between the conscious experience of one being and another]: that of sympathy and communication – that of encounter”. She argues for imaginative striving for sympathy with animal experience by using our knowledge of them in relation to what we experience ourselves asking: “can we enter their worlds of experience?”⁵¹⁹ The coherence of just such a

⁵¹⁵ Giannachi, ‘Environmental Presence’, p. 63.

⁵¹⁶ Rupert Sheldrake, *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home: And Other Unexplained Powers of Animals* (London: Hutchinson, 1999), p. 139.

⁵¹⁷ Marian Stamp Dawkins, *Through Our Eyes Only? The Search for Animal Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 4.

⁵¹⁸ Stamp Dawkins, *Through Our Eyes Only?*, p. 10.

⁵¹⁹ Stamp Dawkins, *Through Our Eyes Only?*, p. 12.

question is the problem with which philosopher Thomas Nagel wrestles in his seminal 1974 essay “What is it like to be a Bat?”,⁵²⁰ which has influenced much of the animal studies that followed it. As Nagel and Dawkins suggest, analogy, sympathy and mediation make up the only window we have through which to approach understanding of animals and yet all are, at the same time, distorting and anthropocentric. For Boehrer, mediation of any type renders the animal less animalistic, turning it into a product of the internal ideas of the writer and a portrait of the artist rather than the sitter.⁵²¹ For Norris, mediation is also suspect. She writes that “mediation [...] functions to insert a lack or an absence into the play of natural power [...] the predator simply overcomes [...] his victim [...] the demagogue relies on the mediation of his polemic to persuade others to relinquish their power [...demanding, effectively, that] ‘I want you to desire what I desire’”,⁵²² or, in the words of Jerry, in *The Zoo Story*, “here is what I wanted to happen: I loved the dog now, and I wanted him to love me [...] I hoped that the dog would understand.”⁵²³ Necessarily in literature animals are representations of the nonhuman mediated by human understanding, and products, not of their living counterparts, but of human responses *to* those creatures.

Una Chaudhuri notes that Tennessee Williams’s *Gnädiges Fraulein* (1966) is “one of surprisingly few plays to include an actual animal in its list of active characters”,⁵²⁴ also mentioning Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros* (1959) in this category. Even in the cases of named animal actors, their presence is not guaranteed among the dramatis personae. Ibsen’s *Little Eyolf* (1895) calls for a live dog, though in the published script he is not included in the cast list.⁵²⁵ Earlier still, Launce’s famous companion Crab in *Two Gentleman of Verona* also traditionally a canine actor, is also not listed in the dramatis personae.⁵²⁶ Some of the plays discussed in this chapter do include animals in their listings: Nugget (horse) in Peter Shaffer’s *Equus*; Strider (horse) in Rozovsky’s *The Story of a Horse*; and Joey, Topthorn,

⁵²⁰ Thomas Nagel, ‘What Is It Like to Be a Bat?’, *The Philosophical Review*, 83.4 (1974), 435-450.

⁵²¹ Boehrer, *Animal Characters*, p. 3.

⁵²² Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, p. 5.

⁵²³ Albee, ‘The Zoo Story’, p. 82.

⁵²⁴ Chaudhuri, ‘AWK!’, p. 58.

⁵²⁵ Henrik Ibsen, ‘Little Eyolf’, in *Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen*, ed. and trans. William Archer, vol. 11 (London: William Heinemann, 1910).

⁵²⁶ Composition conservatively dated 1590-92, though contentiously dated as early as 1585. William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ed. by Roger Warren (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; Oxford Scholarly Editions Online, 2012).; Richard Beadle, ‘Crab’s Pedigree’, in *English Comedy*, ed. by Michael Corder, Peter Holland, and John Kerrigan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 12-36 (p. 13).

Coco, Heine (horses) as well as various other puppets, which include a swallow, crow and goose, in Stafford's *Warhorse*. Though titular presences in their respective plays, neither Williams's iguana of *Night of the Iguana* nor Sylvia in *The Goat* are listed (though Sylvia is given a name).

These plays all have in common a fascination with fluid boundaries between human and animal and explore them through the theatrical space. More than this, however, the animals they depict mostly rely on forms of mediation that require the absence of an actual animal actor: miming, puppetry, masks, even description. Use of graphic spoken description in theatre to detail the interactions with animals, such as the blinding of Nugget and the other horses in *Equus*, or the seduction of Sylvia in *The Goat*, highlights and at the same time figuratively undermines the absence of the animal. In dramatic depiction of animals, without use of the animal itself, ways of invoking reality without actualising it must be considered. In dramatic staging, an animal is mediated but in the present moment; spoken through and spoken for, invoked and staged but not quite literally present. In drama, modalities of representation — onstage/offstage, described/displayed, figurative/literal — are given a living element, and their operation is actively witnessed by an audience. This witnessing is in itself a fertile seam for the discussion of animals, allowing the questions of whether or not we truly see animals, and in what way they see us, to be deeply investigated through the drawing together of the plays of this chapter.

Before drawing these plays together I will situate them individually.

Tennessee Williams's *The Night of the Iguana* was first staged in 1961 on Broadway, and set in Mexico in the 1940s. Philip Kolin has suggested that Mexico “allowed Williams to enter the liminal world where his sexual and political anxieties, triggered by conventionalism, could be expressed and eased”.⁵²⁷ Evidently this setting had significant emotional impact for Williams as he wrote that his own travel in Mexico twenty years before, as recorded in ‘A Summer of Discovery’ (1941), influenced his choice of setting, claiming that a happenstance exploration of Acapulco produced “the background for my new play, *The Night of the Iguana* [...] a frame hotel called the Costa Verde on the hill over the still water beach”.⁵²⁸ In the play disgraced faith-wavering minister Rev. Dr. Lawrence

⁵²⁷ *The Undiscovered Country: The Later Plays of Tennessee Williams*, ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 35.

⁵²⁸ Tennessee Williams, ‘A Summer of Discovery’, in *Where I Live: Selected Essays*, ed. by John S. Bak (New York: New Directions, 1978), pp. 117-148 (p. 125).

T. Shannon, “a male equivalent almost of a Blanche DuBois”,⁵²⁹ now a tour guide for a group, comes to boisterously lustful Maxine Faulks’ hotel. The powerfully hysterical DuBois quality of Shannon is pinpointed by David Richards: “[i]n [William Petersen’s] daring interpretation, this Shannon is high-strung, self-dramatizing and bordering on effeminate at times. He could be Blanche DuBois’s brother [...] the effeminacy [...] lends a razor-sharp immediacy to his desperation.”⁵³⁰ Shannon has furthermore been accused of the statutory rape of one of his party, before the play’s action begins: the sixteen year old Charlotte, whose advances he attempts to resist throughout the play (whilst trying to side-step those of Maxine). Spinster artist Hannah and her elderly Nonno, a poet, arrive, near destitution and, in the case of Nonno specifically, who collapses after dictating his last poem, death. Other guests at the hotel include a family of German travellers who sing Nazi songs: apparently comic but also anticipating the painfully tragic events to unfold in WWII. Following a confrontation the tour party departs, and Shannon, after suffering a break down, is trussed into a hammock by Maxine’s local employees (and sometime lovers) in a similar way to an Iguana they have captured for food and tied up (off-stage, but heard, scrabbling increasingly desperately). Shannon and Hannah find a connection through a long night of slow talk, and eventually release the iguana on the grounds that “all which is most valuable in life is escaping from the narrow cubicle of one’s self to a sort of veranda between the sky and the still water beach (allegorically speaking) and to a hammock beside another beleaguered being, someone else who is in exile from the place and time of his heart’s fulfillment.”⁵³¹ At the close of the play, however, Hannah walks away from any chance at longer intimacy with Shannon, who himself resolves to help run the hotel with Maxine. The John Huston-directed 1964 film starred Richard Burton as Rev. Lawrence T. Shannon, as well as Ava Gardner and Deborah Kerr as Maxine Faulks and Hannah Jelkes respectively.

Equus was first staged at The National Theatre, London, in 1973, directed by John Dexter, and following Peter Shaffer’s earlier *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964). A significant portion of the play centres on an analyst, Martin Dysart, and a teenager whom he is trying to help, Alan Strang. Alan Strang has blinded six horses at the stable where he

⁵²⁹ Tennessee Williams and Studs Terkel, ‘From an Interview with Studs Terkel for WFMT-FM in 1961’, *WFMT-FM* <<http://studsterkel.wfmt.com/blog/1961interview-with-tennessee-williams/>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁵³⁰ See also (on the 1994 Goodman Theatre, Chicago production) David Richards, ‘Review/Theater: The Night of the Iguana; Lost Souls Communing On a Turbulent Night’, *The New York Times*, 30 March 1994 <<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/30/theater/review-theater-the-night-of-the-iguana-lost-souls-communing-on-a-turbulent-night.html>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁵³¹ Williams, ‘A Summer of Discovery’, p. 128.

worked. It emerges, through a mixing of monologue, dialogue and action, that this act was precipitated by a (religiously and sexually) ecstatic devotion Alan developed towards horses, and specifically to his personal deity the God-slave Equus. Alan's mother is Christian, Alan's father not, but both are socially conservative to the point of controlling his behaviour. On the night of the incident Alan and Jill, a stable-girl with whom there is mutual attraction, bump into Alan's father at a "skin-flick" and later attempt sex in the stable. Alan's attachment to Equus, and his sense that he is being witnessed by his god causes him to reject Jill and blind the horses in the stable. Martin Dysart, in the process of his work with Alan, deliberates on his own crisis of conscience, both to himself and in conversation with the magistrate, Hesther, that, in healing Alan's pain he will also remove an important part of his joy and experience of passion. Though the play secured a number of awards in 1975,⁵³² initial critical reception was varied. Sanford Gifford found deception and fault in the play's presentation of the patient-psychiatrist relationship and psychology.⁵³³ John Simon condemned it for "[d]ishonesty to the audiences, by trying to smuggle [in] subliminal but virulent homosexual propaganda" and "[d]ishonesty toward the present state of the theatre, in which homosexuality can and has been discussed openly and maturely".⁵³⁴ James Lee "praised Equus for the fullness of its dramatic experience."⁵³⁵ James R. Stacy maps the passionate search for worship in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *Equus*, stating that the "crux of Shaffer's exploration into these worships is in the admiration the nonbelievers develop for their primitives".⁵³⁶ Barry Wytham suggests that "in its subject matter and dramatic tradition, *Equus* is still infused with the same philosophical outlook which was so popular and controversial in 1956."⁵³⁷

The play was also adapted for Sidney Lumet's 1977 film of the same name, starring Peter Firth, from the original cast, as Alan Strang. Richard Burton took the role of Dysart (whereas the original play cast Anthony Hopkins in this role). A significant

⁵³² James Fisher, *Historical Dictionary of Contemporary American Theater: 1930-2010*, vol. 1 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), p. 246.; Thomas S. Hischak, *American Theatre: A Chronicle of Comedy and Drama, 1969-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 78.

⁵³³ Sanford Gifford, 'A Psychoanalyst Says No to Equus', *The New York Times*, 15 December 1974, Sec. 2, p. 1, col. 7.

⁵³⁴ John Simon, 'Hippodrama at the Psychodrome', *The Hudson Review* 28 (1975), 97-106 (p. 106).

⁵³⁵ James Lee, 'Equus, Round Three', *Exchange* 2 (1976), 49-59, cited in Barry Wytham, 'Anger in Equus', *Modern Drama* 22.1 (1979), 61-66 (p. 62).

⁵³⁶ James R. Stacy, 'The Sun and the Horse: Peter Shaffer's Search For Worship', *Educational Theatre Journal* 28 (1976), 325-37 cited in C. J. Gianakaris, *Peter Shaffer* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 107.

