Beastly Arrangements: Animals, Classification, and Literary Form, circa 1830-1870

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Abstract

This thesis constructs a new literary history of animals in Victorian literature by focusing on questions of categorisation and classification. Noting that the nineteenth-century obsession with taxonomy—what Harriet Ritvo has termed the 'classifying imagination'—is perceptible not only in the natural and social sciences, but also in the form of literary works, it argues that writers of this period adopted and adapted forms of classificatory arrangement in their works. In so doing, the writers considered by this thesis found new and more flexible ways of representing human-animal relations than has hitherto been recognised.

The introduction establishes the historical significance of classification to the period, suggesting that the increased production of taxonomies of the natural world were a response to the extraordinary and newfound diversity of animal life discovered during the nineteenth century. As well as showing the omnipresence of the language of animality in the language of the period, it also situates the thesis in relation to existing work in literary animal studies.

Chapter one bridges the gap between the theoretical discussions of the introduction and the readings of individual authors in the subsequent chapters. It shows how a particular species was used by writers to make sense of both Victorian society and its literary productions, particularly in terms of their constitutive categories (the domestic, class, gender). It is a test case for the succeeding chapters, focusing on the ubiquitous animal of the period: dogs.

Chapter two takes an extended look at the interconnected construction of social order and orders of being in the work of Charles Dickens. The panoply of humans and other animals in Dickens's works is especially helpful for considering the taxonomic status of animals in literature, as well as for raising fundamental questions about the capaciousness of the novel. I show how Dickens finds ways of creating narrative arrangements that can both accommodate a large population of creatures and distinguish between them.

Chapter three turns to another novelist, Emily Brontë, to think further about how writers of this period imagined a textual world that included other animals yet enabled differentiation between them and humans. It shows how the animalised figure of Heathcliff complicates the orthodox Christian belief in humans' possession of an immortal soul and animals' lack of one.

Chapter four builds on the ambiguous classificatory status of Heathcliff discussed in the previous chapter, focusing on the significance of hybridity in Victorian fairy tales (particularly Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies*). A hybrid genre itself, Victorian fairy tales refract many of the senses in which the category of 'humanity' became historical in the period—that is, mutable and conditioned by circumstance.

Chapter five brings together the questions of a blurred human-animal boundary and textual cohabitation, showing how Edward Lear used the formal resources of poetry and illustration to model forms of relation between humans and other animals that complicate our sense of their absolute distinction. Exploring the influence of Lear's early natural history work on his nonsense, it shows how his artistic and poetic fascination with other animals led to forms of arrangement that were predicated on lines as much as on categories.

In a short conclusion, I recapitulate the main arguments of thesis. I also suggest that, despite the ambitions of mastery that seem to inhere in taxonomic approaches to other animals, the cultural poetics of classification explored by this thesis produces visions of democratic cross-species sociability, which are worth recovering.

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This thesis is for Ruby, Ollie, and Judy—three very different examples of how dogs 'go on with their doggy life'.

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‘Of texture midway between life and books.’

William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1850), III, l. 581.

Introduction

Bursting with Life

'Nature *lives:* every pore is bursting with Life', wrote G.H. Lewes in 1860, urging a renewed attentiveness to the 'drama of creation' that existed 'around us, above us, beneath us'. His *Studies in Animal Life* speaks passionately about the importance of natural history, and how it fostered a perception of humans and other life forms as 'parts of one transcendent whole'.[1] Like Lewes, many other writers of this period were fascinated by the idea of other life forms existing around, above, and beneath them. This thesis demonstrates that much Victorian literature was likewise 'bursting with Life', populated by a wide array of animals; and that the different patterns according to which they are incorporated into works of literature by, among other writers, Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Emily Brontë, and Edward Lear constitute significant literary instances of a broader Victorian 'classifying imagination'.[2]

The representation of animals—with humans conceived as one species among many others—has received increased scrutiny across the humanities in the last twenty years. Recent work has shown compellingly how pervasively the 'discourse of species' shapes our thinking about a range of subjects: gender, colonialism, science, subjectivity, and imagination, to name only a few.[3] This thesis continues the revision of our accounts of animals in literature, arguing that this recuperation needs to make sense of them not merely as signposts for shifts in intellectual history, but as intrinsic parts of the literary works in which they appear. When we

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[1] *Studies in Animal Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1860), pp. 10-11; emphasis in original.

[2] I draw this phrase from Harriet Ritvo's stimulating study of taxonomy in the long nineteenth century, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[3] See, respectively, Anna West, *Thomas Hardy and Animals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Barbara Seeber, *Jane Austen and Animals* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Shefali Rajamannar, *Reading the Animal in the Literature of the British Raj* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Gina M. Dorré, *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006); Virginia Richter, *Literature after Darwin: Human Beasts in Western Fiction 1859-1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011); John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body: Violence, Identity and Ecology in Victorian Adventure Fiction* (London: Anthem, 2012).

start to consider the other animals in Victorian literature, however, we are quite quickly faced with a diversity that can be hard to order meaningfully. As both real figures and rhetorical ones, we encounter dogs, horses, and cats, yes—but also flies, lambs, cows, pigs, rats, mice, lions, fish, hippopotami, microscopic animalcules, crocodiles, wolves, lobsters, geese, rabbits, bears, crows, orangutans, fleas, and many others. Given this variety, which I will establish in this introduction as a constitutive feature of the period circa 1830 to 1870, what categories, taxonomies, or distinctions can we draw to make sense of this diversity? And what kinds of historical contextualisation might illuminate this question? Taken as a whole, these readings begin to construct a cultural poetics of taxonomy—an exploration of how classification and animal forms influenced the shape of literary works circa 1830 to 1870.

In literary animal studies, critics have of necessity created their own taxonomies as a way of dealing with this inchoate diversity, producing studies that focus on, for example: exotic animals, domestic animals, the animals 'of' a particular author, 'imperial' animals, animal skins, apes and monkeys, and single species.[4] More recently, critics have begun to use taxonomies more self-consciously as a means of organising their work: Mario Ortiz Robles splits his work on *Literature and Animal Studies* into chapters on 'Equids', 'Canids', 'Songbirds', and 'Felids';[5] while Onno Oerlemans's recent monograph, *Poetry and Animals*, reflects on the difficulties of taxonomy even as it constructs a new one for what he terms 'animal poems', identifying 'the animal allegory', 'poems of the animal', 'the species poem', and 'the animal encounter poem'.[6] As Oerlemans puts it, the 'problem of taxonomy […] is

[4] See, respectively: John Simons, *The Tiger that Swallowed the Boy: Exotic Animals in Victorian England* (Faringdon: Libri, 2012); Monica Flegel, *Pets and Domesticity in Victorian Literature and Culture: Animality, Queer Relations, and the Victorian Family* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Ivan Kreilkamp, *Minor Creatures: Persons, Animals, and the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Anna West, *Thomas Hardy and Animals*; Barbara Seeber, *Jane Austen and Animals*; Shefali Rajamannar, *Reading the Animal in the Literature of the British Raj*; John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body*; Ann C. Colley, *Wild Animals Skins in Victorian Britain: Zoos, Collections, Portraits, and Maps* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); Virginia Richter, *Literature after Darwin*; Gina M. Dorré, *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse*.

[5] *Literature and Animal Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

[6] *Poetry and Animals: Blurring the Boundaries with the Human* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

central to the study of animals, and to animal studies',[7] and making these kind of categories is a necessary part of literary criticism—for in order to circumscribe the bounds of a given discussion we are required to construct categories and groups that distinguish the 'relevant' from the 'irrelevant'. In fact, the making of provisional and pragmatic taxonomies (of relevance and irrelevance, interest and disinterest, helpful and harmful, and so on) is a necessary element of the very act of living. Yet however useful or necessary it may be, it has yet to be noticed that this classificatory approach to literary animal studies obscures the epistemological and artistic problems raised by the fact that 'every pore is bursting with life', as Lewes put it. When readers settle on a useful critical taxonomy—domestic animals and pets, for instance, or exotic beasts from the far reaches of the empire—there is loss as well as gain. For, in doing so, we miss the fact that the construction of makeshift and working classificatory frameworks is part of how the literature of this period attempted to make sense of a newly fecund world. This thesis will show that a new approach to Victorian literary animals is required, precisely because this variety was an essential, constitutive part of encounters between humans and other animals in this period. It is, therefore, one of the axioms of this thesis that literary criticism would benefit from a more developed vocabulary to articulate the effects of these taxonomies. One of the most significant results of attending to the classifying imagination of Victorian literature, this thesis argues, is that it becomes clear the extent to which the nature of the human itself, and its distinction from the animal, was a matter of debate and revision in the period.

I argue in this thesis, therefore, that we can see how Victorian writers themselves registered this problem of diversity and variety—and of finding order amongst this—when they talk about animals in their works. This thesis shows how the question of categories, taxonomies, species and the distinctions between them, is written into the form of a diverse range of Victorian literary texts from this period. Far from simply being a problem with no

[7] Ibid., p. 18.

clear answer, though, writers such as Dickens, Lear, Emily Brontë, and Charles Kingsley (among others) found inspiration in these circumstances, as well as difficulty. Questions about the distinctions between different species, and between humans and other animals, are broached and explored not only in the words but also in the form of literary works—as are questions of taxonomy and arrangement. Inscribed in the literature of the period, the remarkable diversity of animal life available to encounter physically and imaginatively prompted difficult questions of order, distinction, and arrangement that came to reflect meaningfully on the forms of literature itself. In paying attention to the structural, rhetorical, and poetic arrangements of animals in literary texts, we can perceive immanent forms of community and order imagined by their writers, thereby casting these works in a new light. As 'important part[s] of the "intelligible universes"' of all classes and occupations, animals were part of the social world of Victorian Britain, as Asa Briggs rightly noted.[8] To pay attention to the role of animals in Victorian literature, then, is to see examples of how writers made sense of the life around them—life which, moreover, could be both familiar and strange.

The rest of this introduction outlines three important historical contexts for this argument: first, the changing conception of the natural world in the middle of the nineteenth century; secondly, the cultural pervasiveness of discourses of classification, not only in the natural sciences but in other spheres too; and thirdly, the importance of animality to everyday speech (puns, epithets, metaphors), as well as to the new philological science that defined language as a natural rather than a man-made phenomenon. It then explains some methodological decisions regarding this thesis, before positioning it within existing scholarship in literary animal studies.

[8] *Victorian Things* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 41.

Conceptions of the Natural World, circa 1830-1870

These forty or so years constitute an important period for the development of human-animal relations, despite the relative neglect that it has suffered in literary animal studies. The standard periodisation of literary animal studies has often made an implicit leap from Romantic animals to post-Darwinian ones, in which the intervening years represent either a postscript to eighteenth-century and/or Romantic attitudes,[9] or a precursor to the Darwinian revolution.[10] This thesis argues for the significance of this period, articulating an alternative historical narrative in which the years circa 1830 to 1870 represent both the apotheosis and the decline of a cultural fascination with classification and taxonomy—a fascination which began in the middle of the eighteenth century with the Swedish systematist Carl Linnaeus. During this forty-year period, two things happened which make it especially significant: first, confidence in the foundational presupposition of biological taxonomy—the immutability of species—was fatally undermined; secondly, the classifying imagination became a pervasive and ubiquitous characteristic of Victorian culture at large, no longer the preserve of naturalists and systematists. Victorian readers and writers were faced with a daunting range of fauna, and, circa 1830 to 1870, the classification of the natural world underwent a decisive transition. Natural theology, with its foundational tenet of the immutability of species, was superseded by Darwin's genealogical system of randomness and flux. As a result, in the years following the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, systematics ceded its cultural prestige to other branches

[9] See, for instance, Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes: Humans and Other Animals in the Modern Literary Imagination* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010).

[10] See, for instance, Richter, *Literature after Darwin.* Some historical studies are exceptions in this regard, such as Harriet Ritvo's seminal study of mid-Victorian attitudes to animals, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); James Turner's *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain, and Humanity in the Victorian Mind* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). While collections of essays on Victorian representations of animals have also, necessarily, viewed the period from Darwinian angles as well as other ones: *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture*, eds. Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin Danahay (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Empire*, ed. Kathleen Kete (Oxford: Berg, 2007); and *Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture: Contexts for Criticism*, eds. Laurence W. Mazzeno and Ronald D. Morrison (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

of biology—those more interested in establishing generalisations and laws, rather than natural description.[11] In this period, the upending of one classificatory orthodoxy granted readers and writers greater licence to construct their own.

It is worth noting, though, that the rough bookends of this periodisation are significant events in the story of scientific classification. The publication of Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) laid the basis for the conditions that led to the erosion of belief in the Biblical narrative of creation: establishing the extraordinary age of the earth and the necessity of a gradualist understanding of geological history. Lyell showed that continuous but imperceptible forces, operating over vast timescales, were sufficient to explain changes of extraordinary magnitude to the earth's surface—such as the lives of mountain ranges, or the creation of new species. His work was one of the most prominent to establish the conditions of belief under which divine intervention was no longer necessary to explain natural phenomena. At the other end of the period, the publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) and *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animal* (1872) signal the end of classification as the dominant framework of thought for relations between humans and other animals. Just over a decade after the publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859), the notion that species were mutable was widely accepted, fatally undermining the taxonomic endeavour. Scientists were no longer able to see the creation of a complete natural system of classification as a feasible or desirable goal; taxonomy was rendered, at best, a convenient approximation of genealogical descent and, at worst, an artificial conceit. Instead, the question of humans' relations to other animals was reframed as a question of intelligence and cognition. It became more important to discover common or distinctive intellectual capacities, rather than to establish definitive groupings of taxa. It should be noted that Darwin was hardly alone in this focus on animal

[11] Ernst Mayr, *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution, and Inheritance* (London: Belknap Press, 1982), p. 142.

intelligence, and that *The Descent of Man* and *The Expression of the Emotions* are representative rather than exceptional works. They are a convenient bookend by virtue of their fame rather than their uniqueness.

From around the time of publication of Darwin's *Origin*, writers began to think more of other animals in terms of intelligence and psychology, rather than those of taxonomy. The residual heroic sheen of natural history and classificatory endeavour gave way, in the decade preceding 1870, to professionalised inquiry into the 'phenomena of mind throughout the animal kingdom'.[12] Scientists and psychologists such as Herbert Spencer, Darwin, and his disciple George Romanes, led the way, publishing pioneering works which reframed the natural world in terms of nervous systems, instinct, and intelligence—as opposed to clear-cut hierarchies and categories established by diligent systematists. Humans and other animals could no longer be adequately described by a static grid or table of species, for the broad acceptance of the development hypothesis in the decade or so after the publication of the *Origin* rendered such efforts impracticable and unhelpful. The Darwinian account presented a natural world in a state of constant flux, which had to be explained by the operation of laws and processes, rather than described by fixed categories and hierarchies. Classification no longer offered an adequate account of the world. This shift is captured in Herbert Spencer's preface to the second edition of *The Principles of Psychology* (1870-72):

> sundry of the cardinal ideas contained in this work were enunciated many years ago […]. When, in 1855, the First Edition of *The Principles of Psychology* was issued, it had to encounter a public opinion almost universally adverse. The Doctrine of Evolution everywhere implied in it, was at that time ridiculed in the world at large, and frowned upon even in the scientific world. Naturally, therefore, the work, passed over, or treated with but small respect, by reviewers, received scarcely any attention; and its contents remained unknown save to the select few. The great change of attitude towards the Doctrine of Evolution in general, which has taken place during the last ten years, has made the Doctrine of Mental Evolution seem less unacceptable; and one result has

[12] George Romanes, *Animal Intelligence*, 3rd edn (London: Kegan Paul, 1883 [1882]), p. 1.

> been that the leading conceptions set forth in the First Edition of this work, have of late obtained considerable currency.[13]

In *The Principles*, Spencer argued that the basis of all animal life—including human—was the nervous system, and that all the differences between different forms of life could be explained as a function of its presence, size, and complexity. Under this rubric, then, humans and other animals differed only in degree, not kind. What is more, the sliding scale of animal intelligence established great apes as contiguous with humans in the development of the nervous system.

Darwin, too, insisted that evolution placed humans and other animals on a continuum of gradations and variation in their mental capacities—developments that could all be traced back to common causes and emotions. In *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin set out to show 'that there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties'.[14] This is because, as he put it in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), the intellectual capacities of all creatures are not permanently fixed. Rather, they have developed in response to exigencies generated by the 'struggle for existence': 'the structure and habits of all animals have been gradually evolved'.[15] Expression, emotion, and intelligence therefore all came to be seen not only as subjects for study in their own right, but also as clues to the evolutionary history of species. The classifying imagination, of course, had required no account of consciousness or mental powers—its basis was behaviour and anatomy, structure and function. And so, classification had little to add to this new field of research and speculation; in an intellectual milieu now seeking analysis, explanation, causal laws and processes, taxonomy offered only description.

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[13] *The Principles of Psychology* 2 vols, 2nd edn (London: Williams and Norgate, 1870-72), I, p. v.

[14] *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, ed. James Moore and Adrian Desmond (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 86.

[15] *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, eds. Joe Cain and Sharon Messenger (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 23.

One of the established narratives told about the influence of science on representations of animals is that new discoveries in the fields of biological and psychological science renewed a sense of the world's strangeness in the late nineteenth century, revealing a world of transformation, hybridity, and monstrosity. In Isobel Armstrong's words, 'the hermaphrodite and the hybrid carried the Grotesque and its monstrous jouissance into biology',[16] as the rise of the late-Victorian gothic imagination mingled promiscuously with scientific and pseudo-scientific theories of degeneration, multiple personalities, and beastly metamorphoses. The best-known examples of this trend are almost too familiar to merit mention: Bram Stoker's shapeshifting *Dracula* (1897); the half-civilised, half-savage Jekyll and Hyde in Stevenson's story of the same name, published in 1886; the devolved and evolved Eloi and Morlocks in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), or the hybrid creatures of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896). Late-Victorian science, this story suggests, found its way into contemporaneous literary productions in the grotesque shapes of half-human, half-animal beasts and the uncannily familiar shapes of mythical hybrids and metamorphoses. In this telling, the culmination of Victorian representations of animals appears to be a moment of monstrous exuberance, in which free licence was given to the creation of ever more fantastical shapes and fictions. In this respect, the story of the classifying imagination ends here. This late-century development shifted focus away from the construction of comprehensive systems—a kind of taxonomic map of a world and its creatures—to anomalies, exceptions, and aberrations.

We need also to be aware of a parallel and apparently antithetical development, in which the late-century focus on animal intelligence also set stricter limits than before on the possibilities for representations of other animals. Alongside the fantastical gothic imagination in which humans and animals slipped vertiginously between categories, the sceptical attitude

[16] *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination, 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 410.

introduced by studies of animal intelligence prescribed strict boundaries to the representation of other animals. In reality, of course, these two tropes of animal representation were not opposed but rather aspects of the same impulse to establish more stable boundaries between humans and other animals. The gothic mode achieved this by representing the slippage between those categories as transgressive, the sceptical mode by setting boundaries to our 'inferential imaginations', disarticulating other animals from a common world of human feeling and thought.

In the middle years of the nineteenth century, animals were understood to be integral, constituent participants in the social and material worlds of Victorian literature and culture. Later in the century, they became objects of scientific curiosity detached from the everyday experience of their investigators, or monstrous aliens from another time or place—as I have just described. This shift—from constituent background chorus to high-contrast disruptive presence—is an important feature of the literary history of animals, and one which has not been remarked upon. Like figures in the carpet, present but alternately striking and invisible, animals emerged into prominence from the warp and woof of the classifying imagination.

Whereas systematic taxonomies must necessarily be capable of accommodating all species and variations thereof, the decline of the classifying imagination, as well as of the hope for a single unifying natural system, paved the way for exceptional, aberrant, and anomalous individuals to take centre stage. The presence of animals in late-Victorian literature is, correspondingly, much easier to pinpoint—as the examples outlined above suggest. In focusing largely on the years 1830 to 1870, though, we can see the ways in which the omnipresence of other animals registers in the language and structure of the period's literature in less obvious ways. In particular, this is evident in the way that these literary works accommodate them (often with the minimum of fuss) into their organising frameworks and taxonomies. As such, this thesis demonstrates the importance of animals for any understanding of the social vision of

Victorian literature. It is in fact impossible to conceive accurately of either nineteenth-century life, or its textual productions, without taking into account the diverse ways in which other animals were constituent features. As Emily Steinlight argues, though it is often thought of as the age of the individual—its prominent genres being the *Bildungsroman* and the dramatic monologue—the literature of this period is in fact far more truthfully described as a populous age, in which questions of surplus population, of social life and its strained institutions, come to the fore in unprecedented ways.[17] Paying attention to other animals shows us that the teeming life of Victorian literature is far from limited to its human manifestations. The various ways in which animals are integrated within this period's verse and fiction tell us about the forms of social life and community imagined by their writers, giving us new aspects of Victorian literature—both in the sense of new features, and new lines of vision.

Darwin, then, is both displaced and spectrally central to this thesis. It parallels the span of his working life, while at the same time shifting the burden of emphasis in his effect on our understanding of other animals to works published more than ten years after *On the Origin of Species*. When this period is looked at through the keyhole of classification and taxonomy, Darwin's voice appears as one among many, not as the definitive clarion or teleological endpoint. This strategic shift in emphasis allows less familiar models of human-animal interaction, or cohabitation, to come into focus. Relaxing the necessity of placing representations of other animals within a pre- or post-Darwinian narrative enables the perception of stranger depictions of other animals and our relations.[18] This thesis argues that

[17] *Populating the Novel: Literary Form and the Politics of Surplus Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

[18] This argument owes much to Peter Coviello's work on nineteenth-century American sexuality, in which he critiques the impoverishing presentism of our understanding of sex. Queer theorists have long emphasised the historical nature of sex and sexuality, its radical contingency in the face of diverse personal, social, and political experience. In *Tomorrow's Parties*, however, Coviello shows that Foucault's epochal designation of 1870 as the birth of modern sexual identity has been both helpful and unhelpful.[18] This periodisation has led to a disproportionate focus on queer culture after that Foucauldian watershed, Coviello argues, a focus that has obscured the plurality and unfamiliarity of sex in the period preceding it. Moreover, the critical emphasis on post-1870 sexuality has in fact narrowed our conception of what counts as sex and sexuality, a problem which Coviello redresses by turning to depictions of sensuous, sensual, ecstatic, and erotic experience in

the influence of Darwin on our understanding of Victorian animals has been disproportionately influential, and that many nineteenth-century writers understood themselves quite differently. Using classification as a lens through which to view the literature of this period allows us to see some of these differences. In particular, it enables the recovery of historically lost or abortive forms of relation to other animals, which are immanent in those works. In the next section, therefore, I demonstrate the variety of different classificatory systems that were posited in the nineteenth century.

The Classifying Imagination

When faced with diversity, we look for order—and that is what the Victorians did. The development of biological taxonomy in nineteenth-century natural history offered both answers and complications to the search for order within the natural world. The 'shifting, irregular' character of human-animal encounters and interaction formed a living example of the difficulties of scientific taxonomy.[19] Consequently, the classifying imagination of nineteenth-century science was a polyvocal field, in which dissension was a constitutive feature. In this section, I outline four influential approaches to the classification of the natural world.

During this period, the distinction between an 'artificial' and a 'natural' system of classification was debated at length in the natural sciences.[20] The former, designating a classificatory system that was based on either partial, inconsistent, incidentally, or externally-derived resemblances, was the *bête noire* of natural history—a failure of rigour or scientific

nineteenth-century American literature and culture before that date. *Tomorrow's Parties* thus admits the importance of Foucault's epochal marking in *The History of Sexuality* (that the homosexual 'became a species' in 1870), while resisting the temptation to impose it as a hegemonic master-narrative, structuring subsequent histories as their beginning or end.

[19] Donald, *Picturing Animals*, p. 31.

[20] See Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, pp. 27-29; M. di Gregorio, 'In Search of the Natural System: Problems of Zoological Classification in Victorian Britain', *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 4 (1982), 225-54; R. O'Hara, 'Representations of the Natural System in the Nineteenth Century', *Biology and Philosophy* 6 (1991), 225-74.

method, which afforded only an incomplete view of the underlying structural similarities and differences between different forms of life.[21] The latter, describing a system that was based on the essential and enduring characteristics of species, a comprehensive view of the natural world, was by contrast its Holy Grail. But the question of how that system would be constructed continued to exercise taxonomists throughout the period of this study.[22] In the next few pages, I describe four important attempts during the nineteenth century to establish the proper criteria on which to base a natural system, which are representative of the successive prevailing orthodoxies (apart from Ruskin's, which represents a response to one of those orthodoxies by a leading intellectual figure of the period). These are: William Paley's natural theology, Richard Owen's comparative anatomy, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and John Ruskin's mythical-aesthetic taxonomy.

William Paley's *Natural Theology* was the single most influential work of natural theology published in the first three decades of the century, serving as the model for the Bridgewater Treatises, and providing a touchstone for religiously-motivated accounts of the natural world.[23] Natural theology proposed that the *works* of God—his Creation—were as revealing of His presence and will as the *word* of God. It maintained that the close observation of nature revealed the Deity's intricate provision of arrangements and contrivances adapted to suit each organism to its environment. 'In no part of creation', argued William Kirby in 1835,

[21] Interestingly, the first recorded use of *bête noire* in the *OED* is from 1844, in Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon*. Again, we can see how beastly rhetoric was used to establish boundaries and oppositions.

[22] A reviewer in the first issue of *The Popular Science Review* pointed out the frequent disagreements on significant characteristics in a memorable fashion, when he remarked that 'A zoologist who in the present day could promulgate a system with every part of which any other zoologist would be perfectly satisfied, ought to be publicly exhibited as the last and greatest wonder of the world'. 'Zoological Classification', *The Popular Science Review* 1.1 (January 1877), p. 189.

[23] An edition of 1840, published by the Chambers brothers, for instance, supplements Paley's texts with bracketed additions added by one Thomas Smibert. Although, the foreword notes, the additions reflect how 'the progress of science since the time of Paley has brought to light numberless new proofs of Design in the order of nature' (p. v), the essential import of Paley's argument remained buttressed, rather than challenged, by contemporary science. *Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (London: William and Robert Chambers, 1840).

> are the power, wisdom, and goodness of its beneficent and almighty Author more signally conspicuous than in the various animals that inhabit and enliven our globe. The infinite diversity of their forms and organs; the nice adaptation of these to their several functions; the beauty and elegance of a large number of them; the singularity of others; the variety of their motions; their geographical distribution; but, above all, their pre-eminent utility to mankind, in every state and stage of life, render them objects of the deepest interest both to rich and poor, high and low, wise and unlearned.[24]

Observation of the natural world was cast as a kind of scriptural exegesis, but its final revelation was a metaphysical one. Looking carefully at animals was a means of perceiving a spiritual truth invisible to human eyes. Although it drew on traditions of empirical observation in natural history, natural theology regarded animals as symbolic in a foundational way. Symbols rather than systems were Paley's focus, for animals were to be regarded as metonymic or synecdochic figures for divine beneficence. Rather than provide an exhaustive taxonomy of species, Paley's argument demonstrates the irrefutable proof of design and contrivance in the makeup of humans and animals. It thinks in terms of the type, rather than the individual; the species rather than the specimen. Each incarnation of a species is exemplary—and, further, each species is evidence of a single Creator.

According the tenets of natural theology, each species is as beautifully put together as the next. In William Buckland's words,

> We have moreover seen such a systematic recurrence of analogous Designs, producing various ends by various combinations of Mechanism, multiplied almost to infinity in their details of application, yet all constructed on the same few common fundamental principles which pervade the living forms of organized Beings, that we reasonably conclude all these past and present contrivances to be parts of a comprehensive and connected whole, originating in the Will and Power of one and the same Creator.[25]

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[24] *On the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation of Animals and in their History, Habits and Instincts*, 2 vols (London: William Pickering, 1835), I, p. 55.

[25] *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: William Pickering, 1837), I, pp. 580-81.

Indeed, the key characteristics of species are these 'contrivances': the perfect adjustment of internal and environmental relations.[26] The resemblances between how different aspects of animal anatomy worked appeared to offer an empirical basis for natural history and taxonomy; classifications could be based on what was actually observed in and across different species. This emphasis on relation—both internal and environmental—affords something like a definition of species in which they are characterised by the perfect adjustment of parts to function.

> When several different parts contribute to one effect—or, which is the same thing, when an effect is produced by the joint action of different instruments—the fitness of such parts or instruments to one another, for the purpose of producing by their united action the effect, is what I call *relation*; and wherever this is observed in the works of nature or of man, it appears to me to carry along with it decisive evidence of understanding, intention, art.[27]

'The animal economy is full, is made up of these *relations*',[28] Paley stressed. In considering the extraordinary facility with which these relations perform their necessary work, Kirby argued, it is 'impossible to consider this subject deeply, without being struck with other evidences of design'.[29] This is the essence of natural theology's interest in function: the conviction that the parts of species that equip them to thrive in their particular environments could only be the work of an intelligent overseer and designer. There is no contrivance without a contriver, as Paley put it.

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[26] This kind of functionalism was based primarily on the work of Georges Cuvier, who appeared to establish that 'affinities' or 'similarities among organisms stemmed from commonalities of function'. Ron Amundson, 'Richard Owen and Animal Form', in Richard Owen, *On the Nature of Limbs: A Discourse*, ed. Ron Admundson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. xv-lii (p. xviii).

[27] William Paley, *Natural Theology: or, Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature*, eds. Matthew Eddy and David M. Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 [1802]), p. 194. All subsequent references are to this edition.

[28] Ibid., p. 195.

[29] Ibid., p. 199.

Although the next generation of influential scientists—most prominently Richard Owen and Charles Lyell—continued to advocate the immutability of species, the functionalism of natural theology slowly gave way to structurally-based studies in the 1840s. Richard Owen, palaeontologist and comparative anatomist, revolutionised natural history in this decade by establishing a distinction between 'homological' and 'analogical' resemblances between animal physiologies. His comparative anatomy attempted to locate the characteristics of species in static, observable physiological facts, rather than speculations on an organism's ecological fit. He decisively changed the direction of British natural science, shifting its focus from the functionalism of natural theology to biological structuralism.[30]

Owen's successful challenge to this view, for example in *On the Nature of Limbs: A Discourse* (1849), showed how '*entire skeletons* of vertebrate groups could be shown to correspond, bone for bone, with those of other vertebrate groups'.[31] If this was true, then it showed that species living in very different environments had deep-lying structural affinities with one another. To distinguish between the superficial resemblances sought by functionalists and the underlying affinities of composition to which structuralists attended, Owen delineated the two kinds of likeness as *analogy* and *homology*. The former was 'A part in one animal which has the same function as another part of organ in a different animal', while the latter was 'The same organ in different animals under every variety of form and function'.[32] He argued that functionalist approaches to comparative anatomy fail to take into account the growth and development of individual organisms—their ontogeny. 'The general laws of Animal Organization can never be developed from a consideration of the perfect or matured structure alone', he pointed out, because the discernment of 'the signification […] of the parts of an

[30] On this, see Giovanni Camardi, 'Richard Owen, morphology, and evolution', *Journal of the History of Biology* 34 (2001), 481-515; Nicolaas A. Rupke, 'Richard Owen's vertebrate archetype', *Isis* 84 (1993), 231-51.

[31] *On the Nature of Limbs*, p. 23.

[32] *Lectures on the Comparative Anatomy and Physiology of the Invertebrate Animals* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1843), pp. 374, 378.

animal body demands a patient examination of the successive stages of their development, in every group of Animals'.[33] Owen's comparative anatomy therefore introduced ontogeny and phylogeny—the lifespans of individuals and species, respectively—into discussions of animal form. It posited that the successive developmental stages of the forms of species could be used to glance laterally across at resemblances between those which were seemingly far removed in the scale of creation, using changes in the diachronic development of the individual to make synchronic connections between species and genera.

In a further development, Darwin's evolutionary theory proposed that relations between species—if they were observable at all—were obscure and marked by epochs of transformation. His decisive contribution to this debate was to show that 'all true classification is genealogical'.[34] He redefined taxonomy as a question of descent, translating a synchronic patterning of typical forms into an ongoing diachronic process, in effect inverting the model of comparative anatomy. By 1870, his theory of descent with modification was widely known, and the idea that biological species were not immutable was widely accepted.[35] As we have seen, natural theology asserted that this underlying order 'existed in the mind of God':[36] species were understood as manifestations of the will of the Creator. The great triumph of Darwinism was, in Ernst Mayr's view, 'the elimination of this ancient typological view of nature'.[37] In all previous classifications, people had relied on observable phenomena to conclude that species were evidently physiologically distinct, and certain to remain so. Peter Bowler, outlining the roots of natural history in Ancient Greece, characterises this reasoning as follows: 'Casual observation suggests that we can assign each individual animal to a particular species. The

[33] Ibid., p. 191.
[34] *On the Origin of Species*, ed. Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 309.
[35] Darwin's 'very marked influence on the study of natural history', asserted Sir William Boyd Dawkins in 1868, was its 'expression of the disbelief in special creations that has been gradually increasing among scientific men'. Art. V.—The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication', *The Edinburgh Review* 128.262 (1868), 414-50 (p. 414).
[36] Bowler, *Evolution*, p. 5.
[37] Ibid. On the typological view of nature, see Mayr, *Biological Thought*, pp. 158-71.

simplest explanation of this fact is that species have a real existence; they are fixed groupings into which individual animals *must* fall, like prearranged pigeonholes into which mail is sorted.'[38] Darwin showed, however, that species were not like neatly arranged boxes waiting to be filled. By instead charting relation along an axis of time and ancestry, rather than vertically (as in the Chain of Being) or laterally (as diagrammatic taxonomies), Darwin stressed mutability and change—an ongoing process of flux. As he put it brusquely in a notebook: 'How came the first species to go on. – There never were any constant species'.[39] The generation of new species is the result, and therefore the evidence, of descent with modification; a constant, unvarying, non-purposive, non-teleological principle or law—a process, rather than a creative act. If species were entities shaped by generations of mutation and adaptation then they could no longer be considered to typify a Divine Will or Mind. The significant relations between organisms were deep, unseen, and ancestral. The new classification founded on descent meant that understanding humans and other animals became a question of deducing and tracing the operation of natural laws, rather than the discovery of an underlying order. Darwin's argument in the *Origin* did not reject the idea of a 'Natural System' of arrangement, but it did make it conditional on resemblances and differences that were difficult to see with the naked eye. To an extent that is usually lost in accounts of Darwin's 'animalisation' of the human, evolution also curtailed a kind of thought that perceived relation based on observable resemblances and behaviour. It instead emphasised a kind of deep structure, almost imperceptible save under the closest inspection.

Critics have often been drawn, by a deep-felt yet nebulous intuition, to place Darwin and Ruskin side by side.[40] Despite their antithetical opinions on religious belief, and Ruskin's

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[38] Bowler, *Evolution*, pp. 4-5.

[39] *Charles Darwin's notebooks, 1836-1844: Geology, Transmutation of Species, Metaphysical Enquiries*, ed. Paul H. Barrett (London: British Museum, 1987), p. 215; emphasis in original.

[40] See, for example: Dinah Birch, 'Ruskin and the Science of *Proserpina*', in *New Approaches to Ruskin: Thirteen Essays*, ed. Robert Hewison (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.

well-documented antipathy towards the dominant methodologies and conclusions of nineteenth-century science, their subsequent readers have noticed in both a remarkable capacity for observation and detail. Both men, as Katelin Krieg puts it, stressed the importance of 'looking beneath the surface of things' to access a deeper, unseen structure animating the world that we inhabit.[41] What has been less remarked upon less, however, is the difference in the kinds of classificatory order each adopted in their attempts to give sense to the enormous aggregate of detail which they accumulated in the course of their observations.

Throughout his life, Ruskin's eye was turned by other animals. His diaries habitually record sightings of both remarkable and unremarkable creatures, including (in alphabetical order): ants, bees, beetles, bison, butterflies, caterpillars, chamois, cicadas, dogs, donkeys, elephants, fish, flies, fox, frogs, glow-worm, goats, lions, lizards, mules, scorpions, sheep, silkworms, snails, snakes, spiders, tadpoles, water-serpents, whales. In spite of this, systematics and taxonomy interested him only in their practical application: 'I never took to natural history of shells, or shrimps, or weeds, or jelly-fish', he recollects in *Praeterita*.[42]

Ruskin's definitions of species draw heavily on natural theology. In *Modern Painters* II, for instance, Ruskin makes what he terms 'vital beauty' depend on the perception of internal relations as a whole, not in isolation. Each part of an animal implies every other part, and the best art is able to convey an impression of this vital coherence. It is, he argues, to 'the

142-56; Jonathan Smith, *Charles Darwin and Victorian Visual Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); George Levine, *Realism, Ethics, Secularism*; Francis O'Gorman, 'Ruskin, Science, and the Miracles of Life', *The Review of English Studies* 61.249 (2009), 276-88; Phillip Prodger, 'Ugly Disagreements: Darwin and Ruskin Discuss Sex and Beauty', in *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms, and Visual Culture*, eds. Barbara Larson and Fae Brauer (Hanover: Dartmouth University Press, 2009), pp. 40-58; and Katelin Krieg, 'Ruskin, Darwin, and Looking Beneath Surfaces', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 45.4, 709-26.

[41] 'Ruskin, Darwin, and Looking Beneath Surfaces', p. 717.

[42] *The Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), XXXV, p. 78. All subsequent references are to this edition. However, the classifying imagination nonetheless influenced his thought: 'he retained to the end of his life the model of scientific enquiry he had learned as a youth—an activity, predominantly, of description and classifying', as Paul Sawyer observes in *Ruskin's Poetic Argument: The Design of the Major Works* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 265.

expression of happiness' that we owe the pleasure we take in organic forms, 'especially with respect to animals'.[43] Here, happiness refers not to a general feeling, but to the sense of a beneficent Creator evident in the felicitous adaptation of each species to its circumstances. The perception of this coherence, though, involves an active form of apprehension (what Ruskin called the Imagination Penetrative): an act of generalisation that is 'instinctive, unconscious, and imaginative'.[44] A species' identity inheres in what it does, rather than what it is.

Thee three 'grammars' of natural history on which Ruskin worked in the 1870s and 1880s—on flowers, birds, and rocks—exhibit a notable continuity with these principles, despite their historical remove from the young 'Graduate of Oxford'.[45] *Love's Meinie*, Ruskin's 'grammar' of birds, opens with an acerbic account of the state of scientific taxonomy.[46] 'In general, the scientific natural history of a bird consists of four articles', he explained, with his tongue planted firmly in his cheek:

> first, the name and estate of the gentleman whose gamekeeper shot the last that was seen in England; secondly, two or three stories of doubtful origin, printed in every book on the subject of birds for the last fifty years; thirdly, an account of the feathers, from the comb to the rump, with enumeration of the colours which are never more to be seen on the living bird by English eyes; and, lastly, a discussion of the reasons why none of the twelve names which former naturalists have given to the bird are of any further use, and why the present author has given it a thirteenth, which is to be universally, and to the end of time, accepted.[47]

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[43] *Works of John Ruskin*, IV, p. 154.

[44] George P. Landow, 'Ruskin, Holman Hunt, and Going to Nature to See for Oneself', in *Studies in Ruskin: Essays in Honour of Van Akin Burd*, eds. Robert Rhodes and Del Ivan Janik (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1982), pp. 60-84 (p. 66).

[45] Ruskin wrote of the three works in 1876: "In especial, I have set myself to write three grammars – of geology, botany, and zoology, – which will contain nothing but indisputable facts in those three branches of proper human learning"'. Cited in Dinah Birch, 'Ruskin and the Science of *Proserpina*', p. 144.