⁵³⁷ Wytham, 'Anger in Equus', p. 62.

difference that the film introduced, and I will discuss such differences in detail, was the introduction of real horses in place of actors to evoke Nugget and the other horses of the stable. Of this change Vincent Canby wrote that “[w]hat once was poetic and mysterious becomes, when seen in this literal detail, banal, anticlimactic.”⁵³⁸

Mark Rozovsky’s adaptation of Tolstoy’s “Kholstomer”(1886)⁵³⁹ was first directed in a Leningrad performance by Georgy Tovstonogov, in 1975: “[i]t was seen at the Edinburgh Festival in 1987 and also in English-language productions in New York and London (1984, the latter directed by Michael Bognadov)”.⁵⁴⁰ The latter showed at the National Theatre. The play centres on the life of the horse Strider, a powerful horse who is also piebald and consequently unjustly castrated as a matter of course. Though the play features a herd, who speak as a chorus, Strider’s first speech establishes his exceptionalism as a horse: “The piebald gelding stood alone” and the first and last scene of the play show Strider’s dignified execution in old age: the sharpening of the inevitable blade at the play’s beginning, the bleeding, death, flaying and consumption of the body by wolves at its end.

Edward Albee’s *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (2002) opened on Broadway at the John Golden Theatre on March 10, 2002. The original cast featured Bill Pullman (Martin), Mercedes Ruehl (Stevie), Jeffrey Carlson (Billy), and Stephen Rowe (Ross).⁵⁴¹ Sally Field and Bill Irwin later that year took on the roles of Stevie and Martin.⁵⁴² The comfortably-situated marriage of Martin and Stevie falls to pieces in the face of the revelation that Martin is having a heart-felt affair with, or rather, as most of the other characters put it, “fucking” a goat (the eponymous Sylvia). The play details Martin’s failed attempts to describe his transcendent feelings to his devastated and furious wife Stevie, his revolted friend Ross or his bemused son Billy. Billy, who is gay, comes under increasing emotional pressure as the play comes to its close, and kisses Martin in a vulnerable, slightly confused

⁵³⁸ Vincent Canby, “‘Equus’: Film of a Different Color”, *The New York Times*, 17 October 1977 <<http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=990DE6DF1E3AE333A25754C1A9669D946690D6CF>> [accessed 20 December 2016].

⁵³⁹ Leo Tolstoy, ‘Strider, Story of a Horse’, in *The Snow Storm and other Stories*, trans. by Louise Maude and others (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

⁵⁴⁰ ‘Rozovsky, Mark’, in *The Oxford Companion to Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Dennis Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), online <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199574193.001.0001/acref-9780199574193-e-3420>> [accessed 18 October 2016].

⁵⁴¹ Playbill, ‘The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?’, *Playbill*, 2002 <<http://www.playbill.com/production/the-goat-or-who-is-sylvia-john-golden-theatre-vault-0000008382>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁵⁴² David Finkle, ‘The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?’, *Theater Mania*, 30 September 2002 <http://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city-theater/reviews/09-2002/the-goat-or-who-is-sylvia_2608.html> [accessed 10 January 2017].

father-son encounter.⁵⁴³ A destroyed Stevie eventually exits, returning with the dead carcass of a goat to confront Martin. Chaudhuri has noted that this play has been read as “‘really’ not about bestiality at all but about homosexuality”.⁵⁴⁴ David Finkle’s observation that, “[a]udiences seem to have no trouble accepting the whole goat thing [...] perhaps [...] as something too extreme to be believed and therefore harmless; yet they gasp when Martin is kissed by [...] Billy”, might support such a reading of the play.⁵⁴⁵ Réka Cristian finds in Billy “a synthesis of the author’s previous child figures” and suggests that the “the cruelty and kindness game that appears here was foretold by Jerry in Albee’s first play, *The Zoo Story* (1959).”⁵⁴⁶ For my purposes, Billy is of course most interesting because his namesake is the word for a male goat (billygoat).⁵⁴⁷

Nick Stafford's *War Horse* (2007) was adapted from Michael Morpurgo’s children’s novel of the same name (1982). The play's West End and Broadway productions were directed by Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris respectively. The horses are performed through life-size horse puppets by the Handspring Puppet Company.⁵⁴⁸ The play centres on Joey, a horse owned by a Devon-born boy named Albert Narracott. Initially the relationship between the two builds in Devon country life (which features an aggressive goose and swooping swallow, both also Handspring puppets). Albert teaches Joey to plough and to race (as a hunter he has qualities of both thoroughbred and workhorses but the natural affinity for neither activity) in order to win bets placed by his alcoholic father against Albert’s uncle Ted and cousin Billy. In giving Joey a wide skill-set, which does not come easily to him, Albert unknowingly ensures his survival. Deleuze has asserted that “You have not defined an animal until you have listed its affects. In this sense there is a greater difference between a race horse and a work horse than between a work horse and an ox.”⁵⁴⁹ Under a Deleuzian conception the remarkable horse Joey becomes a hybrid species through his formative work with Albert.

⁵⁴³ David Finkle, ‘The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?’.

⁵⁴⁴ Chaudhuri, ‘Introduction’, in *The Stage Lives of Animals*, pp. 1-10.

⁵⁴⁵ David Finkle, ‘The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?’.

⁵⁴⁶ Réka M. Cristian, ‘From Delicate Absence to Presence: the Child in Edward Albee’s Alternating Families’, *Americana 2* (2006) n.p., online <<http://americanajournal.hu/vol2no2/cristian-essay>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁵⁴⁷ ‘billygoat, n.’, *OED*.

⁵⁴⁸ Handspring Puppet Company, ‘War Horse’, *Handspring Puppet Company*, 2016 <<http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/our-work/handspring-productions/war-horse-2/>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁵⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 60, with reference to Spinoza.

At the outbreak of World War One, Joey is sold to the Cavalry and shipped to France as an officer's horse. It is here that Joey meets and eventually earns the respect of Topthorn, another officer's horse. After a disastrous attack both horses are caught up in enemy fire, and the officer's sketchbook is sent to Albert, who enlists. Joey and Topthorn are put to pulling German ambulances before being taken by deserters to a French farm, where they meet Emilie and her mother. They are eventually taken back by the German army and put to pulling artillery with the horses Coco and Heine, under the guardianship of Friedrich Muller. Though inspired and protected by Joey, whose ploughing skill transfers well to pulling heavy artillery, Topthorn eventually dies of exhaustion, and an incoming tank kills the mourning Friedrich and scares away Joey. Joey, running, is eventually caught in the barbed wire of No Man's Land. His plight brings out the underlying humanity of two German and British soldiers who collaborate to cut him free. Albert and his friend David's infantry division encounter Emilie, and bring her to British headquarters. On the way, David is shot and killed, and Albert blinded by tear gas. Emilie does not have time to tell him Joey is alive. In a British encampment, Albert tells his story to a nurse just as the damaged Joey is brought to the camp by soldiers. and nearly killed in an act of mercy before Albert recognises him by whistling. The two convalesce together before returning home at the war's end.

As with previous chapters, the animal species (as well as the animal individual) will affect the way that these plays represent animal space. Norris's discussion of D.H. Lawrence in *Beasts of The Modern Imagination* illuminates the implications of human self-awareness that an animal gaze engenders, and the consequent negation of the animal individual as animate:

Lawrence's 'other' functions like an ocelli, a false eye (I) or illusory consciousness, like the circles on butterfly wings that frighten predators away [...] L[awrence] contrasts human enthrallment to this false eye (I), this illusory consciousness of the social world, with human disregard for the real eye of the animal: people utterly negate the animal as a perceiving consciousness by acting as though animals do not see them, and yet society's ocelli make them self-conscious, afraid, ashamed, gratified.⁵⁵⁰

Subscription to this mythologizing of the animal's ability to perceive as a collective otherness or mirror to human culture denies the very individual sight-ability that gives rise to it, and yet such an assumption pervades the idea of 'animal', and the stage presences

⁵⁵⁰ Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, pp. 18-19.

discussed in this chapter. There are simultaneously eyes everywhere and nowhere. In the apparent omnipresence of an animal other, then, like the off-stage iguana of *The Night of the Iguana* or the “Equus Noise” of *Equus*,⁵⁵¹ the agency of animal characters, such as Nugget the horse (*Equus*) is complicated or masked, further enabling geomorphic presentation of animals on stage as both setting, in the sense of creating an atmosphere in which the Other is always watching, and character, in the sense of being a living presence on stage.

Paula Gunn Allen's work also offers another, more dynamic and performative, way of approaching an animal gaze. Her work on Western translations of traditional Keres narratives explores how cultural communities subconsciously shape readers' understandings of narrative. “[I]n short”, she writes, “it's hard to see the forest when you're a tree.”⁵⁵² According to Allen, Keres literature describes the landscape and its living parts without strict, hypotactic relationships between character and scenery:

In tribal literatures the timing of the foregrounding of various elements is dependent on the purpose the narrative is intended to serve. Tribal art functions something like a forest in which all elements coexist, where each is integral to the being of the others. [...] traditional peoples perceive their world in a unified-field fashion that is very different from the single-focus perception that generally characterises western masculinist, monotheistic modes of perception.⁵⁵³

She shows this whilst applying feminist principles and post-colonial sensibilities to white, patriarchal translations of traditional American Indian *Kochinnenako* stories. Nonetheless I think that Allen's assertion that “there is no ‘point of view’” suppresses the inescapably human perspective of narration, the fact that perceptual experience is always embodied, and by implication, the additional fact that human experience of the world is always constructed through specifically human eyes.⁵⁵⁴

Allen's idea—that the emphasis and purpose of a narrative, rather than being to reiterate a preconceived hierarchy of social importance, are to interrogate what constitutes foreground and background—speaks directly to my approach to geomorphic

⁵⁵¹ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 33: “a choric effect, made by all the actors sitting round upstage, and composed of humming, thumping, and stamping — though never of neighing or whinnying. This Noise heralds or illustrates the presence of Equus the God”.

⁵⁵² Paula Gunn Allen, ‘Kochinnenako in Academe: Three Approaches to a Keres Indian tale’, in *Yellow Woman*, ed. by Leslie Marmon Silko, and Melody Graulich (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p. 86.

⁵⁵³ Allen, ‘Kochinnenako in Academe’, pp. 107-108.

⁵⁵⁴ Allen, ‘Kochinnenako in Academe’, p. 105.

representation of animals in literature. The signification of the iguana in *The Night of the Iguana*, for example, is apparently peripheral, its capture a background event, like the oppressive heat of the jungle beyond the verandah. Yet, in a way comparable to animal presence in zoos, the iguana is nominally and metaphorically central to the play. Whilst it makes an appearance on stage earlier than Sylvia does in Albee's play, its physical presence becomes significant only at the close of the play, but its unseen presence has a much wider-ranging influence within the play. Like the ill-fated duck of Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, the iguana is symbolic, but its purpose is more than this. In Williams's play the vulgar beastliness of the human characters is intensified and condemned, whereas the captured iguana behaves with quiet dignity: Shannon's release of the iguana back into the jungle at Hannah's request is the zenith of their tenderness towards each other, and a redeemingly hopeful moment in an otherwise defeatist (and defeated) atmosphere. The aural, rather than visual, presence of the iguana is perhaps important to its background potency. In the 1964 film, this moment has been received as emotionally flat: "their suffering and their bleating [...] are no more substantial or affecting than the cutting loose of that captured iguana, that edible lizard, by the presumably liberated hero as morning breaks."⁵⁵⁵ In the Huston film the iguana is also shown chased, flashing through undergrowth, then captured and raised in triumph, splayed and still. Sylvia, in Albee's play, breaks onstage more effectively: as carcass. There is no direct equivalence between these two animals in the way that they operate within their respective plays, but rather, a use in both of modalities of absence and presence. One, indeed, is far more part of the background (the iguana) and the other more centrally acknowledged (the goat/Sylvia).

Applying Allen's theory in this way helps to highlight the fact that there are potentially elitist assumptions underlying conceptions of character and scenery, foreground and background. "In the western mind," Allen writes, "shadows highlight the foreground. In contrast in the [Keres] tribal view the mutual relationships among shadows and light in all their varying degrees of intensity create a living web of definition and depth, and significance arises from their interplay."⁵⁵⁶ However, there are also examples of the evocation of such a 'living web' in Western theatre. The 1927 Theatre Company production *The Animals and the Children Take to the Streets* (2013) uses shadow theatre and

⁵⁵⁵ Bosley Crowther, "'Night of the Iguana' Has World Premiere", *The New York Times*, 1 July 1964 <<http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9C0CE6D7103FEE32A25752C0A9619C946591D6CF>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

⁵⁵⁶ Allen, 'Kochinnenako in Academe', p. 108.

projections for a significant portion of the play.⁵⁵⁷ The human actors interact with the previously-recorded projections of animal and human characters, which form a literal backdrop and scenery to this minimalistically presented drama as well as *de facto* active characters. In effect, in this play the scenery is also the cast, and shadows, rather than being the relief surrounding the highlighted focal points, are themselves also the foreground. Though, as Allen intimates, Western theatre might be read, or rather stereotyped, as part of a culture that is built upon hierarchies and rigid narrative templates, its ability to question and play with these conventions endures, and performance in particular, through its necessary presentness and materiality, allows for a visible, actual, demonstration of the attempts to escape the single perspective. The theatre itself necessitates a degree of “inclusive field-perception”, in allowing a single animal, such as the horse Nugget in Shaffer’s *Equus*, to be seen in multivalent (and, in the case of this play, to a degree polyphonic) ways.

Shaffer’s professed interest in *Equus* is not in the horses specifically, but in what Alan Strang’s relationship to, and fixation on, horses can do to steer a path between what he calls “two kinds of right”: between the individual’s experience of passion and selfhood and the collective’s need for safety from each other through social pressure towards restraint.⁵⁵⁸ Shaffer is known in particular for his exploration of the artificial dynamics of witnessing and mediated experience throughout his drama, and it is this that is at play in the depiction of his horses. Shaffer’s problematising of the normative gaze in *Equus* is particularly complicated both by the psychiatrist’s questionable authority and the representation of the “Godslave”/animal that is *Equus*, through the imagined bodies of the horses, made by the real bodies of the actors. In this play Dysart mediates our experience of Alan and Nugget (and *Equus*) and yet at the same time does not; the action is displayed to the audience, not described, and is effectively seen twice. No one is the passive recipient of a single vision, and every encounter occurs twice, simultaneously: a disconcerting refusal to endorse either manifestation as more ‘real’. Even Shaffer’s insistence on the metal and leather of the *Equus* masks sitting high above the actors’ faces when worn, concealing nothing, forces the audience to accept two conflicting identities of Shaffer’s horses, exercising their capacity for suspension of disbelief and ability to

⁵⁵⁷ Lyttelton Theatre; this production ran from 12 December 2011 to 10 January 2013., recording held at ‘The Animals and the Children Take to the Streets’, The National Theatre Archive (London, 2011), PERF8637, RNT/AE/1/1/208 [Digital Performance Videos].

⁵⁵⁸ Peter Shaffer, ‘Equus: Playwright Peter Shaffer Interprets its Ritual’, *Vogue* 165 (1975), p. 136: p. 192 (p. 136).

understand Shaffer's horses as at once representative of a horse proper, the godslave *Equus*, and also of the human actor depicting them.

A similar tension between absence and presence is raised by Shaffer's use of the psychiatric concept of abreaction, defined by the *OED* as the "[d]ischarge of the emotional energy associated with a psychic trauma that has been forgotten or repressed; the process of bringing such a trauma back to consciousness".⁵⁵⁹ This concept draws attention to the play's story-within-a-story construction, complicated by the dramatic form of its delivery in which the animal is both described and seen, with incongruity between these two types of representation creating a kind of double vision. Though there is much abreaction in *Equus*, a particular moment of Scene 20 highlights this doubleness:

[ALAN moves upstage, and mimes opening the door. Soft light on the circle. Humming from the CHORUS: the *Equus* noise.
The horse actors enter, raise high their masks, and put them on all together. They stand around the circle – NUGGET in the mouth of the tunnel]
[...He looks about him. The horses stamp uneasily; their masks turn towards him.]
DYSART: You are on the inside now. All the horses are staring at you. Can you see them?
ALAN: [excited] Yes!
DYSART: Which one are you going to take?
ALAN: Nugget.
[ALAN reaches up and mimes leading NUGGET carefully round the circle downstage with a rope, past all the horses on the right.]
DYSART: What colour is Nugget?
ALAN: Chestnut.⁵⁶⁰

This action begins the climactic scene of the first act of Shaffer's *Equus*, in which the hypnotised patient Alan tells the psychiatrist Dysart about his riding ritual. Later, he denies the truth of his explanation, and the memory he earlier divulged to Dysart on a tape. As Dysart explains to Hesther, the magistrate who brought the boy to him, Alan will only be prevented from denying those recalled memories that he has also shown, and relived before another, when he is "ready to abreact" as Dysart puts it.⁵⁶¹ The implied difference between Scene 20 and Scene 28-34 therefore is that Scene 20 is description of a recalled memory, and 28-34 are abreaction, though to the audience both memories are acted out. Dysart's voice is the guiding authoritative discourse through which the audience's experience is filtered, and, ultimately, through his explanation of and

⁵⁵⁹ 'abreaction, n.', *OED*.

⁵⁶⁰ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 91

⁵⁶¹ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 103.

extrapolation from the case of Alan Strang, his experience is the play's focus. He is unequivocally not, however, the eye of the audience, and he, too, can be the audience's object — a fact highlighted by the shape of the original staging, with its audience gallery putting eyes on all sides of the action, echoing the omnipresent *Equus* gaze, and resonating with Lawrence's, and Norris's, concept of the animal ocelli. The audience are equipped with their own viewpoint on Strang's memories by the figures of Nugget and the other horse actors, and by Strang's abreaction. The horses are partially visible to the audience, in the symbolic guises of the actors, who physically represent the front half of the equine bodies, and imply, in their movements, the full body of the animal. To Alan Strang, of course, the animals that he remembers riding are fully visible: in his past, in his recalling in dreams and speech, and again in the abreaction. The question that this leads to is, what can Dysart see? To Dysart only, the horse is entirely absent. In Lumet's film, the horse and Alan fill the screen, obliterating Dysart completely.

In the above scene, the fictionality of Alan's miming is underlined by the question "What colour is Nugget?" It is worth clarifying here that this question is not for the benefit of the audience, as in the stage directions Shaffer specifies that the actors playing horses must be dressed in "chestnut velvet" as part of their costume (although, of course directors are at liberty to alter this specification).⁵⁶² Alan's reply only corroborates the visual information already presented to the audience. The question nonetheless prompts visualisation, requesting information to lend verisimilitude to the 'imagined' animal, a prompt only for Dysart and for Alan, whom Dysart is trying to provoke into reliving his experiences of *Equus*: in this question Dysart fills in a gap in his visualisation whereas Alan remembers. This snippet of exchange is irrelevant to the audience's mental picture of the animal. The question seems odd, disruptive of the fervour with which Dysart both prompts and directs Alan's imaginings, acted for the audience. Nonetheless it is central to highlighting the complexity of 'where' the horse is ultimately depicted: whether in Dysart's guiding hypnosis, in Alan's description, or in the action of the actor playing Nugget.

Famously, the horses of *Equus* are inspired by a real event, but such inspiration does not necessarily endow them with a stronger sense of the corporeal or even real. As Chaudhuri suggests, Williams's cocaloony birds of *The Gnädiges Fräulein* were apparently inspired by pelicans (the word 'pelican' scratched out and written over with 'cocaloony') but are evidently transformed into something else entirely in Williams's creation, even

⁵⁶² Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 32.

though Williams deliberately records their association in his production notes.⁵⁶³ ‘Outside’ the world created by the text —the source, or ‘real’ counterparts’ to the boy and horses in *Equus*— is also addressed by Shaffer in his note to the play. Shaffer explains his inspiration for the play as a different story: the gossip of a London dinner party related to him by a friend:

One weekend over two years ago, I was driving with a friend through bleak countryside. We passed a stable. Suddenly he was reminded by it of an alarming crime [...] He only knew one horrible detail [...] I had to create a mental world in which the deed could be comprehensible [...] Every person and incident in *Equus* is of my own invention, save the crime itself; and even that I modified to accord with what I feel to be acceptable theatrical proportion.⁵⁶⁴

Even in its inspiration the story follows the pattern of a tertiary witness building coherence out of a troubling, half-remembered narrative.

Within these layers of uncertain and partial witnessing the unanswered question of *Equus* remains: what *is* the horse? Dysart's opening monologue, the opening discourse of the play, frames the unknowability of the horse, and at the same time highlights its agency, its desire: there are two perspectives on the encounter between the boy and the horse, and our access to either is, to lesser and greater degrees respectively, mediated, incomplete and ultimately illusory. “And of all nonsensical things,” Dysart exclaims “I keep thinking about the horse! Not the boy, but the horse, and what it might be trying to do.”⁵⁶⁵ His frustration is palpable - even in his privileged psychiatrist's access to the exchange between the horse and boy, even in having been shown, through the process of Alan's therapy, what happened, he is ultimately barred from access to the inner workings of the animal's, and, as he later acknowledges Alan's, part in this animal-human relationship. Even the scene of their 'joining', the Field of HaHa, conjures illusion in its very name, alluding to a ditch used in landscape gardening to give the impression that garden and the countryside beyond are continuous. A crisis of surface and interior, of the boundary between the mediator and mediated, or the anxiety of signifier and signified, emerges in Shaffer's undermining of Dysart as apparent narrator by highlighting his inability to describe the central animal: in terms of the character Nugget, who, in being named, and demonstrated to the audience in Alan's recallings, stands as a representative

⁵⁶³ Chaudhuri, ‘AWK!’, p. 59.

⁵⁶⁴ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 30.

⁵⁶⁵ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 35.

of all six horses in the stable, and of the Godslave Equus, for whom Alan Strang believes Nugget, and indeed all horses, to act as vessels.

Mediating Animal Bodies

Anxiety about animal sexuality is a central theme to *Equus* that also emerges in other contemporary plays about animals. Sexual intimacy is one modality of animal-encounter in particular that is largely invisible through its illegality and taboo nature. In *Equus*, and Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, however, this uncomfortable subject is central. In the case of the latter play particularly it is important to acknowledge, as does Midas Dekker in his bestiality study *Dearest Pet* (2000), the classical roots of bestiality in art, and its association with escape and the transgression of social norms to an alien and primal wildness.⁵⁶⁶ These associations underlie many of the hedonistic connotations of bestiality, from bacchanalian ritual to the myth of Zeus's multiple seductions of women in the various guises of swan, bull, snake and others. The abandoning of social responsibility, as Martin demonstrates most comprehensively in *The Goat* by the rejection of marriage, friendship and success for the statutory rape of Sylvia the goat, is strongly associated with bestial acts. As Una Chaudhuri notes, "Albee's goat is linked implicitly, explicitly, and etymologically to the tragōidia ("goat song") of ancient Greece."⁵⁶⁷ Indeed, the linking of the play with Ancient Greek tragedy is made explicit by its published subtitle: "Notes toward a definition of tragedy". Albee's play does follow the typical trajectory of the tragic fall. Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy, amongst other scholars, have explained this etymology by speculating that initially a goat was either the prize for a competition of choral dancing or was the showpiece around which a chorus danced prior to the animal's ritual sacrifice.⁵⁶⁸ In such a scenario the goat itself forms a centrepiece and context for the action of the performance and the death of the animal marks the close of the play. The layers of significance of the goat are multiple and unresolved. *The Goat* uses the figure of a goat, in the context of Martin's modern but ultimately fractured family life, to similar ends.

⁵⁶⁶ Midas Dekker, *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 1-3.

⁵⁶⁷ Una Chaudhuri, "'Of all Nonsensical Things:' Performance and Animal Life", *PMLA* 124 (2009), 520–25 (p. 521).

⁵⁶⁸ *History of the Theatre*, 10th edn, ed. by Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy (Boston, Mass.; London: Allyn and Bacon, 2008), p. 13.