[46] 'Meinie', he noted in the preface to the lectures, 'is the old English word for "Many" in the sense of "a many" persons attending one, as bridesmaids, when in sixes or tens or dozens;—courtiers, footmen, and the like. It passes gradually into "Menial," and unites the senses of Multitude and Servitude'. (XXV, p. 13)

[47] *Love's Meinie*, XXV, p. 20.

Ruskin stressed that any sensible system of classification would be based on what a bird *does*: its 'eagle or falcon character', what it eats, how it moves, and so on.[48] In *The Eagle's Nest: Ten Lectures on the Relation of Natural Science to Art* (1872), Ruskin proposed a similar solution in offering a new taxonomy of birds for the use of artists, 'founded only on their ways of using their feet'. By this route, he arrived at groups of birds which 'catch or snatch their prey, and are called "Snatchers"—RAPTORES', or those which 'climb and cling on branches, and are called "Climbers"—SCANSORES'.[49] Such a taxonomy was not scientific, he admitted, but, for the purposes at hand, was 'convenient for a first rough arrangement'.[50] Ruskin composed another rough arrangement for inclusion in *Love's Meinie*, comprising the classes Hawks, Owls, Swallows, Pies, Songsters, Robins, Creepers and Tits, and seven more groupings. The operative resemblances in these taxonomies are, emphatically, those of behaviour and appearance—not those of anatomy or heredity.

It was Ruskin's dissatisfaction with modern scientific nomenclature that drove him to propose these alternative taxonomies, these 'rough arrangements'. For him, its lack of connection to both common speech, and the historical, literary, and mythic vocabularies for the natural world, was symptomatic of the impious and hubristic ambition of contemporary science.[51] The taxonomies invented by naturalists have little hope of lasting the next fifty years,

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[48] In the fifth and final volume of *Modern Painters* (1860), Ruskin had already shown his willingness to compose taxonomic arrangements of the natural world that were responsive to pragmatic requirements, rather than abstract principles. 'As in our sketch of the structure of mountains it seemed advisable to adopt a classification of their forms, which, though inconsistent with absolute scientific precision, was convenient for order of successive inquiry, and gave useful largeness of view; […] I take an arrangement, therefore, involving no theory; serviceable enough for all working purposes, and sure to remain thus serviceable, in its rough generality, whatever views may hereafter be developed among botanists'. *Works of John Ruskin*, VII, p. 20.

[49] *The Eagle's Nest*, XXII, p. 248.

[50] Ibid., p. 249.

[51] Ruskin's sensibility was also constitutionally opposed to the dissection favoured by anatomical sciences. In a diary entry from 1841 he noted his admiration of the lizards in Italy: 'Splendid the l[izards] are—from a foot to eighteen inches in length, bright emerald green under the throat, but beautifully speckled on the back. Caught one fellow by the tail, but he twitched it cleverly out of my hand, before I had determined to risk breakage, for he was a beautiful creature, and I should have been sorry had he left his tail in my hand'. Unfortunately, just this happens three years later, for which Ruskin was deeply sorry: 'my vexation at the hurt of the poor beast has made me sick and ill all day. […] I never felt more annoyance at anything'. *The*

he believed, focused, as they are, on invention and discovery. Instead of contriving new names for familiar things, Ruskin implored, people 'who care for life as well as literature, and for spirit,—even the poor souls of birds' might 'cherish' the etymologies of colloquial and provincial names for animals.[52] Such histories, he believed, remind us of the intimate, entwined fates of life, language, and literature, as well as the fact that interactions with other animals shape our words for them. In a beautiful example, which deserves to be quoted in full, Ruskin demonstrated this with the word *buzzard*:

> Take, for example, the common English name of this low-flying falcon, the most tameable and affectionate of his tribe, and therefore, I suppose, fastest vanishing from field and wood, the buzzard. That name comes from the Latin 'buteo', still retained by the ornithologists; but, in its original form, valueless, to you, but when you get it comfortably corrupted into Provencal 'Busac', (whence gradually the French busard, and our buzzard), you get from it the delightful compound 'busacador', 'adorer of buzzards'—meaning, generally, a sporting person; and then you have Dante's Bertrand de Born, the first troubadour of war, bearing witness to you how the love of mere hunting and falconry was already, in his day, degrading the military classes […]. 'Cassador', [chaser] of course, afterwards becomes 'chasseur', and 'austor' 'vautor'. But after you have read this, and familiarized your ear with the old word, how differently Milton's phrase will ring to you,—'Those who thought no better of the Living God than of a buzzard idol',[…] and all this freshness and value in the reading, observe, come of your keeping the word which great men have used for the bird, instead of letting the anatomists blunder out a new one from their Latin dictionaries.[53]

Despite the evident hostility directed towards comparative anatomists, this passage offers more than simply an ageing man's tirade against contemporary science.[54] Ruskin argued that the resemblances we habitually perceive in other animals rest more often on the words we have for them—'even the rudest or most provincial terms'[55]—and on those words' histories of usage,

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Diaries of John Ruskin, eds. Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-59), I, p. 166; I, p. 301. On this, see Dinah Birch, '"That Ghastly Work": Ruskin, Animals and Anatomy', *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 4.2 (2000), 131-45.

[52] *Love's Meinie*, p. 22.

[53] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[54] For a history of Ruskin's animosity towards Darwin, and the vivisection controversy at Oxford, see Birch, '"That Ghastly Work"'; and Jed Mayer, 'Ruskin, Vivisection, and Scientific Knowledge', *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 35.1 (2008), 200-22.

[55] Ibid., p. 22.

or on the influence of cultural productions that have taken them up. Like Darwin, Ruskin's classificatory system stretched far back into history, philology being another study of descent with modification.[56] Unlike structuralist theories of relation, however, Ruskin gave special prominence to how species and individuals act, and what they do. What most distinguished a species was the characteristic actions and movements of each living being.

Natural history was part of the fabric of Victorian interactions with, and thought about, animals—even in their most everyday forms.[57] The popularisation of natural history meant that profound questions about relations between all animals, human and other, were widely circulated though not decisively answerable. In the early years of the period covered by this thesis, for instance, a fascinating array of taxonomic systems were constructed. The most notorious was probably William Swainson's 'quinary theory', which proposed that all species could be arranged in interlocking groups of five.[58] The patent absurdity of his 'circular system of affinities' had little support from the scientific community even in a transitional period for natural history, but other naturalists, such as the eccentric Charles Waterton, also departed from the established norms of the Linnaean system.[59] The classifying imagination thus raised questions in response to which it could only speculate and deliberate—at least until the mid-to-late 1860s, by which point Darwin's theory of modification by descent had been widely accepted.[60] The periodisation of this thesis, circa 1830 to 1870, therefore reflects the zenith and

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[56] On the relation between nineteenth-century linguistic science and Darwinian evolution, see Stephen G. Alter, *Darwin and the Linguistic Image*.

[57] Much work has established the wide circulation and popularity of natural history in Victorian culture, and I take this as read. See, for instance, Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*; Lynn Merrill, *The Romance of Victorian Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Fairy Tales, Natural History and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[58] Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*, pp. 63-64; Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, p. 15.

[59] Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*, p. 101. For a full account of the diversity of taxonomic endeavour in the period, see Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*.

[60] Peter Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, 3rd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003 [1983]), p. 141.

decline of the classifying imagination, defining that part of its lifespan as a primarily Victorian phenomenon, which nonetheless has important roots in the eighteenth century.

During this period, the natural world no longer appeared to arrange itself in an orderly and typical fashion, as the close observation of its inhabitants revealed a world of innumerable variation. 'Nature', in Diana Donald's words, 'presented a plethora of life forms, of bewildering diversity, with no apparent order or clearly demarcated types'.[61] Between the publication of Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* in 1758, and 1898, the number of known species increased one hundredfold, with the bulk of these discoveries occurring in the middle fifty years of the nineteenth century.[62] What is peculiar about the period explored by this thesis is not just that the taxonomies produced in the natural sciences increasingly bore the marks of this bewildering diversity; it is that this transitional period coincided with a palpable desire for other forms of classification too. It was the age of the classifying imagination not only in its attention to the inhabitants and phenomena of the natural world, but also to things that we tend broadly to see as part of the social or cultural world. Indeed, the similarities in approach represent a sense that the boundaries between the natural and the cultural were becoming blurred.

A short list of such attempts might include: Henry Mayhew's taxonomy of the urban poor and working class; David Masson's categories of the English novel; the divisions and combinations staged in the rooms and halls of the Great Exhibition; the pathologies of criminologists and sexologists such as Giovanni Lombroso and Richard von Krafft-Ebing; Walter Bagehot's categorisation of 'pure, ornate, and grotesque' poetry or Arthur Hallam's distinction between the poetry of reflection and sensation; and Darwin's delineation of the different emotions in man and animals. Each of these epistemological projects looked to create

[61] *Picturing Animals*, p. 30.
[62] Lynn Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*, p. 65.

organised wholes by identifying the constituent parts. This was not a new phenomenon, of course, but such projects were pursued with an unusual zeal and frequency in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

Mayhew, for example, splits British society in general into four categories:

I. Those That Will Work.
II. Those That Cannot Work.
III. Those That Will Not Work.
IV. Those that Need Not Work.[63]

Within the 'London Street-Folk', he identified a richly patterned array of costermongers, street-sellers of various articles, street-buyers, street-finders, chimney-sweepers, destroyers of vermin, street exhibitors, street musicians, street artists, omnibus-drivers and conductors, thieves and swindlers, beggars and cheats—to give a representative but not exhaustive list. Prior to this, in the very first chapter, Mayhew sets his sights even wider and affirms that 'of the thousand millions of human beings that are said to constitute the population of the entire globe, there are—socially, morally, and perhaps even physically considered—but two distinct and broadly marked races, viz., the wanderers and the settlers'.[64]

One year after *London Labour and the London Poor* was collected in four volumes, the philologist Friedrich Max Müller offered a linguistic taxonomy. His more complex system not only proposed both 'genealogical' and 'morphological' classifications of language (in the broad groupings of 'Aryan', 'Semitic', and 'Turanian'), but also subdivided the progressive stages of branches of human knowledge itself into 'the *Empirical*, the *Classificatory*, and the *Theoretical*'.[65]

[63] *London Labour and the London Poor*, 4 vols (London: Griffin, Bohn, 1861), IV, pp. 1-27. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[64] Ibid., I, p. 1.
[65] *Lectures on the Science of Language* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), p. 5.

Around the same time, David Masson's *British Novelists and Their Styles* arranged the contemporary novel into thirteen distinct classes: 'The Novel of Scottish Life and Manners', 'The Novel of Irish Life and Manners', 'The Novel of English Life and Manners', 'The Fashionable Novel', 'The Illustrious Criminal Novel', 'The Traveller's Novel', 'The Novel of American Manners and Society' and 'The Novel of Eastern Manners and Society', 'The Military Novel and the Naval Novel', 'The Novel of Supernatural Phantasy', 'The Art and Culture Novel', 'The Historical Novel'.[66] Masson's taxonomy looks much more like a list than do Mayhew's or Müller's, a fact that should alert us to the variety of forms that classificatory schemes could themselves take. Classification, after all, involves the reduction of many instances into their essential categories, distinguishing between these, and the enumeration of each of those categories.

London (in Mayhew's account), and the English novel (in Masson's) proved tricky knots to unravel, and each typically is peppered with admissions of alternate possibilities, fudged categories, anomalies, or plain bafflement. Here is Mayhew, for instance: 'Those who obtain their living in the streets of the metropolis are a very large and varied class; indeed, the means resorted to in order "to pick up a crust" […] are so multifarious that the mind is long baffled in its attempts to reduce them to scientific order'.[67] Masson, too, admitted that his is a 'rough and obvious, rather than considered and thorough classification', made 'with reference to the different kinds of object-matter handled in the novels'.[68] There were, he acknowledged, other ways of slicing the novelistic cake:

> Had the classification been according to the different notions or styles of art employed in the treatment of the object-matter, whatever its mind, fewer heads might have sufficed. Thus, Sir Bulwer Lytton classifies all novels into the three kinds of the

[66] David Masson, *English Novelists and Their Styles* (London: Macmillan, 1859), pp. 215-27.
[67] *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 9.
[68] *English Novelists*, p. 227.

> Familiar, the Picturesque, and the Intellectual—not a very scientific classification, but one which has an obvious meaning.[69]

Throughout these attempts at systematic ordering there runs a sense of a provisionality and approximation that cannot be avoided, for such classifications are not definitive but rather propose one possible order among many. Huxley provided a similar proviso at the beginning of a primer in biological classification:

> Thus, there may be as many classifications of any series of natural, or of other, bodies, as they have properties or relations to one another, or to other things; or, again, as there are modes in which they may be regarded by the mind: so that, with respect to such classification as we are here concerned with, it might be more proper to speak of *a* classification than of *the* classification of the animal kingdom.[70]

As much as humans may have been the 'rational animal', the 'historical animal', or the 'mortal animal', according to Müller,[71] in this period it also makes sense to think of them as the classifying animal. Forms of life—both in the sense of life-forms and the natural and artificial things used in the course of life—demanded identification, grouping, and arranging, and this structure of feeling was a fundamental ground of Victorian thought about humans and other animals.[72]

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[69] Ibid., p. 228.

[70] *Introduction to the Classification of Animals*, p. 1.

[71] Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, pp. 384-85. It is worth noting an example of Müller's etymological accounts of how 'early thinkers and framers of language distinguish[ed] between man and the other animals', for its beauty and ingenuity. For example: 'The Latin word *homo*, the French *l'homme*, which has been reduced to *on* in *on dit*, is derived from the same root which we have in *humus*, the soil, *humilis*, humble. *Homo*, therefore, would express the idea of a being made of the dust of the earth' (p. 384).

[72] By 'structure of feeling', I refer to a part of the 'particular conventions' of a 'community in a given period', Raymond Williams, *A Preface to Film* (London: Film Drama, 1954), p. 21.

Animals in Victorian England

The classifying imagination outlined in the previous section was a response not only to scientific debate, but also to the extraordinary and newfound variety of animal life that was physically and imaginatively available to Victorian Britain. Animals were part of the sensorial and experiential purview of all classes of society in a way that is hard to imagine from a contemporary vantage point. In this section I describe the varied and populous animal presence of Victorian Britain, outlining the heterogeneous ways in which the Victorian public encountered or consumed other animals, and some moments where this is reflected in its literature. The trends, projects, and institutions that contributed to this omnipresence modelled a very visible kind of domination—'forcefully embod[ying] the symbolism of conquest and acquisition', the mastery of a hostile and fecund natural world, and even the triumph of the human imagination over the vast blankness of history.[73] They also, however, turned animals into aesthetic objects, figures eliciting inquisitiveness as well as acquisitiveness; it is evident that animals were considered figures of entertainment and pleasure, as well as utility.[74]

This brief historical vignette allows a clearer sense of the extent to which animals of all stripes and sizes were part of daily life, and demonstrates one significant reason for the trends of classification and categorisation explored in this thesis.[75] Confronted with a faunal diversity never before seen, writers responded by attempting to order it—although the line between diversity and chaos was thin. This is, of course, the line which the literary text, and especially the realist novel, must traverse—selecting and arranging a potentially limitless array of details and parts into a coherent whole. In this sense, the project of classification, of turning diversity

[73] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 207.
[74] On this see especially Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012).
[75] For more complete accounts of the way that the lives of 'animals and people […] collided and intertwined' in Victorian Britain, see Hannah Velten, *Beastly London* (London: Reaktion, 2013); and Sarah Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, from which the above quotation is drawn (p. 5).

into order, rather than apprehending it as chaotic, bears a direct analogy to the writing of literature itself.

The Bodleian Library's John Johnson Archive of Printed Ephemera offers a representative glimpse of the extraordinary variety of creatures exhibited to the public during the nineteenth century (and perhaps a list or miscellany is an appropriate form for this diversity): crocodiles; an 'active gibbon'; 'A beautiful lion, from Algiers'; bears; 'Bonassus the buffalo' (who became so famous in the 1820s an advertisement could claim him to have been 'patronized by Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline!', and who apparently stood at two tons and seven feet high);[76] a dromedary camel; Signor Cappelli's 'learned cats' (who apparently beat drums, turned spits, ground knives, played music, and roasted coffee, among other skills);[77] Wapiti deer; elephants; a hen with three wings and four legs; the 'learned goose'; a sea lion; a swordfish; a Greenland whale ninety-five feet long; a mermaid; flea-circuses (at which one could apparently have seen fleas dance a waltz, play on musical instruments, draw a miniature coach, and play at whist);[78] giraffes; a gnu; a 'black tyger'; leopards; alpacas; all manner of curious cattle (included horned and six-footed heifers, and a calf with five legs); the famous Toby the sapient pig; a Boa constrictor; rattlesnakes; a rhinoceros; a singing mouse; and zebras. Along with the many public zoos founded after London Zoo opened its gates to the public in 1828, exotic and exceptional animals were a major facet of public entertainment.[79] Their exhibition was one of the characteristic features of the nineteenth century, and, as Kurt Koenigsberger, among others, shows, was closely bound up

[76] http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/pdf/tmp_2073014391794933192.pdf. Accessed 3 January 2018.
[77] http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/pdf/tmp_363612090461808338.pdf. Accessed 3 January 2018.
[78] http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/pdf/tmp_1520111578652976243.pdf. Accessed 3 January 2018.
[79] On this, see Kurt Koenigsberger, *The Novel and the Menagerie: Totality, Englishness, and Empire* (Columbus, OH.: Ohio State University Press, 2007); Takashi Ito, *London Zoo and the Victorians 1828-1859* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), esp. pp. 81-137; Helen Cowie, *Exhibiting Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Empathy, Education, Entertainment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Christine Jackson, *Menageries in Britain, 1100-2000* (London: The Ray Society, 2014); Caroline Grigson, *Menagerie: The History of Exotic Animals in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), esp. pp. 182-261.

with the project of British imperialism. In Harriet Ritvo's words, it 'serve[d] not just as a popular symbol of human domination, but also as a more precise and elaborate figuration of England's imperial enterprise'.[80] It put the unfamiliar and the alien on display, domesticating the inhabitants of Britain's overseas colonies at the same time that it reinforced their strangeness.

As well as entertainment, biological specimens were acquired with astonishing rapaciousness, with adventurous naturalists making available new riches of fauna that were shipped back monthly from the furthest reaches of the globe. For example, one of Charles Darwin's early packages sent back to John Stevens Henslow at Cambridge from the *H.M.S. Beagle* contained a mere eighty birds, and twenty mammals—for which alleged parsimoniousness Darwin apologised.[81] Darwin's specimens included skins and preserved bodies, and the collection of such objects—as taxidermy,[82] in parts,[83] and even, of course, as fossilised remains[84]—made it possible for their audience to get a sense of the animal, which nonetheless retained a sense of strangeness and unfamiliarity. This mix of the recognisable and the alien was peculiarly evident in the dinosaur models exhibited in the grounds of Crystal Palace after its move to Sydenham in 1854, which were made by Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins under Richard Owen's supervision.[85]

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[80] *Animal Estate*, p. 206.

[81] 'I am afraid you have thought them very scanty: but, as I have said before, you must recollect how much time is lost at sea, & that I make it a constant rule, to prefer the obscure & diminutive tribes of animals'. To J.S. Henslow, 18 July 1833, Letter no. 210, *Darwin Correspondence Project*, http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/DCP-LETT-210 , accessed 6 June 2018.

[82] For a representative account of the fascination of taxidermy, see the anonymous article 'Modern Taxidermy', *The Cornhill* 7, June 1863, 120-25; and Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, pp. 183-224. For a short account of the naturalist Charles Waterton's famous collection, see Lynn Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History 1820-1870* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 99-110.

[83] On the exhibition of animal skins in Victorian Britain, see Colley, *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain*.

[84] For an example of the fascination of fossils, see Henry Knight's famous 'cliff-hanger' encounter with a trilobite in Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, ed. Pamela Dalziel (London: Penguin, 1998 [1873]), p. 241.

[85] On this, see Melanie Keene, 'Dinosaurs Don't Die: the Crystal Palace Monsters in Children's Literature, 1854-2001', in *After 1851: The Material and Visual Cultures of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham*, eds. Kate Nichols and Sarah Victoria Turner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 159-74. On Victorian representations of dinosaurs, see Martin Rudwick, *Scenes from Deep Time: Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992); and Steve McCarthy,

The same acquisitive projects also brought back living species, and these were often regarded as scientific curiosities. Such animals were frequently prized for their performance of human-like traits. 'Happy Jerry', for instance, was (it would seem) an orangutan exhibited in 1829, of which the advertisement claimed 'adequate description is impossible':

> It is of amazing size and strength, and seems endowed with a greater portion of intellect than almost any Animal of the Brute Creation. The Head is very large, and the Hair on the Forehead rising to a peak; the Nose, Forehead, and Chin, a beautiful red colour; the Cheeks, which are very prominent, a pale blue, with a Beard of light orange; the colour of the Body, a speckled brown; the Hands and Arms perfectly human. The tricks it has been taught, such as smoking a pipe, &c. which it does with a degree of elegance worthy any Divan, is truly remarkable. We can with perfect confidence assert, that an Animal so highly curious, has not been seen for a length of time.[86]

The last sentence of this passage is stranger than it appears on first glance, and revealing of the ways in which writing permits us to imagine, or at least entertain the possibility of, animals as having inner lives of their own. For 'an Animal so highly curious' describes both a creature which appears unusual to humans, and one that is itself capable of inquisitiveness. An 'Animal so highly curious' might even serve double duty as a description of humans themselves.[87] Similarly, an 1859 review of a 'performing and talking' seal thumbed its nose at Buffon, assuring potential patrons that the eminent French naturalist 'never prepared us to expect that a Fish could be endowed with intelligence—much less would he have presumed to assert that it could be taught in obedience to the will of its keeper to play fantastic tricks'.[88] That the seal was advertised as a fish as late as 1859 suggests that its creator had both eyes on the box office.[89]

The Crystal Palace Dinosaurs: The Story of the World's First Prehistorical Sculptures (London: Crystal Palace Foundation, 1994).

[86] http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/pdf/tmp_3259031597399867282.pdf. Accessed 3 January 2018.

[87] Edgar Allan Poe famously explored this ambiguity in his short story 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (1841), which stressed the uncanny resemblances between an orangutan and the man he was mistakenly assumed to be.

[88] *The Performing and Talking Fish: Opinions of the London Press* (London: R.S. Francis, 1859), p. 1.

[89] The circus entrepreneur P.T. Barnum famously had even less interest in biological truth, for his famous

Of course, the animals that seemed closest of all to humans were pets, and although the practice of bourgeois petkeeping had its genesis in the eighteenth century, it was not until around the mid-nineteenth century that the practice was widely normalised.[90] By 1875, a writer in the *Saturday Review* could describe petkeeping as a paradigmatically human activity: 'Man has been distinguished from brutes as a cooking animal. But he has another characteristic almost equally distinctive. He keeps pets.'[91] Pets were 'found in the homes of people of all classes', writes Hilda Kean, from 'the lowly beneficiaries of Mayhew's cats' and dogs' meat man [to] partakers of the royally approved Spratt's beetroot-filled biscuits, as fed to Queen Victoria's treasured Pomeranians'.[92] Voluntary cohabitation with other animals was part of the domestic landscape of Victorian Britain.[93] These creatures were not all cats and dogs, however, and many other cohabitants were present though not necessarily welcome. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's famous, or rather infamous, menagerie at Tudor House in Chelsea, for instance, according to his brother William Michael, contained:

> The Pomeranian puppy named Punch, a grand Irish deerhound named Wolf, a barn-owl named Jessie, another owl named Bobby […] rabbits, dormice, hedgehogs, two successive wombats, a Canadian marmot or woodchuck, an ordinary marmot, armadillos, kangaroos, a deer, a white mouse with her brood, a racoon, squirrels, a jackdaw, laughing jackasses, ungulated grass parakeets, a talking grey parrot, a raven, chameleons, green lizards and Japanese salamanders.

'Feejee Mermaid' hoax has gone down in popular lore. On mermaid hoaxes in the nineteenth century, including the 'Feejee Mermaid', see Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, pp. 178-82; and Jan Bondeson, *The Feejee Mermaid and Other Essays in Natural and Unnatural History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 36-63.

[90] On the history of pets in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*; and Ingrid H. Tague, *Animal Companions: Pets and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015).

[91] 'Pets', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 4 December 1875, 709.

[92] Animal Rights, p. 98.

[93] Kean, *Animal Rights*, pp. 80-82; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, pp. 96-98.

'Persons who are familiar with the management of pets will easily believe that several of these animals came to a bad end', he drily and truthfully observed.[94] Whereas Rossetti could not help but acquire inhabitants for his Tudor House menagerie, as the narrator of *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840-41) acknowledges early on in the publication of Dickens's work, whether you liked it or not, living in any property invariably meant sharing it with other creatures:

> The moth and spider are my constant tenants; for in my house the one basks in his long sleep, and the other plies his busy loom secure and undisturbed. I have a pleasure in thinking on a summer's day how many butterflies have sprung for the first time into light and sunshine from some dark corner of these old walls.[95]

In *Nicholas Nickleby*, the fowls living in certain parts of London mimic aspects of their surroundings, 'jerking their bodies hither and thither with a gait which none but town fowls are ever seen to adopt, […] perfectly in keeping with the crazy habitations of their owners'—they have become a living manifestation of their habitat.[96] Dickens would make this point in later works, too: the spiders in Mrs Pipchin's school are 'uncommonly prolific', and the earwigs even more so;[97] while Satis House in *Great Expectations* features a 'community' of 'speckle-legged spiders with blotchy bodies', and 'ponderous elderly' beetles.[98]

Citizens of Britain, particularly London, shared not only their homes but also the streets with other animals. The horrors of the meat markets of central London have been well documented,[99] while the extent of the crowding in metropolitan thoroughfares on market day

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[94] William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters with a Memoir*, 2 vols (London: Ellis, 1895), I, pp. 251-54. Cited in Jan Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), pp. 266-67.

[95] *Master Humphrey's Clock and A Child's History of England*, ed. Derek Hudson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 6.

[96] *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. Dame Sybil Thorndike (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 160.

[97] *Dombey and Son*, ed. Alan Horsman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 101.

[98] *Great Expectations*, ed. Margaret Cardwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 84-85.

[99] Smithfield was at the centre of a heated debate about sanitation, animal welfare, and public order until its removal. For histories of the debate, see Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights*, pp. 39-69; Robyn S. Metcalfe, *Meat, Commerce and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012); Hannah Velten, *Beastly London*, pp. 15-27; and Ted Geier, *Meat Markets: The Cultural History of Bloody London* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 77-118.

can perhaps be glimpsed in the fact that thousands of livestock were imported from the continent each week by mid-century, as domestic production struggled to meet the demands of consumers. *The Morning Chronicle*, along with other newspapers, featured weekly reports on the 'London Markets' detailing exactly the number of animals imported. One, in October 1857, reported with satisfaction that 'arrivals of Cattle and Sheep into the port of London from the Continent during the past week have been very large. The Custom-house return gives an entry of 1,555 Oxen and Cows, 566 Calves, 211 Pigs, and 7,065 Sheep, making a total of 9,397 head against 6,641 at the corresponding period of last year'. This fits with the broader pattern in the consumption of animal bodies during the nineteenth century. Annual meat consumption in London doubled from 1750 to 1850, in parallel with an increasing population, and 'to supply this market about 140,000 cattle and 1 million sheep were needed in 1810; by 1828 this had risen to 150,000 cattle and 1.5 million sheep and by 1853, cattle numbers had risen to 277,000 head and sheep to 1.6 million head'.[100] All of these animals came into London, to be sold and slaughtered at the metropolitan meat markets. The bewildering press of bodies, smells, and sounds was a unique part of life in London—'the only city in Europe, and probably the world, with a livestock market [...] and thousands of slaughterhouses at its centre'.[101] Both Oliver Twist and Pip pass through the market in Dickens's novels, and in so doing it is as though Dickens sees Smithfield as part of the beating heart of London: a form of (sticky) baptism through which new arrivals to the city must pass. Indeed, being both centrally located and unmissable (visually, aurally, and olfactorily), Smithfield was part of London's core identity, until it was ordered to be relocated to the less densely-populated Islington, five miles from the city centre, by the Smithfield Market Removal Act of 1851.[102] Contemporary accounts of it

[100] *The Morning Chronicle*, 27 October 1857, 14.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Hannah Velten, *Beastly London*, p. 25. Smithfield was at the centre of a heated debate about sanitation, animal welfare, and public order until its removal. For histories of the debate, see Kean, *Animal Rights*, pp. 39-69; Robyn S. Metcalfe, *Meat, Commerce and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012); Velten, *Beastly London*, pp. 15-27; and Ted Geier, *Meat Markets: The Cultural*

stand as vivid reminders of the living (and dying) material presence of other animals in Victorian London.

Animals were brought to Smithfield to be turned into food—and, as food, fuel, and labour, their bodies kept the nation running in a less visible capacity than their exhibition for entertainment. A standard middle-class breakfast, Eileen White notes, could have included 'broiled fish, mutton chops and rumpsteaks, kidneys, sausages, bacon, ham, poached and boiled eggs, omelettes', and more.[103] Meanwhile, in the first half of the century, sperm whale oil was a vital source of fuel for the burgeoning fires of industrialisation,[104] one of the animal products—including beeswax and tallow—that illuminated and fuelled Victorian society.

Bear- and bull-baiting had been outlawed by the Martin Act of 1822, after two decades of campaigning, but, by the beginning of the Victorian era, other, less conspicuous blood-sports such as dog-fighting, rat-killing, and cock-fighting were easily found.[105] The young Bob Jakin and Tom Tulliver, in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), for instance, look forward to the day when they can own a really good 'rot-catcher' of a dog.[106] And, in *London Labour and the London Poor*, Mayhew included a report on 'A Night at Rat-Killing' in the parlour of London inn.[107] The popularity of the hunting season on British estates at home and abroad is almost too

History of Bloody London (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 77-118.

[103] 'First Things First: The Great British Breakfast', in *Eating with the Victorians*, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), 1-31 (pp. 5-6).

[104] One reviewer of Thomas Beale's popular *Natural History of the Sperm Whale, to which is added a Sketch of a South-Sea Whaling Voyage* (1839), for instance, affirmed that, while Britain had recently imported over seven-thousand imperial tons of sperm oil in one year (1836), the 'importance of the southern whale fishery […] has never been duly appreciated; it is not generally known'. 'The Sperm Whale and South-Sea Whale Fishery', *The London Saturday Journal* 2.29 (1839), p. 35. Whales and whaling spurred the Victorian imagination quite considerably around the middle of the century. On this, see William Scoresby's *The Arctic Regions: Their Situation, Appearances, Climate, and Zoology* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1839), and *The Northern Whale-Fishery* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1849); as well as a number of review articles in periodicals. On the reception of *Moby-Dick*, and its relation to this discourse, see also, Philip Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 99-133.

[105] Ritvo has shown in *The Animal Estate* how the strategies of anti-cruelty organisations relied heavily on a demonization of both the working class and the aristocracy—the one as barbarous, brutish, and needful of stern guidance, and the other dissolute, callous, and prone to cruel extravagance (pp. 125-203).

[106] *The Mill on the Floss*, ed. Gordon S. Haught (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 43.

[107] *London Labour and the London Poor*, III, pp. 1-3.

familiar to warrant mention.[108] Less bloody sports also provided entertainment: horse racing and greyhound racing were so popular as to provoke one newspaper to eulogise the sport as 'essentially English, of which the Englishman is passionately fond, and for which, once a year at least […] he is content almost to lose his ordinary reason for a time'.[109]

Horses were put to work in the city, as well as on the race-track. Along with dogs, and even goats,[110] they were used to pull London's carts, chaises, carriages, and omnibuses, keeping its inhabitants, even the country as a whole, moving. By 1861, Mayhew estimated that around 25,000 horses were employed every day just to pull omnibuses in the capital.[111] Without the extraordinary amount of animal labour employed in nineteenth-century Britain, coal could not have been unloaded and transported around the country in the quantity, and at the pace, required by burgeoning industrialisation. (Paradoxically, the sheer number of animals required to perform these jobs could also bring the city to a standstill. 'Nothing more forcibly strikes the mind of a stranger on his first visit to the metropolis', opined an 1841 article in *The London Saturday Journal*, 'than the immense number of vehicles he sees plying in all directions in the leading streets. […] Sometimes the vehicles are so densely wedged together, that if one could walk on horses' backs, and on the tops of waggons, omnibuses, coaches, cabs, and so forth, without the risk of slipping his foot, he might proceed two or three hundred yards without once touching the causeway'.)[112]

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[108] The logician W.S. Jevons makes this point in 'Cruelty to Animals—A Study in Sociology', *Fortnightly Review*, 19 (May 1876), 673-74, noting that 'an almost infinite amount of needless pain is inflicted on the lower animals every day'.

[109] 'Annals of the Turf', *The Era*, 5 April 1863 (London).

[110] Hannah Velten, *Beastly London*, p. 63.

[111] *London Labour and the London Poor,* II, p. 185.

[112] 'London Vehicles, by the Author of "Random Recollections," etc: No. I. – Omnibuses', *The London Saturday Journal*, 23 January 1841, pp. 40-41, p. 40. Horse-drawn carriages were ubiquitous: as Jonathan H. Grossman has pointed out, the first piece of quoted dialogue in Dickens's first novel is Pickwick's cry for a 'cab!', *Dickens's Networks: Public Transport and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 86. See also, Dickens, 'Hackney Coach Stands', *Sketches by Boz*, ed. Dennis Walder (London: Penguin, 1995 [1836]), p. 104.

Even in the face of 'the dramatic transition from horse to steam power in the first half of the nineteenth century', equines remained a vital part of the metropolitan landscape throughout the century.[113] The shift from stage-coaches to the 'iron horse' revolutionised transportation around the country and even the globe, but, as Velten notes, 'the coming of the railways did not decrease the need for horse-drawn transport; quite the reverse'.[114] Railway companies kept thousands of horses for haulage; they pulled trams and omnibuses, as well as cabriolets; draught horses shifted freight for brewers, colliers, and rubbish disposal; and the finest studs featured in the fashionable parades of men and women in Hyde Park.[115]

As early as the 1820s, though, Thomas De Quincey expressed concern at the instrumentalisation of other animals in the city.

> It ought not to be left to a man's interest merely to protect the animals in his power. Dogs are no longer worked in the way they were, although the change must have arbitrarily robbed many poor men of half their bread. But in a case as valuable as that of the horse, it has been known that a man has incurred the total ruin of a series of horses against even his own gain or self-interest. There ought to be a *custos veteranorum*, a keeper and protector of the poor brutes who are brought within the pale of social use and service. The difficulty, you say! Legislation has met and dealt effectively with far more complicated and minute matters than that. For, after all, consider how few of the brute creation on any wide and permanent scale are brought into the scheme of human life. Some birds as food, some fishes as ditto; beeves as food and sometimes as appliers of strength; horses in both characters. These with elephants and camels, mules, asses, goats, dogs, and sheep, cats and rabbits, gold-fishes and singing-birds, really compose the whole of our animal equipage harnessed to the car of human life.[116]

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[113] Gina M. Dorré, *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 16. This change was famously characterised by Thackeray: 'It was only yesterday; but what a gulph between now and then! *Then* was the old world. Stage-coaches, more or less swift, riding-horses, pack-horses, highwaymen, […] all these belong to the old period. […] But your railroad starts the new era, 'De Juventute', *Roundabout Papers* (New York: Harper, 1863), pp. 96-97.

[114] Velten, *Beastly London*, p. 54.

[115] For a depiction of a related phenomenon in France, see Rosa Bonheur's painting *The Horse Fair*, 1852-55, oil on canvas, 244.5 x 506.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[116] *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* 21 vols, ed. Grevel Lindop (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), XXI, p. 135.

As the century progressed, more people began to notice the attendant cruelty visited on the 'animal equipage' of modern life.[117] The cost of their utility and pliability was recounted, famously, in Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877). There, the miserable fate that awaited most working horses is told through first-person narrative, drawing on the long tradition of it-narratives and animal autobiographies.[118] It differs from its predecessors, though, in the way its portrayal of the injustices visited on these creatures politicises the genre, turning to its own use the tendency of first-person narratives to engender identification with the narrator. Horses continued to work in London up till the second world war,[119] but from the middle of the nineteenth century there was a dawning awareness that, for all the mobility they enabled for humans, the trajectory of urban horses' lives was usually quietly and inexorably tragic.[120]

Life for humans in the Victorian period was thus characterised both by encounters with a newly-expanded animal world, and by a growing sense that there were elements of commonality or overlap between themselves and these creatures. In the next section, I show that this sense was also reflected in the language of the period: both in everyday speech and linguistic science.

Animals in Language

This section is comprised of two parts: the first outlines the significance of animals and animality to figurative language in the period; and the second illustrates how the new science of comparative philology was simultaneously redefining language as inhuman.

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[117] In 1864, for instance, an article in the *Edinburgh Review* noted that 'in no part of the world is the horse put to such varied uses both for profit and amusement', 'English Horses', *Edinburgh Review* 120, July 1864, p. 114. Cited in Dorré, *Cult of the Horse*, p. 18.

[118] On sympathetic imaginings of the life of horses, see Donald, *Picturing Animals*, pp. 199-232.

[119] *Beastly London*, p. 81.

[120] Ibid., pp. 51-52; Dorré, *Cult of the Horse*, p. 17.

The discourse of animality was a key part in the colloquial speech of the long nineteenth century. For example, the *OED* lists the first recorded usage of the following words and phrases as occurring in the nineteenth century: beetle ('to hang threateningly', 1858); dog-eat-dog ('ruthlessly competitive', 1822); elephantine ('resembling an elephant in action or manner; clumsy, unwieldy', 1826—as we will see in chapter two, this word is used by Dickens at the start of *Bleak House* [1853]); outfox ('to outdo in cunning', 1872); gammon ('manifestly false talk or ideas', 1805); and lousy ('swarming' or 'abundantly supplied with', originally U.S., 1843). And, of course, many more were in daily use: bird's-eye, henpecked, crowed, dog-tired, aped. Indeed, a list of animal-based metaphors, proverbs, and figures of speech would look something like an old-fashioned stock-market ticker-tape, churning out example after example. Testament to this variety, some writers seized upon this discursive and verbal plenitude as a ground of play. The poetry of Thomas Hood, in particular, revels in the multiple cohabiting senses of animal-words.[121] His 'Ode to Richard Martin, Esquire' is a good example of this. Hood's subject was the MP for Galway, and a prominent advocate of animal welfare: he was the author of the Martin Act of 1822, which prohibited cruelty to cattle and livestock. According to Hood's wordplay, 'no one sings the man | That, like a pelican, | Nourishes Pity with his tender *Bill!*'. Nor 'when the clown uplifts | His hand against the sparrow's nest, to *grab* it— | He shall not harm the *Martins* and the *Swifts!*'. Tragically, as well, there is no '*Horse-pital*' for wounded equines till, thanks to the Martin Act, 'Man and Horse go half and half, | As if their griefs met in a common *Centaur!*'.[122] (We might be reminded of a moment in *Bleak House*, where Jo the Sweeper asks to be taken to a 'horsepittle'.)[123]

[121] In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida coined a punning, compound term in French to denote both the differences and points of convergence between actual, physical animals, and their lexical embodiments on the page: *animots* (pp. 39-41).

[122] *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hood*, ed. Douglas Jerrold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), pp. 9-10.

[123] *Bleak House*, ed. Osbert Sitwell (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 364.