In *The Goat* initially the audience is introduced to Sylvia by name, and not through Martin's description, but through his friend Ross's assumptions, which paint her as a busty blonde farm-worker; a decidedly human female. Suspense is enabled by Ross's misinterpretation, which accords a greater degree of shock at the revelation to both him and then the audience, to whom Martin's photograph of Sylvia is not revealed, Ross instead shouting incredulously at the close of the scene "THIS IS A GOAT! [...] YOU'RE FUCKING A GOAT!"⁵⁶⁹ The shock is also intensified by the idyllic pastoral setting of Martin's first encounter with the goat - a conventionally beautiful autumn scene from which Sylvia herself emerges:

Martin: And I stopped, and the view was...well, not spectacular, but wonderful. Fall, you know?, with leaves turning and the town below me and great scudding clouds and those country smells.

Ross: Cow shit, and all that.

[...]

Martin: Anyway, it was pretty wonderful. [...] and it was then that I saw her. (*Sees it*). Just...just looking at me.⁵⁷⁰

Given the way that Martin insists on falling for the goat the site is, therefore, important; the natural setting in which he meets her explicitly influences the emotions provoked in him. For him the goat is part of the beautiful countryside scene, an implied contributor, indeed, to the "country smells" that he finds so moving, and that he, in contrast with Ross, idealises. In light of this blurred boundary between animal and setting it is perhaps significant that the name Sylvia suggests she is sylvan (a being of the woods) from the Latin *silva*, or 'forest'.⁵⁷¹ Martin's response to the goat, however, singles her out from the landscape. As I discussed in relation to Bate's reading of Wordsworth in my Introduction, a romantic response to natural setting posits a spiritual connection between man and landscape. Martin's response points to the physical reality, and mutuality, of this connection. In responding to the emotional trigger of the natural setting by, in plain terms, by having sex with a part of it, Martin demonstrates the ability of the natural landscape to interact with him, and breaks down the rigid categories of human character and natural scenery. The name, Sylvia, and the full title of Albee's play, *The Goat, or, Who is Sylvia?*, itself alludes to a song and character from Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "Who is Silvia? what is she, / That all our swains commend her? [...] She excels each mortal thing / Upon the dull earth dwelling: / To her let us garlands bring" (Act IV, Scene

⁵⁶⁹ Edward Albee, *The Goat, or, Who is Sylvia?: Notes toward a definition of tragedy* (London: Methuen, 2004), p. 46.

⁵⁷⁰ Albee, *The Goat*, pp. 43-44.

⁵⁷¹ 'sylvan | silvan, n. and adj.', *OED*.

II).⁵⁷² This awkward madrigal of adoration, sung by the fickle Proteus to the woman who is the object of his friend's desire, is overheard by his previously professed love, Julia (now 'excelled' by Silvia). In Shakespeare's play this is a moment of betrayal and usurpation, resonant with Martin's marital betrayal of Stevie. As Julia does not yet know that Silvia is disgusted by Proteus's affection ("I am very loath to be your idol, sir;") she assumes that they are in love.⁵⁷³ This specific association of the name Sylvia with Shakespeare's Silvia aligns her with a highly desirable, idealised and objectified woman, alluding at a point in *Two Gentleman of Verona* at which Silvia's response has not yet been heard. In Albee's play the goat Sylvia not only has no capacity for human language, but even has no opportunity to reply in any form. It is only Martin's desire and experience of her that are initially described.

In Martin's descriptions it is Sylvia's eyes that capture him, with resonances of the central eroticism of the animal/human exchange of gaze in *Equus*. The meeting of their gaze is described in terms of a Petrarchan love lyric and therefore of conventions of human romance. Martin's understanding of his attraction to Sylvia certainly draws upon such anthropocentric ideas of love, rather than acknowledging the less species-specific sex act. Species is not entirely irrelevant, however, as Midas Dekker notes. In terms of size-compatibility there are only some species with which bestiality is actually possible.⁵⁷⁴ Martin finds himself, after his encounters with the monstrous members of the bestiality support group, unable to see his own relationship as bestial. There is a disharmony between Martin's description of sexual encounters with the goat Sylvia and the reactions of the other characters, who remain very firmly outside the circle of intimacy between the man and animal, unable to conceive of the kind of encounter Martin insists upon. His devastated wife, Stevie, sarcastically asks how Sylvia "*Presented* herself", pointing to the union as animalistic mating.⁵⁷⁵ She refuses to accept the goat as a rival, recalling with sarcastic disgust the farmyard scent "that odd smell...the mistress's perfume on you" that leaves traces of Martin's couplings with Sylvia on his skin.⁵⁷⁶

These material, chemical, indeed animal signals lace the exchange between Stevie and Martin in the opening scene. This exchange lays the groundwork for the idea that

⁵⁷² Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen*, Act IV, Scene II.

⁵⁷³ Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen*, Act IV, Scene II.

⁵⁷⁴ Dekker, *Dearest Pet*, p. 68; pp. 92-94.

⁵⁷⁵ Albee, *The Goat*, p. 87.

⁵⁷⁶ Albee, *The Goat*, p. 59.

Martin is having an affair, with Stevie displaying suspicion and noting signs of his betrayal. She sniffs him like a mate — a visual indicator of sensation private to the two characters and indeed the two performers, and a reminder of the known musk of the familiar, even amongst humans — and asks, “Where have you been?” On finding a woman's business card in his pocket, ominously marked “basic services”, she asks, “Does she smell funny?”⁵⁷⁷ This exchange is doubly animalistic — not only because it highlights the chemical as well as emotional and intellectual signals of Martin's betrayal of Stevie, but also because this manner of detection is appropriate to the nature of the affair in which the ‘other woman’ is in fact another species, a doubly alien scent on Martin's skin. The bestial nature of the relationship that Martin and Sylvia share is undermined by Martin's insistence on their idealistic emotional connection, but its physical, chemical traces on his body serve as an ineradicable reminder of the realities of flesh.

The sexualised animal is introduced and evoked in a very different way to the abreaction and display of the horses in *Equus*. The goat is far more ‘absent’, in a physical sense, her living presence occurring offstage, prior to the events of the play. Like the dodo in *Cries From the Mammal House*, she has to be conjured by the audience. She is made more from words than flesh, until the play's bloody climax. The audience encounters Sylvia at the same time as Ross, constructing their encounter from Martin's accounted memories, forced to reconcile his insistence upon the humanity, the very un-bestiality of their connection, with the knowledge that Sylvia is ultimately an animal, voiceless and legally incapable of consent. The dual naming identity of Albee's Goat is important, as is the question that makes up his title: exactly who (or indeed what) is Sylvia? The audience's first ‘real’ encounter with the physical Sylvia, however, is as she is dragged onto stage by Stevie as a dead carcass, blood smeared across Stevie's hands and front. In redefining the idealised lover as a meaty corpse, the bathetic climax of the tragedy displays the visceral reality of Martin's affair and toys with Sylvia's lack of legal personhood, her existence, ultimately as a sexual object. As I have suggested, paralleling Sylvia with the idealised female love-object, a tradition with which Shakespeare's song plays, raises questions of the effects of the amorous male gaze — questions also raised by a feminist reading of Petrarchan convention. But to direct such a critique towards an animal that not only figuratively but literally has no voice or indeed legal agency is an uncomfortable complication that exposes the species-specific privileges attendant on the idea of personhood. Both in the way that she is mediated and staged, and in the conceptual

⁵⁷⁷ Albee, *The Goat*, p. 13.

framework of the play, the goat is never quite legitimised as a character, and exists instead as a vague, fragmented potentiality; even her fleshly presence at the play's close is only a dead part of the animal: a shocking, debasing, death.

Under David Esbjornson's direction of the play (Broadway, 2002), on which Albee collaborated, the full carcass was replaced by only a goat's head at this point: "we brought out the entire goat [...] When we did that we were getting too much laughter. The prop didn't exactly look real [...] it wasn't beautiful. One of the most important things [...] is that it be benign, a rather gorgeous creature with beautiful eyes."⁵⁷⁸ Though Albee and Esbjornson decided that laughter wasn't what they wanted here, the play's humour is difficult to pin down. Esbjornson notes that "the form he's chosen to express this is under debate [...] everyone [audiences, critics] was struggling over how or even whether or not you can mix comedy and tragedy"⁵⁷⁹ In *Strider* too, and perhaps *Night of the Iguana*, such tension is present. The line between powerful dramatic effect and the ridiculous can be perilously insubstantial. It is the former that the goat's head sought to achieve here, leaving behind the less "real" body. It seems from Esbjornson's description that the beauty of Sylvia, and particularly her soulful eyes, so carefully, idealisingly, and somewhat unbelievably described by Martin, remain present in her final, bloody appearance to the stage as a "gorgeous" head. Her presence needs in some way to validate the descriptions that have evoked her previously in the play, whilst at the same time undermining them with Stevie's firm reassertion of those crossed species boundaries that elevated Sylvia to the status of other woman: because she is a goat, her death hovers between murder, sacrifice, butchery and culling in a way that underlines the subaltern status of rural animals.

Orozco has pointed to the cultural framework applied to the material presence of animal bodies as dictating audience response and potential for outrage. She chronicles peaks and troughs of audience concern with animal welfare in response to a production of Rodrigo Garcíá's *After Sun* (2001) in which actor Juan Lorient mimes sex acts with two living white rabbits mid-performance. Two-thirds of the audience left the performance in vocal outrage, but those remaining watched the final scene, in which Lorient and actor-dancer Patricia Lamas "cook the perfect hamburger" without complaint. "The spectators could not relate to the body of an animal that was no longer visible. The animal had

⁵⁷⁸ 'Albee and his Collaborators on Staging Albee From *The Zoo Story* to *The Goat, or, Who is Sylvia?*', in Solomon, *Albee in Performance*, pp. 197-268 (p. 262).

⁵⁷⁹ Solomon, 'Albee and his Collaborators', p. 265.

become food, and that, somehow, seemed more acceptable than the mistreatment of the live rabbits.”⁵⁸⁰

Nonetheless, Esbjornson insists that such a reading is not the central meaning of this scene: “[w]e said this isn’t about crying over the goat; it is really about what’s going to happen now with this family [...] Cradling the goat [as Martin does with the full carcass in the original script] had made it into a big presentation — a sacrifice — and was slowly turning the play into something else. Edward [Albee] sensed that that wasn’t working”. The significance of Sylvia’s body does not “really” attach to her, in Esbjornson’s articulation. The “something else” to be avoided which he refers to here is a full, ritualistic tragic mode, and an elevation of Sylvia’s corpse to “a sacrifice”, i.e. rendering her sacred through her murder, which he, and Albee, perceived as flying unproductively counter to the necessary realism of the rest of the play. The direction required to deflect the full-tragic, sacrificial potential of this scene, however, points to the multivalence of such a moment: rather than being either/or, Sylvia’s corpse is *both* dead character (collateral scape-goat and murdered victim) and a bloody warning as simple and horrifying as a mafioso horse’s head between the sheets.

Mediating Animal Lives

By comparison, plays in which the animals are central, animate subjects, and specifically central characters, make different kinds of suggestions about animals as individuals. Discussion of *Equus*, *Strider* and *War Horse* will show how differences and patterns emerge in ways of staging these horses; as individual characters, as members of the category ‘animal’ and also as representatives of a species.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote that “Albert Michotte from Louvain demonstrated that, if lines of light move in certain ways on a screen, they evoke in us, without fail, an impression of living movement.”⁵⁸¹ I argue that movement, as well as structure, is central to performed animals, and that the tools for moving give them a distinctively geomorphic aspect by forcing the expansive and creative use of space as part of the animal. In *War Horse*, Joey and the other horses are depicted through puppetry. In the National Theatre

⁵⁸⁰ Orozco, *Theatre & Animals*, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁸¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, trans. by Oliver Davis (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 74.

performances of the play (2007, 2008, 2012) the Handspring Puppet Company were responsible for creating semi-naturalistic structures for the horses, each of which required a crew to animate them; in the case of the horses Joey and Topthorn, three puppeteers were required for each horse, and for the lesser characters, Coco and Heine, only two. The number of actors required is proportionate to the amount of emotional detail that the horse is required to express. This extensive, mimetic puppetry is central to the staging. Stafford writes that:

Joey — the central character — Alice, his mother, and Topthorn are all horses. None of them speak but all — especially Joey — have detailed throughlines. This involves many more stage directions than is normal in a stage play, and these barely indicate the detailed relationships between horse and human.⁵⁸²

As well as recognising behavioural relationships between human and horse as central to the very narrative of this story, the directive process that this script prompts pushes the participants in the play towards exploring this boundary for themselves, and examining real animal behaviours, in a way that closely recalls the aims of Chaudhuri's project. Nonetheless, the first stage direction about setting in the play, in Scene One of Joey's Devonshire upbringing is this: "*Birds in the sky. Nature at its most natural.*"⁵⁸³ It is not so much the detail of animal behaviour that needs to be explored here, but the performativity of the pastoral genre. "Birds in the sky", unlike the horses in the stall, is a note on setting rather than a stage direction about active characters. The quantitative scale of naturalness that Stafford suggests alongside this bare detail of animal placement in the landscape is complicated by his commitment to realistic equine behaviour, with its implied reference to life rather than to pre-scripted art. The implication is that how to animate an animal character needs to be increased by the interactions that they have with humans, and literally determines whether they are characters or part of the setting. It is telling that those with fewer interactions have hampered physical movement, as shown, for example, in the one fewer actors working with the Coco and Heine puppets. The physicality of what makes these horse representations animate, and indeed animal, is in direct proportion to human behaviour. The Spielberg film of *War Horse*, by contrast, had none of the puppetry of the stage production and in doing so paradoxically *lost* the animality of its horse characters. Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, in her examination of representations of horses in the book, play and film of *War Horse* writes that although, "the final shift from

⁵⁸² Stafford, *War Horse*, p. 13.

⁵⁸³ Stafford, *War Horse*, p. 15.

puppet body to “real” horse on film seems to produce a sense of authenticity—it finally produces the actual horses”, ultimately “this is a hollow move.”⁵⁸⁴ Charles Moore criticised the flatness of characterisation in relation to Spielberg’s horses: “[t]his is where the lack of characterisation is unforgivable [...] the film focuses neither on the men nor the horses, but sort of nowhere. Joey and his big black friend Topthorn have no development at all, except Joey’s physical maturation from foal to handsome red bay beast with four white socks.”⁵⁸⁵ What is lost in the transfer to film is a sense not only of the liveness of the animal, but also the connection to that animal, which is forged through asking the audience to accept puppetry and mime as mediating its presence. In making the imaginative leap required by this demand, close attention is necessarily drawn to the horse’s body and behaviour in a way that is not required by the film representations. A real horse in a film requires no imaginative participation in order to make it a horse. In film instead, the selective gaze of the camera dictates interpretative choices to the director or viewer.

When Shaffer addresses how the horses are to be represented on stage he is particularly clear that the “cosy familiarity” of the realistic representation, or worse, the naïve, is to be completely avoided. The real horses of Lumet’s film, then, are explicitly against these early wishes.⁵⁸⁶ Horses in this play are performed by players with the use of masks. As I have previously mentioned, no attempt is made to hide the heads and bodies of the humans playing them, but at the same time the human bodies are not used as the physical shell or mannequin for the whole animal: the “body of the horse” is implied “extended invisibly behind them”.⁵⁸⁷ Indeed with Alan’s earliest horse memory, the encounter is only indicated by the horseman, riding nothing. Alan, rather humorously, sits on his shoulders when he mounts the horse and holds onto his mane. In this particular instance the horse exists only in description, and ‘in’ the empty space onstage. The *Equus* noise, furthermore, is not allowed to include neighing and whinnying, only humming and also the non-human specific stomping and banging. As well as music and noise, hearing in theatre also includes the impact of silence. Sound is another particular aspect of theatre that differentiates it from non-performed literature. Sound can communicate

⁵⁸⁴ Parker-Starbuck, ‘Animal Ontologies’, p. 384.

⁵⁸⁵ Charles Moore, ‘War Horse: Crying Shame of a Film that Falls at the First’, *The Telegraph*, 16 January 2012 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/charlesmoore/9016994/War-Horse-Crying-shame-of-a-film-that-falls-at-the-first.html#disqus_thread> [accessed 16 December 2015]

⁵⁸⁶ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 32.

⁵⁸⁷ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 32.

without language, both to convey, as Meisel suggests, “some concrete message, and less explicably, to qualify the moment or even the whole dramatic world of the play.”⁵⁸⁸ The latter ineffability is evoked in the Equus-noise. Meisel discusses a mysterious reverberating sound, “with no obvious source, identity, or evident meaning,” in Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* which he suggests fills “the twilight with poignant mystery and chang[es] the scale of the human events we have been witnessing.”⁵⁸⁹ This powerful, scale-altering characteristic also applies to the Equus sound, which marks the omniscient presence of Alan’s personal God. Both the Cherry Orchard reverberation and the Equus-noise are *ineffable* sentiments and evocations which can only be performed through a non-linguistic medium.

Whilst fear and sexual worship are central to Shaffer’s play, there is another side to pantomime and the naivety of this type of animal impersonation that other dramatists have explored. Chaudhuri charts Tennessee Williams’s use of ‘awkwardness’ as an aesthetic device in *The Gnädiges Fräulein*, pointing to the climactic appearance of the comically large Cocaloony bird, and the Fräulein’s solemn impersonation of it, as she exits to fight for her survival, flapping her skinny arms.⁵⁹⁰ Terry Johnson also makes use of comic naivety in depicting animals in *Cries From the Mammal House* as discussed in Chapter Three. He illustrates animal presence by using comic ill-matched stuffed ones in the zoo and children’s drawings of animals to depict Mauritius, and the animal role-play between the teenage Sally and Mick bring sexuality and the embarrassingly comic together, a fact of their sex life with which Mick openly struggles. She, on the other hand, uses animal mating as a barrier against human intimacy, rejecting, for example, Mick’s kiss as an inappropriate violation. There is an element of the naïve and comic, also, in Alan Strang’s home-made occult mythology of Equus in the morphologically playful dynasty of “fleckwus”, “neckwus” and so on, and his labelling of the chain as a “chinkle-chankle”.⁵⁹¹ It is evident, however, that these terms, evocative of physical attributes of body parts and sound, heighten the sexual mystique of the horse for Alan. This familiar semi-comic aspect to animality, nonetheless, is not included in the depiction of the horses, and, as I have already shown, Shaffer takes pains to exclude it.

⁵⁸⁸ Meisel, *How Plays Work*, p. 46.

⁵⁸⁹ Meisel, *How Plays Work*, p. 46.

⁵⁹⁰ Chaudhuri, ‘AWK!’, pp. 59-65.

⁵⁹¹ Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 72.

Fewer of these restrictions on animal impersonation are involved in *Strider, Story of a Horse*. In the first appearance of Strider in the 1984 National Theatre production he “stands alone on the stage [...] Whitish faded trousers and old brown jacket worn at elbows, bare to waist body crossed by straps resembling bridle with shining steel rings, buckles and tiny melancholy bells.”⁵⁹² Strider and the other horses speak and narrate as a herd, moreover, they sing, neigh, and dance as a Chorus. In a review of the 1987 Gorky Theatre of Leningrad production at the Edinburgh Fringe, Irving Wardle also describes how Strider shakes hands with his new master:

[u]nlike his predecessors Lebedev does not go in for virtuoso exercises in animal pantomime. The key to his performance is that he never ceases to be a man [...] his main achievement is in combining both forms of life — as where, introduced to his master, he dries a hoof and shakes hands.⁵⁹³

In this performance the exaggeration of the anthropomorphised horse Strider brings to the surface the theatricality of the play's concept of an animal inviting a human audience to share its viewpoint: Strider *holds* a tail, twitching it, horselike, drawing attention to the imperfect translation of equine form, with its tail bone and four legged power, into the barely comparable simian body of a human actor. Nonetheless, zoomorphic movement suffused the performances of the 1984 production to the extent that the *Standard* recorded stiff necks, cracking wrists and swollen ankles caused by the unfamiliar stresses of being a sheep, a pig or a hen.⁵⁹⁴ The human body is quite literally strained in the mediating act of making an animal physically present — in movement and gesture, as well as voice and narration— in performance.

The Chorus perform the complexity of viewpoint in Tolstoy's original story. In Tolstoy's writing the narrative style shifts, with the authorial voice repeatedly claiming not to know what the horses are thinking, right up to the point when they speak to each other on the “First Night”. The placement and use of the narrator is crucial for establishing, contextualising and outlining the relationship between animal, space and story and thus in providing a lens through which the peculiar absence of the animal, or animal trace,

⁵⁹² ‘Strider — The Story of a Horse’, The National Theatre Archive (London, 1984), 553, RNT/SM/1/214 [Prompt Scripts].

⁵⁹³ Irving Wardle, ‘Review: Strider — The Story of a Horse’, *The Times*, 10 August 1987, in ‘Strider — The Story of a Horse’, The National Theatre Archive (London, Jan 1984-Aug 1987), 553, RNT/PR/4/1/293 [Press Review Files].

⁵⁹⁴ ‘Strider: Story of a Horse’, *The Standard*, 19 July 1984, in ‘Strider — The Story of a Horse’, RNT/PR/4/1/293 [Press Review Files].

can be seen. Rozovsky's adaptation of Tolstoy's story for theatre changes all of that. The characters are all displayed as equals to a certain extent, their importance measured out effectively by their time on stage. Through Rozovsky's introduction of almost farcical musical elements, such as the mating song (compared in Wardle's review to Monty Python's "Every Sperm is Sacred") the story is arguably altered in genre as well as manner of telling.⁵⁹⁵ In the stage version of *Strider* the chorus voice is very important but replaces that of the narrative description. Tolstoy is perhaps more effective at evoking the silence between man and horse in the story and at keeping the reader off balance about exactly whose story they are reading. Nonetheless, having a chorus, and furthermore a great many horse-songs, emphasises the herd, and in doing so the imagined hive-mind or multiple viewpoint which complicates individual encounters with animals and permeates the depiction of horses in *Strider* (all of which are part of and bound by the rules of the herd), and *Equus* (in which all horses are representative of the single creature of worship).

In the earlier part of Tolstoy's story the narrator pretends innocence of the inner workings of Strider's mind — describing the horses as though from an outside perspective, with playfully anthropomorphic, naive characterisations of their outward expression: "the horses were not at all frightened or offended [...they] pretended it was all the same to them", "as if to say, 'Nothing in particular, Nester!'"⁵⁹⁶ In this first part of the story Tolstoy makes a pretence of a wall of incomprehension between the narrator/reader and his animal characters, a wall which he does not set up for the men and women of his story, such as Nester. For none of the animal characters is this more pronounced than in his introduction of Strider, by contrast to the later access that the reader is afforded to his story: "it is impossible to say what flavour the piebald gelding found in the post, but his expression was serious and thoughtful while he licked"⁵⁹⁷ Tolstoy sets up Strider's story within the context of the multiple viewpoints from which it is experienced and seen, and in particular within the mismatching but intersecting human and horse valuations of an equine existence. Anthropomorphised naïve representations of natural surroundings and pastoral scenes might characterise a story that then goes on to focus upon the gritty existence of its human elements, such as the lives of the men of the stable yard and so on. It is this expectation upon which Tolstoy plays in his introduction of the story. For the narrative then to embrace its anthropomorphically naïve characterisation of its horses, to

⁵⁹⁵ Wardle, 'Review: Strider', in 'Strider — The Story of a Horse', RNT/PR/4/1/293 [Press Review Files].

⁵⁹⁶ Tolstoy, 'Strider, Story of a Horse', p. 392.

⁵⁹⁷ Tolstoy, 'Strider, Story of a Horse', p. 392.

reassert with sincerity that which has originally seemed a playful trope of genre, and to give the horses legitimate voice and narrative input in the story, is an undermining of expectations that calls into question how literature typically presents the narratives of stables, farms and other loci of animal-human interaction.