In combination with these 'half and half' creatures, Hood's playfulness points towards an important generic tradition that has always been centrally interested in representational slippages between humans and other animals: the grotesque. As it had been since the early modern period, the grotesque occupied an important but liminal place in the literary and artistic productions of the nineteenth century. Not only Thomas Hood, but also Thomas Lovell Beddoes, Jean-Jacques Grandville, H.G. Wells, and Gustave Doré, among others, incorporated the grotesque into their work. In the third volume of *Modern Painters*, John Ruskin's influential theorisation of the grotesque reframed its value by defining it as a vehicle for the representation of intuitive association, raising its most impressive achievements from a mere 'sportive' form of intellectual drollery to the 'expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself'.[124] Like Hood's punning wordplay, which delights in the abruptly-expressed connections of distinct categories and objects, the grotesque 'put[s] things into play', 'jumbling their constituent parts and allowing alien things to stick'.[125] In its capacity, therefore, to blur established cultural boundaries, to 'compromis[e] […] what is "known" or what is "proper" or "normal"',[126] the grotesque offers a fertile corpus of literary texts and artworks for thinking through moments of overlap or interpenetration between humans and other animals. However, for the purposes of this thesis, which is interested in the characteristics of the period from around 1830 to 1870, the long history of the grotesque (which begins around 1500) makes it less suitable than related genres, such as nonsense or the fairy tale, that we can regard as peculiarly Victorian inventions or reinventions. With that in mind, the hybrid creatures of

[124] *The Works of John Ruskin*, V, pp. 133-34. All subsequent references are to this edition.
[125] Frances S. Connelly, *The Grotesque in Western Art and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 2, 8.
[126] Ibid., p. 2.

Beddoes, Grandville, and the like, have not found a place in this study, despite the anarchic, interspecific energies of their verbal and pictorial images.

Animals have remained vital parts of our figurative speech: 'vital' in the sense of important, but also in the sense of life-giving. Histories of metaphor, for example, frequently offer animal figures as paradigmatic metaphors,[127] as John Berger did explicitly when he opined that 'it is not unreasonable to suppose that the first metaphor was animal'.[128] This is probably because metaphor is one way of getting a handle on things we do not know, that we cannot articulate, or that are beyond our control. It is as though, in incorporating other life forms into our expression, we are thereby inspiriting our own speech with that life and vigour, like Renfield's consumption of spiders in *Dracula*; as Akira Mizuta Lippit puts it, animal metaphors 'transport to language, breathe into language, the vitality of another life, another expression: animal and metaphor, a metaphor made flesh, a living metaphor'.[129] As well as *giving* life, however, in the Victorian period in particular the rhetoric of animality also helped people to *order* it. Invoking other animals was very often a way of establishing clear boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable realms of thought or behaviour. The overcrowded tenements of the metropolis, for instance, particularly the parts that were regarded as incubators of criminality and depravity, were frequently referred to as rookeries, warrens, dens, or nests. Thomas Beames, a clergyman and campaigner for social reform, wrote an account of these dwellings in *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present, and Prospective* (1850). In locations like Jacob's Island, and Saffron Hill, he suggested, there were 'human masses pent up, crowded, crammed into courts and allies; here, as by a fatal attraction, opposite houses grow together at

[127] George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 166-81; David Punter, *Metaphor* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 2.
[128] *Why Look at Animals?* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 16.
[129] *Electric Animal: Towards a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 165.

the top […]; not each floor, but each room tenanted by a family'.[130] Tucked away in the labyrinthine heart of the city, it took writers like Beames and, more prominently, Henry Mayhew and Dickens to draw back the curtain and reveal the conditions in which one of Disraeli's 'Two Nations' lived. Although, as Beames put it, rookeries were isolated colonies of suffering in a bustling capital city, 'girdled round with certain barriers',[131] it was the very lack of boundaries within the rookeries that gave most cause for concern, with their inhabitants being 'thrown together without distinction of sex or age'.[132] As we will see in chapter two, this was a frequently addressed worry of middle-class social reformers.

Beames's use of the term 'rookeries'—and not only his: the word was ubiquitous in discussions of urban life in the century—directly incorporates its avian origin. 'Doubtless', he says, 'there is some analogy between these pauper colonies and the nests of birds from whom they take their name'.[133] This resembles another animal word used to police boundaries of propriety in the period: like 'rookeries', the word 'beast' hovered between the literal and the figurative, and marked boundaries between forms of being and forms of behaviour. Excessive or deviant sexuality was frequently termed 'beastly' or the 'beast'.[134] The word's synonymous propinquity to 'savage' also drew racial boundaries in imperialist and colonial discourse, similarly to how, at the turn of the twentieth century in North America, the discourse of beastliness was also used to buttress and police racial divisions.[135]

One more example will suffice to show the centrality of representations of animals to forms of social order in nineteenth-century Britain. Lions, both literary and British, were a familiar feature of drawing rooms and newspapers, as well as a prominent inhabitant of the

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[130] *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present, and Prospective* (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1850), pp. 2-3.
[131] Ibid., p. 4.
[132] Ibid., p. 3.
[133] Ibid., p. 2.
[134] Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885-1914* (London: Penguin, 1995); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 182-212.
[135] Lundblad, *The Birth of the Jungle*, pp. 121-56.

period's figurative menagerie. A 'literary lion' described a celebrity author, and the phrase was ubiquitous in reports of London Society. In *Aurora Leigh* (1856), for instance, Lady Waldemar reassures the titular protagonist that her intentions are more honourable than mere 'lion-hunting':

> naturally you think
> I've come here, as the lion-hunters go
> To deserts, to secure you with a trap
> For exhibition in my drawing-rooms
> On zoologic soirées? Not in the least.[136]

Dickens had used the same trope in 1837 as a comic pivot for a short piece entitled 'Some Particulars Concerning a Lion', in which the 'zoological' and the 'literary' varieties are compared and contrasted, with a decided preference stated for the latter by virtue of the species' reliable willingness to perform on demand.[137] This trope was also featured in Henry James's short story, 'The Death of the Lion', in which the eponymous author, Neil Paraday, is collected into one Mrs Wimbush's 'universal menagerie', where 'the animals rub shoulders freely with the spectators and the lions sit down for whole evenings with the lambs'.[138] By 1870, both the metaphor and the individuals described by it were familiar to the point of tedium: *The Saturday Review* could wearily assert, in an article titled 'Lions and Lion-Hunters', that although 'Society is a little tired of lions, it must be owned', 'it is hard to imagine how society is to be carried on without them'.[139]

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[136] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, ed. Margaret Reynolds (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994), pp. 276-77.
[137] 'Boz', 'Stray Chapters: II. Some Particulars Concerning a Lion', *Bentley's Miscellany* 1, January 1837, 515-18.
[138] Henry James, *Selected Tales*, ed. John Lyon (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 267.
[139] Anonymous, 'Lions and Lion-Hunters', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 11 June 1870, 763-64 (p. 763).



Figure 1. 'The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger', Punch, *22 August 1857. Source: https://www.archimaera.de/2007/1/1207/Spiegel_04.html/fullscreen. Accessed 27 March 2018.*

The image above indicates the other main metaphorical meaning of lions in the period: that is, as a symbol of Britain itself. Expressing a desire for a swift and crushing response to the violence of the Indian Mutiny in 1857, this image was one of many similar ones produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which represented the nation as a lion.[140] The association is, by now, almost too obvious to remark upon—but it is, in one sense, notable that Britain's global imperial reach resulted in the adoption of a symbolic national animal that was not indigenous to the country (unlike, for instance, the Russian Bear, or French Cockerel).[141]

[140] This image represents one of two stereotypical positions of lions in nineteenth-century art. This one derives from the earlier lion paintings of George Stubbs, such as *Horse Attacked by a Lion* (c. 1762) and *A Lion Seizing a Horse* (c. 1763-64). In these images the lion is seen as a violent predator. In the other tradition, lions were depicted as magnanimous and noble, a kind of resting power; such as Edwin Landseer's *Study of a Lion* (c. 1862), his Trafalgar Square lions for Nelson's Column, or John Frederick Lewis's *Head of a Lion* (1824). These two strands obviously enabled a national self-image at once benign, yet powerful if roused. On Stubbs's lion paintings, see Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain 1750-1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 71-74.

[141] On the British Lion abroad, we might think about the recurrent metaphorical sparring between the British Martin Chuzzlewit and Mark Tapley, and the Americans encountered by them during their sojourn in the United States.

This period was not alone in conferring a special and hefty metaphorical burden on lions—Deirdre Jackson has aptly named the lion 'the King of Clichés'[142]—but we should note that its use to figure both a nation and its most influential people converged in suggestive ways with the increasing visibility, presence, and availability of exotic animals in Britain. The image below offers an icon of this, with international relations refigured as a menagerie of diverse creatures (with the British Lion metaphorically and pictorially on top, of course).

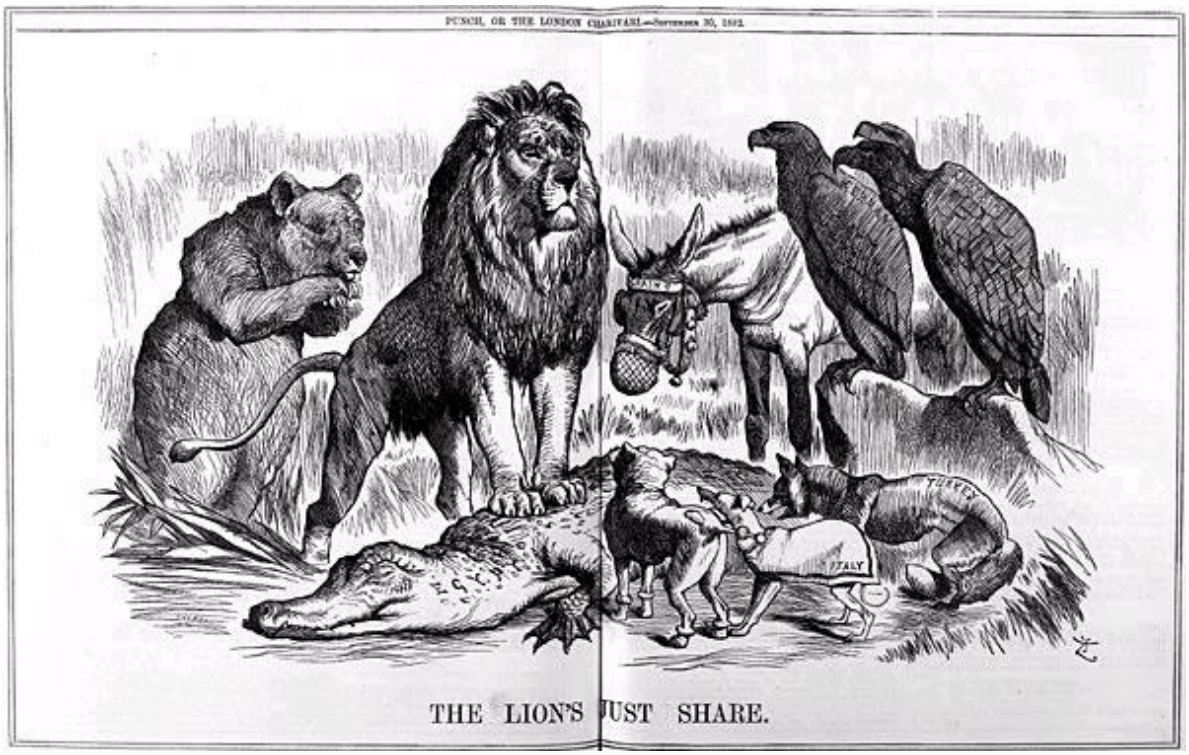


Figure 2. 'The Lion's Just Share', Punch, *30 September 1882. Source: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/battles/egypt/images/lion.jpg. Accessed 28 March 2018.*

Animality inhabited the language of Victorian Britain, as it has done in every other age. However, during the years covered by this thesis, the new science of comparative philology also began to inspire language with another kind of life. This scientific revolution in the understanding of language was instituted in the first half of the century by the importation of

[142] *Lion* (London: Reaktion, 2010), p. 7.

the ‘new philology’ from the continent. In the 1830s, led by John Kemble and Benjamin Thorpe, the ‘old philology’, whose methods had been based on the assumption that thought and language were inextricably linked, was forced to give way to the ‘new’ or ‘comparative’ philology, which posited language as a separate entity subject to its own inexorable laws. The former ‘was based on the simple consideration that if discourse is the image of thought and if thought is subject to the laws of reason, then discourse itself must reveal and illustrate the laws of reason’. The latter contended that ‘the study of language was as scientific as natural history, and that language was a sort of substance, subject to invariable laws, which once established had the same general validity and certainty as those that governed the “hidden springs” of matter and motion’.[143] The ‘old’ view clung to a non-arbitrary relation between word, world, and thought; the ‘new’ method dislocated this triad, showing them to be, in fact, eminently extricable. As Richard Garnett put it, ‘the knowledge of words is, in its full and true acceptation, the knowledge of things’;[144] in order to become an object of empirical study, language had to be unmoored from the vagaries of subjectivity and culture and constitute an object of study similar to any other natural phenomenon.

The conception of language had to change, therefore, from a fixed and stable arrangement of words, the history of which could be traced back logically through recognisable meanings and senses, to the idea of a ‘living form’, whose existence and development was outside of human control, and whose shifts were no longer sense-based and understandable, but arbitrary and phonetic.[145] Studies by Linda Dowling and Christine Ferguson, and, more recently, Will Abberley, have shown how this new sense of the historical, border-hopping,

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[143] Hans Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780-1860* (London: Athlone, 1983 [1967]), pp. 14, 201.
[144] *Philological Essays by the late Rev. Richard Garnett* (London, 1859), p. 296, cited in Aarsleff, p. 210.
[145] For histories of this shift and its relation to Victorian literature, see Isobel Armstrong, *Language as Living Form in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982); Linda Dowling, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 3-46; Christine Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006); and Will Abberley, *English Fiction and the Evolution of Language, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-21.

arbitrary nature of language generated different kinds of anxiety in Victorian writers: fears of cultural degeneration, of 'an order of meaning completely detached from the representational order',[146] of human language as an evolutionary accident rather than a divine gift. These fears, of course, increased the attention paid to the relations between humanity and human language. Even if Thomas Huxley could insist on 'speech as the great barrier between humans and other animals',[147] and even if, for many, 'language somehow remained unchanged in its power to guarantee human identity and value',[148] Victorian literature, and fiction in particular, continued to challenge 'the division between mute, instinctive beasts and thinking, symbolic humans'.[149] As Dowling notes, 'Linguistic science thus seemed not simply to make words independent of their meanings, but as it repelled the a priori speculations of human reason, seemed to make language disturbingly independent of man as well'.[150]

These developments in linguistics and philology were closely related to developments in natural history, for language plays an important but ambiguous role in classification, as Michel Foucault demonstrated in his seminal *Les mots et les choses* (published in English as *The Order of Things*). For Foucault, natural history was made possible by a changing relation between things and words. That is, the principles of observation and induction that structured Enlightenment natural science presupposed that natural 'things' had an existence that was completely separated from verbal representations of them. 'Natural history […] is the space opened up in representation by an analysis which is anticipating the possibility of naming'.[151] It 'exists as a task only in so far as things and language happen to be separate'—it is an act of translation.[152] This was one of the shifts inaugurated by the 'Classical' era of knowledge,

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[146] Dowling, *Language and Decadence*, p. 62.
[147] Abberley, *English Fiction and the Evolution of Language*, p. 74.
[148] Linda Dowling, 'Victorian Oxford and the Science of Language', *PMLA* 97.2 (1982), 160-78 (p. 161).
[149] Abberley, *English Fiction and the Evolution of Language*, p. 75.
[150] *Language and Decadence*, p. 63.
[151] *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002 [English trans. 1970, French 1966]), p. 141.
[152] Ibid., p. 144.

broadly corresponding to the Enlightenment, as Foucault saw it. Whereas previously the natural world had borne the accumulated sediment of human culture as part of its own history, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century naturalists now separated what had been said about an entity from the material facts of its existence.

> Until the mid-seventeenth century, the historian's task was to establish the great compilation of documents and signs – of everything, throughout the world, that might form a mark, as it were. It was the historian's responsibility to restore to language all the words that had been buried.[153]

A condition of the knowledge that natural history and classification granted was the separation of things from words; the latter became a conceptual grid that could be overlaid on an immanent material world. This is the conceptual relation between words and animals (and other 'natural things') out of which the science of the early nineteenth century, particularly Natural Theology, grew. Foucault identified the beginning of the nineteenth century as the start of the 'Modern' era, in which the focus shifted (at least in terms of natural history) from constructing an orderly arrangement in totality of the 'teeming profusion' of life, to the internal organisation of individual beings, their 'organic structure'.[154] This is another description of the nineteenth-century shift in *Weltanschauung* from immutable species and natural systems to a world in flux governed by immutable laws, described earlier in this introduction. This will be particularly relevant to the discussion of fairy tales in chapter four.

During the years circa 1830 to 1870 language itself was gradually redefined in terms of natural laws, and this is one of the developments that Foucault saw as rendering the Classical relation between language and nature impossible. Like natural objects, language too was governed by arbitrary and immutable laws. In this period, therefore, we can also see that the

[153] Ibid., p. 142.
[154] Ibid., p. 257.

separation of animals from the words designating them was, to an extent, indistinct. At the level of epistemology, language was increasingly naturalised (as history had been in the previous century);[155] and, at the level of discourse, speech continued to be vitalised by the representational and figurative presence of other animals.

In addition to the shifts instigated by comparative philology, Abberley, Ferguson, and Stephen G. Alter illustrate the ways in which writers influenced, and were influenced by, the emergence of evolutionary theory in conceptualising the development of human language.[156] In fact, traditional species *and* national identities seemed to many to be under threat in the shift from the 'old' to the 'new' philology, as the insights of linguistic and evolutionary science seeped into other areas of Victorian life. As Ferguson notes, 'Late Victorian anxieties about the "brutal" origin, nature, or future of language were exacerbated through the ease of their applicability to wider social debates about literacy, popular publishing, linguistic colonization, animal psychology, and class mobility'.[157] What is more, these developments in philology have gone on indirectly to condition the emergence of posthumanist thought in the twenty-first century—perhaps surprisingly but no less clearly. Organicist theories in the nineteenth century disentangled language and reason, and posited that it had evolved (and would continue to evolve) independent of human will or intervention. In effect, then, comparative philology enabled the emergence of Ferdinand de Saussure's synchronic comparative analysis, which, of course, in turn formed the basis of structuralist and poststructuralist approaches to language. This, then, goes some way towards explaining the shared emphasis on the impersonality of language in both Victorian philology and posthumanist theorist Cary Wolfe's work on animals and language.

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[155] Ibid., p. 142.
[156] *Darwin and the Linguistic Image: Language, Race, and Natural Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
[157] *Language, Science and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 3.

In Wolfe's seminal contribution to animal studies, *Animal Rites*, he emphasises how philosophical theories of language in the twentieth century must inevitably result in a conception of language itself as a 'trace beyond the human', as fundamentally *in*- or *a*human. In such a way, he argues, this fact determines the nature of the human as both itself and not itself:

> first, in evolutionary terms, as the outcome of processes and dynamics not specifically or even particularly human that remain sedimented and at work in the domain of human language broadly conceived; and second, in terms of how language is traced by the material contingency of its enunciation in and through the body, in its 'involuntary' kinesic and paralinguistic significations that speak in and through us in ways that the humanist subject of 'intention' and 'reflection' cannot master, ways that link us to a larger repertoire and history of signification not specifically human and yet intimately so.[158]

Wolfe means that language cannot be considered—as both philosophical history and conventional wisdom would have it—as the Rubicon separating humans from the nonhuman, because it can in no meaningful sense be defined as 'human' by any of the criteria (such as intention or reflection) that have historically been thought to define the human. Language exists independently of humanity and of individual humans, as an arbitrary evolutionary development and as a semiotic system that, through involuntary bodily and paralinguistic signification, 'is inherently open to the repudiation of itself'.[159]

These reflections raise a question: if language is not, strictly speaking, *human*, what was, or is, the taxonomic status of animals in literary texts? If animals are unable to re-present themselves in language, must we think of them always as exterior to it, or excluded by it? If so, we would therefore be led to think of representations of animals in literature as akin to representations of rocks or trees. Or, rather, might the creatureliness of human language prompt

[158] Wolfe, *Animal Rites*, p. 86.
[159] Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge: In Six of Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 16.

us to think of other animals as already inhabiting the arbitrary systems of signs we idealistically think of as human language? In which case, animal figures (as both representations and tropes) would represent a special, liminal case for literary studies—*living* in language without having, or constituting, *a* life in it. (I discuss this further in chapter three.) For this kind of attitude, we might note John Carey's admiration of some flies in *The Old Curiosity Shop*—'they are very Dickensian flies, and it took Dickens to notice them at all'—as though they were already there, and just waiting to be discovered.[160] This quotation registers the ambiguity just raised, epitomising the presence of animals in Victorian literature. At once imaginative inventions and always present figures waiting to be acknowledged, animals in these texts require a strange kind of double vision to be read and understood. They are part of the implied world of the realist novel, even when unseen, but they are also frequently glimpsed or named in the foregrounds and backgrounds of novels, poems, and plays (despite George Moore's protestations to the contrary).[161] Language's power both to index or represent worlds, and to conjure them up, is thus placed under particular scrutiny when we read *for* other animals.[162]

Intuitively, it seems clear that there are differences between representations of humans, other animals, and inanimate objects. One lives and re-presents that experience in human language; one lives, but cannot re-present itself; and another, as far as we know, has negligible experience of life at all. At the same time, though, there are categories within those categories. Human characters, for instance, as E.M. Forster noted, might be either 'flat' or 'round'.[163] As

[160] *Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens's Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 7.

[161] The Irish writer, in *Avowals*, complained that 'I do not remember any dog, cat, or parrot in *Vanity Fair*', and believed this to be a systemic malaise of the English novel to which Dickens was an exception (London: privately printed, 1919), pp. 81-82. Cited in Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 1.

[162] As a question of what we can consider to be *in* a text, these issues might also speak usefully to current debates in literary studies about 'surface reading' and the textual grounds of interpretation. For two foundational statements on surface reading, see Steven Best and Sharon Marcus's introduction to their special issue on the subject, *Representations* 108 (2009), and Heather Love, 'Close But Not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn', *NLH* 41.2 (2010), 371-91.

[163] *Aspects of the Novel*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Penguin, 2005 [1927]), p. 76.

influential as this elegant formulation has been, Forster's remarkable, but little-noticed, comment on the nature of animals in novels is perhaps even sharper:

> Since the actors in a story are usually human, it seemed convenient to entitle this aspect People. Other animals have been introduced, but with limited success, for we know too little so far about their psychology. There may be, probably will be, an alteration here in the future, comparable to the alteration in the novelist's rendering of savages in the past. The gulf that separates Man Friday from Batouala may be paralleled by the gulf that will separate Kipling's wolves from their literary descendants two hundred years hence, and we shall have animals who are neither symbolic, nor little men disguised, nor as four-legged tables moving, nor as painted scraps of paper that fly.[164]

The image of the descendants of Kipling's wolves evolving into higher, or at least more compelling, literary characters gives a new meaning to the idea of Literary Darwinism. But the marvellous taxonomy with which the quotation concludes illustrates that, even when there might be a consensus that an animal figure was incorporated as an 'alibi for some other theme',[165] our conceptual grasp of their identity within a text is hesitant.

In the next section, I outline the significance of questions of order and classification for literature itself, while reflecting on some methodological questions for this thesis.

Order and Arrangement

When confronted by the 'transcendent whole' described by Lewes, Victorian writers and scientists responded almost invariably by attending to its constituent parts. Faced by the rapidly expanding variety of life in an era of scientific progress and colonial expansion, scientists 'endeavored to make a sort of provisional order amid the chaos, after which succeeding labors might introduce better and better arrangements',[166] 'the purpose of [which] arrangement[s]

[164] Ibid., p. 54.
[165] Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), p. 5.
[166] Lewes, *Studies in Animal Life*, p. 87.

being to facilitate the operations of the mind'.[167] Not only the scientist: writers of all kinds endeavoured to make provisional orders and arrangements out of the abundance of animal life with which they were faced. Unlike scientific projects of classification, though, literary texts could embrace more provisionality in their arrangements. This is because at its core, as Gillian Beer notes, taxonomy contains within it a germ of imaginative sensibility. Like metaphor, it allows us to construct surprising but enlightening juxtapositions, 'to reach for relationships that aren't immediately obvious'.[168] Thus, while the writers I explore in this thesis all construct categories by which to order human and animal life, their arrangements lean towards the idiomatic rather than the systematic. Bearing the influence of the many scientific and cultural classifications produced circa 1830 to 1870, works of imaginative literature also diverge from these discourses, creating makeshift or demotic orders.

The word 'order', closely related as it is to ideas of classification and categorisation, requires a moment of reflection at this point. It can mean both the imposition of an artificial arrangement (putting in order) and the perception of an immanent composition (the natural order of things). These two senses therefore encompass both the intrinsic structure of a thing and the uses to which it is subject; it can refer to an activity or a pre-existing scheme. As such, the word's conceptual flexibility, we might even say its ambivalence, pays homage to the nature of the literary work itself, which exists independently of individuals and yet is also defined in and by its usage. Reflecting on the kinds of order coexisting in a novel or a poem can therefore attune us to moments of literary self-consciousness, images or verbal tics which afford glimpses of the writer's conception of their art and that artwork's relation to the world.

[167] Thomas Henry Huxley, *An Introduction to the Classification of Animals* (London: John Churchill & Sons, 1869), p. 1.
[168] Gillian Beer, *Alice in Space: The Sideways Victorian World of Lewis Carroll* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), p. 136.

‘Order’ thus behaves very similarly to a key word in the title of this thesis, ‘arrangements’, for which the *OED* gives the following definitions:

1. The action of arranging or disposing in order.
2. Arranged condition, orderly disposition, order.
3. Style or mode in which things are arranged.
4. *concr*. A structure or combination of things arranged in a particular way or for any purpose […].
5. *Music*. The adaptation of a composition for voices or instruments for which it was not originally written […].
6. a. A settlement of mutual relations or claims between parties […].
7. Disposition of measures for the accomplishment of a purpose; preparations for successful performance.

Like ‘order’, ‘arrangement’ can refer to the process of organising, the end result, or the style in which it is done. This flexibility helps to remind us of the double life of literary works themselves, which are, of course, both finished objects and ones that unfold during their telling or reading. The idea of arrangement as style, similarly, describes another important feature of literature. Its real advantage, however, is that the co-existing senses of the word encompass both artistic production (composition, style, coherence) and social being (a settlement of mutual relations, an orderly disposition). It alerts us to the possibility that literary arrangements may model, critique, or envisage alternatives to social ones.

Analogously, in the following chapters, I argue that in the literature of this period the unclear taxonomic identity of humans and other animals combined with a culturally pervasive classifying imagination to produce works that were peculiarly attuned to such overlaps between the literary and the social, political, or biological. The classifying imagination heightened writers’ awareness of the taxonomic in the literary, and the literary in the taxonomic, and other animals thereby became potent nexuses through which to explore this imbrication. This is in part because arrangement is a vital part of classification and taxonomy itself. In Ernst Mayr’s seminal history of biological thought, he identified the main two protocols of classification as

'microtaxonomy', 'by which kinds ("species") of organisms are recognized and delimited', and 'macrotaxonomy, which deals with the methods and principles by which kinds of organism are classified, that is, arranged in the form of classifications'.[169] The readings in this thesis develop this distinction into questions for literary works, recasting these two main questions of classification—'What is a species? What is relationship?'[170]—as three: What is it? What is it not? and How do these groups fit together?

In this transitional period for what became known as the biological sciences—in which one 'natural system' of classification was eventually eclipsed by another—the writers in this study frequently seem to be aware of the complexities described above: a sort of double consciousness, acknowledging that literary texts themselves both impose order and reveal it. These works accommodate different orders of being (humans, animals, ghosts, narrators, monsters), at the same time as different kinds of order are superimposed on top of each other. Social class, biological taxonomy, family groups, and generic conventions all give shape and sense to the multitudes of being in these texts.[171] Because the writers explored in this thesis also bear the traces of the classifying imagination, they help us see with special clarity some of the ways in which literary forms create their own 'provisional orders' and arrangements. The diversity of animal presence in these works is an important part of what makes these questions legible.

A further part of illuminating these questions involves a mode of reading that often focuses on the accretion of details and examples rather than on unambiguous contrasts or paradigmatic instances. This methodological decision bears out my emphasis on diversity and

[169] *The Growth of Biological Thought,* p. 146.
[170] Ibid., p. 144.
[171] The articulation of these thoughts has benefited from Caroline Levine's polemical work on form, in which she has stressed the 'structuring and patterning' work of the diverse form arranging our experience, as well as how they operate in different but overlapping ways across the aesthetic and the political. *Forms: Whole, Hierarchy, Rhythm, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 12.

pervasiveness, in that the sheer number of different animals in Victorian texts is a significant sign of the contemporaneous interest in classifying or sense-making frameworks for different forms of life. A more enumerative kind of reading is therefore necessary at times in this thesis, for the reason that, if one were to attempt to create a tally or table for the different animals that appeared in a novel by Dickens (for instance), the categories required by the text would be too inconsistent and ambiguous: individual species, taxonomic classes, pets, vermin, epithets and metaphorical turns of phrase.[172]

Throughout this thesis I usually adopt the formulation 'humans and other animals', or some variant thereof, for the same reason—that there is no one category termed 'animal' that could reasonably accommodate such a heterogeneous group of species.[173] Terminology, in this case, is a complicated issue with implications for the taxonomies we use as critics. As much important philosophical work on animals has argued since the 1970s, the conception of humans and animals as different in kind rather than in degree has licenced a wide variety of abuses and exploitations, and this conception is reinforced by the binary opposition set up in the phrase 'human and animal'.[174] Nonetheless, as Mary Midgley argues in her inexplicably overlooked study, *Beast and Man*, it is as false to suggest that there is no difference between humans and other animals as it is to suggest that there is one monolithic difference;[175] there are, rather,

[172] This method was prompted by Franco Moretti's data-driven approach to 'distant reading', particularly *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998) and *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 2005). What is most interesting, I think, is that when it came to animals this 'distant reading' prompted more questions than answers.

[173] On the importance of seeing *differences*, rather than a single difference, between humans and other animals, see Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), pp. 31-35.

[174] I am thinking here in particular of the following: Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Random House, 1975); Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), and *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), and *What is Posthumanism?* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); and the essays collected in Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, John McDowell, Ian Hacking, and Cary Wolfe, *Philosophy and Animal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[175] Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* (Brighton: Harvester, 1979).

many differences. The demands of stylistic economy necessitate that this complex issue be boiled down into a single phrase, and so when the term ‘animals’ appears it is often a form of shorthand for ‘other animals’. This is intended to signal a scepticism regarding claims of human exceptionalism (‘the human’ as over or above ‘the animal’), without denying that there are appreciable and variegated differences between humans and other species.

The questions raised by classification are, in the ways described above, analogous to some of those which we find in literary criticism. Finding a framework that is capable of making coherent sense out of a heterogeneous collection is the primary aim of the classifying imagination; it is also one way of describing the endeavour of literary criticism itself. This thesis explores this analogy, arguing that focusing on the taxonomic poetics of the nineteenth century can help us to understand how writers in this period envisioned their own place in the world, as well as to sharpen our own interpretive toolkit. I pay attention, therefore, not only to the content of debates in natural history, but also to the various forms their answers took in literary texts. Rather than tracing, for instance, the influence of natural theological doctrine of species immutability in Victorian literature, I argue that we can discern alternative answers to the foundational questions of taxonomy in the necessary aesthetic cohesiveness of literary works. Biological classification is rarely debated outright in Victorian literature (*The Water-Babies* [1863] is an exception), but the diversity of animal life in its works is analogous to the variety of fauna available—indeed, unavoidable—in Victorian Britain. Because writers are always faced with the need for unity *and* differentiation, Victorian novels and poems necessarily construct their own forms of order and arrangement with regard to humans and other animals.

All societies taxonomise the natural world, as a way of ordering the experience of phenomena that are beyond human control, although the classifications that societies impose on these phenomena tend to say more about the societies themselves than they do about the

ostensibly external facts of nature. This suggests a connection between scientific (or indeed lay) taxonomies and other artificial frameworks, and therefore also between scientific taxonomies and aesthetic objects. Works of literature and taxonomies alike organise a multiplicity of experiential facts into an artificially constructed system of parts. This may sound like a depressingly clinical definition of works such as *In Memoriam* or *David Copperfield* (published as single volumes in 1850), but the peculiarly fecund classifying imagination underwriting Victorian literature is diverse, resourceful, and, frequently, moving. The taxonomic imperative evident in these, and other such, efforts speaks to a desire simultaneously to identify and to discriminate between kinds; to see individuals as manifestations of a type, species, or genera, and to draw lines (separating and connecting) between them. This desire creates ambiguities, particularly for Victorian literature, in that to see someone or something as 'typical' could mean either to understand it as a manifestation of a general type, or to remark what is peculiar to that individual. These kinds of question are often staged by the *bildungsroman*. For example: does Jane Eyre rhyme with 'air' because it characterises her peculiar qualities (we could note that she is flighty, spiritually-orientated, and fascinated by birds); or because she represents an elemental purity, in opposition to Bertha Mason's fiery temper, Rochester's earthy language, and the inexorable will of St John *Rivers*? In their closer conceptual connection to the typifying idea of a species, other animals enabled writers to think through such complexities. The names of pets, for instance, are intended to distinguish individuals, and yet, very often, they are generic in both the proper and colloquial senses of the word: Tiger, Ginger, Vixen. Their incorporation into works of literature require an acknowledgement of the double sense of 'typical', prompting us to see those figures as both individuals and constituent members of a group. In this way, the classifying imagination of the nineteenth century is a democratic attempt to recognise and assimilate individuals into a wider

group or community, an *orderly* order of beings capable of accommodating both hierarchical arrangement and lateral affiliation.

It also speaks to the uncertain distinction between a natural and an artificial system of classification; between the discovery of a permanent truth or system, and the capricious imposition of a pattern of coincidental resemblance. In part, this is because language, especially that form of language we call literary, contains intrinsic capacities of structure and classification. Syntax and grammar are inherently taxonomic: they work by splitting up aggregate bodies of words and sentences into smaller constituent parts and categorising them according to function. Gillian Beer points out that the subject-verb-object structure inherent to English cannot help but construct implicit hierarchies of being, arguing that the English language is 'anthropomorphic by nature and anthropocentric in its assumptions'.[176] As the section above on comparative philology suggests, though, Beer's claim needs revising. The concept of language itself in this period changed to become 'disturbingly independent' of humanity; consequently, the conventions of grammar and diction thus imposed traditional hierarchies even as language itself was reconceptualised as subject to arbitrary and impersonal laws. Linguistic structure thus reveals both natural and artificial forms of order.[177]

Classificatory distinctions between beings are indeed part of the texture of language, for it matters if I refer to a person or animal as 'he', 'she', or 'it'. This is true in even more senses when we consider literary language, in its intensified use of genre, rhyme, metaphor, and repetition to create meaning. Each of these constructs meaning through its relation to, or distinction from, an existing group of similar marks, events, or effects, and our reading of literature is itself a process of making meaning through determining meaningful connections,

[176] *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1984]), pp. 44-47.
[177] I am grateful to Katharine Westwood for noticing this paradox.

as opposed to insignificant or incidental ones. Literary criticism involves the postulation, modification, confirmation and/or dissolution of taxonomies at both intuitive or unconscious and explicit or formulaic levels. (It is not only that, but this is a vital part of our experience as readers.) Language, as Donald Davie observed, is 'above all an instrument of articulation, a way of establishing relationships, like the harmonies of music and the equations of algebra',[178] and, for these relationships, harmonies, and equations to be meaningful, they must always have broader frames of reference rather than being isolated or idiosyncratic instances.

In the following chapters, the groups formed by these 'relationships, harmonies, and equations', which are in some sense internal to literary works, are like little prisms that reshape the world they represent. Unlike the classifications created by scientists, which are designed to reflect the natural world as it is, the categories constructed in and through works of literature enable thought experiments in which the world is recast or remoulded by a novel or poem, to varying degrees. Genre is perhaps the most familiar of these literary critical categories, and the ways in which different generic conventions reshape the world as it is represented in a literary work are familiar to most critics. We need to understand, though, that they do not do so by providing a set of stable pigeonholes to fill or identify; as Alastair Fowler notes, regarding genres, the distinctive characteristic of such categories is that 'they change'.[179] This is, in part, why Fowler suggests that 'genre is much less of a pigeonhole than a pigeon', for both are identifiable species comprised of many different individuals, subject to internal variation.[180] As is often the case with metaphors, there are deeper correspondences between the vehicle and the tenor than it might first appear: like pigeons, genres are partly naturally occurring phenomena and partly artificial constructions, and both are mutable. What is more, we can

[178] Donald Davie, *Articulate Energy: An Enquiry into the Syntax of English Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958 [1955]), p. 3.
[179] Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 18.
[180] Ibid., p. 37.

recognise individual instances of species or genres, but no two of these instances are identical. Indeed, like carrier pigeons, it might even be said that our familiarity with different genres, in establishing sets of rules and expectations, is a way for meaning to be communicated across physical and temporal distance.

Animals and Literary Studies

My focus on the literary nature of other animals distinguishes this thesis from influential earlier works in this field, which tended to stress a philosophical or ethical question of agency.[181] In such work, literary criticism has assumed the *a priori* ethical obligation to demonstrate that animals are not simply passive vehicles for human use, but rather leave traces of their agential capacity in literary texts that are the critic's responsibility to recover. Alternatively, it has assumed that failures to represent an animal 'as in itself it really is' are an imperative object of critique. Susan McHugh, for instance, in a seminal study of animals in twentieth-century narratives, admits the complexities of understanding agency through representations of agency, while still begging the questions behind this. Asking, for instance, 'How do animal agents appear in literature, and with what material effects on the worlds around them?', presupposes that (i) animal 'agents' *do* appear in literature, and (ii) these representations have 'material effects' on the world (the world of the text or the real world?), that moreover can be observed and understood.[182] The ethical approach which prioritises the political ramifications of a work ahead of the text itself furthermore implies that we need literature to reflect, bear witness to, or embody the fact that animals are active participants in the world. However, might we not

[181] Marion Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993); John Simons, *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Randy Malamud, *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Josephine Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care: On the Literary Treatment of Animals* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) are exemplary of this trend.

[182] *Animal Stories*, p. 2.

recognise this already without needing literature to confirm it? And, what is more, is literature the best vessel for that line of inquiry? Can a text ever really exhibit more than human representations of animal agency?

McHugh's study is attuned much more sharply than many to the fact that literature has very different styles and protocols of thought than do philosophy and science.[183] There is one moment of illumination in particular deriving from this which bears repeating: the 'metaphorical animal's ways of inhabiting literature without somehow being represented therein'.[184] McHugh's emphasis on representations of positive agency pulls her study away from the suggestive negativity of this statement, but three recent studies have begun to address the strange lacuna of, as it were, the textual ontology of other animals. Susan Crane's *Animal Encounters* (2013), Mario Ortiz-Robles's *Literature and Animal Studies* (2016), and Heather Keenleyside's *Animals and Other People* (2016), have begun the important work of thinking through what it means for literature, and for literary representation, that animals always appear as *one of a kind*, in both senses. In other words, much more than humans, animal figures are always doubled, both individual and representative of the species to which they belong.[185] These studies have complicated the distinction between real and symbolic animals. As Susan

[183] Ibid., p. 7. For examples of the difficulty of keeping this fact in focus, see Anna West, *Thomas Hardy and Animals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), which places significant emphasis on 'the extent to which [Hardy's writing] anticipates, and can be illuminated by, theoretical considerations of human-animal relations raised in twentieth- and twenty-first-century thought' (p. 4); and Carrie Rohman, *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[184] *Animal Stories*, p. 6.