In Rosovsky's play there are several striking differences in the way that the horses are narrated; in particular, their characters are far more immediate and the orality of their horse culture is underlined. The play is musical, and the Herd speaks, and indeed sings, as a Chorus. The aforementioned collective mentality is considerably strengthened through this device. References to this herd or species mentality pervade a wide range of presentations of animals, from Descartes to Kant to Kafka. Kafka is horrified by the fluid boundary between animal and human, which is central for much of his work, such as *Metamorphosis* and "A Report to an Academy". Margot Norris's analysis of Kafka's short story "Josefine the Singer, or The Mouse Folk" draws out the conclusion that to individualise an animal is to humanise it.⁵⁹⁸ She explains that even the opposition in the story's title between Josephine as either an individually functioning singer or a group part of the mousefolk points to this tension.⁵⁹⁹ Through the process of the narrative, "Josefine is invalidated as a singer, the mouse folk are invalidated as her audience, and their difference is expunged, and with it one of the major anthropomorphic features of mouse culture."⁶⁰⁰ The story, as she shows, undermines its own status as a narrative by un-telling itself, by unravelling every premise and distinction laid out at its beginning. By the close of the story, the tribute to the mouse-singer is no elegiac narrative at all, but a musing on whether or not the mouse folk are even capable of elegy, or, indeed memory itself. Norris asserts that Kafka's *Josefine* makes the explicit assertion that to be animal actively prevents narrativisation, because narrative relies on the distinctions that allow character, individualisation, anthropomorphisation. The residual voice is, in the end, not Josefine's, but the voice of the folk. Just such a tension between herd and individual plays out in *Strider*. The herd-voice is strongest in the songs, and nowhere more explicitly than in the song of the herd (taken from Tegel's translation, staged in 1984, London):

We are the herd, Horse of a hundred heads.
We are the herd, Horse of a hundred Manes.
We have trampled the field; since dawn our hooves have thundered.

⁵⁹⁸ Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, pp. 118-33.

⁵⁹⁹ Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, p. 120.

⁶⁰⁰ Norris, *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*, p. 121.

Since Dawn we have scented the air with our sweat.
A hundred names we have, a hundred heads.
One bridle restrains us. One bridle only,
And only one law.
The law of the Herd.⁶⁰¹

This song has strong echoes of Job 39:19-25, a resonance that also makes itself known in *Equus*: Alan's Field of HaHa is named for his sexual and religious fascination with this Bible extract.⁶⁰² Rozovsky's use of the Chorus to vocalise narrative description, except that concerning Strider, who uses his own voice, preserves to a certain extent the balance of viewpoint that gradually undermines Strider's apparent right to self-definition: as the narrative shows, ultimately the meaning of his life is beyond his control. Whilst the ambiguity of narration cannot be highlighted in the same way in performance as in the written text, the word, when spoken, can have its source immediately identified in the lungs, throat and mouth of the present actor, or actors. Nonetheless the collective expression that the play version of the story performs through the Chorus voice heightens the tension between herd mentality and individual character at the heart of the discussion of equine existence in *Strider*.

Dramatic form, however, can also be used to foreground individual silence as well as collective voice: equine voice is suppressed rather than amplified in the conversion of Michael Morpurgo's story *War Horse* to Nick Stafford's adaptation of the same story for the stage in 2007. The first-person viewpoint of Joey the horse is translated into a far more anthropocentric perspective: the voice of the animal is subsumed into the action of the play. The outcome in this instance of form-translation is that the audience is less privy to the 'thoughts' of the horse, Joey: the perspective shift is more pronounced. Interestingly, Stafford's stage directions attempt to encompass much of the development of the relationship between the boy and his horse through movement — the physical interaction between the puppet (and its human operators) and the actor: the emotional cords referenced in Stafford's version of *War Horse*: "Joey's as happy as when he was with his

⁶⁰¹ 'Strider — The Story Of A Horse', RNT/SM/1/214 [Prompt Scripts].; A different wording is recorded in Rozovsky, Mark, *Strider*, trans. by Tamara Bering Sunguroff, ed. by Robert Kalvin, and Steve Brown (London: Samuel French, 1981), p. 10: "Over meadow — over pasture / Roams the hundred-headed stallion/ With a hundred manes in motion / And his sweat perfumes the Summer / Though a hundred heads are tossing / They are tossing all as one / And it couldn't be more natural / In the logic of the Herd".

⁶⁰² "Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back for the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with the fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha ha; And he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting." quoted in Shaffer, *Equus*, p. 138.

mother at the start of the play. It's as if the piece of elastic now joins him and ALBERT – their symbiotic relationship is complete.”⁶⁰³ Stafford's stage directions point up the need for physical communication between boy and horse on stage to describe the connection between familiar humans and animals. This kind of communication in *War Horse* is doubly necessary, both because of the physicality of theatre and because of the physicality of the animal, and this emphasises the similarities between dramatic display and inter-species communication: Fudge's “dance of relating”.⁶⁰⁴

The crucial difference between *War Horse* as a play and as Morpurgo's book lies in the use of viewpoint. There is a significant level of sentimentality in this literary device, which abandons the realism of preserving the verbal silence between man and horse. Shaffer's approach to vision and perception might be considered an alternative to the sentimental trap of attempting to transcend the human subjective viewpoint, by breaking down the way that vision operates within the play into multiple, simultaneous, yet fractured points of view. Alan Strang's anxiety about the horses' eyes and their ever-open awareness, forming the motive for his violent crime, undermines this fracturing by resolving the multiple gazes of the horses into a single, omniscient Equine eye. In *Equus* the horse's gaze is not confined to the moment of witnessing, but becomes timeless and all-seeing in an endless encounter between Alan and Equus – the attainment of hybridity. In Lumet's film, this gaze can also fix directly on the audience themselves, but perhaps at the expense of the sense of an omni- and thus quasi-presence of Equus: when only real horses are witnessed, their physical reality seems to assert itself over and drive out Alan's divine projections. The cruelty and horror of Alan's action in the last scene in the film comes closer to the bare details of Shaffer's inspiration: a boy blinded horses with an iron spike. In the play, however, the horror of the realisation that Equus is bound irrevocably to Alan's environment causes Alan to blind the silent, but nonetheless witnessing, horses. Alan's worship of Equus has made him hyperaware of animals as active witnesses and has convinced him of their understanding and judgement of him. It is not just symbolically, as representatives of the Godslave *Equus* that these animals know his dark obsession, but also literally, having all of them participated in his night time excursions. The blinding scene of *Equus* brings together all of the multiple significances of Alan's obsession. At once, all of Alan's encounters with horses—with living individuals, images, literary depictions, and

⁶⁰³ Stafford, *War Horse*, p. 27.

⁶⁰⁴ Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, p. 180.

his own personal deity Equus—manifest in a single, shaming moment that drives him to brutal violence, and implies a perversion of the orgasm.

Conclusion

I find a potent analogy for the way in which the literary trope of ‘animal’ operates in the blinding scene of *Equus*, in which a moment of concentrated and immediate presence is demonstrated. The immediacy of drama and the idea of presence are linked but are not always identical: presence is not always physical. As Philip Auslander has argued, stage presence itself is also not neutral. He points to the performance of presence in the postmodern theatre of the 1980s and 1990s as political: “the simple presentation of performer to audience” is rendered suspect through refusing the impulse to “other” a performed presence in order to “expose the collusion of presence with [charismatic] authority and resist such collusion.”⁶⁰⁵ Jane Goodall, in her study of stage presence, argues that: “through the extreme rigors of performance technique, *the body* and the mind are torn from their comfortable lodgement in habit and circumstance” (my emphasis).⁶⁰⁶ In both cases, the resistance to and disruption of simplistic or unidirectional power matrices between the perform-er/-ed and the audience is achieved *through* performance: in performance, presence can be made to question itself.

In the case of the animal, such a questioning can also come to undermine the centre-periphery relationships between dramatis personae and animal actor, and between presence and space as this chapter has explored. Questioning animal presence can also enhance awareness of the symbolic power of taxonomy and how animal figures and names can evoke more than one single being. Fudge has suggested that the animal function can be simultaneous and oxymoronic, at once subject and object, individual and herd-member.⁶⁰⁷ Setting a script, dramatic instructions for a specific individual performance of an animal, which can nonetheless be replicated, and mutated, in many different re-performances, also creates a kind of herd. In my work I have shown that a

⁶⁰⁵ Philip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and PostModernism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 62.

⁶⁰⁶ Jane R. Goodall, *Stage Presence: The Actor as Mesmerist* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 159.

⁶⁰⁷ Fudge, ‘The Animal Face’, p. 180.

geomorphic animal can, furthermore, be at once scenery and character, at once absent and present. This immediacy of living experience is connoted by the mythology of the label 'animal'; a non-human consciousness or state about which we conjecture but never quite reach or resolve. In the manner of Deleuze/Guattari this may suggest that 'understanding animal' is also an always occurring but never complete process. This in itself is a reminder that, like 'animal', 'human' is not a fixed value. As I have demonstrated in Chapter One, human animals can also have geomorphic aspects.

Conclusion: 'The Invisible Animal'

The aim of this thesis has been to establish a mode of literary analysis for the reading of animals that focuses on their capacity to function as space, without negating their animate agency. I have developed this analytical approach through a diverse (as opposed to comprehensive or historically linear) range of periods and genres of English literature, in which the distinctions between animal and environment are blurred and collapsed.

Though I explore the concept of geomorphism in close detail, my analysis has taken an open, nuanced form in order to allow for each case-study to be fully rooted within the literary and historical contexts of its textual moment.

Chapter One addressed literal and figurative hole-making worms (as well as, briefly, other scriptoria- or soil-based creatures) of the Anglo-Saxon riddle tradition, whose symbiotic relationship with the book and the body enact an ambivalent depiction of death and mutability. I argue in Chapter One that in the context of the *EBR* anxiety about bodily wholeness and continuity is expressed through the image of a burrowing worm, which eats away at the material bodies and spaces on which higher or spiritual resonances depend, like the soul on the body. Worms thus undermine, literally, the sacred aspirations of the human and display the profane sense of the body as food and earthly, dirty space.

Chapter Two examined massive medieval whales in Biblical poetry and Physiologus taxonomy which, through these influences, operate as a nefarious manifestation of the *abyss*. In Chapter Two I show that within layers of association around medieval whale depictions, landscape and animal repeatedly blur. In the island, the boat, the bower, the prison and the 'dimme hert' of the sea, I explore this depiction of whales as a kind of faux-landscape, or, *unlonde*. In the reading of these whale texts geomorphism is nuanced by the sense that the space to which the whales are related, the sea, has an almost animate agency. The whale is swept up into this association, becoming geomorphic through its habitat.

Chapter Three and Four stage encounters more explicitly, and have allowed for the recognition of the dance of relating that Erica Fudge outlines in animal-human relationships.⁶⁰⁸ Chapter Three explored theatrical zoo-spaces in a mix of theatrical and

⁶⁰⁸ Fudge, 'The Animal Face', p. 180.

film depictions of zoos and animal collections, in which the containment of and engagement between animals and humans undermines distinctions of time/place as well as species. I argue in Chapter Three that the boundaries of the zoo, which imply binaries of space — safe, not safe; confined, free; wild, human; observed, observer, educational; educated — are produced through performance and that an act or connection between individuals on either side of such boundaries may disrupt them, often resulting in destruction and death: Alan's, Jerry's, Yank's, Gilbert's. Zoos, paradoxically, as sites for conservation, become emblems of all that conservation seeks to remedy.

Chapter Four took a theory of geomorphic animals to a collection of post-war Anglophone plays (again from a mixture of playwrights) at the heart of which the presence of animal character is deliberately nebulous, unsure, even quantum: both there and not-there. In comparing the live, in many cases unrealistic, depiction of animals with contemporary film counterparts, I find that there is a paradoxically powerful presence of the animal where it is actually absent, on stage, which makes the realistic film counterparts feel hollow as there is no need for the audience to suspend their disbelief and enter into a theatre world in which a puppetry-actor assemblage *becomes* an animal.

There was an explicit taxonomical interest at play in the genres examined in Chapter One and Two (riddles, bestiaries and biblical animal narratives) which appeared in the creative engagements with zoos in some of the texts of Chapter Three: *A Zed & Two Noughts*, *Gilbert is Dead*. In harmony with the interrogation of taxonomy in earlier chapters, I argue in Chapter Four that, as with the term 'animal' so also 'human' is not a fixed value. Humans may also have geomorphic aspects, an observation that is also drawn out in the first chapter of this thesis in which worms make humans into a habitat. Through the development of the concept of geomorphism I argue that presentations of animals do not just exist in margins but can be productively read as actually constituting and creating those spaces: that they are *geomorphic*. Examining geomorphic animals across historical and generic contexts has allowed for nuances in the use of the idea of geomorphism to appear. In this conclusion I seek to draw together and examine the centre-periphery relationships of attention and recognition implicit in the incidence of geomorphism.

Geomorphism and Disgust

Whilst maintaining the situational difference of the texts that produce them, across this transtemporal and cross-genre study other uniting themes have also emerged. Significantly, in all four case-studies, the geomorphic trajectory moved through material that is often uncomfortable, and sometimes disgusting. Drawing on Rita Felski's suggestion in *Uses of Literature* that, readerly fascination with the taboo and the marginal may "cut across, or undermine, such ordering devices, generating more visceral, inchoate, or unruly responses",⁶⁰⁹ I have shown that the rotten, the profane and the forbidden appeared in various guises at each juncture of my tracing of geomorphism. This is sometimes predictable in the case of the corpse-burrowing worms, the whale's viscosely lined stomach; but also sometimes more surprising, as in the paradoxical stagnancy of preservation within zoos, and dark, taboo and obscene impulses staged through animal characters. Disgust seems to often be provoked by a feeling of vulnerability, which is evoked in the ethics of Anat Pick and Myra Hird, initially addressed in the first chapter of this thesis in relation to animalistic eating. In the course of this thesis, as well as drawing out and testing the applications of geomorphism as a literary concept, I have also established this disturbing undercurrent within geomorphism.

Disgust is both rejection and fascination, an involuntary response of revulsion. Daniel Kelly argues that disgust has evolved from an automatic warning system that transmits information to keep humans safe from disease, parasites and poisons which has been co-opted to play certain psychological roles in the navigation of culture, noting that disgust, "does not sit easily on either side of the traditional nature–nurture divide".⁶¹⁰ The *OED* records a sense in which disgust "excites aversion", pointing to irresistible outside stimuli in its arousal. In its etymology it is drawn from the intimate sensory experience of taste, from the French *desgouster* (in R. Estienne 1539).⁶¹¹ Richard Schechner calls the senses of bodily tissues, of touch, smell and taste, "a visceral space-sense", pointing out that human living tissue does not stop abruptly but includes the cavities of the sinuses and throat and the gut.⁶¹² Though the human propensity for disgust is naturally framed by

⁶⁰⁹ Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 126.

⁶¹⁰ Daniel Kelly, *Yuck!: The Nature and Moral Significance of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), p. 11.

⁶¹¹ 'disgust, v.', *OED*.

⁶¹² Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theatre* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), pp. 12-16.

intellectual bias and highly-wrought cultural frameworks, it is at the same time primarily a bodily response. Such embodiment is a theme with which geomorphism engages through testing the boundary between space and body.

As well as probing bodily boundaries, another unnerving aspect of the geomorphic animal arises from its position on perceptual boundaries. A geomorphic animal may leap out of its position as space and reveal itself as a living, sometimes threatening presence, like the *Physiologus* whale-island assemblage. Disgust as a response may come from uncomfortable juxtaposition: between the destructive and the vulnerable perhaps (as in flesh-worms, sailors at the mercy of dark sea and evil whales, for example) or with the taboo or subliminal. Albee's *Sylvia*, as explored in Chapter Four, becomes a grotesque hybrid in the struggle to reconcile goat-fucking with love. For Martin's family, disgust closes the question of exactly how he communicates with the goat. For the people surrounding Alan Strang in *Equus*, similarly, disgust and horror frame his communication with horses. In Alan's first encounter with a horse, which occurs on the beach when he is six, he not only experiences the horse and rider as one being, but draws no distinction between this encountered hybrid and its affects, all of which he experiences bodily rather than cognitively: the smell; the visual closeness of the bridled, spitting mouth; the sweatiness; the wind and the speeding thrill of the ride. Alan's heightened awareness melds the horse with both his sensory response to it and the experience of the beach. It is this sensual melding of being and space which informs the staging of the horses of *Equus* as spatial — a grouping of horseness rather than simply a horse-outline. The agency of the horse to fundamentally alter and shape the space around it is therefore emphasised, in a way that is uncomfortably intimate and potentially taboo.

Geomorphic Animals and Spatial Agency

It is perhaps unsurprising that the disturbance of boundaries between what is a dynamic, moving agent and what is stable, inhabitable space should be unnerving. Animal agency and intelligence, too, is a disturbing consideration in many of the texts I have examined. In these case-studies the agency of animals, though often depicted as other, informs their geomorphic behaviour and capacity to be read as spatial: to surround, frame, envelop, swallow, tunnel, contain. These examined spaces — holes (tunnel, decay), islands/cells (shelter, nest, womb, prison), boxes (prison again, cage, case, treasure-chest, house), costume (idea, clothing, puppet)—are different functions of nonhuman animal

behaviour in relation to human neighbours and encounters. Anthropocentric definition of intelligence, whilst a pressing subject on its own, as attested by a number of recent publications, also has further implications for perception of space and the space-shaping forces.⁶¹³ Animal creativity (or craft, to use a term from Chapter One and Chapter Two) then, like vulnerability and the discomfort this can engender, also underpins the concept of geomorphism. In this conclusion, alongside the already addressed issue of disgust and underpinned by the importance of presence and visibility, I will therefore draw out spatial agency within the theory of geomorphic animals which this thesis has established.

In Chapter One I suggested that the *EBR* validate the idea that animals have their own, albeit different, ways of producing space. Whilst this idea is treated with little anxiety in the riddles I discussed, it opens up questions of agency and mind that can be complicating for theories of space (and indeed, the attention to other minds in geomorphism is what makes such an idea useful in the context of riddles and puzzles). As discussed in the Introduction (pp. 23-24), in *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre famously argues that space is produced: it is both product and means of production, a theory to which I believe that the animal spaces I have discussed correspond. In emphasising that production is socially conditioned, however, Lefebvre asserts that ‘nature does not produce’⁶¹⁴ as natural beings such as trees and flowers are *created* and therefore cannot be products.⁶¹⁴ Such an assertion gives little consideration to the possibility that interspecies interaction might be considered to have a participatory involvement in the creation of social forces, at whatever level. Lefebvre’s Marxian approach draws a rigid opposition between economics and ecology, setting up a framework within which the reference to worms’ weaving as craft in the *EBR* 35, for example, would appear to be mere anthropomorphism.⁶¹⁵ I have instead argued that this is a kind of geomorphism, a literary phenomenon which reopens the question of animal ability to consciously shape space, which, under Lefebvre’s conception, seems to have been deemed out of court.

Whilst Lefebvre dismisses any potential for animal presence and participation in making space (negating their intention as natural and therefore unintentional) I feel that this leaves a gap in his theory. Karen Raber, in her discussion of renaissance animal

⁶¹³ For animal intelligence in philosophy and politics see, for example, Eugene Linden, *The Parrot's Lament and Other True Tales of Animal Intrigue, Intelligence, and Ingenuity* (New York: Dutton, 1999).; *Animal Social Complexity: Intelligence, Culture, and Individualized Societies*, ed. by Frans B. M. de Waal and others (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).; *Beastly Morality: Animals as Ethical Agents*, ed. by Jonathan K. Crane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

⁶¹⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 70.

⁶¹⁵ See Chapter One, p. 57.

bodies, also examines Lefebvre's rejection of animal building as cultural, through his treatment of spiders' webs, in order to illuminate "[t]he difficulty that current theories of space have in assimilating the roles of animals".⁶¹⁶ Raber notes that the animal capacity to produce is not usually credited, as generation is often defined as a deliberately cultural act. Theorists instead characterise animal labour as "a 'natural' sculpting of bodily material that sidesteps issues of a stratified and exploitative labor system."⁶¹⁷ Such an exclusion seems to assume that animals cannot exploit each other either. Some animals do, as Nelson also notes, implement and participate in agricultural systems, such as fungus-growing ants and dairying ants which herd mealybug in order to "milk [them] by stroking them with their antennae".⁶¹⁸ One who defines 'cultural act' by excluding animal acts from that definition might argue that animal agricultural behaviour should be termed 'mutualism', as distinct from an 'exploitative labor system', thus implying a 'natural' rather than 'cultural' behaviour. The diligent exclusion of animals from the capacity to exploit or produce, however, is again reliant on a species-specific division between outer and inner, a division that is often in practice transgressed. Boundaries such as these posit that there can only be one Outer and one Inner, rather than the multiple conceptions and uses of space that Nelson reveals in American 'wilderness', and that this thesis has revealed in the geomorphic representation of animals.⁶¹⁹

Labour, and indeed fences, do not have to be anthropocentric. In arguing this I will examine Lefebvre's meditation on Marx's spider question in *Capital* which,⁶²⁰ remarkably, depicts the spider geomorphically. This is a meditation which, in its celebratory highlighting of a governing force of Nature (or instinct or providence) resonates with my readings of *EBR* 40 and 66, and Aldhelm's Enigma.c, *de Creatura*, in Chapter One:

Does a spider obey blind instinct? Or does it have (or, perhaps better, *is it*) an intelligence? Is it aware in any sense of what it is doing? It produces, it secretes and it occupies a space which it engenders according to its own lights [...] Should we think of this space of the spider's as an abstract space occupied by such separate objects as the body, its secretory glands and legs, the things to which it

⁶¹⁶ Raber, *Animal Bodies*, p. 131.

⁶¹⁷ Raber, *Animal Bodies*, p. 131.

⁶¹⁸ Nelson, *Wild and Domestic*, p. 3. See also Jithu U. Krishnan and others, 'A Review on *Paracoccus Marginatus* Williams, Papaya Mealy Bug (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae)', *Journal of Entomology and Zoology Studies* 4 (2016), 528-33 (p. 530).; for fungus-growing ants see A. Mikheyev, 'Convergent Coevolution in the Domestication of Coral Mushrooms by Fungus-growing Ants', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 271 (2004), 1777-1782.

⁶¹⁹ See discussion of Terminology in my Introduction, p. 22-24.

⁶²⁰ See also discussion in Raber, *Animal Bodies*, p. 211.

attaches its web [...] No, for this would be to set the spider in the space of analytic intellection, the space of discourses [...] preparing the way for a rejoinder of the type: ‘Not at all! It is nature (or instinct, or providence) which governs the spider’s activity and thus is responsible for that admirable and totally marvellous creation [...] Would it be fair to say that the spider spins its web as an extension of its body?’⁶²¹

Lefebvre’s spider emerges as both agent and environment, geomorphically occupying a space which it simultaneously engenders, an engendering which exudes from and also is an extension of its body. Rather than becoming embroiled in the questions of consciousness and intentionality that are the grounding of Lefebvre’s problem with the spider—Catherine Ingraham reasonably writes of this moment, “[o]f course the spider thinks, why wouldn’t it?”⁶²²—I am concerned with why Lefebvre frames the spider as geomorphic assembly of functioning parts. He conflates the spider with its weaving, and suggests the web is an extension of its body, because of a philosophical anxiety about the capacity of non-human, Other minds. The unexpected incidence of a geomorphic animal in this theoretical text suggests that as a literary phenomenon geomorphism may in fact point to a questioning, or oppression, of agency.