[185] Each of these works was responding to a historic tendency in literary animal studies to valorise or reify the 'real' animal lurking in the shadows behind symbolic creatures. This distinction, of course, becomes harder to discern or police when it comes to literary texts, than it is in historical or philosophical ones. Nonetheless, a number of valuable and significant literary animal studies have structured their analyses around just such a distinction. This proposition takes the form that, based on an ethics of particularity, the tendency to treat animals as metaphors for other things rather than as themselves, is a symptom of the physical exploitation they are generally subject to in the real world—a conceptual version of an endemic material violence. This approach was formalised in Josephine Donovan's *The Aesthetics of Care*, but earlier works also invest in this dichotomy to a greater or less extent. For example: Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2001); and John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body* (2012).

Crane puts it, the physical encounter with animals and the intellectual processing of that encounter are not, finally, separable:

> Medieval writers (like writers today) had no animal experience, however physically immediate, that they did not apprehend cognitively as it unfolded. Conversely, there is no thinking—even in fabulation, in figuration, in the formal constraints of genre—that can entirely forget the living creature.[186]

In some ways, this is simply to claim that 'rhetorical conventions make real world claims',[187] as Keenleyside puts it, in a way that applies to figurative depictions of animals as much as it does (for example) to genre or apostrophe. Because we have no direct knowledge of other animals (no cow has yet testified as to its own experience), and because we have no understanding of other animals that is not mediated in one way or another by language, it would be reasonable to say that all our knowledge of them is to an extent both imaginative and literary. The ways that animals are represented in literary works say something about their encounters with humans in the real world, but they do so according to the logic of literature, and not philosophy or theory. To acknowledge that, for most writers and readers, animals exist as symbolic beings in literary texts is not merely a way to dismiss them from critical purview. It rather invites a consideration of the ways in which representations of living beings can be meaningful as a consequence both of what they do, and what they are.

The objection to readings that are interested in the symbolic and figurative importance of animals in literature has frequently had recourse to a famous turn of phrase by twentieth-century anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss: animals have become significant metaphorical totems for many cultures, he claimed, 'not because they are "good to eat" but because they are

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[186] *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 1.

[187] *Animals and Other People: Literary Forms and Living Beings in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), p. 1.

"good to think"'.[188] This pronouncement has garnered a lot of attention in literary animal studies, much of it dismissive. The conventional derision to which it has been subject is unjust, and part of the confusion regarding it seems to stem from the incorrect addition of an extra word in common usage. Lévi-Strauss's *bon mot* is a rhetorical twist of a phrase introduced earlier in the text. His argument is that animals (and not inanimate objects, or other natural phenomena) have become important metaphorical vehicles for virtually all cultures not because of their importance and familiarity as food and clothing ('bonnes à *manger*'), but because of the signifying potential in the structured relationships between species ('bonnes à *penser*'). 'Bonnes à penser' recalls (in both sense and sound) 'bonnes à manger', but the original French lacks the prepositional 'with' habitually added in the English translation, presumably in order to avoid the modish neologism that would be made by shifting 'think' from a transitive to an intransitive verb ('good to think with', instead of 'good to think'). 'With' implies a sense that animals are, in this new formulation, cognitive instruments to be exploited in an equivalent way to their use as food and clothing. But the sentence preceding this one, rarely quoted by animal studies critics, gives the lie to this assumption: 'their perceptible reality permits the embodiment of ideas and relations conceived by speculative thought on the basis of empirical observations'.[189] Lévi-Strauss does not, therefore, argue that animals can be strapped to the metaphorical plough as well as the agricultural one, to help us consider our own relation to the world. He is arguing that animals appear externally to embody relations and thoughts which otherwise have only an internal, conceptual existence. As he understands it, however, there is no origin in this relationship; large, impersonal structures produce human feeling and thought, and so it cannot be a question of humans simply voluntarily projecting their own concerns onto the natural world in order to see them more clearly.[190] The relation between internal human

[188] *Le Totémisme, aujourd'hui* (1966), published in English as *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (London: Merlin, 1991), p. 89
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid., p. 70.

thought and external natural embodiment is bidirectional, and therefore blurs the distinction upon which it is premised. We are not able to affirm that the thoughts themselves have a genesis or existence in human minds that precedes their recognition in the external world, for the shape of those thoughts has been conditioned by the resemblance itself. Thought finds its embodiment in nature (though the resemblance is not one-to-one, but rather a resemblance of differences), but in that correspondence the subject of thought cannot be certain that he or she is the originator of it. To put it another way, when humans 'use' animals as metaphors, the relationship is not one in which an internal thought is projected onto any external screen that was available—Lévi-Strauss argues that the thought itself has already been conditioned by the figure of its external embodiment. The relation between internal and external is no longer one characterised by a conventional subject-object relationship, in which there is a clear order of temporal and intellectual precedence. Things are much muddier than this.

For this reason, it seems mistaken to reject the figurative significance of animals as anthropocentric projections, and even more mistaken to do so in the name of a critique of Lévi-Strauss, for the structuralist's argument in fact complicates the human-animal boundary, as I have just shown. What is more, as Mario Ortiz Robles argues, our understanding of animals is itself conditioned by different kinds of figurative thinking. Every animal that we know, we know in ways that are at least partly metaphorical or figurative, whether we are thinking about anatomy, behaviour, or psychology: 'animals as we know them are a literary invention', as Robles provocatively puts it.[191] In both these respects, we should take animals more seriously as figures, for better understanding the ways in which writers have seen them as external embodiments of internal conceptions has the potential to complicate the distinctions between human and animal, and external and internal. Furthermore, to do so would also entail understanding much more clearly not only the extent to which we have invented animals as we

[191] *Literature and Animal Studies*, p. 2.

know them in and through literature, but the extent to which they are themselves imbricated in our thinking; understanding, then, the extent to which they invent us.

The conceptualisation of literary animals outlined above has implications for both literary form and literary history, for this was a period in which a broadly formalist question—what is the significance of animals being at once individual and typical, particular and generic?—was also being asked by thinkers in other disciplines. This thesis shows that the same question received different answers in different forms, in a manner that should prompt us to expand our sense of historicist inquiry when it comes to animals. The interactions of humans with other animals are shaped by unpredictable jumbles of factors: rational thought, tradition, family life, vocation, feeling, prejudice, and more besides. We cannot rely solely on the waypoints of intellectual history (a parliamentary bill or a widely-circulated pamphlet, for example) to make sense of representations of animals, for they are often more complex, and perhaps more intangible, than that would allow. For this reason, as Susan Crane argues, the normal postulates of historicist inquiry—teleology, or at the very least chronological progression—are rendered problematic by a focus on animals: 'differing milieus and genres engage animality in a heterogeneous convergence of analytical, intuitive, metaphorizing, didactic, and ethical modes that resists reduction to paradigms and teleologies'.[192] That this description of medieval Britain could apply equally to the period covered by this thesis, itself speaks to the strange timelessness of human encounters with other animals. Animals require an unusual kind of historicism. After all, it was precisely during this period that species came to be regarded as having a history, in the sense of a changing existence in time. It might not be possible fully to reconstruct this web of discourse and influence: to do so would be like herding cats. However, because of its attunement to structures of both feeling and thought, as well as

[192] *Animal Encounters*, p. 3.

its imaginative and figurative qualities, literature is peculiarly able to register a wider range of these influences.

Animals are 'there' in Victorian literature; but, for all the critical attention that has been paid to them, it is still difficult to account for their meaningfulness in a text according to the logic of the text itself. One way of recalibrating our vision regarding this is to focus on the logic, or rather logics, of classification. As Keith Thomas has shown in his magisterial history of the natural world in early modern Britain, prior to the Linnaean revolution, the six main taxonomic categories for animals were pragmatic rather than scientific: 'edible and inedible; wild and tame; useful and useless'.[193] Such an arrangement very clearly indicates the primary concerns of the humans who used them: a society in which most people worked with (or indeed against) animals, and relied on them for food, clothing, fuel, and more. Similarly, the shift to what Foucault termed 'Classical' taxonomy, which constructed a relational grid undetermined by species' interactions with humans, indicates the partial or attempted rejection of an anthropocentric model of the universe. In short, observing the categories and logics used to classify other animals in a given period can tell us much about broader cultural concerns. This holds true for literary works as well; in the act of discerning a text's operative taxonomies, we can often see other aspects of it more clearly.

This thesis constructs a mode of reading for animals in literature that is inspired by the classifying imagination, but not beholden to it. If we pay attention to animals that have previously been misinterpreted in Victorian literature, patterns start to emerge, and these patterns operate on both macro and micro levels. Classification itself is a wider rubric which makes it possible to see the idiosyncratic, peculiar forms of arrangement and pattern that shape individual works or authors. This approach tessellates a cultural poetics with individual

[193] *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), p 53.

manifestations of it, and is best thought of as a kind of 'contexture'. The word, a coinage of Thomas Hobbes's, was picked up by Geoffrey Hill to describe the combination of 'the continuity or contiguity of things' and 'the structure and composition of artefacts': the way an individual text is related to the circumstances of its production, as well as the ambiguities of meaning which play out internally due to 'the circumstantial and contingent matter implicated in our discourse'.[194] Although it is 'close to "circumstance" understood as the totality of surrounding things', Hill argued, contexture does not assert any one particular model of relation between text and history, or text and reading: 'Extrinsic and intrinsic "contexture" are related but the nature and extent of that relationship are largely indeterminate'.[195] This approach makes room both for the historical embeddedness of a text, and its own internal ambiguities, without succumbing to a single determining hermeneutic model. In the case of this study, the possibility raised in Hill's essay for 'thesis' and 'antithesis' to exist in the same sentence, despite or even because of its historical circumstances, also makes room for new models of literary or textual relationality to emerge between humans and other animals in literary works.

[194] *In the Enemy's Country: Words, Contexture, and Other Circumstances of Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 25.
[195] Ibid.

1. Dogs in Fiction

Dogs were ubiquitous in the nineteenth century: Crufts was founded, as was the Kennel Club; Greyfriars Bobby was commemorated and adored; Landseer's portraits of dogs enjoyed huge popularity; and Queen Victoria owned and popularised numerous canines throughout her reign, exhibiting Pomeranians from the royal kennels at Crufts in 1891. Conceptually, too, the familiar caricatures of dogs—noble hunters, loyal retrievers, dangerous curs—fit neatly with a version of the nineteenth century which still lingers with us: rigidly class-based, obsessed with marking respectability and discerning social deviance. Dogs belonged to masters and to families, served them faithfully, and lived in either perfect harmony or predictable antipathy with other animals. They embodied a stable ideal of property and social hierarchy, of family, and of servitude and class. They remained constant, predictable and obedient, and, if they strayed, always came back to the same places at the same time, in observable routines (such as Greyfriars Bobby, or Landseer's *The Shepherd's Chief Mourner* [1837]). They were either docile or savage, a faithful hound or a vile cur, and this binary corresponded exactly to the owner's perceived state of civilization or savagery.[1] Victorian depictions of dogs tended to cast them as representing these ideals of order, in the sense both of a known category and of social stability, and this desire for order extended to an intra-species level. Canines are useful in thinking about categories not only because they are omnipresent in Victorian culture (and, indeed, in human history), but because the identity of *canis familiaris* is itself an elastic category—as Susan McHugh demonstrates in her history of the species.[2] 'This group of mammals has the largest range of body types and sizes of any mammal', as well as 'the longest

[1] William Martin, *The History of the Dog: its Origin, Physical and Moral Characteristics, and its Principal Varieties* (London: Charles Knight, 1845), p. 33.

[2] McHugh notes that scientific efforts to establish the origin of *canis familiaris* have been perennially frustrated by dogs' ability to interbreed with other related species, such as coyotes, jackals, dingos, and wolves. *Dog* (London: Reaktion, 2004), pp. 7-57.

history of human domestication of any animal by several thousand years'.[3] Because of their flexibility as signs and their variation in bodily form, dogs were subject to extensive classification.

It might seem intuitive to base each chapter on a species, in a thesis on taxonomy and animals. This chapter illustrates the benefits as well as the difficulties entailed by such an arrangement. It shows how dogs give shape to categories used by Victorians to make sense of social life—in sections on class, domesticity, and gender—and it demonstrates how this process helped writers make sense of some of the challenges of fiction itself. Dogs prompted reflection on the operative categories that help readers and writers make sense of literary texts (enabling distinctions between the significant and the insignificant, for example, or characters and backgrounds). Notwithstanding these advantages, this chapter also shows how a species-based approach is ultimately too broad. Like their biological counterparts, literary dogs are too promiscuous a species to serve as reliable guides for analytic inquiry. The chapter therefore opens up questions that are addressed in subsequent chapters, showing how animals offered writers other ways of understanding the classifications of social life and literary texts. As part of this, it argues that we require more varied and responsive kinds of taxonomy to make sense of Victorian literature and its animals than we habitually assume.

Breed

In Victorian literature, dogs frequently appear as types, representative of general categories such as the possessive lapdog or the surly mongrel. These figures were, of course, projections of traits which humans either disdained to own or wanted to exemplify, as William Empson argued in his essay on 'The English Dog'.[4] The word 'dog', he suggested, was an important

[3] Ibid., pp. 7-8.
[4] *The Structure of Complex Words* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995 [1951]), pp. 158-74.

lexical repository for aspects of humanity that people wished to admit to, but for which they did not want to take full responsibility. Thus, after the Reformation, Empson proposed, 'dog' connoted a wide variety of traits, all of which spoke to a sense of something deep within the human species that was, at different times and by different people, felt to be difficult to acknowledge: cynicism; roguery; humanity's bestial origins; cheerfulness as a front for existential sadness. In Christopher Norris's parsing, the word has 'a down-to-earth quality of healthy scepticism which […] permits [its] users to build up a trust in human nature based on a shared knowledge of its needs and attendant weaknesses'.[5] 'Dog' is what Empson called a 'complex word', registering subtle historical shifts in feeling in a kind of colloquial philology. It is with histories of such words, he argued, that we might recover the unspoken assumptions and concerns of different periods: 'because a man tends finally to make up his mind, in a practical question of human relations, much more in terms of these vague rich intimate words than in the clear words of his official language'.[6] In spite of its heuristic generosity, the tone of this quotation points towards a necessary revision which is the principle subject of this thesis. 'Man', 'human', and 'dog' are confidently taxonomised, as though we can be sure what, or whom, they represent, when in fact, as my introduction argued, the nature of the human itself and its distinction from the animal was a matter of debate and revision in the period.

Dogs, curs, mongrels, spaniels, mastiffs, bulldogs, lapdogs: there was a rich and varied language for canines in the period, which was used to draw lines between individuals and classes. The names of exhibited dogs, their respective breeds, their typical qualities, and the distinctions between them, were not officially formulated by the Kennel Club until its Stud Book of 1874, published a year after it was founded. This provided a way of establishing the desirable characteristics of breeds judged in shows. The first such show had occurred in

[5] *William Empson and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (London: Athlone, 1978), p. 86.
[6] Ibid., p. 158.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1859, and, from that date, competitors and interested parties had grown increasingly frustrated by a lack of standardised categories.[7] In the preface to the 1874 *Kennel Club Stud Book*, its editor Frank Pearce stated his intention 'to fill up a blank in the history of the canine world' by establishing a pedigree line for forty different breed groups, such as Bloodhounds and Deerhounds, Setters and Pointers, Mastiffs and Dalmatians.[8] Pearce emphasised the 'value of blood and pedigree' in both dogs and people, listing not only prize-winning canines but also a handsome array of patrons such as the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of Buccleuch and Beaufort, and Viscount Downe.[9] Breed histories played out a fantasy of recorded lineage—a guarantor of 'good blood'—that was accessible to the middle classes as well as the aristocracy,[10] and it was for this reason that debates over the identification of, and standard for, breeds were conducted with animation and passion. The effort to distinguish kinds of canine, with stable recorded histories and identifiable characteristics, parallels a broader desire for classificatory clarity discernible in the period, but this investment in the importance of the distinctions between breeds also opened it up to satire, as in the following flirty scene from *Vanity Fair* (1847):

> 'Rawdon', said Becky, very late one night, as a party of gentlemen were seated round her crackling drawing-room fire […] 'I must have a sheep-dog'.
> 'A what?' said Rawdon […].
> 'A sheep-dog!' said young Lord Southdown. 'My dear Mrs. Crawley, what a fancy! Why not have a Danish dog? I know of one as big as a camel-leopard, by Jove. It would almost pull your brougham. Or a Persian greyhound, eh? (I propose, if you please); or a little pug that would go into one of Lord Steyne's snuff-boxes? There's a man at

[7] One such commentator opined in 1873 that 'as the awards at some shows go, it is simply a farce'. Theobold Raoul William, 'Dog Shows and Dog Trials', *London Society: An Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature for the Hours of Relaxation* 24.142 (1873), 365-76 (p. 365).

[8] *The Kennel Club Stud Book: A Record of Dog Shows and Field Trials*, ed. Frank C.S. Pearce (London, 1874), p. i.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Jennifer McDonnell has pointed out that 'the breed of a dog was for the majority of Victorians a metonym for the breeding of their human owners'. 'Bull's-eye, Agency, and the Species Divide in *Oliver Twist*: a Cur's-Eye View', in *Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture: Contexts for Criticism*, eds. Laurence W. Mazzeno and Ronald D. Morrison (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 109-128, p. 115. On this, see also Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 144-57; and Philip Howell, *At Home and Astray: The Domestic Dog in Victorian Britain* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2015), pp. 102-24.

> Bayswater got one with such a nose that you might—I mark the king and play—that you might hang your hat on it.'
> 'I mark the trick', Rawdon gravely said. […]
> 'What CAN you want with a shepherd's dog?' the lively little Southdown continued.
> 'I mean a MORAL shepherd's dog', said Becky, laughing and looking up at Lord Steyne.
> 'What the devil's that?' said his Lordship.
> 'A dog to keep the wolves off me', Rebecca continued. 'A companion.'
> 'Dear little innocent lamb, you want one', said the marquis; and his jaw thrust out, and he began to grin hideously, his little eyes leering towards Rebecca.[11]

Becky plays with two orders of meaning here: the figurative, traditional resonances of working breeds, and the developing sense of artificial varieties. A shepherd's dog is a traditional type of canine, of the kind found in Thomas Bewick's *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1792), and Bewick's entry for the shepherd's dog emphasises the metaphorical characteristics of the breed: 'This useful animal, ever faithful to his charge, reigns at the head of the flock; where he is better heard, and more attended to, than even the voice of the shepherd. Safety, order, and discipline, are the fruits of his vigilance and activity.'[12] Lord Southdowne, though, gamely misperceives Becky's statement as a wish for a fashionable and exotic variety, like a pug or Persian greyhound—a dog seemingly more suited to her aristocratic deportment. In this, we can see the simultaneous existence of traditional and developing classifications for dogs—the slippage between which creates room for semantic play. Moreover, the passage not only compounds breeds and types, but humans and dogs. Becky's knowing expression of her desire for 'a companion' 'to keep the wolves off me' shifts the discussion into a figurative register that had previously bubbled just below the surface: these are the kinds of wolves that dress in a coat-and-tails and gamble large amounts of money. Thackeray is in on the joke too, of course, appraising his own creations as though he were a judge at Crufts (*avant la lettre*)—casting an approving eye over 'the lively little Southdown', or Lord Steyne's 'jaw thrust out'.

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[11] *Vanity Fair*, ed. John Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 473.
[12] *A General History of Quadrupeds* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009 [1792]), p. 327.

Class

Dog pedigrees provided a means by which their human breeders might 'reconceive and refashion the social order in which they coveted a stable place'.[13] Breed histories represented proof of 'good blood', the written and pictorial representation of unbroken heredity, traceable lineage. The other side of this coin, of course, involved the fate of those dogs and humans without such lineages. In industrial or social problem fiction, the working class are frequently depicted as animalised or brutalised as a way of drawing attention to the inhumane conditions in which they lived. For Elizabeth Gaskell, dogs in particular offer a figurative point of comparison for the state of the working class. In *Mary Barton* (1848), for instance, the workers are described as 'sick as dogs',[14] and, developing this logic, Ben Davenport later 'lay[s] down on straw, so damp and mouldy no dog would have chosen it in preference to flags'.[15] Gaskell also uses this rhetoric in *North and South* (1855), when Bessy Higgins laments that sympathy appears to be a rare commodity: 'the very dogs are not pitiful in our days, as they were in the days of Lazarus'.[16] (This is a reference to Luke 16:21, in which dogs licked Lazarus's leprous sores.) Her father adopts the same language in acknowledging the brief and wearisome life she has led: 'what wi' hard work first, and sickness at last, hoo's led the life of a dog'.[17] Many of these analogies and comparisons are based on the formulation, *Even dogs do not, or should not, have to suffer this*. In this sense, here, the rhetorical purpose of dogs is to establish a line of propriety or humanity that has been crossed. This representational strategy is common to many of the reports produced in the 1840s, detailing the conditions of the working class. Often,

[13] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 115.
[14] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton; A Tale of Manchester Life*,ed. Joanne Wilkes, in *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. Joanne Shattock, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005), V, p. 34. All subsequent references to Gaskell's novels are to these editions.
[15] Ibid., p. 57.
[16] *North and South*, ed. Elisabeth Jay (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005), VII, p. 141.
[17] Ibid., p. 205.

it is not limited to canines, taking the shape of a larger discourse of animalisation. These texts—including journalistic reportage, governmental Blue Books, and passages from novels—emphasise the dehumanising effects of the living conditions of the industrial working class. In order to appeal to the ideal of a common humanity, however, they must first establish the existence of a gulf between the presumed middle-class reader and the subject of the report; between, that is, the civilised and the brutalised, the human and the animal.

In *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844; English translation 1892), for instance, Friedrich Engels described 'swarms of workers' and a 'whole collection of cattle-sheds for human beings', noting with both pity and revulsion that 'their dwellings are not more cleanly than the pig-sties which are here and there to be seen among them'.[18] They were, Engels affirmed, 'reduced morally and physically to bestiality'.[19] Joseph Adshead's *Distress in Manchester* (1842) printed a report of a family of nine 'all crowded in a place so dark and contracted as to be unfit for the residence of any human being'.[20] The issue is put most starkly in Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845), where, regarding the inhabitants of Wodgate, the narrator explained the nature of the degradation caused by poverty: 'It is not that the people are immoral, for immorality implies some forethought; or ignorant, for ignorance is relative; but *they are animals*; unconscious; their minds a blank; and their worst actions only the impulse of a gross or savage instinct.'[21] Such instincts are evident even in their leisure activities: 'On Sunday the masters begin to drink; for the apprentices there is dog-fighting without any stint.'[22] Dog

[18] *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ed. Victor and Kiernan and trans. Florence Kelly (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987), pp. 90-91.
[19] Ibid., p. 100.
[20] *Distress in Manchester: Evidence (Tabular and Otherwise) of The State of the Labouring Classes in 1840-42* (London, 1842), p. 34, The Making Of The Modern World, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2119/mome/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=MOME&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T001&docId=U106174931&type=multipage&contentSet=MOMEArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>, accessed 6 April 2018.
[21] Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil; or The Two Nations*, ed. Sheila M. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 164; emphasis in original.
[22] Ibid., p. 163.

fighting was one of the blood sports characterised by middle-class animal welfare movements as degrading, the pursuit of the lowest and most brutalised classes. In appealing to this consensus, Disraeli hoped to establish the inhabitants of Wodgate as beyond the social pale.

Frequently, the rhetoric of animality in these reports concerned issues of sanitation and hygiene. Disraeli's Wodgate is, again, a paradigmatic example:

> These were crowded with dwellings of various size, while from the principal court often branched out a number of smaller alleys, or rather narrow passages, than which nothing can be conceived more close and squalid and obscure. Here, during the days of business, the sound of the hammer and the file never ceased, amid gutters of abomination, and piles of foulness, and stagnant pools of filth; reservoirs of leprosy and plague, whose exhalations were sufficient to taint the atmosphere of the whole kingdom, and fill the country with fever and pestilence.[23]

A similar account in *Mary Barton* exhibits more sympathy, and a more intimate perspective, but Gaskell evidently also believed that people could not live in these conditions and remain human. In an early chapter, Jem Wilson and John Barton bring aid to the Davenports, living in squalor and deprivation:

> Our friends were not dainty, but even they picked their way, till they got to some steps leading down toward a small area […]. You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window-panes many of them were broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at mid-day. […] the smell was so foetid as almost to knock the two men down. […] they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up.[24]

[23] Ibid., pp. 164-65. On the parallels between this account and a governmental report on the town of Willenhall, see Sheila M. Smith, 'Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence', *The Review of English Studies* 13.52 (1962), 368-84.
[24] Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, p. 55.

Images of oozing moisture ripple throughout these accounts, provoking an especial horror in their promise to render boundaries porous.[25] Like the children in the passage above, about to be engulfed by the encroaching moisture, the creatures forced to live in these areas become liminal or transient—subjects only of a half-existence, liable to be swallowed up by the effluvia. In *Alton Locke* (1850), Kingsley wrote of the 'pools of stagnant water at our feet; and the huge heap of cinders […] a dreary, black, formless mound, on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the offal, appearing and vanishing like dark imps in and out of the black misty chaos beyond'.[26] And it is into the 'stagnant olive-green hell-broth', the 'black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows […] bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcases of dogs, and lumps of offal', that the tailor-poet sees Jemmy Downes disappear at the feverish climax of the narrative.[27] In chapter four, I return to Kingsley's fascination with what he called (both ironically and earnestly) 'the waters of life'. At this point, though, it is worth noting another prominent public health issue that reccurred periodically throughout the century, and which centrally concerns both dogs and water.

Rabid dogs straddled the spheres of domestic and foreign, placid and dangerous—they were threshold figures. Public scares regarding rabies peaked in 1830, and showed a trend of decline until the 1870s, as Neil Pemberton and Michael Worboys note, but throughout these years rabies remained in the public consciousness: the 'unique combination of fear, excitement, comedy, mystery, and tragedy that was remembered, and still periodically experienced, ensured [the] profile [of rabies] was maintained in elite and popular culture'.[28] In the figure of the rabid

[25] On contemporary fears of effluvia, see Steven Connor, 'Space, Place and the Body of Riot in *Barnaby Rudge*', in *Charles Dickens* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 211-29 (pp. 213-18).
[26] *Alton Locke*, ed. Elizabeth A. Cripps (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 333.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Neil Pemberton and Michael Worboys, *Rabies in Britain: Dogs, Disease and Culture, 1830-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 40.

dog, the Victorian public could embody similar anxieties to those described above: about the transformation of the civilised into the brutal, and about the familiar turned foreign and dangerous.

The resemblance of Daniel Quilp, the villain of Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*, to various monstrous figures in popular or folk culture has long been noted.[29] His likeness to contemporary conceptions of rabid dogs, though, has not[30]—yet the list of symptoms associated with the disease converges curiously with Quilp's behaviour in the novel. Dogs and humans with rabies (or hydrophobia, as the condition was known in humans) were prone to physical and verbal abusiveness, and developed criminal tendencies; it may have even been caused, some worried, by frustrated sexual desires.[31] Quilp threatens to bite his wife, and contemporary accounts of rabid fits 'almost always included the patient's attempts to bite others or themselves'.[32] These accounts also regularly included patients howling or barking,[33] recalling Quilp's 'melodious howl'.[34] The common opinion that 'rabies was associated with heat [and] thirst'[35] also provides a context for Quilp's tendency to 'drink boiling tea without winking',[36] and his customary 'panting look'[37] echoes the idea that rabies may have been a 'perverted, pathologised panting'.[38] Appropriately, for a potential victim of 'hydrophobia', he meets a watery death; drowned, literally immersed in what nineteenth-century science suggested that his body repulsed.[39] Rabid dogs thus provide a kind of prototype for Quilp's

[29] See Toby A. Olshin, "'The Yellow Dwarf' and *The Old Curiosity Shop*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 25.1 (1970), 96-99; and Paul Schlicke, *Dickens and Popular Entertainment* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1986), pp. 125-31.
[30] Beryl Gray has noted the dense and varied population of canines in the novel, but does not discuss rabies. 'Man and Dog: Text and Illustration in *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *The Dickensian* 103.2 (2007), 125-44.
[31] Pemberton and Worboys, *Rabies*, pp. 14, 23, 24-5.
[32] Ibid., p. 14.
[33] Ibid., pp. 16, 30.
[34] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 391.
[35] Pemberton and Worboys, *Rabies*, p. 5.
[36] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, p. 46.
[37] Ibid., p. 372.
[38] Pemberton and Worboys, *Rabies*, p. 24.
[39] Garrett Stewart notes that Quilp's death is an 'epitome' of his life, in *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 62.

seemingly *sui generis* oddities, and this association forms part of the threat he poses to Little Nell and her grandfather, invading and driving them out of home after provisional home.[40] It is the peculiar nature of Quilp's villainy to render porous the supposedly safe boundaries between work and home, the public and the domestic. As if to emphasise this association, the novel itself contains several other violent dogs, lurking in dark corners and alleys. Quilp is himself surprised by one when, 'rolling very near a broken dog-kennel, there leapt forth a large fierce dog', who 'would have given him a disagreeable salute'.[41] While Sampson Brass, Quilp's accomplice, is likewise warned by the villain with a consummately deadpan tone that 'there's a dog in the lane. He bit a man last night, and woman the night before, and last Tuesday he killed a child – but that was in play […]. He lives on the right hand […] but sometimes he hides on the left, ready for a spring. He's uncertain in that respect'.[42] Quilp might well be talking about himself, a suggestion that is put into the mouth of the mysterious 'single gentleman' when he accuses Quilp of 'dogging' his footsteps.[43]

The link between canines and criminality that animates Quilp's character is not an arbitrary or exceptional one. Specific kinds of dog, particularly 'curs' and bulldog/terrier mixes, were typologically associated with human criminals.[44] This discourse of criminality was closely coupled with middle-class anxieties about a 'beastly' underclass, and thus helped to articulate and reinforce boundaries of social class and criminality. Mongrels—*curs*, as they were most often called—came to be closely associated with the lawless under-classes of society. Indeed, it is a sign of the word's significance in the period that a variety of new

[40] On this, see Steven Marcus, *Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), pp. 129-68; and John Bowen, *Other Dickens: Pickwick to Chuzzlewit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 153.
[41] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, p. 173.
[42] Ibid., p. 484.
[43] Ibid., p. 372.
[44] On this, see Grace Moore, 'Beastly Criminals and Criminal Beasts: Stray Women and Stray Dogs in *Oliver Twist*', in *Victorian Animal Dreams*, pp. 201-14; and Jennifer McDonnell, 'Bull's-eye, Agency, and the Species Divide'.

cognates were coined in it: ‘mongrelly’ (1842) ‘mongrelish’ (1859); ‘mongreldom’ (1884); ‘mongrelized’ (1857) and ‘mongrelization’ (1868); and the pleasing nonce-word, ‘mongrelity’ (1859). When taken together, they indicate a felt need for a wider vocabulary with which to distinguish between ‘pure’ and mixed heritage. (Unsurprisingly, given the anxieties surrounding race and national culture—which are outlined in more detail in chapter four—many of these words were also used to talk about race and ethnicity.) Fierce and fearless, this indistinct yet wholly recognisable type of canine supposedly roamed the streets, facilitating their criminal human owners or disrupting the lives of unsuspecting civilians. Bewick’s *General History of Quadrupeds* defined ‘The Cur Dog’ as a separate type, ‘although it is not taken notice of by naturalists as a distinct race’, because of its wide use in agriculture in Northern England.[45] With a magnanimity that quickly faded in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Bewick praised its ‘uncommonly great’ sagacity, its ‘great strength’, and its ‘attentive[ness]’.[46] By the Victorian era, however, curs came to be associated with rootlessness, criminality, unpredictability, and aggression. Two examples, both published in 1837, help to outline how this link served as a literary trope.

Snarleyyow, by Captain Frederick Marryat, is set at the end of the seventeenth century on board a cutter ship commissioned with taking orders from mainland Britain to the Netherlands and the court of William of Orange. The novel’s titular character is a ‘vile cur’,[47] and the companion of the miserable, usurious, and treacherous Lieutenant Vanslyperken, commander of the ship. It tells the story of Vanslyperken’s treachery (he attempts to deceive both the Protestant supporters of William, and those of the exiled Catholic King James), his and Snarleyyow’s cruel treatment of the crew and the consequent mutiny, and the political intrigues of the Catholic and Protestant governments. Snarleyyow is the recurrent target of the

[45] *General History of Quadrupeds*, p. 329.
[46] Ibid, p. 330.
[47] Captain Frederick Marryat, *Snarleyyow*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1929), p. 36.

narrator's opprobrium, though he explains in chapter thirty-five that he graces the title of the novel by virtue of the fact that he is the only honest character of the novel—honest, that is, in his reliable savagery and unstinting taste for mischief and human calves. His one redeeming feature is his loyalty to his partner-in-crime Vanslyperken, for whom he willingly suffers beatings, kidnappings, amputation, and the loss of an eye.[48] Like Snarleyyow, Bill Sikes's dog Bull's-eye in *Oliver Twist* exhibits a similar faithfulness to his criminal master, and he too bears the marks of more than a few scrapes: he is a 'white shaggy dog, with his face scratched and torn in twenty different places'.[49] In fact, three of the four characters—Sikes, Vanslyperken, and Snarleyyow—are hanged at the end of their respective stories, and Bull's-eye hurls himself from a rooftop in sympathy with his dying master. Both Marryat and Dickens thus seem to have been fascinated with the strength of the bond between a criminal and his cur,[50] even as they both affirm the grisly and inevitable end of such misadventures.

We can see an example of this attachment in chapter thirty-nine of Dickens's novel. Sikes has been taken dangerously ill after the failed robbery at the Maylies's, and Bull's-eye joins Nancy to hold vigil over his convalescing master:

> The dog sat at the bedside: now eyeing his master with a wistful look, and now pricking his ears, and uttering a low growl as some noise in the street or in the lower part of the

[48] For a reading of *Snarleyyow* which emphasises the co-presence of violence and attachment, see Susan McHugh, *Dog* (London: Reaktion, 2004), pp. 136-37.

[49] *Oliver Twist*, p. 90.

[50] See, in particular the tenderness Vanslyperken shows to his dog as they are both about to be hanged. Up to this point, the Lieutenant has been painted as an abject, irredeemable coward, but the narration startlingly changes its emotional tack:

> '"Be merciful!" exclaimed Vanslyperken, who, strange to say, forgot his own miseries in pleading for his darling cur. […]
>
> "One moment—I ask but one moment," cried Vanslyperken, much agitated, "only one moment, sir."
>
> "For what?"
>
> "To kiss my poor dog," replied Vanslyperken, bursting into tears; strange and almost ridiculous as was the appeal, there was a seriousness and a pathos in Vanslyperken's words and manner, which affected those who were present like a gleam of sunshine, this one feeling which was unalloyed with baser metal shone upon the close of a worthless and wicked life, Sir Robert nodded his head, and Vanslyperken walked with his rope around his neck over to where the dog was held by Smallbones, bent over the cur and kissed it again and again' (pp. 408-09).

> house, attracted his attention. Seated by the window, busily engaged in patching an old waistcoat which formed a portion of the robber's ordinary dress, was a female.[51]

Bull's-eye's watchful guarding of his beloved master recalls Landseer's portraits of loyal canine heroes such as *Attachment* (1829), *A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society* (1838), and *Saved* (1856).[52] Most specifically, it appears to reference Landseer's depiction of a 'battle-scarred terrier' in a doorway fiercely guarding his master's shop in *Low Life* (1829) (figure 3).[53] Grace Moore highlights Bull's-eye's 'wistful look' in the scene in the novel, suggesting that his 'yearning for his master to awake aligns him more closely with Nancy than at any other point in the novel'. Spurning the role of ferocious cur, 'Bull's-eye's conduct is highly feminized in this scene', as his 'yearning here converges with Nancy's listless watchfulness'.[54] Landseer's own depiction of a devoted but sullen 'cur' forms part of a humorous pair of dog portraits depicting *Low Life* and *High Life* (figure 4), contrasting the situations of their respective masters. As representatives of their human owners the dogs indicate a conventional contrast of bodily pleasures (signalled by the pipe and tankard in the butcher's doorway) and intellectual ones (the deerhound in the latter painting sits in an aristocratic study, next to a desk littered with books, paper, and parchment). In this, Landseer makes them representatives, too, of given social classes: the butcher's implements signal the working class, while the castle turret just visible through the window and the sword on the table denote the aristocracy. Both also appear to be guarding, and thereby delineating, a domestic space—the terrier, in particular, sits on the threshold of a house. However, as subjects in their own right, the expressions of both canines bespeak the same intensity of attachment that

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[51] *Oliver Twist*, p. 255.

[52] On Dickens's connections to Landseer, see Beryl Gray, 'Dickens and Dogs: "No Thoroughfare" and the Landseer Connection', *The Dickensian* 100.1 (2004), 5-23; and Phillip Howell, *At Home and Astray*, pp. 25-49.

[53] Richard Ormond, *Sir Edwin Landseer*, contributions by Joseph Rishel and Robin Hamlyn (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), p. 99.

[54] 'Beastly Criminals', p. 208.

Dickens represents in the figure of Bull's-eye. I discuss Landseer's influence on Dickens further in chapter two, but for now it suffices to note the analogous juxtapositions of high and low, comic and tragic, in the work of both men—as well as their shared interest in dogs as at once symbols and the possessors of an internal life. These domestic scenes also look ahead to the next section, in which I show how dogs helped demarcate the borders between the home and the world, and the domestic and the exotic.

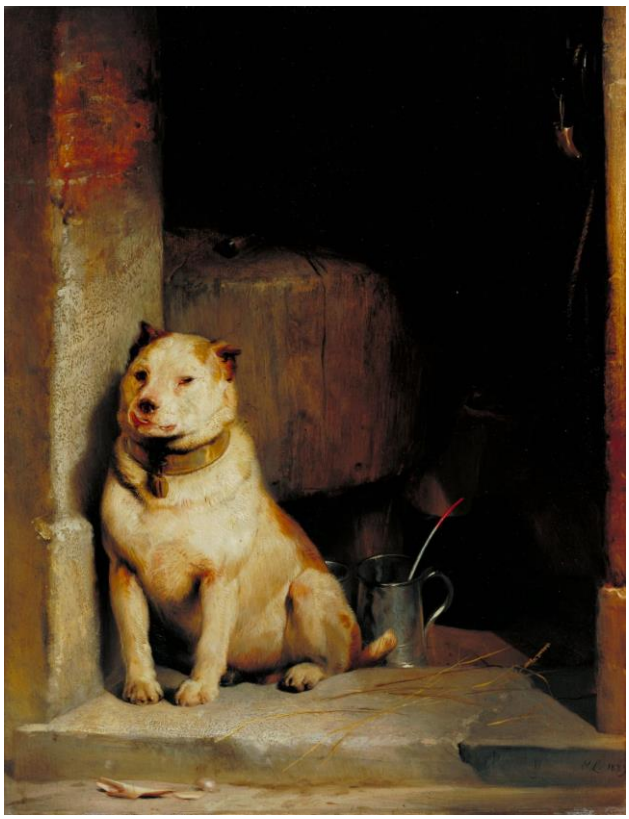


Figure 3. Edwin Landseer, Low Life, *1829, oil on mahogany, 70 × 99 cm, Tate Britain, London*

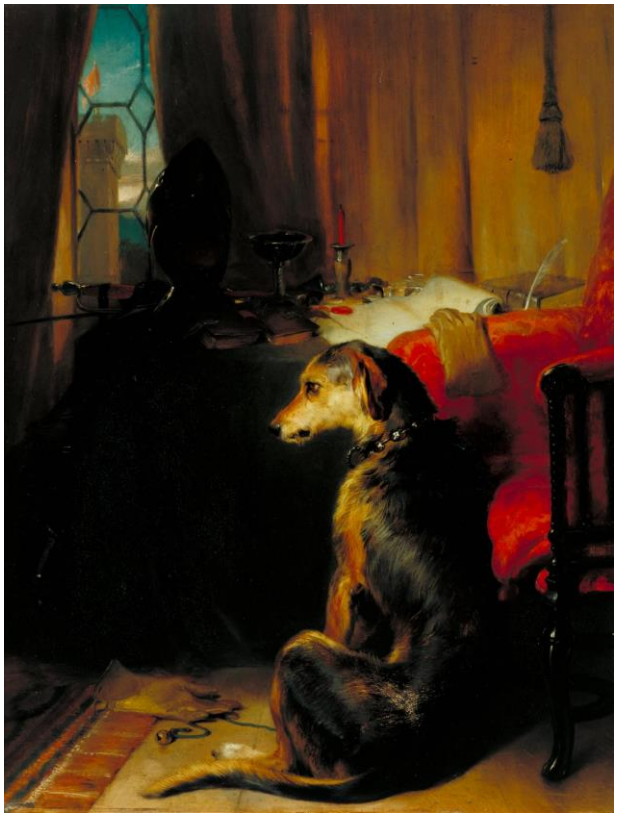


Figure 4. Edwin Landseer, High Life*, 1829, oil on mahogany, 70 × 99 cm, Tate Britain, London*

Domesticity

In *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction, 1832-1867*, Catherine Gallagher shows how the industrial or social problem novel frequently tried to understand and depict society through the smaller unit of the family. Domestic relations could model wider societal bonds. At one moment in *Hard Times*, Gallagher notes, the circus-master Mr Sleary gives Thomas Gradgrind a lesson in what this might look like, based on the surprising return after a long absence of Sissy Jupe's father's dog, Merrylegs:

> 'It theemth to prethent two thingth to a perthon, don't it, Thquire? […] one, that there ith a love in the world, not all thelf-intereth after all […]; t'other, that it hath a way of ith own of calculating or not calculating, with thomehow or another ith at leatht ath hard to give a name to, ath the wayth of the dogth ith!'[55]

[55] *Hard Times*, p. 293.

'In this ending', remarks Gallagher, 'exemplary family behaviour and "the wayth of the dogth" are indistinguishable'.[56] The faithfulness of Merrylegs offers a vision of interpersonal bonds that are not based on 'thelf-interetht'. His desire to return reveals the possibility of relations and attachments that are independent of calculation or utility, and provides a model for forms of community that are likewise free of self-interested motives. Popular dog narratives of the period often depicted the roaming, itinerant life of a canine in the metropolis;[57] like Merrylegs's story, though, these lives typically revolved around or eventually returned to a fixed spot—often an original home, or the grave of a master. Part of the broader appeal of these narratives lay in their demonstration of a love that was synonymous with loyalty, even to the point of self-neglect. Frequently, they emphasised how dogs had refused food, water, and shelter, in their dedication to their owners. In this way, Merrylegs is in fact a manifestation of dog-story genre exemplified most memorably by the story of Greyfriars Bobby (as I note above). If, as Gallagher suggests, societies mimic familial relations in industrial fiction, the story of Merrylegs suggests that families might also mimic human-canine ones. In this section, I trace some further instances in Victorian fiction where dogs helped writers to construct versions of domesticity.

In Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* (1853), Mrs Jamieson's fat spaniel Carlo delineates the boundaries of the home, as an enervated sentinel and representative inhabitant of indulgent domesticity. So habituated is Carlo to his role, even his begging for food replicates the haughty discernment of his mistress:

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[56] *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 158.

[57] See, for instance, Jacob Abbott, *Bruno: Lessons of Fidelity, Patience, and Self-denial Taught by a Dog* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1854); Maria Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy* (London, 1856); Thomas Miller, *The Life and Adventures of a Remarkable Dog* (London: Dean, 1857).

> Carlo began to beg, which was a thing our manners forebade us to do, though I am sure we were just as hungry; and Mrs Jamieson said she was certain we would excuse her if she gave her poor dumb Carlo his tea first. She accordingly mixed a saucer-full for him, and put it down for him to lap; and then she told us how intelligent and sensible the dear little fellow was; he knew cream quite well, and constantly refused tea with only milk in it: so the milk was left for us; but we silently thought we were quite as intelligent and sensible as Carlo, and felt as if insult were added to injury when we were called upon to admire the gratitude evinced by his wagging his tail for the cream which should have been ours.[58]

Gaskell uses the figure of Carlo to parody a kind of petty connoisseurship associated with middle-class affluence. His refusal of milk in favour of cream attests to a taste for luxury, and it seems clear that his indulgence is symptomatic of a note of hypocrisy in Lady Jamieson's 'elegant economy', which flouts the habit manifested by even the wealthiest inhabitants of Cranford of regarding expensive food and drink as 'vulgar or ostentatious'.[59] Carlo gobbles down the treats laid out for the guests as though he had not had 'anything to eat', swallowing with 'avidity [...] chance pieces of cake'.[60] He stands as a little antithetical model of the domestic ideals prized by the women of Cranford: he is greedy, partial to luxury comestibles, and indolent. Gaskell emphasises this point by depicting Carlo's avid demolition of the cake as a typological instance of dehumanising greed. This is evident elsewhere in the novella, in the letters of a young Peter Jenkyns, long-lost brother to Miss Matty: in them, the narrator Mary Smith reads how his 'animal nature broke out in such a little sentence as this, evidently written in a trembling hurry, after the letter had been inspected: "Mother, dear, do send me a cake, and put plenty of citron in."'[61] Mrs Jamieson herself is not immune to the risk of animalisation which cake presents, at one point eating 'three large pieces of seed-cake, with a placid, ruminating expression of countenance, not unlike a cow's'.[62]

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[58] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*, ed. Alan Shelston, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005), II, p. 233.
[59] Ibid., p. 167.
[60] Ibid., p. 222.
[61] Ibid., p. 207.
[62] Ibid., p. 222.

Carlo both completes the domestic picture and marks out its boundaries. As he 'lay and snorted, and started at his mistress's feet', in a bravura imitation of his owner, we learn that 'he, too, was quite at home'.[63] His vocalisations, however, are not only signs of contentment: he also 'ungraciously bark[s]' at the arrival of friendly company, and it is in this particular action that Carlo both distinguishes and extinguishes himself. As we have seen already, and will continue to see in chapters two and three of this thesis, dogs in Victorian fiction are frequently cast as the gatekeepers and guardians of the home. They thereby play an important role in constructing the domestic space they protect. Chapter ten of *Cranford*, for instance, tells of a spate of robberies in the neighbouring area, concerning the population of Cranford so much that homes are only to be inhabited in the daylight, and require a thorough search each night, weapon in hand, to check for intruders. A robbery is attempted at Mrs Jamieson's, but thankfully Carlo, alert to foreign bodies, sees off the burglars with his barking:

> no one knew what might have happened if Carlo had not barked, like a good dog as he was!
>
> Poor Carlo! his barking days were nearly over. Whether the gang who infested the neighbourhood were afraid of him, or whether they were revengeful enough […] to poison him; or whether, as some among the more uneducated people thought, he died of apoplexy, brought on by too much feeding and too little exercise; at any rate, […] two days after this eventful night, Carlo was found dead, with his poor legs stretched out stiff in the attitude of running, as if by such unusual exertion he could escape the sure pursuer, Death.[64]

'Too much feeding and too little exercise': the speculative autopsy proferred by 'the more uneducated people' echoes a broader middle-class Protestant work ethic. The final sentence confirms the inevitable end of the gluttonous and slothful, though it is also unable to resist the ironic epitome of his final pose as Carlo at last tries to show a clean pair of heels. We might therefore see Carlo as a channel through which conventional critiques of the overindulged

[63] *Cranford*, p. 222.
[64] Ibid., p. 246.

upper classes could run. Like the aristocratic lapdogs of eighteenth-century fiction, he is a proximate symbol of indulgence and the reluctance to work, a non-productive member of society like one of Mayhew's individuals 'Who Will Not Work'.[65] However, as the passage above suggests, he also defends the house from intruders, 'good dog as he was'. In this double role, we can see how Gaskell uses the figure of Lady Jamieson's fat spaniel in the capacity of both symbol and verisimilitudinous creature: the former as an antithetical version of ideal domestic relations, and the latter as a constitutive inhabitant of a given space.

As a bridge to the next section, let us return briefly to the image of Lady Jamieson eating cake with a 'placid, ruminating expression of countenance, not unlike a cow's'. On this and on other occasions, who gets cake and how they eat it feeds into Gaskell's representation of proper and improper domestic situations.[66] Cake appears to have been something like a totem of domesticity for Gaskell; however, in the animal greed exhibited by Peter Jenkyns and Lady Jamieson, its indelicate or improper consumption also threatens to reveal a kind of lurking incivility. We might further note that it is animals, children, and (older) women who are the perpetrators of this impropriety, revealing a link between the representation of animals and gender that the next section will explore.[67] *Apropos* of Lady Jamieson's bovine expression, we might also note in passing the raillery of her resemblance to Miss Betty Barker's gentlemanly Alderney cow, which has to be 'clad in dark grey flannel' as a result of a traumatic fall into a lime-pit which caused her to lose her hair.[68] I say 'her' advisedly, because an Alderney was a

[65] I am grateful to Katharine Westwood for making this connection.

[66] We could think here, for instance, of the homely tact of Alice Wilson in *Mary Barton* who, despite her straitened circumstances, invites Mary into her house for 'oat bread of the north, the clapbread of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and […] thin cakes' (p. 31), or of the social delicacies required of hosts and guests who habitually dined at conflicting hours that Gaskell noted in *Wives and Daughters* (1866), ed. Josie Billington (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006): 'How ask people to tea at six, who dined at that hour? How, when they refused cake and sandwiches at half-past eight, how induce other people who were really hungry to commit a vulgarity before those calm and scornful eyes?' (X, p. 357).

[67] On the liminal subject-status of both animals and children, see *Human, All Too Human*, ed. Diana Fuss (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

[68] Ibid., p. 168.

breed of dairy cow (now extinct); the joke here is not only that the cow is wearing a waistcoat and trousers, but, moreover, that it is a female cow so attired. In these scenes, the appearance of animals represents when certain boundaries of propriety have been not merely crossed, but cross-dressed.

Gender

The domestic sphere was, of course, so closely entwined with the gender politics of Victorian Britain that it is no surprise to see dogs replicating or reworking these dynamics in fiction. In a journal entry made during a trip to Ilfracombe, George Eliot described the risks her partner G.H. Lewes faced in asking for directions:

> At last we came in sight of a lone farm-house, and I waited at the gate while G. went to inquire. […] It requires some desperate courage to make these interrogatory visits to lone farm-houses, for you are likely to get a prompt but not categorical answer to your questions from a great dog who protects the premises in the absence of the males.[69]

Like the dogs that chase Oliver Twist away from farms as he makes his way to London,[70] these canines jealously guard their homes, failing to distinguish between intruders and mere inquirers. Their behaviour is, in this way, perfectly in keeping with the trope of dog-as-guard noted earlier. It also curiously anticipates a moment in *Adam Bede,* published three years later in 1859, in which the imagination is described as 'a licensed trespasser', which 'has no fear of dogs, but may climb over walls and peep in at windows with impunity'.[71] It is possible that, in the scene recorded in her journal, Eliot was struck by the extraordinary licence granted to

[69] 8 May-26 June 1856, *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon Sherman Haight, 9 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1954-78), II, pp. 245-46.
[70] *Oliver Twist*, p. 61.
[71] *Adam Bede*, ed. Carol A. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 67. Cited in Kate Flint, *Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, p. 112.

narrators, the 'impunity' with which they may peer into the lives of their characters. It is also possible that the ubiquitous presence of dogs in the domestic scenes of nineteenth-century novels is part of what triggered this recognition. Eliot's amused surmise that the dogs acted as a substitute or proxy for an absent male also highlights another role played by dogs, and pets more generally, in Victorian fiction: that of 'surrogate partners'.[72] To take an example from Eliot's own work, we might think of Bartle Massey in *Adam Bede*. Massey is a confirmed, truculent, plainly misogynistic bachelor, whose domestic situation nonetheless comprises himself and his Dachshund Vixen—Vixen who, on Adam's first visit, has given birth to two puppies or 'babbies' as Massey calls them.[73] Indeed, the schoolmaster 'always called Vixen a woman, and seemed to have lost all consciousness that he was using a figure of speech'.[74] In this, Eliot captures, with both a fond familiarity and a raised eyebrow, the anthropomorphic intimacies shared by humans and their pets in domestic settings.

Carlo is a more pointedly ironic manifestation of this surrogacy. Gaskell de-sexualises the conventionally erotic relationship between 'the lady and the lapdog'[75] (an 'image [that was] the inaugural event for the literary representation of pet keeping' in the eighteenth century),[76] but maintains familiar elements of the trope: sharing food, baby-talk, the privileging of the dog at the expense of guests and visitors, and, most importantly, the female human/male dog bond.[77] In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, lapdogs allowed writers to explore newly significant questions of intimacy, leisure, and luxury raised by the influence of capitalist

[72] Flegel, *Pets and Domesticity*, p. 17.
[73] *Adam Bede*, p. 283. Jane Carlyle wrote to George Eliot praising the depictions of both humans and dogs in the novel: 'In truth, it is a beautiful most *human* Book! Every Dog in it, not to say every man woman and child in it, is brought home to one's "business and bosom," an individual fellow-creature! I found myself in charity with the whole human race when I laid it down – the canine race I had always appreciated – "not wisely but too well!" – the human, however, – Ach! – that has troubled me […]!' (20 February 1859, *The George Eliot Letters*, III, p. 18).
[74] Ibid., p. 284.
[75] 'No longer furry dildos, pets became instead both small romantic companions and babies-in-training' in the nineteenth century, observes Flegel. *Pets and Domesticity*, p. 22.
[76] Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*, p. 65.
[77] See ibid., pp. 65-90.

individualism. They also served as supplements for men in the conventional romantic and familial sexual dyad. At once an insufficient and injurious imitation, and an example of surplus luxury, lapdogs occupied a precarious but distinctive place at the heart of many bourgeois and aristocratic homes. They could be part of the performance of female sexuality—in caresses and kisses—and they could also serve as a deliberate barrier preventing physical intimacy between a woman and her courter(s). As Laura Brown rightly points out, this trope is most visible in eighteenth-century poetry, but it is developed in the nineteenth century—most evidently in the figure of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spaniel Flush, and in Dickens's Diogenes (in *Dombey and Son* [1847]) and Jip (in *David Copperfield* [1850]).[78] Thus, in *Copperfield*, Dora lavishes affection on Jip, demonstrating her capacity for intimacy, but Jip's jealousy also impedes David's attempt to claim that intimacy for himself: 'I had Dora in my arms. I was full of eloquence. […] I told her how I loved her. […] I told her that I idolised and worshipped her. Jip barked madly the whole time'.[79]

In Victorian literature, as much as this trope continued to influence representations of dogs and domestic spaces, and as much as dogs continued to stand in for one part of a domestic relationship, the gender roles and relations they played diversified throughout the nineteenth century. On the surface, for instance, Tartar, the mastiff belonging to Charlotte Brontë's eponymous heroine in *Shirley* (1849), is typical of the lapdog trope I have discussed (as with the bouncing and sizeable Diogenes, a dog does not have to be lap-sized to fit the other characteristics of a lapdog). However, Brontë's use of canines in the novel helps us to see a complicated interplay of gender, violence, and will that can often be obscured by the seemingly conservative conclusion to the novel.[80]

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[78] *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*, pp. 81-85.
[79] Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, ed. Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 417.
[80] In this kind of reading, Shirley's independence is seen to be sacrificed to the demands of the conventional marriage plot. Recent readings, however, have sought to recover feminist and queer readings of the novel See, for instance, Julia Gardner, '"Neither Monsters nor Temptresses nor Terrors": Representing Desire in

Gaskell was the first to connect Tartar with Charlotte's sister Emily's own dog, Keeper: all of Shirley's interactions with her dog, Gaskell suggested, were 'the literal true account of what Emily had done' with Keeper.[81] Like many lapdog figures, Brontë depicted Tartar as fiercely protective. For example, when three curates (for whom Brontë makes her distaste perfectly clear) visit Shirley, Tartar anticipates her feelings and 'gave tongue in the hall, amidst whose hollow space the deep bark resounded formidably. A growl more terrible than the bark, menacing as muttered thunder, succeeded'.[82] By contrast, Shirley's future husband, Louis Moore, is accepted by Tartar long before he is by Shirley: 'the ruffianly Tartar, who, sullen and impracticable to others, acquired a singular partiality for him—a partiality so marked that sometimes, when Moore, summoned to a meal, entered the room and sat down unwelcomed, Tartar would rise from his lair at Shirley's feet and betake himself to the taciturn tutor'.[83] It is not simply affection, but also interest, that is fired in Tartar, as a precursor of the combination of intellectual and romantic equality that eventually convinces Shirley to wed: 'the audacious tutor by one word and gesture fascinated him again. He pricked up his ears at the word; he started erect at the gesture, and came, with head lovingly depressed, to receive the expected caress'.[84] Tartar is, unlike dogs such as Jip, the first party to be seduced rather than the final unyielding frontier—and there is clearly an extended metaphor developed by Brontë that Moore's task is to 'tame' Shirley. (This recalls Charlotte's sister Anne's use of dogs as precursors and enablers of, rather than obstacles to, romance in *Agnes Grey* [1847] and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* [1848].)[85]

Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 26.2 (1998), 409-20; Anna Lepine, 'Virgin Solitude: Envisioning a Textual Space for Spinsters in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*', *Victorian Review* 33.1 (2007), 121-36; Temma Berg, 'Reading Amazon Fragments: Queering *Shirley*', *Brontë Studies* 41.3 (2016), 216-28.

[81] *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. Alan Shelston (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1857]), p. 268.

[82] *Shirley*, ed. Margaret Smith, Herbert Rosengarten, and Janet Gezari (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 232.

[83] Ibid., p. 380.

[84] Ibid.

[85] In the former, the terrier Snap, with whom Agnes forms a close bond, is later found trotting beside the

Tartar, however, is not the only dog to play a role in *Shirley*'s romantic narrative. Walking alone through the woods near her house, Shirley encounters a frenzied dog, 'tongue hanging out […] bruised and beaten all over'. Meaning to 'coax her into the house, and give her some water and dinner', Shirley attempts to pat the dog's head, only for Phœbe, the dog, to turn and snatch at her arm. 'She bit it so as to draw blood, then ran panting on'.[86] The men chasing after her inform Shirley that the dog is 'raging mad'—rabid. This causes Shirley to seclude herself in her house, dress the wound herself, and make a will. Louis Moore seeks her out, and Shirley's fear that she may be close to death precipitates a new and unreserved intimacy between them. Phœbe the pointer is thus the means by which Brontë contrives the union of the two protagonists. Moreover, Phœbe is something of a narrative pointer: a fortuitous diegetic corrective guiding Shirley along the storyline that has been laid out for her by her creator. As we have seen, this rings true more broadly across Victorian fiction. Not only can dogs give human characters a nudge on behalf of their author without it appearing too much like a ham-fisted contrivance, their anomalous status (in novels) as living non-humans causes them to stand out enough for a narrator to use them as a kind of intra-textual highlighter. To put it another way, if an author wants their readers to notice someone, one way to achieve this is to have an animal notice, or otherwise draw attention to, it within the narrative. When other animals appear in stories concerned predominantly with humans, they can stick out, but dogs tend to do so without appearing out of place.

From one angle, the incident with Phœbe reads like a violent and punitive rebuke of Shirley Keeldar's proto-feminist individualism; D.A. Miller would surely read this canine as a police dog were she included in *The Novel and the Police*. And, indeed, what we subsequently

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favoured Mr Weston, *Agnes Grey*, ed. Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 148. In the latter, Gilbert Markham finds an ally in Dash, Helen Huntingdon's spaniel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, ed. G.D. Hargreaves and Winifred Gérin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985). On the role of dogs in courtship in Victorian fiction, see Flegel, *Pets and Domesticity*, pp. 17-55.

[86] *Shirley*, p. 426.

learn of Shirley's response to the bite reinforces this: she has cauterised it herself with a red-hot poker. The penetrative emphasis of Shirley's actions are clear, taking 'an Italian iron from the fire, and appl[ying] the light scarlet glowing tip to my arm. I bored it well in. It cauterized the little wound'.[87] The continental European poker (Louis Moore is French) cauterising the 'little wound' is suggestive of genital mutilation,[88] and therefore of a rejection of female sexual independence. However, the scene is richer than this, in a way that seems to highlight the element of novelistic contrivance in it. Phœbe's name—that of a Greek titan, grandmother to Artemis (also known as Diana)—raises the ghost of an illusion to Achæon's fateful glimpse of Diana's naked body. But Phœbe, of course, is not Diana or Artemis—not quite—and the encounter with a hunting hound presages a moment of figurative nakedness with Louis Moore, in which mutual recognition and understanding is finally possible. There is an important sense here, I think, in which Brontë wanted to make this scene one in which Shirley's wilful independence (her self-confinement and cauterisation) could bring about its apparent opposite—that is, interdependency and relationality. However, the mythical resonance of the dog's name, as well as the unlikely fortuity of the event itself, attests to the artificiality of its conception. A dog running away, having been beaten by its master, 'mad' but not rabid, announces itself simultaneously as an authorial contrivance and an entirely plausible scenario.

In this way, dogs provided 'a repertoire, or grammar, of fictional relations' that was useful to the novel, as Gillian Beer phrases it in a different context.[89] As living and familiar beings they could slot happily and with little obtrusion into any scene; as nonhuman beings, however, they also represent animate forces that could act non-rationally. Like the *deus ex machina* of the flood in *The Mill on the Floss*, dogs allowed for authorial intervention in the

[87] Ibid., p. 427.
[88] On the use of cauterisation in female genital mutilation in the nineteenth century, see John Black, 'Female genital mutilation: a contemporary issue, and a Victorian obsession', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 90 (1997), pp. 402-05.
[89] Gillian Beer, *George Eliot* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986), p. 52.

shape of natural contingency; they could take on the role of contrivance that had been recast or disguised as fate.

Characters and Accessories

In *Roderick Hudson* (1875), Henry James theatrically pushed this tension to its limit. In a novel concerned with the mercurial nature of authenticity in works of art, and with the dangers of allegory, James introduces a companion animal which is to be considered an aesthetic object in itself: a living example of life transformed into art.[90] The novel tells the story of a talented but naïve young sculptor who is brought from Massachusetts to Rome by the wealthy bachelor Rowland Mallet, in order to begin the artist's aesthetic education. Inevitably, beset by the distractions of society, alcohol, and, most significantly, the ethereal beauty of Christina Light, Hudson falls prey to (something like) sculptor's block and subsequent despair. He eventually throws himself, or falls, off a mountain cliff during a storm in the Swiss Alps. The central question for James in this novel, Leon Edel has argued, was how to reconcile passion and artistic creation.[91] But the novel is also, as Richard Poirier has rightly observed, fundamentally concerned with the difference between those who act according to principles, and those who act according to predicted consequences.[92] The central dramatic instance of this question is Christina Light—an ultimately tragic figure, manipulated by her domineering mother into a marriage with the eligible but colourless Prince Casamassina. Her late, ultimately fruitless attempt to rebel against her mother's will fails, as Mrs Light threatens to reveal the ruinous fact of Christina's illegitimacy.[93]

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[90] Though the publication of the novel in Britain falls nearly a decade beyond 1870 (1878, with Macmillan), and although it was originally published in *The Atlantic* magazine in the USA (1875), its transformation of the tropes of which I have spoken so far warrants inclusion in this history.

[91] *Roderick Hudson*, ed. Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961), p. 6.

[92] Richard Poirier, *The Comic Sense of Henry James: A Study of the Early Novels* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 12.

[93] *Roderick Hudson*, eds. Geoffrey Moore and Patricia Spack (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 309-14. All

On the surface, one particular 'part […] of Christina's colourful entourage'—a white poodle named Stenterello—has little to do with these questions.[94] Throughout the novel, though, the two are inseparable, and recurrently glide into the narrative frame with one preceding the other. On Christina's first appearance, for instance, she draws the dog in on a lead:

> She was tall and slender and dressed with extreme elegance; she led by a cord a large poodle of the most fantastic aspect. He was combed and decked like a ram for sacrifice; his trunk and haunches were of the most transparent pink, his fleecy head and shoulders as white as jeweller's cotton, his tail and ears ornamented with long blue ribbons. He stepped along stiffly and solemnly beside his mistress, with an air of conscious elegance. There was something at first slightly ridiculous in the sight of a young lady gravely appended to an animal of these incongruous attributes, and Roderick, with his customary frankness, greeted the spectacle with a confident smile.[95]

The presence of one signals the proximity of the other, and Christina rarely crests the horizon of narrative awareness without this accompanying poodle of 'fantastic aspect'. The pairing of Christina with a poodle draws on an established association of this breed with the performance of social aspiration and femininity.[96] It thus covertly signals the Lights' social ambitions and the deceptions necessary to attain those ends. Furthermore, this 'incongruous' partnership in fact describes Christina's narrative arc, which begins as composed and controlled, leading Stenterello by a cord, and concludes with the unleashed dog as 'a sort of vanguard of defence'.[97] As the extent of her mother's manipulation becomes clear, Christina and her poodle change

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subsequent references are to this edition.

[94] Poirier, *Comic Sense*, p. 13.

[95] *Roderick Hudson*, p. 109.

[96] See, for instance, the letter from 'Lady Ashby, formerly Miss Murray' to the heroine in Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, pp. 173-74; the 'fat lady' in chapter seven of William Thackeray, 'A Shabby Genteel Story', in *Catherine, A Shabby Genteel Story, The Second Funeral of Napoleon, and Miscellanies, 1840-41*, ed. George Saintsbury (London: Oxford University Press, 1910 [1840]), p. 352; the Marchioness of Carabas in Benjamin Disraeli, *Vivian Grey*, The Bradenham Edition of the Novels and Tales of Benjamin Disraeli, 12 vols (London: Peter Davies, 1926-27 [1826]), pp. 35, 42; and the performing poodle in Charles Dickens, 'The Uncommercial Traveller', *All the Year Round* 10.229 (12 September 1863), p. 65.

[97] Ibid., p. 362.

places, the former changing from leader to led. (On questions of leading and following, more in the next chapter.) The following quotations, excerpted from different parts of the novel, describe this shift:

> They saw no more of the young girl […]. She had evidently only been passing through Rome; Naples or Florence now happily possessed her, and she was guiding her fleecy companion through the Villa Reale.[98]

> Suddenly, to his musing sense, the soft atmospheric hum was overscored with distincter sounds. He heard voices beyond a mass of shrubbery, at the turn of a neighbouring path. In a moment one of them began to seem familiar, and an instant later a large white poodle emerged into view. He was slowly followed by his mistress.[99]

> Christina Light swept forward, preceded by her poodle and almost filling the narrow room with the train of her dress.[100]

There is nothing especially virtuosic about this, it would seem. Symbolically, the subtle relinquishment of control (intentional or not) on Christina's part merely finds its counterpart in the shifting '*tableau vivant*' of woman and dog, as James described them.[101] What is worth noting, however, is the depiction of Stenterello as both extravagantly ornamental and potentially knowing. He is simultaneously presented as symbolic (relevant only at the level of *récit*, rather than *histoire*), and seemingly cognisant of the events of the plot (a position which approaches that of both the characters of the novel, and also its reader).

Like his mistress and Roderick, Stenterello is 'inconveniently picturesque'.[102] His name signifies a Florentine mask, and, as the passage quoted above shows, his first appearance is described in exquisite aesthetic detail, presenting a 'fantastic aspect' with 'an air of conscious

[98] Ibid., p. 111.
[99] Ibid., p. 198.
[100] Ibid., p. 246.
[101] Ibid., p. 290.
[102] Ibid., p. 311. The term is used over twenty times to describe the three characters.

elegance'. But it is the near paradox hinted at in '*conscious* elegance' that captures the peculiar interest of this canine figure. He is intended to be looked at and admired; a product of an aesthetic, almost ritualistic sensibility ('decked like a ram for sacrifice'). All the cues point towards Stenterello as a piece of decoration, a symbolic flourish, almost a signature accessory of the glamorous Christina. And yet, if he is *only* there to be looked at, what is the point of his recurrent appearance? Unlike the dogs we have seen so far—Bull's-eye, Snarleyyow, Tartar, Carlo—he is useless, in both physical and narrative terms. He brings about no significant partings or meetings between characters, nor is he any sort of working dog. His fantastic ornamentality, and the attention James lavishes on him, thus suggest that James used Stenterello to think about what he termed, in the preface to the New York Edition of the novel, 'the contributive value – or […] the beguiling charm – of the accessory facts in a given artistic case'.[103]

But what distinguishes an 'accessory' from a character? James repeatedly alludes to Stenterello's 'consciousness' throughout the novel. According to his mistress, who is 'teaching him to talk' and 'to say little things in society', the urbanity of his deportment exceeds that of a mere 'brute':

> 'He is a wonderful beast,' said Rowland.
> 'He is not a beast,' said the young girl. 'A beast is something black and dirty – something you can't touch.'[104]

The 'sharp unearthly cry of sympathy' Stenterello lets out at the prospect of Christina's distress suggests an instinctual empathic understanding that is reserved for very few characters in the

[103] Ibid., p. 35.
[104] Ibid., pp. 146-47.

novel.[105] While Rowland Mallet himself jokes, uneasily and ambiguously, about the dog's powers of perception—

> 'Meanwhile, are we alone?' And she glanced into the dusky corners of the room.
> 'Unless Stenterello counts,' said Rowland.
> 'Oh, he knows my secrets – unfortunate brute!'[106]

—it seems clear that we are not to take this speculation at face value. Rowland and Christina, those most interested in the question of the dog's knowingness, are also the novel's deftest handlers of irony. Christina's affirmations of Stenterello's sentience seem like manifestations of her habitual flirtatiousness, instances of her subtle understanding of the seductive appeal of a secret known by one who does not have the means to reveal it. However, Daniel Hannah has also recently reminded us of James's own playfully anthropomorphic interactions with dogs, and his coy insistence on a kind of mutual intelligibility.[107] We might surmise, therefore, that part of the appeal of Stenterello for James lay in the oscillating implication of empty symbolism and epistemological contiguity with the other characters. The figure of the dog is an embodiment of Christina's lack of self-determination, and her ultimately sacrificial role ('decked like a ram'). However, it is also an intuitive reflection of James's that animals are often liminal beings in literary texts, figures of both symbolic and narrative significance. For most readers, it seems likely that Stenterello would signify, precisely, a mask: a supplementary provision of figurative meaning. It is evident, though, from the above quotations that James wanted subtly to undermine that confidence. The dog is an exemplary, even ostentatious, instance of an 'accessory fact', but one which complicates our sense of what that phrase might mean.

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[105] Ibid., p. 249.
[106] Ibid., p. 246.
[107] 'Beasts in the Jungle: Henry James, William James, and the Animal Turn', *Modernism/modernity* 24.2 (2017), 371-90 (p. 371).

One thing that 'accessory facts' can offer is hinted at in Stenterello's 'knowingness' in the quotation above. In a figure, like this dog, that is at once involved in and detached from the main events of the narrative, James found a compelling analogy for the presence of the narrator in fiction. Like the dogs described in this chapter and like many of the animals in the following ones, narrators are both part and not part of the novel in which they appear. What this tells us is not only that narrators are a different beast to the other characters in a novel, but also that animals fit into previously established roles and categories in literary texts. To put it another way, one means we have for understanding animals in literature is through pre-existing literary taxonomies (such as narrator, comic relief, chorus, plot device, to name but a few), with which we are already familiar. We might be tempted to see this as confirmation that no animals as such ever appear in literature: that they are only ever, in E.M. Forster's sparkling characterisation which I noted in the introduction, 'symbolic', 'little men disguised', 'four-legged tables moving', or 'painted scraps of paper that fly'.[108] Looked at the other way, though, the significance of literary taxonomies can suggest the importance of imaginative literature in shaping our understanding of animals in the real world.[109]

In the novels I have considered in this chapter, dogs are significant on the levels of narrative function and structure, symbolic meaning, and generic type. They can be metonyms for human counterparts, but they also enable writers of realist fiction to contrive developments in their plots that appear to occur without authorial—or even human—intervention. Dogs are important to Victorian fiction because, in writing as in the real world, they have a life of their own. They also help to regulate and transgress boundaries within works of literature: borders of class, gender, or the home. Their uncertain status within literary critical taxonomies,

[108] *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 59.

[109] As I note in the introduction, I am grateful to the work of Heather Keenleyside in *Animals and Other People*, and Mario Ortiz Robles in *Literature and Animal Studies* for their formulations of similar arguments, which have helped me in my own.

however, such as the different registers of meaning I have just outlined, means that we should think of them as liminal, textually-ontologically hybrid figures in these works. They are alternatingly, or indeed simultaneously, subservient to and independent of the dramatic, generic, or symbolic requirements of a given novel or poem. In this, they are, to a large extent, representative of the significance of other animals in Victorian literature. (Though, of course, this replicates the burden of metonymy with which the novels explored above habitually saddle them.)

We need to understand animals as meaningful in their capacities both as symbols and characters, and this involves seeing them as taxonomically ambiguous within texts. The next chapter, on Dickens, takes up this question of their classificatory status in the novel. It shows how, in his fiction, animals are both part and not part of the world of the novels—alternately functional elements of the plot and emergent from the narrative as individuals. As such, they pose complex questions about the novel's capacity for accommodation, and the possibility of integrating these liminal figures into a coherent whole.

2. Charles Dickens's Following

Boundless Plenitude

If 'Social Life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute society', as Thomas Carlyle put it, then both the historian and the novelist have a task on their hands.[1] But how do we calculate this 'aggregate'? 'If one Biography', wondered Carlyle, 'nay our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remains in so many points unintelligible to us; how much more must these million, the very acts of which, to say nothing of the purport of them, we know not, and cannot know!'.[2] Carlyle's musings can help point us to a related dilemma in Dickens's fictional histories, with their large casts of characters. This is because the precise aggregate total of lives at which a reader of Dickens's novels might arrive depends largely on the question: what counts as a life? 'Like God, Dickens created a universe of plenitude', as Fred Kaplan put the matter in a foreword to George Newlin's astonishing encyclopedia of *Everyone in Dickens*.[3] The analogy would seem to put Dickens's readers in the role of natural theologian, tasked with understanding and describing the beneficent order crafted by the Inimitable. Moreover, like nineteenth-century systematists confronted with a natural world increasing exponentially in its inhabitants, the number of personages in Dickens's novels that his readers confront can seem almost confoundingly bountiful.

Dickens was well aware of the 'boundless plenitude' described by Carlyle.[4] He was also alert to a sense that the 'aggregate' of 'Social Life' includes both individuals and individual histories that 'we know not, and cannot know'. His novels were exercises in both extension and contraction; how much of this aggregate could be accommodated by the novelist, and how

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[1] Thomas Carlyle, 'On History', *The Norman and Charlotte Strouse Edition of the Writings of Thomas Carlyle: Historical Essays*, ed. Chris R. Vanden Bossche (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 5.
[2] Ibid.
[3] George Newlin, *Everyone in Dickens*, 3 vols (Westport, CT. and London: Greenwood Press, 1995), III, p. ix.
[4] Carlyle, 'On History Again', *Writings of Thomas Carlyle: Historical Essays*, p. 17.

much must necessarily be compressed in order to craft an intelligible narrative? F.R. Leavis spoke chidingly of Dickens's 'loose inclusiveness'[5]—a less-than-hidden allusion to Henry James's assessment of the baggy form of the Victorian novel—but it is much easier now to see just how much care and compression went into Dickens's writing.[6] James also famously noted, regarding the novel, that 'really, universally, relations stop nowhere',[7] and it is the form and extent of Dickens's 'inclusiveness' that will be the main focus of this chapter. It explores this question from a new angle, however, by considering the many forms of animal life found in Dickens's novels.

Volume three of *Everyone in Dickens*, subtitled 'A Taxonomy', lists thirty-six named animals included in Dickens's fiction and journalism,[8] and several recent essays and studies have demonstrated how the presence of other animals intertwine with the concerns of the novels in which they are incorporated.[9] But who (or what) exactly counts as 'one' to be included in 'Everyone'? Newlin's taxonomy includes only named animals, but this should not blind us to the numerous references to other nameless and/or mythological creatures that populate Dickens's work. If the possible scope of the 'aggregate' life in Dickens's fiction is thus widened—no further than what is already observable in the works themselves, it should be noted—then the question of organisation comes into sharper focus. In other words, what forms of arrangement were capable of crafting this exuberant abundance into a single, cohesive narrative? This has, of course, long been the most pressing question for the Victorian novel.

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[5] *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 20.
[6] See, for example, John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson's seminal *Dickens at Work*; also, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2012).
[7] New York Edition Preface to *Roderick Hudson*, p. 37.
[8] Newlin, *Everybody in Dickens*, III, p. 136.
[9] See, for instance, Herbert Sussman and Gerhard Joseph, 'Prefiguring the Posthuman: Dickens and Prosthesis', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32.2 (2004), 617-28; Grace Moore, 'Beastly Criminals and Criminal Beasts'; Ivan Kreilkamp, 'Dying Like a Dog in *Great Expectations*', in *Victorian Animal Dreams*, pp. 81-94; Beryl Gray, *The Dog in the Dickensian Imagination* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Gowan Dawson, 'Dickens, Dinosaurs, and Design', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44.4 (2016), 761-78; Jennifer McDonnell, 'Bull's-eye, Agency, and the Species Divide'.

As Alex Woloch notes, its combination of 'social breadth and psychological depth' necessarily prompted (and continues to prompt) reflections on the limits of that breadth and depth, and the aesthetic coherence that may be constructed from it.[10] In Dickens's work, though, we can see the apotheosis of this question as a result of his extraordinary willingness to accommodate other animals, and in his ambivalent relation to order (both as a compositional principle, and a social one), which is discussed later in the chapter.

Derrida's Following

Before proceeding to Dickens's fiction proper, a note on methodology is necessary. This chapter suggests that we can get a better grasp of the questions outlined above by thinking about 'following', in its different senses, as a form of textual and social arrangement to which Dickens regularly turned. 'Following' as a verb can mean 'to go or come after', 'to move behind in the same direction', 'to go forward along a path', 'to come after in sequence or series', 'to be second or inferior to', or 'to come after or succeed as a consequence or effect' (*OED*). In these senses, what 'follows' can be a question of chronology, obedience, hierarchy, or causation. As a noun, the word also means 'a body of followers, attendants, retainers or adherents' (*OED*), and so raises questions of community and politics. As this chapter demonstrates, Dickens's writing is always alive to these multiple senses; following (verb) and followings (noun) in his work present complex reflections on both narrative form and social being.

At first glance, 'following' may have little to do with other animals. However, in a work that has since become foundational to animal studies, Jacques Derrida argued that the word may in fact help us unpack important aspects of humans' relations with other animals. He

[10] Alex Woloch, *The One vs the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 19.

suggested that if we want to track down the roots of human identity (in his terms, *le genre humain*, which signals the textual basis of his argument), we might take a cue from the homonymic conflation in French between *être* and *suivre* in the first-person present tense: both are conjugated as *je suis*—I am, I follow. Such linguistic coincidences are, of course, central to Derrida's work, and from this example he draws out a suggestion that *to be* human may well also ineluctably be *to follow*, or to come after, the animal:

> If I am (following) this suite, and everything in what I am about to say will lead back to the question of what 'to follow' or 'to pursue' means, as well as 'to be after', back to the question of what I do when 'I am' or 'I follow', when I say, '*Je suis*', if I am (following) this suite then, I move from 'the ends of man', that is the confines of man, to 'the crossing of borders' between man and animal.[11]

The Animal That Therefore I Am is at once suggestive and inchoate, but a crude paraphrase of its general argument might be as follows: to be human is not to be animal, and so to establish the category of the human we must first distinguish what this excludes. We therefore differentiate 'the animal' conceptually before we distinguish 'the human', determining that what animals lack, and what we have, is what makes us human.[12] If that is the case, Derrida argues, to *be* human is always to claim membership of a group that can only come into existence *after* the constitution of the group termed 'animal'. This is a kind of grammatical argument, but it also corresponds to biological fact, in that humans evolved from the nonhuman and from other animals. This insight places the human not as a naturally separate entity, different in kind rather than degree, but as a shifting identity category located in both time and space. The pun does not work in English, of course, but the possibilities of Derrida's influential meditation on

[11] Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 3.