It is in bringing literary explorations of Other processes to critical attention that geomorphism can contribute to feminist and postcolonial analysis of space and agency, disrupting received hierarchies of rationality, cognition and intelligence. The human is simply one of many animals interacting within a shared, living space. A theory that seeks to unite aesthetic and activist purposes has been recently put forward by Josephine Donovan. Seeing, in the argument of *The Aesthetics of Care*, is never neutral—it is an ethical act. Donovan asserts that, “[a]ttention requires looking directly at an object, suspending imaginative constructs so as to see the object ‘without interpretation’—an epistemological acesis.” She argues that caring attention reveals presences that are elided by abstraction and objectification,⁶²³ and claims that an aesthetics of care frames its subject matter “as [a] living presence [...] located in a particular, knowable environment, who has a history and is capable of dialogical communication.”⁶²⁴ Donovan’s approach argues for the ethical imperative of the kind of attention which might draw out and examine a geomorphic animal. She criticises Jane Bennett’s conflation of the significance

⁶²¹ LeFebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 173.

⁶²² Catherine Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 191.

⁶²³ Josephine Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care: On the Literary Treatment of Animals* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 8.

⁶²⁴ Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care*, p. 11.

of animals and objects in her discussion of a “hoard” of found things to illustrate her theoretical position, of which a dead rat is the sole animal part.⁶²⁵ Donovan writes that “[t]o the [rat] is owed, I would contend, respect and ethical attention, unlike the latter [objects].”⁶²⁶ Donovan’s care aesthetics demand more than simply attention to overlooked presences (which Bennett delivers abundantly), but specifically a caring attention. Those shadowy presences that are *alive* are in greater need of attention, an attention which they do not always receive.

In the examination of the interplay of centrality and liminality in geomorphic animals, I must finally ask a question that is best-phrased by Carol Martineau, George’s “unbearable mother” of Ali Smith’s *How to be Both* (2014): “Do things that happened not exist, or stop existing just because we can’t see them happening in front of us?”⁶²⁷ Perspective, in this question, is not the frame but the form itself. I have established that such a flickering of perceptual boundaries is a central aspect of geomorphism. It can also be illustrated in the famous and much reproduced figure of Rubin’s Vase/Faces. This is a double image in which both a white vase on a black background and two black profiles facing each other on a white background are valid interpretations.⁶²⁸ Each alternative image acts as the frame—the negative space—for the other. Whilst powerful as a tool for psychology and philosophy, Rubin’s vase has somewhat limited use in literary criticism.⁶²⁹ The way in which animals might be both animate agents *and* a spatial part of environment in literature can be elucidated through the use of this image. The reversal of the figure and ground takes us by surprise; the vase (or the two faces) suddenly emerge, announcing their hiding-place in plain sight. For Edgar Rubin this is not a simple matter of clarity of attention: the human brain forms a perceptual reality from sensory stimuli that exists beyond the mere sum of their parts.⁶³⁰ Until it is seen, the vase is not actually ‘there’ in the sense in which the human brain perceives the world. With geomorphic

⁶²⁵ Jane Bennett, ‘Powers of the Hoard: Further Notes on Material Agency’, in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Ethics and Objects*, ed. by J. J. Cohen (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2012), pp. 238-39 (p. 238).

⁶²⁶ Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care*, p. 35.

⁶²⁷ Ali Smith, ‘Section Eleven’, *How to be Both* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014), n. p.

⁶²⁸ Edgar Rubin first published this image in his thesis *Synsoplevede Figurer* (visually experienced figures) in 1915. I refer to the rendering of the image in E. Rubin, ‘Figure and Ground’, in *Readings in Perception*, ed. by D. C. Beardslee and M. Wertheimer (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand, 1958), pp. 194–203 (p. 201).

⁶²⁹ One exception is Jonathan Shandell, ‘The Other Within Us: the Rubin’s Vase of Class in “The Dumb Waiter”’, *Harold Pinter’s The Dumb Waiter*, ed. by M. Brewer (Amsterdam, NL: Editions Rodopi, 2008), pp. 161-172.

⁶³⁰ Rubin, ‘Figure and Ground’, p. 194.

animals, it is perhaps the same: until they receive the kind of attention which Rubin, Donovan and Smith (through Carol Martineau) suggest, they cannot be present.

That theatre relies on presentness (and of course, therefore, absence) has informed the development of geomorphism in my final two chapters. Geomorphism itself requires the flickering of perceptual boundaries, as described above, and so in the live, immediate experience of theatre, takes on a nuanced, disturbing form. In addition to its literary function, theatre is a powerful, tangible encounter with other bodies, in a shared and co-created territory, capable of triggering an embodied response which bypasses intellectual obstacles and not only invites but delivers empathy. Whilst Donovan sensitively explores the aesthetics of a series of narratives and images —the work of Woolf, Tolstoy, Coetzee —I have also argued that theatre can be a powerful metaphor and forum for the sensitive reading of animals. Literature requires that readers, however temporarily, enter into another world.⁶³¹ In the experiencing of theatre, this entry is made live. To experience theatre, arguably both as a performer and as a member of the audience, another reality must, on some level, be temporarily entered into, in a manner described by Donovan as a care-aestheticised literary approach. Naomi Rokotnitz writes of the real relationships between audience and performers experienced through the action of theatre:

Drama presents the tangible actions of living bodies on stage to living bodies in the audience. In addition to — and by no means instead of — the intellectual stimulation of the narrative argument and its linguistic dimensions, dramatic performance arouses and co-opts both performers' and audiences' embodied receptiveness, thereby facilitating a deep emotional learning that can bypass resistance, bias, and fear, often opening new avenues for communication and encouraging trust.⁶³²

Experiencing texts through performance produces a willingness to experience difference and to trust emotional as well as intellectual response, an openness that is part of Donovan's argument for Care-based aesthetics. Reading geomorphic animals in this way disrupts received definitions of what is the central agent and what is the framing environment. Rather than trying to undo distinctions of background and foreground, of animal and landscape, I have, in this thesis, attempted to work with them, allowing these concepts and pairings to take on a symbolic quality in the way that they can be used to frame the geomorphic animal. As a critical tool this idea is disruptive and fluid: as soon as

⁶³¹ Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care*, p. 128.

⁶³² Naomi Rokotnitz, *Trusting Performance: a Cognitive Approach to Embodiment in Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 3.

attention is drawn to something, ideas of foreground and background shift or switch. This relationship need not be read as a hierarchy. The title of this chapter, ‘the invisible animal’, characterises my critical intervention and methodological focus and also refers to a critical gap: the underrepresented animal in ecocriticism. An ecocritical conception of nature can hide animal interaction with humans within the larger idea of the environment. In animal studies the animal-human study is often removed from its spatial context, lacking the nuances of its positioning in the literary environment. Reading animals geomorphically necessarily requires attention to both of these things at once.

Animal presence is a constituent part of the environment yet often exists partially or, indeed, utterly unseen. We, as humans, are a connected part of an ecosystem; a world that is sensory, animate, multiple and heaving with life on such a range of scales that we cannot see them all at once, if indeed at all.⁶³³ As I have previously asserted, animals disrupt and resist the duality of figure and landscape, on which is predicated the pairing of ‘man’ with and against the ‘natural world. Through their different movement and construction animals defy dichotomies of outside and inside, vast and concrete, even *here* and *there*, which Bachelard unravels in *The Poetics of Space*.⁶³⁴ For, as Bachelard points out, if such terms and pairings are constructed in relation to “human scale”, any other species presence makes and uses spaces on a different scale, in many cases inaccessible to humans, and in other cases with significant overlap.⁶³⁵ In literary representation therefore, animals, though ubiquitous, are often marginal. Such apparent marginality produces and is the product of oppressive valuation and labelling according to feminist and postcolonial readings. Ursula K. LeGuin writes that, “[c]ivilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is other — outside, below, underneath, subservient. [...] What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and the wilderness, to be used as I see fit.”⁶³⁶ Placing LeGuin’s words alongside Paula Gunn Allen’s assertion that, “[i]t is the nature of woman’s existence to be and to create background”, illuminates the implications of patriarchal recognitions of women and of non-humans for their position not just as

⁶³³ For more on the effects of scale on perception see Clark, ‘Derangements of Scale’. For the effects of technological advancements in optics and their effects on understanding of scale in Natural History see Stott, *Darwin’s Ghosts*, pp. 13-40.

⁶³⁴ Bachelard, *Poetics*, pp. 211-216, especially p. 212, and p. 215.

⁶³⁵ Bachelard, *Poetics*, p. 215.

⁶³⁶ Ursula K. Le Guin, ‘Women/Wilderness’, in *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places*, ed. by Ursula K Le Guin (1986; reprint, New York: Grove Press, 1989), pp. 161-64 (p. 161).

peripheral, but as spatial: the wilderness or ground against which “civilized Man” might be defined.⁶³⁷

In addition, the ways in which animals might see humans if, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty implies, we pay attention, can inform how human traces and movements map space. Merleau-Ponty’s assertion that the world is made up of living beings which trace their own vision of things in their environment is specifically rooted in a call to careful unusual, attentiveness: “[w]e will only see this if we lend our attention to the spectacle of the animal world”.⁶³⁸ Merleau-Ponty’s conception of invisibility, unseen-ness, even absence involves not so much describing things to be seen, or not, but a description of the limits of the the viewer. Attentiveness can push back the boundaries of the senses. It is in this way too that geomorphism can be use to contribute to feminist and postcolonial analysis of space and agency.

Ultimately, geomorphic animals may have new implications for the process of reading narrative. Gertrude Stein’s conception of “a play as a landscape that opens itself to any number of views or time frames” is in direct response to a desire for freer, less linear narrative experience as a theatre-viewer: “for her imagined viewer could explore freely without following either rigorous sequences or clearly delineated views [and] remains perpetually in play in the spatial-visual landscape.”⁶³⁹ It is exactly this capacity in theatre that Carl Lavery sees as its most potent contribution to environmental activism: “displacing the human subject from the centre of the ‘world’ and locating it instead in an agential landscape of flows, systems and networks.”⁶⁴⁰ Whilst I do not make large claims for the relative activism of this thesis, I believe that there is value in the idea of a geomorphic animal, itself an agential landscape. I hope this idea will have a similar productively displacing effect. In this conclusion I have shown how geomorphism is predicated on the understanding that literary representation can entertain fascinations with non-human minds and ways of conceiving the world even within the way that space itself is depicted. Felski has emphasised the power of literature as its own end, when she argues that to frame works of literature as objects of ideology is to limit literary capacity: “[i]t is to rule out of court the eventuality that a literary text could know as much, or

⁶³⁷ Allen, ‘Kochinnenako in Academe’, p. 107.

⁶³⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible: followed by working notes*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis, ed. by Claude Leforte (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 103.

⁶³⁹ Crochunis and Sweeting, ‘Performing the Wild’, p. 332.

⁶⁴⁰ Lavery, ‘Introduction: Performance and Ecology’, p. 231.

more, than a theory.”⁶⁴¹ The capacity of literary representation to entertain the metaphysical impossibility of geomorphic animals, and the stance that geomorphism can take against anthropocentric theories of space and animal consciousness, supports Felski’s insistent proclamation or, perhaps, reclamation, of the idea that literature can be a source, not just an object, of knowledge.

Geomorphism is intended, like anthropomorphism or zoomorphism, to describe a creative phenomenon. It is first and foremost a tool of literary analysis, with a highly flexible capacity. Through considerations of riddle, poetry, Biblical texts, theatre, film, book and art history I have demonstrated that geomorphic animals may appear in vastly different kinds and periods of literature. The range of animal representations that I have addressed has been similarly radically diverse, including animals in the sea, in flight, in the earth, within the mind, in the house, in the library and of or on farmland. The avenues for critical expansion of this concept have been by no means exhausted by this discussion, however, quite the reverse; each case-study has been designed to be an opening up of a group of texts through geomorphic analysis. For ecocriticism and animal studies, the crucial relevance of the non-human to human life is fundamental and urgent. What the concept of geomorphism contributes to the respective concerns of these critical fields is to make consideration of environmental force and individual animal representations simultaneously possible in literary analysis. In doing so palpable, shocking and half-hidden aspects of animal depictions have been made apparent. It is my hope that geomorphism can be used to describe not only animal depictions, but any marginal figures or forces that, in their peripheral position between ignored absence and acknowledged presence nonetheless have a paradoxical power to switch, like Rubin’s vase, between figure and ground.

⁶⁴¹ Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 5.

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