[12] Ibid., pp. 13-14. Giorgio Agamben, in another important philosophical work on animals, contends that this process can be conceived spatially rather than temporally, and that the construction of the categories 'human' and 'animal' necessitates the production of a 'zone of indistinction', as a kind of buffer separating the two, in which we place humanised animals and animalised humans. *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33-38.

the coincidence between being and following is worth further scrutiny. In particular, the overlaps and disjunctions created by the multiple senses of 'following'—its internal grammar—help to construct a flexible schematic for the coexistence of humans and other animals in Dickens's work. This chapter therefore offers a new perspective on a foundational text in literary animal studies by, in a sense, taking it at its word. To do so, I draw on the work of William Empson—a critic whose writing is not often mentioned in the same breath as Derrida's. My account of following in this chapter uses Empson's notion of 'complex words', particularly the idea that our intuitive grasp of the play of sense in certain words can inform our understanding of how language models our interactions with the world itself. The play of meaning within the word 'following' illustrates the nature of the relations between those individuals represented as following.

If psychoanalysis has taught us anything, it is that our minds tend to get stuck on things. One of the aims of this chapter is to chart a recurrent pattern in Dickens's work where both the word 'following' and its multiple senses might be said to organise our understanding. We also tend to reduce complexity to compact nodes; it is a habit of our thinking to reduce and simplify diversity into as fewer terms, ideas, or images as possible. Within those condensed nodes of meaning, though—'rich and vague' as Empson described them—there exist complex constellations of ideas, feeling, and even 'some general view of life'.[13] Indeed, it is the reduction of many into one that distinguishes the act of classification and categorisation from cataloguing or listing: the consolidation of individuals into species, genuses, orders, and kingdoms. In this sense, then, Dickens's intentional or unintentional compounding of different questions and ideas into a single word or concept is an act with a family resemblance to

[13] Christopher Norris, *Empson and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism*, p. 80. It is worth mentioning that Norris is one of the very few critics who has written on both Empson and Derrida.

classification, as well as to the work of the novel itself—which brings together into one object many different constituent parts.

Dickens was never averse to the investment of a particular symbol with multivalent signification; think of the sea in *Dombey*, for instance, or Marshalsea Prison in *Little Dorrit*. It is one of the characteristic features of his art. In the same way that the sea or the prison has multiple *symbolic* resonances in those novels, following is a 'complex word' with a comparable *semantic* multivalence. There is 'an inner grammar of complex words like the over grammar of sentences',[14] and if we can tease out the 'various meanings within one word, and their interactions', we gain 'a special insight or window into how the mind operates when it uses language'.[15] For this reason, observing the interaction of animals and the different senses of following affords a better sense of how language—especially literary language—registers our conception of other animals. This is because one of the things complex words are very good at is corralling and accommodating different senses and implications under a single roof, in the same way that any text (but particularly the novel) accommodates a diversity of forms of life. Indeed, the peculiarly spacious accommodation offered by the word 'following' itself mirrors the very questions raised in this chapter.

In short, the kinds of following that Dickens's novels stage allow him to depict both desirable and undesirable forms of social relation. My use of the word 'stage' here is deliberate, for this chapter expands the scope of Empson's emphasis on verbal semantics to also include dramatised instances of the word. It is not only Dickens's use of the word 'following' that is traced here, but its embodiment as both noun and verb in the action represented in the novels. In so doing, I extend the sense of a 'complex word' to accommodate those figures that can follow without being able to say that they are doing so.

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[14] Comment for Third Edition (1977), *The Structure of Complex Words*, p. xxvii.
[15] Ibid.

The rest of this chapter first discusses the question of who or what 'counts' in the novel, considering Alex Woloch's influential study of minor characters in the nineteenth-century novel. It shows that who does and does not 'follow' can be a useful criterion for thinking through this question. It then considers the significance of 'following' as a verb, developing this through a reading of *Bleak House*. Finally, it looks at 'following' as a noun, culminating in a reading of Dickens's historical novel, *Barnaby Rudge*.

Marginal Characters

In *The One vs the Many*, Woloch shows how what he calls the 'asymmetrical' realist novel relies on an uneven process of characterisation to give shape to the narrative as a whole. Readerly attention, argues Woloch, is always divided unequally between protagonists and minor characters, and it is only through the marginalisation of certain characters at the expense of others that protagonists can actually *be* protagonists. Moreover, because of the compressed space and timeframe in which minor characters are permitted to appear, representations of them are always subject to distortion; they can never appear as 'fully-rounded' individuals with a rich, human-like psychological interiority. In short, we never meet a minor character that is not in some way 'flat', in E.M. Forster's sense of the word (which was also discussed in the introduction). From this, Woloch puts together a theory of the novel in which it is reimagined as a continual negotiation between its ambitions to represent both 'social breadth and psychological depth'—a tension that minor characters illuminate with particular clarity, in their distortion and compression.

Woloch's brilliant study constructs its own taxonomies, distinguishing between protagonists and minor characters, as well as further subdividing the latter category into

'functional', 'eccentric', 'marginal', 'fragmented', 'compressed', and 'externalised'.[16] Perhaps unsurprisingly, though, questions about the species identity of minor characters remain unaddressed. In an important extension of Woloch's work, Ivan Kreilkamp shows how, in *Great Expectations*, domestic animals are related to, but distinct from, human minor characters in their effects on the fiction.[17] The canines depicted in the novel tend to disappear suddenly from the narrative, or are always at risk of doing so—their inability to 'take hold' in the narrative, Kreilkamp suggests, illustrates their ambiguous status as both characters and non-characters.[18] Unlike the humans in the novel, it is clear that dogs in Dickens's fiction do not elicit the same responsibility from the author to narrate their fate—they can simply disappear without comment. For example, their treatment often contrasts sharply with the fate of human characters at a novel's conclusion, in the conventional tying-up of loose ends that informs readers of the various fates of the cast of characters, major and minor. A letter from Dickens to John Forster, written just before the final number of *Dombey and Son* went to press, illustrates both the ease with which animals can slip out of the narrative purview as well as Dickens's consciousness of this fact. 'I suddenly remember that I have forgotten Diogenes', he wrote,

> Will you put him in the last little chapter? After the word 'favourite' in reference to Miss Tox, you can add, 'except with Diogenes, who is growing old and wilful'. Or, on the last page of all, after 'and with them two children: boy and girl' (I quote from memory), you might say 'and an old dog is generally in their company', or to that effect. Just what you think best.[19]

[16] Ibid., pp. 214, 155, 217, 224, 68, 82.

[17] 'Dying Like a Dog in *Great Expectations*', *Victorian Animal Dreams*, pp. 82-90. Kreilkamp was the first critic to draw attention to the potential for Woloch's model in thinking about animals in fiction. His argument ascribes animals' marginality to the dictates of generic convention (their habitual confinement to children's literature and fables) and their inability to assume speaking roles in the realist novel.

[18] Ibid., p. 81.

[19] 25 March 1848, *The Pilgrim Edition of Letters of Charles Dickens*, 12 vols, eds. Madeline House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002), V, p .264.

This letter at once confirms Diogenes's status as minor character in the novel (he is featured by name in the epilogue) and throws it into doubt (he is almost forgotten, and it is his presence that matters rather than the specifics of his fate).

What critical taxonomy would be able to draw fine enough distinctions between animals that can be considered minor characters and those that cannot? Is there a line in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, for instance, between Little Nell's 'pet bird with a green bough shading his little cage', and the 'dusky thrush' mentioned earlier in the novel, 'whose cage was hung outside a garret window all night long' and who is driven 'half mad with joy' by the sunrise?[20] Nell's bird features in Newlin's taxonomy of *Everyone in Dickens*, while the other bird does not, and yet the latter might seem to offer more in terms of psychological interiority. Nor is the possession of a proper name a guarantee of 'character-status', for Jerry's dancing dogs in the same novel also make it into Newlin's encyclopedia—as they surely should—though they are otherwise nameless. To put all this another way, Woloch's theory of the novel is strained when it is asked to accommodate (as the novels themselves do) the presence of other animals, for two reasons. First, animals complicate the idea of character itself (how do we know what or who counts?). Secondly, the tension Woloch identifies between social breadth and psychological depth is less significant in the case of animals, because cognitive or emotional interiority is not something we expect from their representation.

This chapter proposes that the question of who follows whom improves our sense of the implicit classifications of Dickens's fiction, rather than taking the distinction between major and minor characters on its own. The case of Jo in *Bleak House* (1853) helps us tease this out. To begin with, we could ask: what kind of creature is Jo?

> He is not one of Mrs Pardiggle's Tockahoopo Indians; he is not one of Mrs Jellyby's lambs, being wholly unconnected with Borrioboola-Gha; he is not softened by distance

[20] *The Old Curiosity Shop*, pp. 31, 7.

> and unfamiliarity; he is not a genuine foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary home-made article. Dirty, ugly, disagreeable to all the sense, in body a common creature of the common streets, only in soul a heathen. Homely filth begrimes him, homely parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on him: native ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal nature lower than the beasts that perish. Stand forth, Jo, in compromising colors! […] He seems to know that they have an inclination to shrink from him, partly for what he is, and partly for what he has caused. He, too, shrinks from them. He is not of the same order of things, not of the same place in creation. He is of no order and no place; neither of the beasts, nor of humanity.[21]

In an attempt to answer this question, Dickens mixes the discourses of natural history (the 'order of things', 'soil and climate', 'parasites') and biblical proclamation ('heathen', 'the beasts that perish', 'place in creation'). Of 'no order and no place', Jo's position in the world of the novel is one characterised by precariousness. Even the repetition of 'home' and 'homely' remind us, ironically, that he has no home.[22] Shrinking from 'them' as 'they' shrink from him, Jo's being is constantly under erasure—obscured by grime, eaten by 'parasites' and 'sores'. His visibility to others in the narrative is akin to the 'Dogs, undistinguishable in mire' and 'Horses, scarcely better' described in the opening paragraph of the novel.[23]

It is clear that the society depicted by Dickens does not recognise Jo as fully human. Not quite a 'genuine foreign-grown savage', and lower than the 'beasts that perish' by virtue of the degradation of his 'immortal' soul, Jo's anomalous presence trips up attempts to categorise his relation to, or within, social life. As a creature in ontological limbo, the act of incorporating at length Jo's presence and voice into the densely populated world of *Bleak House* is a critique of the society that would push him to its margins; the jarring visibility of the invisible speaks for itself, in this case. Jo's incorporation also asks questions of narrative

[21] *Bleak House*, pp. 640-41
[22] I am grateful to Robert Douglas-Fairhurst for this observation.
[23] Ibid., p. 1.

art that verge on contradiction: how can Dickens simultaneously accommodate this figure and represent the social exile he epitomises?

One way we see this difficulty emerge is in Jo's speech—where, ironically, he only knows enough to know that he 'don't know nothink' (one definition of wisdom, of course). Dickens needs at once to assert and to undercut Jo's place in the world of the novel in order for what we might call the social critique to hit home; Jo must be *of* this world, but not *in* it. This is why, for instance, Dickens has Jo require an advocate or interpreter. He asks Mr Snagsby if he 'wos able to write wery large, p'raps?', and, receiving an affirmative, requests that he be the medium of Jo's remorse to Esther Summerson: 'Wot I wos a thinkin on then, Mr Sangsby, wos, that wen I was moved on as fur as ever I could go […] whether you might be so good p'raps, as to write out, wery large so that any one could see it anywhere, as that I wos wery truly hearty sorry that I done it and that I never went fur to do it. […] If the writin could be made to say it wery large'.[24] Writing here is the instrument which makes Jo's thoughts legible to the world beyond Tom-All-Alone's in a way that he cannot. Snagsby stands in for Dickens, writing 'wery large' the uncounted experience of those unable to project themselves into the world in felicitous verbal forms.

Indeed, Jo's death is followed by a speech that mimics the official tone of a barrister, condemning the 'lords and gentleman […] Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order' that are insensible to the circumstances of people like Jo. We might note that the role of a barrister is advocacy—speaking on behalf of a client who is unfamiliar with the procedures and verbal formulations of the court. Jo's liminal status is emphasised by Dickens in these scenes by depicting his need for an interpreter. Not only was Dickens evidently concerned by the novel's ability to diagnose exclusion by performing inclusiveness, the way he did so was

[24] Ibid., p. 647.

frequently to stage a break between a character's representation of himself or herself and the possibility of this being understood by the majority of the novel's other characters. Scenes of interpretation, or of authorial figures acting as mediums, often signal attempts to work out who does and who does not fit into the world depicted.

Not only does Jo's speech requires a kind of mediation by Snagsby, he himself struggles to interpret the world around him:

> A band of music comes and plays. Jo listens to it. So does a dog […]. He and Jo listen to the music, probably with much the same amount of animal satisfaction; likewise as to awakened association, aspiration, or regret, melancholy or joyful reference to things beyond the senses, they are probably upon a par. But, otherwise, how far above the human listener is the brute![25]

Unlike Jo, the dog 'has been taught his duties and knows how to discharge them';[26] he has a place in the order of things and apprehends this in a way Jo cannot. This is because the orphan child has been, in the narrator's words, 'turn[ed] […] wild'.[27] In a sense, Jo's emphasis on the 'arbitrary […] despotic characters' of writing,[28] and his inability to tell sound from song, encourages us to see his story as a parable about literature's capacity both to include and exclude, to form a community that necessarily has an outside. In a more specific sense, though, Jo's exclusion is represented as a wilderness without co-ordinates: without duties to discharge, without the ability to understand verbal communication.

Adrift from the main world of the novel, Jo's interactions with this world are predicated on partial understandings. He has no duties or orders to follow, only arbitrary and peremptory directions. Nor can he follow the meaning of other characters' speech. Indeed, readers of the

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[25] Ibid., pp. 221-22.
[26] Ibid., p. 222.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Dickens, *David Copperfield*, ed. Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 465. For a discussion of 'arbitrary and despotic characters' in Dickens, see John Bowen, *Other Dickens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1-40.

novel may feel that they themselves need Mr Snagsby as an interpreter, given the alienating transliteration of Jo's thick accent and unusual grammar. Jo's out-of-placeness is in fact represented by these failures to follow, for the prerequisite of participation in this world is the ability to understand and interpret its various mysteries. (Though, as we will see in the next section, Jo's difficulty in this sense is different only in degree, not kind, to that of the other characters in the novel.) This inability to follow is epitomised in Jo's death scene, which is tolled in, famously, by the Lord's Prayer—that is, by communal words, taken from the Book of Common Prayer. Woodcourt's incomplete catechising of Jo illustrates the boy's willingness to be led (emphasised earlier in the narrative as he follows Woodcourt through the streets of London in the early hours of the morning), but its incompleteness also mirrors Jo's marginalised existence. The repeat-after-me structure of the Lord's Prayer enables Jo to participate in a Christian society, but his evident unfamiliarity with the words ('Our Father!—yes, that's wery good sir') also marks him as alien to it.[29] As we will see later in this chapter, this compounding of different kinds of following into a question of taxonomic status is not limited to Jo, or to *Bleak House*. The case of Jo, though, helps us to see Dickens's interest not only in misfits, outcasts, strays, and anomalies, but in how fictional narrative might be able to represent their exclusion *and* enact their accommodation. Just after Jo's request for his apology to be inscribed in large letters, Mr Jarndyce and Allan Woodcourt think 'how strangely Fate has entangled this rough outcast in the web of very different lives'.[30] The image of the web of life is familiar to discussions of the Victorian novel, but Dickens's peculiar interest lay as much in the differentiation of these 'different lives' as in their connectedness.

[29] 'Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order', the narrator intones following Jo's death; almost as though the clergy were a taxonomic grouping. Dickens's is an inclusiveness that pays close attention to the internal classifications and categories, to the question of order doubly conceived—as a group or type, and as an aggregate arrangement of individuals.

[30] *Bleak House*, p. 647.

Following as a Verb

Dickens's novels are filled with faithful followers and people on the run—whether literally or figuratively. It is striking how often we find one, or both, of these ideas structuring narratives: Mark Tapley and Barnaby Rudge senior; Bull's-eye and Little Nell; Smike and Magwitch. There are followers and those who are followed, and, in this sense of following as a verb, Dickens embodies two aspects of social order. The first represents an ideal of interpersonal attachment, the relational basis of a community or society. The second represents, as it were, the long arm of the law—the part of society that guarantees punishment to wrongdoers.[31]

The fate of James Carker in *Dombey and Son* (1848) neatly illustrates the transition from one to the other. As the insinuating manager of Paul Dombey's affairs, Carker poses as a 'faithful friend',[32] only to elope with Dombey's wife Edith. Spurred to 'pursuit and revenge',[33] Dombey hunts down Carker, who is famously dashed to pieces by a train at its climax. In a sense, it is a very Dickensian parable—false loyalty is discovered, routed, and melodramatically punished—and, appropriately, Dickens narrates his story in terms that draw on the fabular tradition: 'Spurned like any reptile; entrapped and mocked; turned upon, and trodden down […] undeceived in his deceit, and with his fox's hide stripped off; he sneaked away, abashed, degraded, and afraid'.[34] It is instructive too to note Carker's persistent association with cats ('feline from sole to crown'),[35] as well as his usurpation of the law of primogeniture: he is styled as 'Carker the senior', and his older brother as 'Carker the junior'. In this character's plot, the proper order of things has been interrupted—genealogically and hierarchically. The servant bites the hand that feeds it, and consequently is to be regarded as

[31] On the importance of this kind of order to Dickens's fiction, see John Carey, *Violent Effigy*, pp. 30-53; and D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police*, pp. 58-106.
[32] *Dombey and Son*, p. 354.
[33] Ibid., p. 705.
[34] Ibid., p. 730.
[35] Ibid., p. 292.

no better than a beast.[36] (This mention of hands calls to mind a similarly dissembling villain—Uriah Heep—to whose cold, clammy hands David Copperfield's attention is repeatedly drawn. At one point, David finds Heep reading a book, tracing the words with his finger and, in doing so, making 'clammy tracks along the page (or so I fully believe) like a snail'.[37])

Carker's feline qualities are thrown into sharper relief by the figure of Diogenes, the 'great hoarse shaggy dog' first befriended by young Paul Dombey at Doctor Blimber's, and then by his sister Florence after his death.[38] Diogenes's comically pre-emptive protectiveness ('a clumsy, bullet-headed dog, continually acting on a wrong idea that there was an enemy in the neighbourhood, whom it was meritorious to bark at')[39] could not be further from Carker's slyly insinuating treachery, and it seems as though Dickens felt a kind of affectionate though distant identification with the energetic canine, who 'came tearing up the stairs and bouncing into the room'.[40] (Indeed, we might recall in this figure a resemblance to E.M. Forster's description of Dickens's narrative technique: 'Logically, *Bleak House* is all to pieces, but Dickens *bounces* us, so that we do not mind the shiftings of the viewpoint.')[41] As Beryl Gray has noted, the transferral of Diogenes as a friend and ward from Paul to Florence is a means, in Dickens's own words, of 'throw[ing] the interest of Paul, <u>at once on Florence</u>'.[42] The parallel

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[36] During the pursuit, Carker gradually loses hold of his intellectual capacities, and is described as 'hunted' (p. 731). As is often the case in Dickens's novels, the hunted and/or haunted individual comes less and less to resemble the other humans in the novel.

[37] *David Copperfield*, ed. Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981 [1850]), p. 200.

[38] *Dombey and Son*, p. 186. See also the end of chapter twenty-two, where this is made explicit:

> 'As Mr Carker picks his way so softly past the house, looking up at the windows, and trying to make out the pensive face behind the curtain looking at the children opposite, the rough head of Diogenes came clambering up close by it, and the dog, regardless of all soothing, barks and growls, and makes at him from that height, as if he would spring down and tear him limb from limb.
>
> Well spoken, Di, so near your Mistress! Another, and another with your head up, your eyes flashing, and your vexed mouth worrying itself, for want of him! Another, as he picks his way along! You have a good scent, Di,—cats, boy, cats!' (p. 310).

[39] Ibid., p. 249.

[40] Ibid. On Diogenes the Cynic's preference for animals over people, see Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals The Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 160.

[41] *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 82; emphasis added.

[42] *Dombey and Son*, p. 932. Cited in Beryl Gray, *The Dog in the Dickensian Imagination*, p. 159.

between the two unwanted characters—Florence and Diogenes—is part of Dickens's representation of a bond of loyalty between them. Indeed, Diogenes himself is both the medium and the subject of a bond. 'Ask them to take care of Diogenes, if you please', requests Paul as he leaves Dr Blimber's Academy, a wish that 'will be kept by the narrator rather than by Blimber, and fulfilled through Florence'.[43] Very soon after their first meeting, 'Diogenes already loved her for her own [sake], and didn't care how much he showed it', and this feeling is warmly reciprocated.[44] In this, their relationship affectionately parodies the lady and the lapdog trope of the eighteenth century, as was shown in chapter one. As 'unlike a lady's dog as might be',[45] Diogenes nevertheless replicates the familiar 'dynamic of comic distance and alien intimacy'.[46]

If Diogenes is a parodic magnification of the faithful lady's lapdog—right attitude, wrong dog—*David Copperfield*'s Jip is a 'true' exemplar of that peculiar breed, as we also saw in the previous chapter.[47] Jip is jealously protective of Dora, and supplies ample opportunity for comic set-pieces where the rituals and conventions of courtship are abruptly exposed as artificial. David's first meeting with Jip, for instance, runs as follows: 'On my way through the hall, I encountered her little dog, who was called Jip—short for Gipsy. I approached him tenderly, for I loved even him; but he showed his whole set of teeth, got under a chair expressly to snarl, and wouldn't hear of the least familiarity'.[48] The dog's implacable hostility renders the suitor's *tendresse* wonderfully insipid, and allowed Dickens to find the comic potential in his obsessive faithfulness. But we might remember also that, like Bull's-eye in *Oliver Twist* or Lion, Henry Gowan's Newfoundland in *Little Dorrit,* comparable devotion can end in tragedy.

[43] Gray, *The Dog in the Dickensian Imagination*, p. 159.
[44] *Dombey and Son*, p. 277.
[45] Ibid., p. 265.
[46] Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*, pp. 82-83.
[47] Ibid., p. 83.
[48] *David Copperfield*, p. 336.

It is, in a sense, entirely in keeping with Dickens's imagination that comedy and tragedy originate from the same source.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, one model for Dickens's dogs was Edwin Landseer's paintings, such as *Alexander and Diogenes* (1848; figure 5), *Lion* (1828), and *The Shepherd's Chief Mourner* (1837). From Landseer, Dickens drew not only names (for example, Lion), but the understanding that dogs were particularly potent vehicles for a compound genre of humour and pathos. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens's narrator likens the 'sudden shiftings' and 'violent transitions' of melodrama—their 'regular alternation' between 'the tragic scenes and the comic scenes'—to 'the layers of red and white in a side of streaky, well-cured bacon'.[49] As much as this visual metaphor is drawn from an animal body itself, in both life and death Dickens's animals enabled him to boil down humour and pathos into one figure. Unlike the sequential streaks of tragic and comic scenes, Dickens's animals are often lessons in how to be both simultaneously, reducing into a single figure what had until then followed on from one another in more or less abrupt transitions. By virtue of their medium, Landseer's paintings were themselves little models of this simultaneity, able to represent both at once in the same frame. Paintings like *Alexander and Diogenes*, or *Dignity and Impudence* (1839; figure 6), depicted social and moral dichotomies in compositions that, pictorially, also emphasised cohabitation.

[49] *Oliver Twist*, p. 104.



Figure 5. Edwin Landseer, Alexander and Diogenes*, 1848, oil paint on canvas, 112 × 143 cm, Tate Britain, London*



Figure 6. Edwin Landseer, Dignity and Impudence*, 1839, oil paint on canvas, 89 × 69 cm, Tate Britain, London*

Chapter one discussed depictions of dogs as devoted mourners and loyal companions, but animals were also followers in another, less voluntary sense. In *Oliver Twist* and several articles on the Smithfield market controversy (discussed in the introduction to this thesis), Dickens pauses over the powerlessness of livestock, seeing in them little models of living beings that have lost their autonomy. Unlike the dogs discussed above, livestock—and particularly lambs or sheep—can be made to follow orders and directions without apparent preference or discernment. If canine faithfulness could always be counted on (to cut through the nonsense, to amuse, to move), the blind obedience of livestock was a cautionary allegory about society's (ir)responsibility to the vulnerable. In *Oliver Twist*, for instance, characters are constantly at risk of slipping semantically into the place of meat. Oliver himself is perhaps most in danger of this fate. The parish orphanage in which Oliver is placed is described as 'a system of farming'[50] (in a reference to the contemporary practice of 'baby-farming'),[51] while on a trip from that lodging Oliver 'trotted' beside Mr Bumble.[52] The cook at the orphanage is called Mr Limbkins, which, as John Bowen has pointed out is 'a jointed lambkin'.[53] Bowen also notes that:

> [Oliver] is called a 'kid' by Sikes, whom he follows 'Like a lamb' while walking 'with a kind of trot'. His mother's name, Agnes, means 'lamb', and she is called one too. […] Mr Grimwig knows only 'Mealy' and 'beef-faced boys'. Noah Claypole changes his name to Morris Bolter, one who eats too fast.[54]

Oliver is passed between characters like a kind of parcel—but also, given the semantic field linking him to lambs, like livestock. It is clear that Dickens thought about this in terms of

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[50] *Oliver Twist*, p. 5.
[51] As a solution to overcrowding at the London Foundling Hospital, the institution set up an arrangement whereby babies were 'farmed out' to wet nurses (with a fee and other sundry benefits), and then re-admitted at the age of five. David Paroissien, *The Companion to Oliver Twist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), p. 41.
[52] Ibid., p. 8.
[53] *Other Dickens*, p. 90.
[54] Ibid.

meekness and endurance—'the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance'[55]—for in both *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, lambs and cattle resonate with their Old Testament history as sacrificial animals. This association continued to stimulate artists and writers throughout the century—see, for example, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Found* (c. 1859), in which a calf allegorically embodies the helplessness of the woman in the foreground. Both Agnes Wickfield and Oliver's mother sacrifice their own happiness or, indeed, life for the person they love. In a subtle admission of his recognition of this sacrificial structure, David offers a poor shadow of this impulse in chapter thirty-seven: 'I made a perfect victim of myself. I even entertained some idea of putting myself on a vegetable diet, vaguely conceiving that, in becoming a gramnivorous animal, I should sacrifice myself to Dora.'[56] A year after the publication of *David Copperfield*, in a letter to W.H. Wills, Dickens made his feelings on such attempts perfectly clear, observing that the 'Vegetarians […] have lately been making stupendous fools of themselves'.[57]

In two mid-century articles about Smithfield Livestock Market published in *Household Words*, the treatment of actual livestock, and particularly their bruising journey from field to slaughterhouse, is considered in less allegorical terms. In 1850, Dickens published an essay titled 'The Cattle-Road to Ruin', in which is 'trac[ed] the brief and eventful history of an ox, from his journey to Smithfield, till he rolls his large eye upward for the last time beneath the unskilful blows of his slaughterer'.[58] The story told is a bleak one. The 'good-natured, healthy, honest-faced ox [is] driven out of his meadow at break of day […] amid the shouting and

[55] Preface to Third Edition (1841), *Oliver Twist*, p. lxii.
[56] *David Copperfield*, p. 521. On the sacrificial logic that structures human-animal relations, see Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015 [1990]; and Jacques Derrida, '"Eating Well," or the Calculation of the Subject', in *Points...: Interviews, 1974-1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 255-87. Susan McHugh has argued that this 'sacrificiality' regarding the animals leads to a narrower focus on the roles animals can play in literature, *Animal Stories*, p. 9.
[57] 10 August 1851, *Letters of Charles Dickens*, VI, p. 457.
[58] 'The Cattle-Road to Ruin', *Household Words* 1.14, 29 June 1850, p. 325.

whistling of drovers […] and the sound of many cudgels',[59] and, from there, it only gets worse; 'From this moment there is no peace or rest in his life.'[60] The drovers' violent treatment of the cattle is imagined in graphic detail, up to and including the moment of slaughter. Faced with this violence, the narrator earlier imagined that, with little else left to do, the oxen might 'resign themselves to endure their destiny with stolidity, if possible',[61] only to sense very quickly that each animal was 'convinced that something more is needed in this world than passive submission. But what […] he knows not'.[62]

In a similar article from an earlier issue that year, the magazine had led with an article about the fictional Mr Bovington, a livestock farmer encountering Smithfield for the first time. The infamous cruelty of the drovers, charged with moving the livestock from the fields outside London to Smithfield on market day, is confirmed by a very Dickensian cadence: when Mr Bovington hopes that his animals might be 'driven down by humane drovers', 'Mr Whelter—the was the master-drover's name—assented, in a manner that showed he had not the remotest idea what a humane driver was, or where the article was to be found'.[63] As is hinted at in the comic civility of the name 'Bovington' (as though it were an attempt to humanise the 'bovine'), the naïve farmer is drastically out of step with the metropolitan cattle markets.[64] The articles enter into the spirit of contemporary criticisms of Smithfield, employing the familiar topoi of sadistic drovers, incompetent slaughterers, and the 'Pandemonium' of thousands of animals crammed into the narrow streets and squares of the capital.[65] As was noted earlier, Oliver himself is witness to such scenes, as he is led through Smithfield market by Sikes twice in

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., p. 326.
[62] Ibid.
[63] 'The Heart of Mid-London', *Household Words* 1.6, 4 May 1850, p. 122.
[64] In Jonathan Culler's essay, 'The Uses of *Madame Bovary*', *Diacritics* 11.3 (1981), 74-81, he notes how the frequent punning references to bovines in the novel—especially *veau* (veal)—introduce the ghost of representation into non-representational words and statements. This, argues Culler, anticipates one of the key aspects of postmodernist literary productions.
[65] On this, see Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights*, pp. 39-69; and Ted Geier, *Meat Markets*, chapter two.

Oliver Twist, once when empty and once when the market is in full swing. The second of those occasions, 'a stunning and bewildering scene',[66] anticipates depictions of Smithfield in the successful mid-century campaigns to have it moved from the centre of the city. Much of what appears to have horrified Dickens about the situation, though (as well as the violence), was the defencelessness and passivity of the animals that were driven there. Particular venom is reserved for the portraits of drovers, such as the one whom Mr Bovington addresses: 'As he spoke, he drove the point of his goad into the backs of each of a shorn flock that happened to be passing. He had no business with them, but it was a way he had.'[67] The perception of an arbitrary maliciousness is part of what really needled Dickens. The animals are compelled to follow the directions of a petty tyrant, with little option other than 'passive submission'.

A third kind of following in its sense as a verb, which differs from both enduring loyalty and blind obedience, is the tenacious pursuit of criminals Dickens so admired in the Detective Branch of the Metropolitan Police. In numerous articles, particularly in the early issues of *Household Words*, he paid enraptured tribute to the acuity, persistence, and single-mindedness of these officers of the law.[68] As we saw in the introduction and chapter one, criminals were often rhetorically bestialised, and explicitly likened to animals. In an important sense, Dickens's own writings on this topic unembarrassedly borrow this trope and extend it into a hunting narrative. The criminals pursued by the police are depicted as dehumanised by desperation, innate savagery, and the literally de-moralising effects of their criminal activities. In the novels, for instance, Sikes goes on the run, 'dashing through brier and brake, and leaping gate and fence as madly as the dog'.[69] Barnaby Rudge senior has lived 'the life of a hunted

[66] *Oliver Twist*, p. 136.
[67] 'The Heart of Mid-London', p. 122.
[68] See, for instance: W.H. Wills, 'The Modern Science of Thief-Taking', *Household Words* 1, 13 July 1850; the couple of articles on 'A Detective Police Party', *Household Words* 1, 27 July 1850 and 8 August 1850; 'Three Detective Anecdotes', *Household Words* 1, 14 September 1850; Wills and Dickens, 'The Metropolitan Protectives', *Household Words* 3, 26 April 1850; 'On Duty with Inspector Field', *Household Words* 3, 14 June 1851 (all articles by Dickens unless otherwise indicated).
[69] *Oliver Twist*, p. 328.

beast […] a thing from which all creatures shrink, save those curst beings of another world', and 'ate and drank with the voracity of a famished hound'.[70] In *Our Mutual Friend*, believing he has murdered Eugene Wrayburn, Bradley Headstone's guilt weighs so heavily on him that he becomes like 'an overweighted beast of burden'.[71]

In one story, recounted by W.H. Wills in an article in *Household Words*, the narrator notes three criminals being surreptitiously led away by a plain-clothes detective 'like sheep driven to the shambles', with the satisfaction of a law-abiding citizen.[72] If we are not always encouraged to approve of such metamorphoses (in the case of Oliver, for instance), or of the manner in which such driving was usually conducted (as in Smithfield), here the 'sheep' are more like wolves that have been tamed and transformed. In another article, 'On Duty with Inspector Field', the eponymous detective welcomes Dickens and the others accompanying him to 'Rats' Castle'—'a noted company of thieves'.[73] The 'den', as he describes it, mirrors sociological reports of the living conditions of the urban poor, but his account is heavily inflected with an intemperate and dehumanising insistence on the beastliness of the criminal class: 'heaped upon the floor like maggots in cheese', like 'rats or […] insect vermin'.[74] This is extended to a symbolic endpoint when the group encounter a man called 'Bark', who is theriomorphically transformed into an ambiguous mix of dog and man:

> Bark sleeps in an inner wooden hutch, near his street-door. As we parley on the step with Bark's Deputy, Bark growls in his bed. We enter, and Bark flies out of bed. Bark is a red villain and a wrathful, with a sanguine throat that looks very much as if it were expressly made for hanging, as he stretches it out, in pale defiance, over the half-door of his hutch. Bark's parts of speech are of an awful sort—principally adjectives. I won't, says Bark, have no adjective police and adjective strangers in my adjective premises! I won't, by adjective and substantive! Give me my trousers, and I'll send the whole adjective police to adjective and substantive! Give me, says Bark, my adjective trousers! I'll put an adjective knife in the whole bileing of 'em [*sic*]. I'll punch their

[70] *Barnaby Rudge*, ed. Kathleen Tillotson (London: Oxford University Press, 1961 [1841]), p. 129.
[71] *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. E. Salter Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1963 [1865]), p. 790.
[72] 'The Modern Science of Thief-Taking', p. 377.
[73] 'On Duty with Inspector Field', p. 266.
[74] Ibid., pp. 267-68.

> adjective heads. I'll rip up their adjective substantives. Give me my adjective trousers! says Bark, and I'll spile the bileing of em! [*sic*].[75]

Inspector Field is unperturbed by this bluster, and remains coolly self-possessed, 'stand[ing] in this den, the Sultan of the place. Every thief here, cowers before him, like a schoolboy before his schoolmaster. All watch him, all answer when addressed, all laugh at his jokes, all seek to propitiate him'.[76] Field's composure signals a man in confident possession of his faculties, a force of order amidst the hubbub, able to bring unruly creatures to heel.

Bleak House

It is not only the power of these detectives to subdue the criminals they apprehend that Dickens admired, or even their ability to render these supposedly dangerous animals tractable and docile. It is also their persistence and tenacity in the chase—their doggedness.[77] Although Detective Bucket is recruited into the narrative of *Bleak House* by Mr Tulkinghorn (who himself is said to have 'pursue[d]' Lady Dedlock 'doggedly and steadily, with no touch of compunction, remorse, or pity'),[78] Bucket's single-minded quest for truth is unswayed by partiality or social etiquette. In the first moments of the climactic pursuit of Lady Dedlock, Bucket acts like an anomalous law-unto-himself: 'Mr Jarndyce begs him to remain there, while he speaks to Miss Summerson. Mr Bucket says he will; but, acting on his usual principle, does no such thing—following up-stairs instead, and keeping his man in sight.'[79] The opacity of his methods also read as strange, almost as if he were navigating by co-ordinates that were invisible to the ordinary human eye. Esther 'could not account' for the 'steadiness and confidence with

[75] Ibid., pp. 269-70.
[76] Ibid., p. 266.
[77] John Carey makes a similar point in *The Violent Effigy*, pp. 39-42.
[78] *Bleak House*, p. 421.
[79] Ibid., p. 798.

which he had directed our journey back […]. Never wavering, he never even stopped to make an inquiry'.[80] (There is a kind of impersonality to the Victorian detective in both their preternatural, hawk-like observation, and their cussed disregard for social niceties—think of Auguste Dupin or Sherlock Holmes, who is aided on occasion by the dog Toby—which might encourage us to see them almost as members of a different species. We might notice, for instance, that the *OED*'s first recorded usage of 'sleuth-hound'—'a keen investigator or pursuer'—is from 1843.)

Bucket and Esther's chase across London and Lincolnshire is a clear-cut example of Bucket's willingness to follow the clues of a mystery to its satisfactory conclusion. Esther's narrative recounts how 'we appeared to seek out the narrowest and worst streets in London. Whenever I saw him directing the driver, I was prepared for our descending into a deeper complication of such streets, and we never failed to do so'.[81] Dickens's own excursions into the labyrinthine depths of the city delighted him, and, at this point, Bucket is an avatar of his creator, following leads and piecing together the scattered threads of stories. There is something Virgillian about this descent to the metropolitan underworld; but there is also something of the naturalist about Bucket, 'bringing his keen eyes to bear on every slinking creature whom he passes',[82] visiting the 'queer bird'[83] Harold Skimpole, and seeking out the lanterns of fellow officers glowing in the dark 'like so many insects'.[84] In *Bleak House*, as in many of Dickens's novels, acts of following represent—or are symptoms of—desirable forms of social relation. Conversely, by investing the depiction of following with the power symbolically to instantiate social order, Dickens's narrative art is also able to diagnose what he sees as social problems in

[80] Ibid., p. 833.
[81] Ibid., p. 835.
[82] Ibid., p. 796.
[83] Ibid., p. 809.
[84] Ibid., p. 835.

a single image or phrase—in carnivalesque inversions of precedence,[85] or in labyrinthine interruptions of sequence and consequence. Bucket's ability to track down criminals is a synecdochic figure for the proper operation of the law, while the preternatural vision that allows him to follow disjointed narrative fragments, and synthesise them into a coherent whole, makes him a counterpart for the novelist who is able to construct a semblance of unity from the experiences of disaggregated individuals. 'I beg of you to follow me close with your attention', he requests of Sir Leicester Dedlock, sounding as much like a plea from the author as the detective.[86]

The novel is busy with followings and followers, the word and its cognates appearing well over one hundred times. Perhaps more than any other of Dickens's novels except *Barnaby Rudge*, *Bleak House* explores the multiple senses of *to follow* as part of its linguistic texture, its dramatic action, and its symbolic import. The famous opening passage, for instance, hints at a sense that time is out of joint, regressing or repeating: 'As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus […] waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn-Hill'.[87] The present of the novel is depicted with a kind of shadowy superimposition of the past (this might be a description of any of Dickens's novels), in which chronological time snags, or loops over on itself. In this case, the *déjà vu* which establishes this sense is the imaginary beast waddling up Holborn-Hill.[88] A similar effect is found in *Barnaby Rudge*, discussed below, but Dickens had also already explored the possible effects of this image in 'On Duty with Inspector Field'. The

[85] On the carnivalesque belonging to 'the borderline between art and life', see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984 [Russian 1965]), p. 7. On the relation of this to animals, see the discussion of the ambivalent semiotics of pigs in Peter Stallybrass and Allon White *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 44-66, in which they discuss the pig's hybrid status as '*celebrated* as well as reviled' (emphasis in original), mixing 'faeces and food, human and animal, human skin and animal hide, the household and the farmyard and the field' (p. 47).

[86] *Bleak House*, p. 769.

[87] Ibid., p. 11.

[88] On the correlations between Dickens's novels and 'elephantine lizards', as well as his relationship with Richard Owen, see Dawson, 'Dickens, Dinosaurs, and Design'.

eponymous detective is initially posted at the British Museum, and his icy composure enables him to inhabit that museum of grotesque and menacing figures without discomfort, 'making little outward show of attending to anything in particular, just recognising the Icthyosaurus as a familiar acquaintance, and wondering, perhaps, how the detectives did it in the days before the Flood'.[89]

The legal case with which the novel is concerned, Jarndyce and Jarndyce, has become a joke without a punchline, one 'so complicated, that no man alive knows what it means'.[90] 'Chancery is so very difficult to follow', as Miss Flite puts it.[91] And this pronouncement is one of several examples of misdirected following, or failures to follow, which are dotted throughout the novel, and which constitute instances of its social critique. The lamentable impenetrability of the mysteries of Chancery is a problem, Dickens's novel suggests, not only because of the lack of transparency with which its business is conducted (the impossibility of following, in the sense of understanding its workings), but because this mysteriousness lures in unsuspecting victims like Miss Flite or Richard Carstone—people who have entailments riding on a verdict, or who see in the thicket of confusion an opportunity for the advancement of their fortune. Those characters waiting interminably on their Chancery suits tend, unsurprisingly, to get stuck in behavioural ruts, such as Miss Flite's unflagging attendance and her ever-increasing collection of pet birds, or Richard's obsessive poring over legal documents. (Miss Flite's birds stand as one of the most expressive lists in English literature: 'Hope, Joy, Youth, Peace, Rest, Life, Dust, Ashes, Waste, Want, Ruin, Despair, Madness, Death, Cunning, Folly, Words, Wigs, Rags, Sheepskin, Plunder, Precedent, Jargon, Gammon, and Spinach!'. This is not just for the associative variety of its diction—ashes to dust, jargon to gammon—but also for the way it describes an individual lifespan—arcing from 'Hope' to 'Youth' to 'Life' to 'Despair' to

[89] 'On Duty with Inspector Field', p. 265.
[90] *Bleak House*, p. 4.
[91] Ibid., p. 60.

'Death'—before continuing on tragically to what a life lived in Chancery is reduced to: 'Folly', 'Words', 'Wigs' 'Rags', and 'Gammon'.)[92] The difficulty faced by the characters in tracing the twists and turns of Chancery is not dissimilar to that faced by Dickens's readers in their first encounter with *Bleak House*. The interlacing of different narrative threads concerning the Dedlocks, Krook's lodging house, Esther Summerson, and numerous other sub-plots requires careful attention on the part of the reader in navigating them. In particular, of course, the shift from third- to first-person narration in the oscillation between Esther's narrative and the rest of the novel enacts a noticeable shift in perspective. While, as her portion of the narrative begins, she may 'have a great deal of difficulty in beginning to write [her] portion of these pages', Dickens's readers face a related difficulty in their own encounter with these words, working out how the emphatic 'I' with which chapter three begins can be integrated into the narrative pattern set by the preceding two—particularly given the eerie impersonal voice which declaims the famous opening passage.[93]

In one sense, the reading of *Bleak House*, indeed of any novel, involves a kind of trusting resignation—a faith in the author, and in his or her implicit promise to bring the scattered threads of the narrative together satisfactorily. This resignation might look and sound a bit like Lady Dedlock's acquiescence to her fate: 'I follow it alone to the end, whatever the end may be'.[94] Her hopeless abandonment to an unknown but pre-determined conclusion hints at the idea that Chancery itself is something like a modern, bureaucratic engine of fate in the novel—arbitrary, obscure, and inescapable. Looked at another way, however, the trusting resignation made by readers delivers them into the care of novelists much in the same way that Dickens described livestock in the *Household Words* articles discussed above: with the readers as sheep, and the novelist as their shepherd. In which case, Mr Bovington's exemplary

[92] Ibid., p. 819.
[93] Ibid., p. 15.
[94] Ibid., p. 511.

solicitude with regard to his cattle would contrast starkly with the carelessness of Mrs Jellyby in allowing Peepy to disappear out of town with a flock of sheep:

> As I had not seen Peepy on the occasion of our last call (when he was not to be found anywhere, and when the cook rather thought he must have strolled away with the dustman's cart), I now inquired for him again. The oyster shells he had been building a house with were still in the passage, but he was nowhere discoverable, and the cook supposed that he had 'gone after the sheep.' When we repeated, with some surprise, 'The sheep?' she said, Oh, yes, on market days he sometimes followed them quite out of town and came back in such a state as never was![95]

These scenarios are metaphors for the relations between writers and their readers, as much as they are parables of a duty of care towards those in vulnerable positions. (And as much, it could be added, as they demonstrate the importance of the comic wandering of the picaresque genre to Dickens's imagination; more often than not, 'going astray' in Dickens is accompanied by a sense of humour and adventure.) Like the structure of metaphors themselves (*a* is *b*), the two terms here—shepherd and sheep—construct a relation. In this, the social significance of following becomes apparent, as well as its importance for the individual. The inability of characters like Miss Flite and Richard to move on, compelled as they are to follow the dictates of habit rather than reason, illustrates the psychological effects of Chancery. There is also an important sense in which the novel depicts broader, social problems through the idea of following—particularly class structure and social hierarchy. Although those characters that we might consider as its two heroes—Esther Summerson and Mr Bucket—are, respectively, an orphan and a detective, Dickens also in significant senses resisted the secession of social authority to the middle class. Esther, after all, is the daughter of Lady Dedlock, and, near the beginning of the novel, Dickens pointedly critiqued the inversion of traditional relations of deference and service:

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[95] Ibid., p. 183.

> It may be so, or it may not, but there is this remarkable circumstance to be noted in everything associated with my Lady Dedlock as one of a class—as one of the leaders and representatives of her little world. She supposes herself to be an inscrutable Being, quite out of the reach and ken of ordinary mortals […]. Yet every dim little star revolving about her, from her maid to the manager of the Italian Opera, knows her weaknesses, prejudices, follies, haughtinesses, and caprices and lives upon as accurate a calculation and as nice a measure of her moral nature as her dressmaker takes of her physical proportions. Is a new dress, a new custom, a new singer, a new dancer, a new form of jewellery, a new dwarf or giant, a new chapel, a new anything, to be set up? There are deferential people in a dozen callings whom my Lady Dedlock suspects of nothing but prostration before her, who can tell you how to manage her as if she were a baby, who do nothing but nurse her all their lives, who, humbly affecting to follow with profound subservience, lead her and her whole troop after them; who, in hooking one, hook all and bear them off as Lemuel Gulliver bore away the stately fleet of the majestic Lilliput.[96]

Dickens seems both perturbed *and* amused by the idea that one might be being led by the nose at the moment one is followed with what seems like 'profound subservience'; although the cunning subterfuges of her servants hardly seem like a characteristically Dickensian virtue, the final image of Gulliver borne away by the Lilliputians introduces a note of the absurd into the passage. Less ambiguously, the characters of Tulkinghorn, Hortense, and Smallweed are the dramatic extension of this critique: figures who affect to serve others as a means of, or disguise for, the pursuit of their own ends. Dickens always valued straightforwardness in his heroes, even when this looked like impulsiveness—the failure totally to govern one's instincts is a guarantee of honesty, as in Nicholas Nickleby's violent irruptions. However, we might note also the spatial politics of the idea, as though honesty required, or was represented by, a straight line with no deviation or repetition. The act of following appears to distinguish between shepherd and sheep, master and servant, but the contradiction between appearance and reality exposed by Dickens in the above passage points to the multi-layered and ambiguous dynamics of following; a physical entourage of followers is not necessarily representative of the true social relations between those individuals.

[96] Ibid., p. 23

Bleak House rebukes not only those who serve to serve themselves, but also false prophets, such as Mr Chadband, or the Noodles, Doodles, and Boodles who are going through the motions of parliamentary governance. 'Mr. Chadband', for example, 'is attached to no particular denomination and is considered by his persecutors to have nothing so very remarkable to say on the greatest of subjects'. In spite of this, though, 'he has his followers, and Mrs. Snagsby is of the number'.[97] The consequences of mistaking a noodle ('a stupid or silly person', *OED*), or indeed Noodles, for an adequate leader are the same on a personal or political level. 'What follows?', Sir Leicester Dedlock asks rhetorically: 'the country is shipwrecked, lost, and gone to pieces'.[98]

Dickens himself had been a parliamentary reporter as a young man,[99] but by this point in his career he was thinking carefully about his own following. In 1850, the year before he began to write *Bleak House*, Dickens founded *Household Words*, with himself at the helm as 'conductor' of the magazine. His stated ambitions for the publication, boldly proclaimed in the opening number, are evidence of Dickens's sense that his influence among the reading public was considerable:

> We aspire to live in the Household affections, and to be numbered among the Household thoughts, of our readers. We hope to be the comrade and friend of many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions, on whose faces we many never look. We seek to bring into innumerable homes, from the stirring world around us, the knowledge of many social wonders, good and evil, that are not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of one another, les faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in this summer-dawn of time.[100]

[97] Ibid., p. 260.
[98] Ibid., p. 161.
[99] On this, see Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens*, pp. 69-78.
[100] 'A Preliminary Word', *Household Words* 1.1, 3 March 1850, p. 1.

Confident though this passage is, the 'Preliminary Word' also gestures towards a compensatory humility—'We have considered what an ambition it is to be admitted into many homes with affection and confidence'—designed to offset the grandiloquence of the announcement.[101] As the magazine's conductor, Dickens was evidently thinking carefully about the rhetorical strategies that would enable a writer to gain passage into the hearts and homes not merely of a wide readership, but the widest possible one: 'many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions, on whose faces we many never look'. This aspiration towards social inclusivity merges with a question of influence, in a similar way to that described above in the sections on livestock and detectives. It is not only the case that a large crowd requires a corresponding and adequate authority to control it—the constitution of an inclusive social group presupposes a persuasive and trustworthy conductor.

Following as a Noun

In an early number of Dickens's weekly *Master Humphrey's Clock*, the eponymous old man remarks with pleasure how 'Spirits of past times, creatures of imagination, and people of to-day are alike the objects of our seeking, and, unlike the objects of search with most philosophers, we can insure their coming at our command'.[102] We have already seen how the boons and the dangers of obedience exercised Dickens's imagination, and how this was frequently articulated using an animalised language. In this quotation, though, the sense of following as a verb (of pursuit, of obedience) is preceded by the sense of it as a noun (a group of individuals). The 'spirits', 'creatures', and 'people' summoned by Master Humphrey and his companions constitute a heterogeneous body of multiple taxonomic categories; at the very least they represent three different appellations for human or human-like figures. In the first

[101] Ibid.
[102] Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, p. 11

part of this chapter, I argued for a renewed attention to the extensiveness of Dickens's social imagination, and a similar eclectic inclusiveness is evident here too. The figures populating the stories told by this eccentric gathering are both unified and divided; the syntactic parallelism binds the different groups together ('spirits of past times, creatures of imagination, and people of to-day'), but within this repeated rhythm the diction of the speaker sorts them into categories (spirits, creatures, people). We have seen that the representation of follow*ing* helped to distinguish (not unfailingly, but effectively) between the law and criminals, masters and servants, or humans and animals, but the depiction of follow*ings* raises different political questions—about the creation of communities and the necessary tension between distinction and inclusion that this entails.

Dickens's consciousness of the semantic links between 'following' as a verb and as a noun is especially evident in the prefaces to his novels. John Carey's choice of words in describing Dickens's 'desire to *lead* his readers in public worship' is apposite here,[103] for Dickens often characterised the 'desultory' experience of serial publication as a kind of chase.[104] However, this chase was over by the time he wrote each preface—making them strangely untimely documents, as Dickens acknowledged. Set before the body of a novel in a single-volume edition, they nonetheless always express a strong sense of finality and hindsight. They are at once prospective and retrospective: 'I cannot forego my usual opportunity of saying farewell to my readers in this greeting-place, though I have only to acknowledge the unbounded warmth and earnestness of their sympathy in every stage of the journey we have just concluded.'[105] It 'would be very unreasonable', he admitted in a 'Postscript, In lieu of a Preface' to *Our Mutual Friend* (another attempt to acknowledge that untimeliness), 'to expect that many readers, pursuing a story in portions from month to month through nineteen months,

[103] *The Violent Effigy*, p. 108; emphasis added.
[104] 1857 Preface, *Little Dorrit*, p. lix.
[105] 1848 Preface, *Dombey and Son*, p. lv.

will, until they have it before them complete, perceive the relations of its finer threads to the whole pattern which is always before the eyes of the story-weaver at his loom'.[106] In prefaces to *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Dombey and Son*, too, Dickens described the publication as a 'journey' on which he led his readers.[107]

Dickens's consciousness of his readership is evidenced by a constant stream of solicitation within the prefaces. 'In the Preface to *Bleak House*', he remembered in the preface to his subsequent novel, 'I remarked that I had never had so many readers. In the Preface to its next successor, *Little Dorrit*, I have still to repeat the same words. Deeply sensible of the affection and confidence that have grown up between us, I add to this Preface, as I added to that, May we meet again!'.[108] It is also evident in his concern that the trail his readers have followed may have been arduous, dull, or obscure: in the same preface, he remarked with more than a hint of ruefulness that, 'as it is not unreasonable to suppose that I may have held its threads with a more continuous attention than anyone else can have given them during its desultory publication, it is not unreasonable to ask that the weaving may be looked at in its completed state, and with the pattern finished'.[109] In the 1847 Preface to *The Pickwick Papers*, he admitted that he 'could perhaps wish now that these chapters were strung together on a stronger thread of general interest',[110] whereas in 1837 he had been more sanguine about his hope that the picaresque narrative episodes were 'linked together by a chain of interest strong enough to prevent their appearing unconnected or impossible […] each leading to the other by a gentle and not unnatural progress of adventure'.[111] By the publication in one volume of *Bleak*

[106] *Our Mutual Friend*, p. 821.
[107] 1844 Preface, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, p. lix; 1848 Preface, *Dombey and Son*, p. lv.
[108] 1857 Preface, *Little Dorrit*, p. lx.
[109] Ibid., p. lix.
[110] *The Pickwick Papers*, ed. James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 883.
[111] Ibid., p. xcix.

House in 1853, he felt it necessary to assure his public that 'I do not wilfully or negligently *mislead* my readers'.[112]

It was not only his readers that Dickens regarded as a following. In these same prefaces, he cast the characters of the novels as a retinue or troupe of companions. An 'author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world', he observed in the Preface to *David Copperfield*, 'when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever'.[113] We might think of the 'crowd of creatures' Dickens was forced to abandon at the conclusion of each novel as something like Mr Sleary's circus in *Hard Times*, or Vincent Crummles's theatre troupe in *Nicholas Nickleby*; they are in effect the same motley band of 'spirits, creatures, and people' invoked in *Master Humphrey's Clock*. But crowds also carried more ambivalent significance for Dickens. He was awestruck at his reception in the United States of America, and wrote to John Forster about the impossibility of communicating it: 'How can I tell you what has happened since that first day? How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to the theatre'.[114] On the other hand, the crush and chaos that often ensued could just as easily slide into concern, even terror. As Dickens recounted, for instance, at one reading in Edinburgh, he was confronted by

> a tearing mad crowd in all the passages and in the street […] forcing a great turbid stream of people into the already crammed hall. The moment I appeared, 50 frantic men addressed me at once, and 50 other frantic men got upon ledges and cornices, and tried to find private audiences of their own. Meantime the crowd outside, still forced the turbid stream in, and I began to have some general idea that the platform would be driven through the wall behind it, and the wall into the street.[115]

[112] *Bleak House*, p. xiv; emphasis added.
[113] 1850 Preface, *David Copperfield*, p. lxxi.
[114] 29 January 1842, *Letters of Charles Dickens*, III, p. 34.
[115] To W.H. Wills, 3 December 1861, *Letters*, IX, pp. 531-32.

The frenzied single-mindedness of crowds both excited and perturbed Dickens, and this fear surfaces in the novels as well as in his correspondence. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, for instance, as in *Barnaby Rudge*, a violent mob metamorphoses into a boundless and unstoppable sea, a 'resistless […] force of the ocean', a 'whirlpool of boiling waters'.[116] It is not simply the fact that 'every living creature' in the crowd 'held life as of no account' that troubled and excited Dickens about such scenes;[117] it is that crowds swallow up individuality in the creation of a mind of its own—so that the differences between 'Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques One Thousand, Jacques Two Thousand, Jacques Five-and-Twenty Thousand', as he puts it in *A Tale of Two Cities*, become indistinguishable.[118] As John Bowen shows, the novel itself is deeply concerned with counting, and with who (or what) counts. In this, Bowen argues, *A Tale of Two Cities* should be seen as an imaginative exploration of a tension at the heart of liberal democracies: that every vote of every individual must count, but that the aggregate totals of such votes necessarily obscure the individuals of which such aggregates are constituted.[119] This is, of course, similar to the implicit injunction of classification—that a taxonomy must be able to account for or assimilate each individual variation, without making special provision for such differences. A curiously-placed comma in a later crowd scene in *A Tale of Two Cities* illustrates neatly what is at stake: 'The eye could not detect one creature in the group, free from the smear of blood.'[120] The pause demanded by the comma enables—or rather forces—an alternative, provisional parsing of the sentence, in which both individuality and humanity are abolished: 'The eye could not detect *one* creature in the group', and 'The eye could not detect

[116] *A Tale of Two Cities*, ed. Sir John Shuckburgh (London: Oxford University Press, 1967 [1859]), p. 204.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., p. 205.
[119] 'Counting On: A Tale of Two Cities', in *Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities and the French Revolution*, pp. 104-25.
[120] *A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 249.

one *creature* in the group'. The rioters in *Barnaby Rudge*, to which I turn in more detail below, are depicted in similar terms.

Dickens's explicit aim with the representation of the Gordon riots was not only to de-individualise the crowd, but almost to lose his characters amidst the mayhem. In an oft-quoted letter to John Landseer on 5 November 1841, he describes the difficulty of writing the riot scenes:

> No man in the crowd who was pressed and trodden here and there, saw Wilkes. No looker-on from a window at the struggle in the street, beheld an Individual, or anything but a great mass of magistrates, rioters, and soldiery, all mixed up together. Being always in one or other of these positions, my object has been to convey an idea of multitudes, violence, and fury; and even to lose my own dramatis personae in the throng, or only see them dimly, through the fire and smoke.[121]

This same image resurfaces in the text itself:

> A mob is usually a creature of very mysterious existence, particularly in a large city. Where it comes from or whither it goes, few men can tell. Assembling and dispersing with equal suddenness, it is as difficult to follow to its various sources as the sea itself; nor does the parallel stop here, for the ocean is not more fickle and uncertain, more terrible when roused, more unreasonable, or more cruel.[122]

The spontaneous unification of individual feelings into an aggregate, cathected emotion could be a source of wonder as well as terror, as when Dickens wrote glowingly to Daniel Maclise after a reading of 'The Life and Death of Little Dombey', that 'I never saw a crowd so resolved into one creature before, or so stirred by any thing'.[123] His choice of words is both precise and suggestive, with 'resolved' carrying with it senses of decisiveness, unification, decomposition, and diffusion. *Resolving*, for Dickens, is what a crowd did: dissolving or melting into a single

[121] *Letters*, II, p. 417.
[122] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. 396.
[123] 11 June 1858, *Letters*, VIII, p. 584.

substance, and splitting up into its constituent parts—an undecidable, ambivalent form of taxonomy.

Dickens's followings—in the shape of his reading audience, his cast of characters, and the anarchic pseudo-political mobs of his historical novels—resonate with anxieties about a loss of individuality and distinction, even of humanity. Yet he kept returning to them. In the following and final section of this chapter, I offer a reading of *Barnaby Rudge* which picks up on the threads of previous sections. I show how the novel is unique in Dickens's canon for the way it weaves together, and complicates, the questions of criminals and the law, masters and servants, leaders and followers, individuals and crowds, and humans and other animals that have been drawn out above. It is a peculiarly concentrated instance of Dickens's preoccupation with literal and figurative followings, and their capacity to order—and disorder—social life. Furthermore, it shows how Dickens's poetics of following establishes the ambiguous, liminal position of one character in particular: Grip the raven.

Barnaby Rudge

Barnaby Rudge remains a strange novel, despite a recent critical rehabilitation after over a century of dismissal.[124] Its tone is hard to judge, and one of the main stumbling blocks is the question of how to understand the role in the narrative of Grip the raven, and to a lesser extent Hugh the ostler-cum-centaur. In their attempts to come to terms with the strange centrality of the animals and animalised humans to the novel, the majority of its readers have based their analyses on a binary understanding of human/animal difference.[125] *Barnaby Rudge*, though, is

[124] On this rehabilitation, see Iain Crawford, '"Nature … Drenched in Blood": *Barnaby Rudge* and Wordsworth's "The Idiot-Boy"', *Dickens Quarterly*, 8.1 (1991), 38-48 (p. 38).

[125] See, for example, differing accounts of Grip and Hugh in James K. Gottshall, 'Devil's Abroad: The Unity and Significance of *Barnaby Rudge*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 16.2 (1961), 133-46; Myron Magnet, *Dickens and the Social Order* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Michael Hollington, 'Monstrous Faces: Physiognomy in *Barnaby Rudge*', *Dickens Quarterly* 8.1 (1991), 6-15; Barbara L. Stuart,

the novel of Dickens's that places most stress on this dichotomy—stress both in terms of emphasis, and of testing pressure. An idealised version of humanity appears to be constantly under siege by the bestialising tendencies of criminality, social ostracisation, savagery, and mental disability: this is a novel in which howling mobs, an inhumane executioner, a 'bird-brained' child, and a beastly centaur take centre stage.

At its core, the novel is occupied by questions of political community, by questions of exclusion and inclusion, and the susceptibility of societies to exploitation from within and without. This is why, when the novel reaches its retelling of the Gordon Riots, the riots themselves are led by figures occupying the border-zones of those communities: a severely developmentally-arrested twenty-one-year-old; an ostler who is frequently described as a 'centaur', and is the child of a Gypsy mother; and a hangman (a non-criminal murderer sanctioned by the state). The question of 'who counts' in this society is an especially relevant one for the novel, dealing as it does with the Gordon Riots, which were ostensibly provoked by a repeal of laws prohibiting Roman Catholics from owning property and holding official office. Tied in to the questions raised by the existence of members of a society that cannot or do not participate fully in the political life of that society (Roman Catholics, the mentally disabled, Gypsies, even domestic and companion animals), Dickens also represents the dangers entailed by a myopic subscription to a particular cause, in the shape of demagoguery and unthinking obedience. He does so by depicting the riots not as an outpouring of public feeling, but rather as the result of the machinations of two calculating villains (Gashford and Sir John Chester) pursuing their own private ends. As such, the actions of the mob are the result of manipulation rather than voluntary action, of being led rather than following. As it was in the earlier discussion of Dickens's writing on Smithfield, following here is a form of social relation

'The Centaur in *Barnaby Rudge*', *Dickens Quarterly* 8.1 (1991), 29-37; and Jerome H. Buckley, '"Quoth the Raven": The Role of Grip in *Barnaby Rudge*', *Dickens Studies Annual* 21 (1992), 27-35.

at once necessary and subject to abuse. As has also been the case throughout this chapter, in *Barnaby Rudge* Dickens used animals to think through these questions on the page.

In the 1849 preface to the Cheap Edition of *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens tells two stories: one about the 'two great originals' which inspired him to create the fictional Grip, and another about the execution of eighteen-year-old Mary Jones in 1777 for petty shoplifting.[126] Both ravens, we learn, died from eating the wrong thing (respectively, 'a pound or two of white lead', and 'the greater part of a wooden staircase'); Mary Jones was put to death for the 'comfort and satisfaction of shopkeepers in Ludgate Street'.[127] Before their 'youthful indiscretion[s]', these ravens exhibited remarkable mental acuity: the first with gifts 'improved by study and attention in a most exemplary manner', and the second yet 'more gifted', whose first act is 'to administer to the effects of his predecessor, by disinterring all the cheese and halfpence he had buried in the garden – a work of immense labour and research, to which he devoted all the energies of his mind'.[128] The preface pushes in different directions. The second raven comes along both to repeat and to undo the work of the first, and this, in one sense, is an allegory of Dickens's relation to the historical fiction of Walter Scott, as Bowen suggests:

> The preface tells a story, or a pair of stories, about youth and death, food and money, language and burial, tales about the limits or ends of the human in talking animals and judicial execution. But they also begin an historical novel, one which settles accounts with, moves beyond or, alternatively, lamely imitates the historical fiction of Walter Scott. The second raven of the preface, who succeeds the first, is 'more gifted' than his predecessor, but spends most of his short brilliant life undoing all the first bird's work.[129]

[126] This is noted by Bowen, *Other Dickens* pp. 164-65.
[127] *Barnaby Rudge*, pp. xxiii-xxv.
[128] Ibid., p. xxiv.
[129] *Other Dickens*, p. 165.

Simultaneously, Dickens's preface raises questions of causation: 'Nothing seems to follow or succeed'.[130] What exactly is the link between the story of the ravens, and Mary Jones's execution? Is the first anecdote finished before the second one begins? Chronologically they are reversed, but the point of the preface (and of the promiscuous conjoining of two narratives that seems both to call for, and resist, such melding) is that they linger on as part of and apart from the main text. Is the preface a recapitulation or *précis* of the novel that follows it? (Especially given that the 1849 Cheap Edition was released eight years after the commencement of the novel's original serialisation, and therefore thirteen years after its initial conception.) *Barnaby Rudge* begins before the preface is properly finished, but its timeline was also tangled up with another story—*The Old Curiosity Shop*—which was serialised with *Barnaby Rudge* contemporaneously in eighty-eight weekly numbers of Dickens's magazine *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840-41). *Barnaby Rudge* should have been his first planned published novel, instead of his fifth, as John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson have noted, had he kept to the plans he made while writing *The Pickwick Papers*.[131]

Much of the novel's strangeness stems from its disordered sense of time and causation, and its confusion of temporal or logical sequence; this is a novelistic world in which the usual order of things is repeatedly disrupted. For the first half of the novel, the focus is on the personal relations linking three places (the Maypole Inn, the run-down Catholic aristocratic manor known as the Warren, and the locksmith Gabriel Varden's London home), and for the second half the narrative jumps forward five years, and places these three characters at the centre of the 'largest, deadliest and most protracted urban riots in British history'.[132] In this narrative of social disorder—'A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty', as the subtitle puts it—one of the major

[130] Ibid., p. 166.
[131] *Dickens at Work* (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 76. For an account of the novel's 'unusual' composition, see pp. 76-82 of the same study.
[132] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 2nd edn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009 [1992]), p. 339.

symptoms of this disorder is the failure of history to move on, or to progress, as expected: Barnaby Rudge senior returns from the dead, stagnation reigns at the Maypole, inheritances are forfeited, fathers outlive sons. The narrative leaps and loops over on itself—skipping five years at a bound, but also beginning with a ghost story about the return of a character long thought to be dead—so that the reference to 'Time […] roll[ing] on like a might river' towards the novel's end strikes us less as a cliché than a moment of wishful thinking.[133]

The multiple synchronous timeframes of the novel give the lie to this metaphor: the 1840s when it appeared; the 1775-1780 period in which it is set; and the hundred and twenty years prior to that which Grip has apparently lived, thus going back to 1655.[134] (We might add to this the mythic timeframe from which is drawn the figure of the centaur/satyr Hugh.) None of these timeframes, though, work like a frame; that is, none of them properly contain anything. Grip and the Jesuit spectres of the seventeenth century return in the late-eighteenth,[135] and the anti-Catholicism of both periods resonates in the 1840s, while the contemporary Chartist agitation is read back into history. Grip's disjuncture with the novel's temporal schemes amplifies the questions raised by the 'deep caesura' in the narrative,[136] throwing into sharper focus one of the major themes of the novel: that history repeats itself, and that it is a repetition without a known origin. As Steven Marcus notes, in the novel 'the past persists in the present, in society and in personal life',[137] and these hauntings, repetitions, and livings-on thread the text with an insistent sense of the uncanny. John Bowen's account of the novel's sense of history argues that what is at stake in these repetitions is 'the possibility of a more radical, disturbing, or originary understanding of historical narrative, one that is also uncanny, self-

[133] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. 584.
[134] Ibid., p. 55.
[135] For the argument that, in the novel's account of 1775-80, 'the Jesuit roams undiminished as her [Bloody Mary's] phallus, her unborn, never-conceived son', see Judith Wilt, 'Masques of the English in *Barnaby Rudge*', *Dickens Studies Annual* 30.1 (2001), 75-94 (p. 77).
[136] *Other Dickens*, p. 167.
[137] *Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey*, p. 175.

effacing, abyssal'.[138] In this vision of history, there is no guarantee that events follow on from each other causally or sequentially.

Looked at one way, there are aspects described above of Dickens's prefaces that anticipate, or revisit, some of the key animating concerns of *Barnaby Rudge*. Their odd layering of temporalities is echoed in the dramatic hauntings and lacunae in the novel. The 'crowd' of creatures populating its pages becomes an unruly, destructive mob, and the talking raven Grip, ever-present companion of the eponymous Barnaby, provides a ventriloquisable figure through which Dickens can reflect on the narrative in progress. At once part of and set apart from the story proper, Grip's liminal position in (and out of) the novel mirrors those of the paratextual prefaces. Like those documents, he exists both before and after the timeframe of the novel: as I note above, Gabriel Varden estimates the bird's age at 'A hundred and twenty, or thereabouts',[139] but the very last sentence closes with the surmise that Grip 'has very probably gone on talking to the present time'.[140]

We might ask what relation the Grip of *Barnaby Rudge* has to the ravens of the preface. The document itself suggests that this relation might be analogous to that between an original and a copy (or, in this case, two originals),[141] or to that between a preface and a novel proper. One of the originals was certainly named Grip, among the three that he owned as pets in the 1830s and 40s. The editors of Dickens's letters assert that, as he claimed in the preface, 'the characteristics of Barnaby's Grip may be thought to have derived from the original Grip, which died in 1841, and the third raven, which died in 1845'.[142] (There is a question of pronouns here, introduced by the editors' choice of 'which'. When paired with the verb 'died', we might expect

[138] *Other Dickens*, p. 161.
[139] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. 51.
[140] Ibid., p. 634.
[141] On the complication of the distinction between originals and copies in the nineteenth century, and in Dickens particularly, see Robert Macfarlane, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 50-91.
[142] *Letters*, II, p. 524.

to hear ‘who’ instead of ‘which’ when reading about a named individual. Both are of course legitimate, but our use of ‘she’ or ‘it’, ‘who’ or ‘which’, when referring to animals is itself an act with taxonomic ramifications. One of the things that fictional narratives enable, and particularly Dickens’s, are thought experiments in thinking of animals as ‘who’ rather than ‘which’.) In reading the novel, we are faced with more than one raven, and we are invited to regard the character Grip as both identified with, and different from, his forebears. The fictional Grip himself appears to exult in a related sense of multiple being:

> The raven, in his little basket at his master’s back, hearing this frequent mention of his name in a tone of exultation, expressed his sympathy by crowing like a cock, and afterwards running over his various phrases of speech with such rapidity, and in so many varieties of hoarseness, that they sounded like the murmurs of a crowd of people.[143]

In drawing attention to Grip’s ontological status as both a copy from life and a fictive invention, Dickens split Grip between the two, in which neither original nor copy, life nor fiction, have a discernible relation of priority.

The ‘murmurs of a crowd of people’ whisper a presentiment of the violent delights depicted in the second part of the novel. As I note above, for Dickens, mobs were liable to become both de-individualised and dehumanised, and this particular mob also dramatically overspills the limits of both the human and the humane. In one scene, the drowsy rioters ‘lay wallowing, like some obscene animals, in their squalor and wickedness on the two heaps of straw’,[144] while, during the riots themselves,

> they found in one of the rooms some canary birds in cages, and these they cast into the fire alive. The poor little creatures screamed, it was said, like infants, when they were

[143] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. 131.
[144] Ibid., p. 398.

> flung upon the blaze; and one man was so touched that he tried in vain to save them, which roused the indignation of the crowd, and nearly cost him his life.[145]

In this passage the frenzied, indiscriminate destruction of life indicates a group of people no longer bound by social convention. Dickens goes a step further than this, though, and represents the riots as a period in which the law is absent or suspended, and the rioters are a beastly entity outside or above the law.[146] There is a conspicuous and deliberate absence of absolute governing authority: the King sends a feeble proclamation offering a reward for information; a 'strong military force disposed in every advantageous quarter' is ineffectively deployed several days into the riots; and 'The House of Commons' sits uselessly behind 'locked and guarded doors' mulling over its response.[147] When Geoffrey Haredale, for instance, attempts to accost the Lord Mayor he is refused entry to his lodging, in much the same way as the protagonist of Kafka's short story 'Before the Law' is denied access to a legislative authority.[148] In fact, these misled followers of Lord Gordon end up headed by the centaur-like Hugh, 'wield[ing] an axe in his right hand, and [astride] a brewer's horse of great size and strength, caparisoned with fetters taken out of Newgate', and they become a singular, ungovernable entity.[149] For Dickens, the mob embodied an assemblage of animalised individuals that momentarily detached itself from the body politic, offering a fleeting glimpse of a community at once part and not part of the human, political world.

The novel is thus peculiarly transfixed by instances of disordered following: of the abrogation of temporal sequence, and of the corruption of a body of people. And Grip is a

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[145] Ibid., p. 511.

[146] As Jacques Derrida observed, the beast and the sovereign are alike in their position outside or above the law. On this, see Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, 2 vols, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and David Wills (Chicago and London: Chicago and University Press, 2009-11).

[147] *Barnaby Rudge,* pp. 405, 558, 559.

[148] On this story, see Jacques Derrida, 'Before the Law', in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge, trans. Avital Ronnell and Christine Roulston (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 181-220.

[149] *Barnaby Rudge,* p. 517.

figure that allows Dickens to think through these questions—by being a creature that is at once in and out of the novel in several senses. Moreover, Grip's relation to these questions also allows Dickens to reflect on the form of the novel itself. Dickens realised that, like animals, narrators too are liminal creatures, and that this position entails both advantage and ambiguity.

Grip occupies an odd taxonomic position within the novel, neither fully *in* it nor completely external to the dramatic action of the narrative. Even at the level of grammar, this distinction is unclear: the narrator's references to Grip switch between an impersonal third-person noun ('the raven') and the more familiar third-person pronoun ('he'). We might note here that the tendency to distinguish between kinds of being is built into the syntax of the English language: 'he', 'she', and 'it' all carry different implications, and draw different lines between their referents. Even now, in both colloquial and professional discourses, animals occupy the uncertain middle ground between a 'he'/'she', and an 'it'—capable of being referred to as either, they oscillate between person and thing depending on the speaker's own assumptions or intentions. Grip likewise straddles the boundary of the word and world: he is multiplied by the 1849 preface; and his lifespan runs in parallel and beyond the novel's timeline(s).

Moreover, Grip's traits were influenced by contemporaneous folkloric beliefs about ravens, rendering him a compound figure of tradition and invention. Ravens, as Boria Sax notes, have always had an especially rich history within folklore and myth.[150] The conviction that ravens were extraordinarily long-lived, for instance, was a familiar one, and was reinforced by its inclusion in various articles on the 'natural history' of the raven in the periodical press.[151] These articles blended fact and superstition,[152] observation and anecdote, without concern for

[150] *Crow* (London: Reaktion, 2003), p. 8.
[151] See, for example, 'The Naturalist', *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 17 September 1836, 181-83 (p. 181).
[152] This fact was noted by the anonymous author of 'The Raven', *Fraser's Magazine* 55.328, April 1857, 438-54 (p. 442).

verifiability or accuracy. In particular, a number of motifs associated with the raven cast light on why Dickens placed a talking example of the species at the heart of his novel. Ravens supposedly possessed between sixty-five and one hundred vocal inflections,[153] combined with remarkable powers of vocal imitation.[154] In a novel in which, as John Folland has observed, 'doer' and 'deed' frequently do not match up, the capacity of mimicry to trouble our sense of origins and originals was evidently valuable. Moreover, ravens were considered potent birds of omen, especially with regard to death.[155] They were said to possess a preternatural ability to sense disease and impending death, in humans and other animals.[156] Hybrid 'natural histories' of the raven that mixed science and superstition readily compounded this to generate an aura of curiosity and even dread around the bird. Grip is therefore not only a 'compound of two great originals', but also an amalgam of natural history, personal experience, and folklore: of ravens and The Raven. In this particular context, then, we might return with greater specificity to the quotation from Derrida discussed earlier. To consider Grip the raven in *Barnaby Rudge* is to see, in multiple ways, how the human characters of the novel follow Grip (in terms of chronology, and as a bird of omen), and how they are followed by him (as the sole contemporary survivor of the narrative, as pet, and as a literal and figurative carrion bird). Moreover, to *be* in the novel is, as Dickens's preface intimated, is to be *after* Grip. 'Call him!', exclaims Barnaby when asked to subdue the bird, 'But who can make him come! He calls me, and makes me go where he will. He goes on before, and I follow. He's the master, and I'm the man'.[157]

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[153] 'The Raven', *Saturday Magazine*, 19 December 1840, 237-38 (p. 237); William Dowling, *A Popular Natural History of Quadrupeds and Birds* (London: Burns, 1849), p. 251.

[154] 'The Raven', *Fraser's Magazine*, April 1857, 438-54 (p. 442).

[155] 'The Raven, (Corvus Corax)', *Saturday Magazine*, 31 October 1840, 165-66 (p. 165); Christian Johnstone, 'The White Raven of Moher', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, October 1835, 693-95 (p. 694); G. F. W., 'The Raven', *Bentley's Miscellany*, January 1838, 469; Charles Waterton, *Essays on Natural History, Chiefly Ornithological* (London: Warne, 1870 [1838]), pp. 288-90.

[156] 'The Raven', *Saturday Magazine*, p. 237; 'The Raven, (Corvus Corax)', *Saturday Magazine*, p. 165.

[157] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. 51.

Grip is both a character in the story and an avatar for the narrator. That the eponymous Barnaby—in this nominative sense the voice of the novel—designates Grip the master and not the man helps us see this more clearly. It might lead us to recall, for instance, that the very name Grip refers not just indexically to a figure in the novel, but deictically to the hold that the man who styled himself as the 'Inimitable' hoped to have over his readership. Like Grip, Dickens set out to be the master, not the follower. In particular, the raven's ambiguous, but continually reasserted, *knowingness* is a way for Dickens to register and perform his need to grip his readers, and to get a grip on the story. That Grip is the most appropriate figure in the novel through which to depict this need is clear in the resemblance between birds and narrators posited at the beginning of chapter nine: 'Chroniclers are privileged to enter where they list, to come and go through keyholes, to ride upon the wind, to overcome, in their soarings up and down, all obstacles of distance, time, and place.'[158]

Grip's repetitious speech disturbs the characters in the novel, but he is no less apparently threatening for his 'knowing' looks.[159] Here, the hanging present participle of *knowing* indicates no particular body of knowledge, but rather a foreknowledge that is continually in anticipation of the present. It also refers therefore to a body of knowledge to which we, as readers, do not have access. For taken in isolation, 'knowing' oscillates between an adjective and a transitive verb missing its object—knowing *what*? A knowledge of the causal links between actions is a preserve of the villainous Gashford and Chester, who are nonetheless undone in the great ferment of their actions. *Knowing* itself, a condition unattached to links of any kind, causal or otherwise, is the supernatural gift of the raven. Grip's knowingness, his gift of prophesy, and his life before and beyond the narrative, suggest that he might be as much the narrator's familiar as Barnaby's. Like the narrator, Grip's role is that of

[158] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. 69.
[159] Ibid., p. 51.

observer, as in the scene in which Barnaby's father, unbeknownst to his son, watches him menacingly from behind a door: 'Grip – alive to everything his master was unconscious of – had his head out of the basket, and in return was watching him intently with his glistening eye'.[160] To be 'alive' to what other characters are unconscious of is a peculiar privilege of the narrator, but also, as Dickens here intimates, of personages that hover on the edge of the narrative proper. They are 'alive to' the actions of the other characters but not, perhaps, as 'alive' as them. Think, for instance, of Edgar Allen Poe's raven in the eponymous poem, 'perched above [the] chamber door' of the weary scholar: poised at the threshold of the room, the 'stately Raven' appears to be uncannily in possession of coherent, yet enigmatic, answers to the speaker's desperate inquiries.[161] It is generally considered that *Barnaby Rudge* was one of Poe's two main sources for 'The Raven';[162] in its depiction of a threshold figure possessed of a kind of unfathomable knowingness, the poem's dramatic situation highlights the liminal nature of Dickens's corvid, as well as Grip's role as intermediary between the novelist and his readers.

Once more, contemporary periodical articles offer a useful context for thinking about the implications of Grip's knowingness. Ravens were said to circle dying animals (human or otherwise), aided by supernatural sensory powers which led them to those about to become their next meal. Bearing more than a hint of the ghostly or uncanny, ravens were thus associated with a preternatural prescience about impending death. As a writer in the *Saturday Magazine* put it, 'The faculty by which the Raven is able to discern at a great distance the dead or dying animal, on which it is about to feed, is one of which we can have little conception'.[163] In the course of history, the Chinese-whispers effect of folklore muddled the causal relation

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[160] Ibid., p. 132.
[161] *The Collected Works of Edgar Allen Poe*, 3 vols, ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 1969), I, p. 366.
[162] William H. Gravely Jnr, 'Christopher North and the Genesis of the Raven', *PMLA* 66.2 (1951), 149-61.
[163] 'The Raven', *The Saturday Magazine*, December 1840, p. 237.

underlying this phenomenon: it was equally possible that, and equally uncertain whether, ravens were able to sense when an animal was dying or were themselves the bringers of death.

Grip is both the narrator's and Barnaby's familiar, and the idea of the familiar is a helpful one for thinking about the role of animals in literature more broadly. Both fictional animals and familiars are ineluctably tied to their creator or master, but possessed of an independent form; they are responsive to their master's will, and yet not identical to him or her. The word 'familiar' implies both intimacy and resemblance, even as it maintains a clear distance—much like a simile. Literary animals are a kind of authorial projection into a text, charged (consciously and unconsciously) with moments of reflexivity, structural problem-solving, and deictic gesturing. We can never regard them as wholly independent beings, of course, but neither can animal figures be completely assimilated into narratives and poems as though they were humans in disguise. Ravens offered Dickens the chance to reflect aslant on *Barnaby Rudge* from within the novel itself. Accordingly, I end this chapter with a different kind of bird's-eye view from which to see the questions raised in the thesis as a whole.

In the second number of *Household Words*, in April 1850, an article appeared entitled 'Perfect Felicity. In a Bird's-Eye View'. It begins in bold and declarative style: 'I am the Raven in the Happy Family—and nobody knows what a life of misery I lead!'[164] As strangely as this pronouncement might strike modern ears, this Raven referred to a specific cultural phenomenon. Happy Families were sources of popular entertainment in the middle of the century, in which a diverse array of species (some traditionally regarded as antagonists or natural foes) cohabited in apparent peace and equanimity. In the same year as 'Perfect Felicity' appeared, Henry Mayhew had begun to publish *London Labour and the London Poor* in parts. In what would later be released as part of volume three, he devoted a section to 'The Happy

[164] *Household Words* 1.2, 6 April 1850, 36-38 (p. 36).

Family Exhibitor', in which he affirmed that these 'assemblages of animals of diverse habits and propensities living amicably, or at least quietly' were 'so well known as to need no further description here'.[165] The 'misery' of the Raven in Dickens's piece quickly morphs into hectoring indignation regarding the supposed superiority of humans over other animals, and this pose is resumed twice more in subsequent articles by the same 'contributor', entitled titled 'From the Raven in the Happy Family'.

These articles demonstrate once more Dickens's use of ravens to offer alternative perspectives on a phenomenon from within it. In 'Perfect Felicity', the raven reflects on the absurdity of the Happy Family, and laments the inhibiting restrictions imposed by such arrangements. Surrounded by 'incongruous companions', the Raven cannot bury his treasures as he would outside the cage: 'I am a Raven', he explains, and 'am, by nature, a sort of collector'.[166] The articles offer a light satirical swipe at the evident attitude of mastery that underwrote the sorts of collecting and exhibiting that were represented by the Happy Family. In the second part, for instance, the raven's vitriol is targeted at the presumptuousness of natural history's claims to knowledge: 'I like the idea of you men writing histories of *us*, and settling what we are not, and calling us any names you like best'.[167] What did Buffon 'know about birds—especially about Ravens?' he asks rhetorically.[168]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this Raven bears more than a passing resemblance to Grip, and to the pet ravens mentioned in the 1849 Preface. The resonant 'Halloa!' with which the second number ends is a not-so-distant echo of Grip's 'Halloa, halloa, halloa!' upon his entrance into the novel—as well as of the first raven's stoical 'Halloa, old girl!'.[169] The Raven's uncle,

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[165] *London Labour and the London Poor*, III, p. 293.
[166] 'Perfect Felicity', p. 36.
[167] 'From the Raven in the Happy Family', *Household Words* 1.11, 8 June 1850, 241-42 (p. 241).
[168] Ibid.
[169] See a letter to Daniel Maclise on 12 March 1841, describing the raven's final hours. *Letters*, II, pp. 230-32.

residing 'in a stable-yard down in Yorkshire' (the origin of Dickens's first raven),[170] is likely occupied in similar pastimes to the second raven mentioned in the preface, who delighted to whistle and to drive horses in the stables.[171] Similarly, the Raven in the Happy Family and the first raven of the preface both delight to collect things and bury their hoard in the ground.[172] That the traits of Grip and Dickens's own ravens should reappear in this figure is hardly surprising, but, as if there was a risk of overlooking the similarities, the openings of the two subsequent articles foreground the longevity of ravens—a longevity that quietly threads together these diverse texts. 'I have made up my mind to go on',[173] the second article begins, only for the third to return more dramatically, with a note of the resurrectionist impulse legible in the letters: 'I suppose you thought I was dead? No such thing. Don't flatter yourselves that I haven't got my eye upon you. I am wide awake, and you give me plenty to look at.'[174]

'What you look hard at looks hard at you', Gerard Manley Hopkins once mused.[175] In these articles, Dickens explores a similar sensation. Paradoxically, the Raven's position as an exhibition—as something to be looked *at*—exposes the audience to an even more fiercely scrutinising stare. The observations of the animals in the Happy Families would constitute a natural history of humans, suggests the Raven; more precisely, the account would be an unflattering one. 'What colors do you think you would show in', he wonders mischievously, 'if some of us were to take it into our heads to write histories of *you*? I know something of Astley's Theatre,[176] I hope; I was about the stables there, a few years. Ecod! if you heard the

[170] 'Perfect Felicity', p. 37.
[171] *Barnaby Rudge*, p. xxiv.
[172] 'Perfect Felicity', p. 36; *Barnaby Rudge*, p. xxiv.
[173] 'From the Raven in the Happy Family', *Household Words* 1.11, p. 241.
[174] 'From the Raven in the Happy Family', *Household Words* 1.22, 24 August 1850, 505-507 (p. 505).
[175] *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, eds. Humphrey House and Graham Storey (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 204. Cited in Matthew Bevis, 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight', p. 38.
[176] A popular equestrian theatre in London.

observations of the Horses after the performance, you'd have some of the conceit taken out of you!'[177] In the first article, the Raven gleefully anticipates getting up

> a Happy Family of men, and show 'em. I should like to put the Rajah Brooke, the Peace Society, Captain Aaron Smith, several Malay Pirates, Doctor Wiseman, the Reverend Hugh Stowell, Mr Fox of Oldham, the Board of Health, all the London undertakers, some of the Common […] Council, and all the vested interests in the filth and misery of the poor, into a good-sized cage, and see how *they*'d get on. I should like to look in at 'em through the bars.[178]

The last line of vision, 'through the bars', is of course one that exists already in the Raven's current 'false position'.[179] Both 'Happy Families' gaze in curiosity at each other. In the repeated references to lines of sight and acts of looking, it is hinted that the Raven is already witness to a dysfunctional Happy Family, in all its 'filth and misery'. And so, like Grip in *Barnaby Rudge*, the Raven in the Happy Family articulates an alternative perspective from within; a trick of mirrors in which the creature being observed turns observer. As we have seen, this was often true of the animals included in Victorian literature—as embodiments of a liminal taxonomic status, they were neither properly in nor fully out of a given form or frame.

Kurt Koenigsberger has suggested that the English novel and the zoological collection (menageries, zoos, circuses, Happy Families) are 'homologous' imperial structures.[180] The novel's incorporation and display of a heterogeneous body of creatures, which synthesises them into a cohesive whole, provided shape and style for imperial ambition. The list of other animals with which the Raven is confined could well serve as a bestiary for any number of Victorian novels and poems: 'a cat, a mouse, a pigeon, a ringdove, an owl (who is the greatest ass I have ever known), a guinea-pig, a sparrow, and a variety of other creatures with whom I have no

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[177] 'From the Raven in the Happy Family', *Household Words* 1.11, p. 241.
[178] 'Perfect Felicity', p. 36.
[179] Ibid., p. 37.
[180] *The Novel and the Menagerie*, p. x, see esp. pp. 1-31.

opinion in common'.[181] Indeed, it may help to think about the novel—particularly Dickens's—as another kind of Happy Family; both for the diversity of its creaturely forms of life, and its orientation towards an audience. Victorians themselves appear to have perceived the resemblance, as demonstrated in the popular card game, also named 'Happy Families'. Originally created in 1851 by John Jaques Jr, the object of the game is to collect all four members of one of four 'families' (usually defined in terms of trades) before the other players. The game was published thirty years after the *OED*'s first recorded usage of the animal 'Happy Family', and it clearly takes inspiration from the collecting and grouping involved in its namesake. Moreover, the separation of humans into families based on trades is another kind of taxonomy, akin to Mayhew's classification of the population of the metropolis. This card game is a neat example of the fact that the classifying imagination transcended species borders, but also that this tendency could produce play as well as order—or, rather, play within orderliness.

Happy Families held an appeal that zoological gardens and museum exhibitions did not, in that they brought together an eclectic assortment of animals and housed them in a single space. Resonant with echoes of Isaiah 11 ('The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together'),[182] the Happy Family both emphasises species difference, and disregards or transcends it. The identity of species as predator or prey, gregarious or lonely, for instance, was a condition of the exhibition's effect, but the premise was that such traits were not acted upon. They were taxonomically ambivalent, stressing both difference and universality; in this, they are again like the works discussed in this thesis. When we look at the infra-textual menageries of novels

[181] 'Perfect Felicity', p. 36.

[182] Isaiah 11:6, *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, eds. Robert P. Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 775.

and poems in this period, we see simultaneous movements towards distinction and unification. This, after all, is the central tension of the classifying imagination.

As a nexus of artistic composition, social being, and political organisation, the question of who follows whom offered a point at which ambitions for narrative coherence, verisimilitudinous representation, and broader political or social significance could converge. At once natural order, and unpredictable constructed relation, the implications of following enabled Dickens's novels to depict a solid ground of social life, as well as its vagaries, confusions, corruptions, and reformations. It is under this rubric of arrangement that we can best see the place and importance of other animals in Dickens's work; for the improvisatory, provisional character of following as an action allows a flexible interpretive framework in which animals could be both present and absent, accidental or intentional, ornamental or functional. As a peculiarly accommodating form of social arrangement, who follows whom ends up making a virtue out of necessity.

3. Emily Brontë and the Afterlives of Animals

Immanent Animals

Emily Brontë was fond of animals, almost to a fault. 'We all knew how great was Emily Brontë's tenderness for the lower animals', wrote Swinburne in 1883.[1] But this tenderness was not always forthcoming to those higher up in the order of creation, as Gaskell had earlier noted: 'Some one speaking of her to me, in a careless kind of strength of expression, said "she never showed regard to any human creature; all her love was reserved for animals"'.[2] The 'strength of expression' Gaskell attributed to her source corresponds to the intensity, and sometimes violence, of Brontë's attachment to other animals. The strength of this affinity has often been noted,[3] and it is an unusual kind of fondness—one which, for example, led to a famous incident in which she punished an obdurate Keeper (her mastiff dog) by pummelling him with her bare fists, before immediately tending his bruised head, and thereby fostering an intimate and lifelong understanding.[4]

Illustrating how animals are depicted as liminal beings in *Wuthering Heights*—poised on thresholds between dead and alive, life and the afterlife, inside and outside, wild and domestic—this chapter shows that Heathcliff too is represented as part-human and part-animal, and that the distinction between humans and other animals more broadly is put in question by the novel. In its preoccupation with distinctions and limits, death emerges as a key term which both distinguishes between, and connects, different forms of life. All lives come to an end, but not necessarily the same end. In orthodox nineteenth-century Protestant theology, the

[1] *Athenaeum*, 16 June 1883, pp. 762-63, in *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Miriam Allot (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 440.
[2] *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, p. 268.
[3] See, for example, Winifred Gérin in her standard biographical study, *Emily Brontë: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), pp. 2-3. For an extended discussion of her relation with her dog Keeper, see Maureen Adams, *Shaggy Muses: The Dogs Who Inspired Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edith Wharton, and Emily Brontë* (New York and London: Ballantine, 2007), pp. 19-96.
[4] Gaskell, *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, p. 269.

possibility or not of a spiritual afterlife offered a sure ground of difference between humans and other animals. However, in *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë set up this dichotomy between human and animal, only to complicate the grounds of such a distinction.

If it was easy for Gaskell's interlocutor to interpret Emily's demeanour as misanthropic, this accusation has become even harder to refute after the publication of her Belgian *devoirs*, written while studying abroad under the guidance of the Monsieur Héger who would later become Paul Emmanuel in Charlotte's *Villette* (1853). In an essay on 'Le Chat', for instance, she suggested that a 'cat […] has more human feelings than almost any other being', specifically 'hypocrisy, cruelty, and ingratitude'.[5] Unsurprisingly, readers of *Wuthering Heights* (1847)—from contemporary reviewers to twenty-first-century critics—have long noted the connection between its apparent misanthropy and the animality that inhabits its pages.[6] An early review by H.F. Chorley in the *Athenaeum*, for instance, described how, in the harsh Moors landscape, 'human beings, like the trees, grow gnarled and dwarfed and distorted'.[7] A reviewer in *The Examiner* admired Heathcliff's savage 'approximat[ion] to humanity',[8] while one in *Britannia* saw 'an image of primeval rudeness, which has much to fascinate […] the mind' in 'the harsh cry of solitary birds, the cries of wild animals, and the startling motion of the snake' which the novel seemed to call to mind.[9] Perhaps the strangest account of the novel's rhetoric of animality, though, appeared in *The Christian Remembrancer* in 1857. To begin with, the reviewer suggested, a reader ought to be suspicious of the moral

[5] *The Belgian Essays: A Critical Edition*, ed. and trans. Sue Lonoff (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 56.
[6] See, for instance, Margaret Homans, 'The Repression and Sublimation of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*', *PMLA* 93.1 (1978), 9-19; Barbara Munson Goff, 'Between Natural Theology and Natural Selection: Breeding the Human Animal in *Wuthering Heights*', *Victorian Studies* 27.4 (1984), 477-508; Ivan Kreilkamp, 'Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal', *Yale Journal of Criticism* 18.1 (2005), 87-110.
[7] *The Critical Heritage*, p. 218.
[8] Ibid., p. 220.
[9] Ibid., p. 223. Further examples collected in *The Critical Heritage* speak of 'inhumanity' (p. 228), a paradigmatically 'natural story' and 'the ferocity of the tiger' (pp. 231-32), and 'hideous inhumanities' (p. 234).

rectitude of a writer 'who would not endure intercourse with her fellow-creatures'.[10] A knowledge of Emily's own 'animal qualities', he argued, explained how 'a clergyman's daughter […] could have conceived such scenes' as those found in the novel. Among those qualities, he noted half-seriously, was her '*dogged temper*'.[11] This laboured pun leads into a much more expansive conceit:

> If the respectable bull-dog Keeper could have been endowed with the ambition and the power to describe graphically the passions of his race – if you could put a pen in his hand and tell him to delineate the springs and impulses which prompt the displays of dog nature, with the outer workings of which we are alone familiar – if he could tell us the secret causes of every yelp, bark, and snarl, and spring, and bite, which we know now only in their effects – he would write precisely such a book as *Wuthering Heights*.[12]

For this reviewer, *Wuthering Heights* is not merely a novel that contains animals, but one that exemplifies animal (specifically canine) nature itself. Amusing as the reviewer's hyperbolic indignation is, there is a grain of truth in it. For the novel does indeed play insistently and gamely with the distinction between humans and other animals.

In the suggestion that not merely are animals present in the novel, but that it is itself somehow animal in nature, we are prompted to think about the difference between presence and immanence. In his *Theory of Religion*, George Bataille posited an influential model of the significance of animality to religious thought that can elucidate why this question matters to discussions of humans and other animals. In Bataille's view, theology inevitably figures animals as possessed of a special kind of immanence in the world: like water in water.[13] This is, at least in the eyes of humanity, diametrically opposed to our own 'transcendent' sense of

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[10] *The Christian Remembrancer* 97, July 1857, 87-145, in *The Critical Heritage*, p. 367.
[11] Ibid; emphasis in original.
[12] Ibid., p. 368. The reviewer refers to Keeper as a bull-dog, though he is generally considered to have been a mastiff. See Maureen Adams, 'Emily Brontë and Dogs: Transformation within the Human-Dog Bond', *Brontë Studies* 29.1 (2004), 43-52.
[13] *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone, 1989), p. 23. Bataille wrote about Brontë elsewhere, including a chapter on her in *Literature and Evil*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Penguin, 2012).

being a subject (able to manipulate the materials of the world into tools for our own use) in a world with which we are not continuous.[14] In perceiving the difference between 'animal immanence' and 'human transcendence', humans catch a glimpse of something akin to the sacred—which is understood as a kind of impossible desire, from the unavoidable position of a being distinguished from the world, for that undifferentiated state.[15] This glimpse 'offer[s] man all the fascination of the sacred world', without the possibility of access.[16]

Janet Gezari describes Bataille as 'the modern thinker who is most congenial' to Brontë's work,[17] and it is tempting to make sense of the spiritually-charged world of *Wuthering Heights* using this dichotomy of 'fallen man' and 'immanent animal'. We might, for instance, note the difference between the alien presence of Lockwood (self-conscious, resident there for a season, unable to witness the story except through second-hand mediation) and the enduring, rooted presence of the 'Earnshaws' (whose name is carved into the Heights, and outlives the events of the novel at both ends)—mapping onto this a corresponding distinction between culture and nature. Indeed, this binary corresponds to a more broadly held superstition that animals inhabit the world with an unselfconsciousness irrecoverably lost to humanity—in which animality is defined as a 'plenum', in Margot Norris's words, devoid of the wounding lack entailed by self-consciousness.[18] However, this chapter argues that Brontë's novel

[14] 'I am able to say that the animal world is that of immanence and immediacy, for that world, which is closed to us, is so to the extent that we cannot discern in it an ability to transcend itself. […] We can at least imagine an embryo of that ability in animals, but we cannot discern it clearly enough. While a study of those embryonic aptitudes can be done, such a study will not yield any perspectives that invalidate our view of immanent animality, which will remain unavoidable *for us*. It is only within the limits of the human that the transcendence of things in relation to consciousness […] is manifested. […] In reality, we are incapable of basing ourselves on unstable coagulations and we must confine ourselves to regarding animality, from the outside, in the light of an absence of transcendence. Unavoidably, in our eyes, the animal is in the world like water in water'. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[15] Ibid., p. 35.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Janet Gezari, *Last Things: Emily Brontë's Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 4. This is, in part, because of Bataille's interest in 'loss and anguish, unconditional expenditure, and sovereignty'—but also, no doubt, because of Bataille's especial interest in realms of experience that are inaccessible to language.

[18] *Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, and Lawrence* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 4. Lacan's account of the 'mirror stage' in the development of the

complicates this opposition in two ways. First, in its emphasis on linguistic transformations and its poetic slipperiness, the novel refuses the imposition of a clear-cut distinction between 'real', biological immanence and mediated representation; its language is a constitutive element of the characters inhabiting the novel. Secondly, in its ambiguous representation of death, *Wuthering Heights* refuses to draw definitively the boundary that would establish a clear line between transcendence and immanence. Death implies a limited duration, which in turn implies an existence apart from that being's element of habitation—and so, in attenuating the sense of an ending for its characters, their transcendence over and above the world of the novel is cast into doubt. Brontë is therefore not the only thinker to have identified the fact of death as a taxonomically significant one: for both Bataille and Brontë, this chapter demonstrates, the question of endings defines a being's relation to the world.

Animal Death

I want to turn now briefly to the question of the relation of animals to death in nineteenth-century literature and culture more widely, to historicise this question as well as to highlight by contrast Brontë's unique handling of it. The memorialisation of other animals formed an important part of the century's cultural productions, whether in verse, picture, or monument.[19] The story of Greyfriar's Bobby caught the Victorian imagination, and similar stories were soon circulated and consumed with enthusiasm. A sense of animals' prelapsarian innocence had been cultivated in the literature and thought of the eighteenth century, alongside an increased

individual is an originary context for this distinction, in which he suggested that the distinction between humans and other animals lies in the former's ability to recognise a displaced image of themselves in a mirror. Jacque Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1977), pp. 502-509.

[19] On this, see Teresa Mangum, 'Animal Angst: Victorians Memorialize their Pets', in *Victorian Animal Dreams*, pp. 15-34; Hilda Kean, 'The Moment of Greyfriars Bobby: The Changing Cultural Position of Animals, 1800-1920', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Empire*, ed. Kete, pp. 1-24; Chase Pielak, *Memorializing Animals During the Romantic Period* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [2015]).

attentiveness to the suffering and feeling of other animal bodies, and this attitude filtered into the nineteenth century.[20] Increasingly, animals became irresistible figures of pathos for the verbal and visual arts, offering either a safe outlet for compassionate effusion or a hyperbolic extension of sympathetic sentimentality, depending on one's outlook. In Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, for instance, Yorick encounters a man mourning over his dead donkey, and the strength of his grief is exemplary of this new inclination to tenderness and eulogy. The 'poor creature' had been the 'patient partner of his journey[s]', and had searched for his master for three days without food or water when they had once been separated during a journey.[21] 'Poor' is a near-constant adjectival feature of this trope, and this perhaps reflects a latent but enduring sense that even in life such creatures were seen to lack some essential relation to life and the world, as it does in Martin Heidegger's assertion that the animal is 'poor in world'.[22] Nonetheless, for Sterne's traveller, the man and his ass's affecting devotion to each other offers an ideal vision of relations between humans: 'Did we love each other, as this poor soul but loved his ass—'twould be something'.[23]

Frequently, in animal elegies of this period, the qualities of the animal—often a dog—are eulogised and held as a model to which the humans that survive it might aspire. A poem of Wordsworth's, for example, fondly notes

> A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
> Not only to us, but to thy Kind:
> Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
> A soul of love, love's intellectual law.[24]

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[20] On this, see Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*; Steven F. Eisenmann, *The Cry of Nature: Art and the Making of Animal Rights* (London: Reaktion, 2013); Tobias Menely, *The Animal Claim: Sensibility and the Creaturely Voice* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 124-201.

[21] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy by Mr Yorick to which are added The Journal to Eliza and A Political Romance*, ed. Ian Jack (London: Oxford University Press, 1968 [1768]), pp. 40-41.

[22] On this, see Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeil and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 186-273. For a recent and influential critique of this thesis, see Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies*, pp. 15-54.

[23] Ibid., p. 41.

[24] 'Tribute: To the Memory of the Same Dog', *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest

In these lines, the end-rhymes 'bind' and 'Kind' suggest, by a kind of unspoken logic, that the subject of this elegy remains 'bound' to his species in a way that human subjects do not.[25] This is illustrative of an important characteristic of the genre, for the elegised animal only ever partially transcends its identity as part of the species: it remains one of a 'Kind', in a way that mitigates the sorrow of an individual death by affirming the continuance of the species. 'Bind' and 'Kind' are, moreover, very self-conscious rhymes, drawing attention to the poem's artifice. This self-consciousness is one of the things that poems about animals enable; it is as if writing about animals rather than humans prompts a more self-reflexive tone, or makes the writer more conscious that he or she is Writing a Poem. The life of this genre continued throughout the century: in 1829, we can see a similar self-consciousness in the inflated, eulogistic diction of Edward Lear's early poem in memory of 'Ruby – Accidentally shot. November 3rd, 1829': 'poor Animal! gentle and true, | […] For 'mongst dogs thou wast good […] and of mortals, how few, | Can boast of a life half so faultless as thine!'.[26] While, as late as 1880, Matthew Arnold's elegy for his dachshund Geist exhibits a similar tone: 'all that life, and all that love', 'That loving heart, that patient soul'.[27] (I return to another of Arnold's animal elegies in the conclusion to this thesis.)

Brontë's interest in animals and death, though, bears little relation to this tradition, despite her almost certain exposure to it in contemporary periodicals. Animals are not mourned or memorialised in her work, nor do they exemplify particular virtues. In part, this is because

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de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 384.

[25] On rhymed and repeated words as 'bound words', see Valentine Cunningham, *Victorian Poetry Now: Poetry, Poets, Poetics* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 55-72.

[26] *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*, ed. Vivien Noakes (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 22.

[27] 'Geist's Grave', *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Kenneth Allot (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 547. Seamus Perry discusses animal elegies by Christina Rossetti and Arnold with tact and acuity in 'Elegy', *The Blackwell Companion to Victorian Poetry*, eds. Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Antony H. Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 115-34, pp. 126-28.

the only animals actually seen to die in the novel are the puppies hanged by Hareton. In a narrative as full of deaths and violence as *Wuthering Heights*, in which other animals are just as likely to receive a blow as humans, this is a curiosity. Brontë seems to have wanted to avoid the obligatory sentimentality usually attendant upon animal deaths. At the same time, however, she worked hard to establish Heathcliff's animality—or, at least, his quasi-humanity—before his 'queer end', as the next section of the chapter shows.[28] As such, his death is shaped to stand as in some way exemplary of nonhuman death. (Attention is also drawn to the afterlives of other animals when Isabella recognises Throttler as 'a son of our old Skulker'.[29] The novel's depiction of generational continuity and change extends to other animals as well as human ones.) Further, Heathcliff's death stands in sharper relief in the drastically foreshortened account of life at the Heights and Grange after his end. Following the deaths of each of the other major protagonists (Mr Earnshaw, Catherine, Hindley, and Edgar), the plot continues for some time, both diegetically and in the time of reading. Heathcliff, however, is almost no sooner buried than the story ends, his 'grave [still] bare' upon Lockwood's final visit.[30] Heathcliff's afterlife is the one we have least opportunity to observe, and hence the most ambiguous.

Another tradition of writing about animal death, and one of which Brontë was well aware, gets us a little closer to a precedent or context for the novel's preoccupation with this question. This is the blending of satire and black humour in such accounts. Early examples of the modern reincarnation of this tradition would include poems such as Thomas Gray's 'Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes', and John Gay's 'Elegy on a Lap-Dog'. This mode came to Brontë's period particularly through the comic, satirical, and grotesque energies of Thomas Lovell Beddoes, Thomas Hood, and Lord Byron. In the case of

[28] *Wuthering Heights*, p. 275
[29] Ibid., p. 127.
[30] Ibid., p. 300.

these three poets, a mischievous tendency to take aim at decorous po-facedness was mingled with a congruent misanthropy, and it is this compound tone which most connects them with Brontë.

Hood wrote a number of comic elegies (some of them pre-emptive) for animals ('The Monkey-Martyr', 'The Lament of Toby, the Learned Pig', 'On the Death of the Giraffe', 'Address to Mr Cross, of Exeter 'Change') which manage both to lament their subjects and make light of the occasions of their writing. Beddoes's poetry tended more towards the grotesque and the morbid, as in Isbrand's song from *Death's Jest-book*, 'Squats on a toad-stool under a tree', but it shares an impulse to iconoclastic rejections of sentimentalism. The 'mock-heroic stance' discernible in many of these poems was an established feature of the tradition of 'theriophilic' thought in eighteenth-century poetry identified by Christine Kenyon-Jones.[31] And, indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, especially in poetry, animal deaths were often a means of indulging sentiment humanely, but without the full weight of human loss.[32] They offered a way of handling mortality more lightly, for animals were possessors of *life*, but only some of them of *a* life. For instance, one of the conditions of possibility for memorialisation—a proper name, which is able to live on after the individual's death—are only possessed by some animals and not others. Furthermore, the ambiguity of the distinction between individual and type means that the loss of an individual animal is counterbalanced by the survival of the species. They are (or were) alive, but their species identity frequently eclipses their individuality, and so, regarded in this light, they often appear to have been thought to possess life without being subjects of a life. This is true to a qualitatively greater extent than it is for

[31] *Kindred Brutes*, pp. 11-50. By 'theriophilic', Kenyon-Jones means something close to its Greek root: beast- or animal-loving. I use a similar coinage in chapter five: 'theriomorphic', meaning the opposite of 'anthropomorphic'.

[32] On this, see Valentine Cunningham's brief but panoramic account of the genre in *Victorian Poetry Now*, pp. 337-39. Though his claim that animal elegies 'never manage to sound much more than parodic of the genre' (p. 337) seems to miss the full range of feeling at stake here.

humans; representations of animals in literature always appeal to the idea of a species, to its supposed characteristics, as well as, on occasion, its idiosyncrasies.[33] Because of this, the animal elegy is charged with this tension between the individual and the type. Such poems as I have discussed above retrospectively bestow a life on their subject—almost in compensation for the lack of one when alive—even as they commemorate the loss of it. As with all elegies, perhaps, it is easier to comprehend a life as such once that life has stopped being lived.

However, Byron's epitaph for his dog Boatswain, though grounded in the theriophilic/misanthropic tradition, as Kenyon-Jones shows, deliberately undersells the expected irony in his praise for the dog. Throughout Byron insists, both in the poem's generic identity and its words, on the sense of an individual that has been loved and lost. 'Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog' demonstrates how theriophily and misanthropy were often two sides of the same coin, but it also represents a medial step from the comic-ironic tradition of eighteenth-century and Romantic animal elegies, to the passionate intensity of Brontë's own misanthropic preoccupation with human and animal death:

> But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend
> […]
> Unhonoured falls, unnoticed all his worth,
> Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth:
> While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
> And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.[34]

Byron's reference to a 'soul held on earth' but 'Denied in heaven' refers to the conventional Christian belief (articulated by Augustine, and emphasised by Thomas Aquinas) that animals' lack of a soul, and their supposed incapacity for rational thought, precluded the possibility of

[33] On this, and the modern genre of 'species poems', see Onno Oerlemans, *Poetry and Animals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), pp. 83-118.
[34] *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-1993), I, pp. 224-25.

an afterlife.[35] But the passive voicing of 'Denied […] a soul' leaves open the question of agency: who or what, exactly, is doing the denying? Much rests on whether the answer is convention or divine edict, but we are unable to decide either way.[36] In other words, the nature or kind of a being determines what happens once that being crosses the threshold from life to afterlife. It is clear that, by the end of the nineteenth century, Emily Brontë was not the only person to have thought about what might become of other animals once they were dead. The most famous example of this fact is the Hyde Park pet cemetery, where between 1880 and 1915 'some three hundred pets were sewn into canvas bags and interred in the garden of the gatekeeper'.[37] The graveyard contained mainly dogs, but within that homogeneity there was a remarkable mix of classes (Prince, a Yorkshire terrier belonging to the Duchess of Cambridge, was buried alongside Topper, a fox terrier and Metropolitan police dog), and nationalities (Kulach, born in Berne; the Italian-born Bibi; and Kaiser, a Spitz born in Germany, who died in 1886).[38] Looked at as a historical phenomenon, the cemetery is a touchingly sentimental, though somewhat maudlin, symptom of the rise of bourgeois petkeeping. Seen as a literary artefact, though, it resembles the lives of animals in novels—given only a single name and the briefest of tributes or narratives, they constitute a buried, inaccessible history that can only be gestured towards in concise, and often clichéd, phrases ('Darling Dolly | My Sunbeam | My Consolation', reads one).[39] Indeed, as with headstones, literary animals can generate a lot of feeling with only a few words—their position on the borders of our world adds weight and

[35] Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, p. 202.
[36] What is clear is that the question itself is voiced much more frequently in the nineteenth century than in the preceding or succeeding periods. Although only an imperfect representation of this, a search for 'animal souls' on the ProQuest database *British Periodicals (1681-1939)*, reveals a clear pattern. Until 1800, hits per decade hover at around two hundred. Between 1800 and 1809 however, there are nearly 1,500, and the numbers increase from there, decade by decade, until the 1860s, which returns over 14,000. It drops off from there, until the 1910s, by which point the search hits have dwindled to around 2,500. Accessed 5 April 2018, https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:7316/britishperiodicals/results/EE074FC1FAFE47EEPQ/1?accountid=13042.
[37] Jan Toms, *Animal Graves and Memorials* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 2006), p. 48.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

significance to the glimpses we get of them, because there is no possibility of a fuller account. Just as those headstones fixed the identity and nature of the animal they eulogised, in Brontë's novel what happens after death determines the nature of those liminal creatures that exist undecidably between human and animal.

Threshold Poetics: Animals

Animals are liminal creatures in the novel, guardians of boundaries but also themselves sometimes caught between the living and the dead. As we saw in chapter two, for instance, dogs frequently mark the threshold of a house.[40] In one such example, Skulker, the bulldog at Thrushcross Grange, lays hold of the trespassing Cathy and Heathcliff, only for the latter to thrust a stone between his jaws, leaving him 'throttled off, his huge purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth, and his pendant lips streaming with bloody slaver'.[41] This foreshadows later scenes, in which Isabella's spaniel Fanny is strung up and left to hang by Heathcliff, and Nelly finds Hareton hanging a litter of puppies.[42] In the former, Nelly finds the dog 'nearly at [her] last gasp'[43]—like Skulker, she is found almost at the point of death. In these moments animals are quite literally suspended between this world and the next.[44] We might connect these scenes also to Heathcliff's 'preter-human denial in abstaining from finishing [Hindley] completely', in the dramatic scene preceding the latter's death.[45]

Nelly's response to finding Fanny illustrates another kind of liminality of the novel's animals: their tendency to hover at the borders of perceptibility and interpretation. Initially,

[40] *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Helen Small and Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1847]), pp. 3-5, 13, 43, 121, 139.
[41] Ibid., p. 43. Heathcliff and Cathy had at this point seen Isabella and Edgar fighting over 'a little dog […] they had nearly pulled in two between them'.
[42] Ibid., p. 161.
[43] Ibid., p. 114.
[44] I am grateful (I think) to Ushashi Dasgupta for pointing this out.
[45] Ibid., p. 157.

Nelly is unable to discern whether the spaniel's body is a natural or a supernatural form: 'I saw something white moving irregularly, evidently by another agent than the wind. Notwithstanding my hurry, I staid to examine it, lest ever after I should have the conviction impressed on my imagination that it was a creature of the other world.'[46] Confronted with a creature at the very edge of life, Nelly—not for the last time, as we shall see—struggles to categorise it. Other animals flicker in and out of the periphery during Lockwood's first visit to the Heights. For example, he dimly perceives, in 'an arch under the dresser […] a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies, [while] other dogs haunted other recesses'.[47] Immediately following this, 'half-a-dozen four-footed fiends, of various sizes and ages, issued from hidden dens to the common centre'.[48] Later he mistakes a 'heap of dead rabbits' for a 'cushion full of something like cats'.[49] Lockwood's perception of different orders of being is thus confused upon entering the Heights: the dogs act both like 'a brood of tigers' and 'a pack of curs',[50] and he mistakes Catherine for the 'ministering angel' or 'beneficent fairy' of the house.[51]

Like the 'quantity of grotesque carving' above the 'threshold' of Wuthering Heights,[52] animals and animalised figures cluster around borders within the novel. Further, like the grotesque itself, humans and animals are frequently compared or conflated.[53] The following list of instances of humans being compared to animals is not exhaustive, but suffices to demonstrate the extent to which other animals permeate the speech of the novel's characters. Lockwood describes himself as shrinking into his shell like a snail, and being as 'feeble as a

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[46] Ibid., p. 114.
[47] Ibid., p. 3.
[48] Ibid., p. 4.
[49] Ibid., p. 7.
[50] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[51] Ibid., pp. 9-10
[52] Ibid., p. 2.
[53] On the hybrid and dehumanising characteristics of the grotesque, see John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, III, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, XI, p. 145.

kitten'.[54] Heathcliff calls Zillah a bitch, is compared to a cuckoo by Nelly, is called a dog by Hindley, has the expression of a 'vicious cur' and hair like a 'colt's mane', as well as the attitude of a tiger or 'venomous serpent'.[55] Edgar is likened to a cat in possession of a half-killed bird, and has the courage of a lamb, a mouse, or a leveret.[56] Catherine looks as 'dismal as a drowned whelp', and acts like a 'dog in the manger'.[57] Isabella is an 'impertinent little monkey', a 'centipede' or another 'strange repulsive animal'.[58] Cathy is a 'stray lamb', a mouse, and a monkey, as well as a 'changeling', and a spaniel.[59] ('Changeling', of course, is another order of being altogether.) Heathcliff calls Linton a 'puling chicken' and Hareton an 'infernal calf' or a dog.[60] Readers of *Wuthering Heights* have long sensed the importance of landscape to the novel's patterning and meaning,[61] seeing its unusually vibrant depiction of animality as part of its savour of wildness. In this novel, though, its formal and rhetorical patterns (it is a novel that works by pattern, as much as by plot) present a complicated sense of the distinctions between humans and other animals, and these fuzzy boundaries present a more truthful account of the pervasive animal presences in the novel. Presented with a list such as the one above, we are, as is often the case with lists, persuaded to try either to categorise items or to arrange them into a narrative. Lists prompt us to make sense of them either by splitting their totality into smaller constituent parts or by chaining the individual items together to form a coherent story. Critics too, have sought to make sense of this animalistic rhetoric by thinking of the novel in terms of schematic dichotomies of nature and culture, storm and calm, cruel and humane, or the individual and the collective.[62] What they have not recognised, however, is that

[54] *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 4, 27.
[55] Ibid., pp. 25, 30, 33, 50-51, 128.
[56] Ibid., pp. 64, 101.
[57] Ibid., pp. 76, 90.
[58] Ibid., pp. 90-93.
[59] Ibid., pp. 170, 172, 240.
[60] Ibid., pp. 183, 184, 276.
[61] Most notably David Cecil in *Early Victorian Novelists* (London: Constable, 1934), pp. 161-69; see also the contemporary reviewers cited above in *The Critical Heritage*; Homans, 'The Repression and Sublimation of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*'; and Kreilkamp, 'Petted Things'.
[62] See note 6.

Brontë's language prompts us to construct more and finer distinctions between orders of being—specifically, the way in which the binaries dead/alive and human/animal are blurred, and overlaid on each other.

The novel is littered with references to animals; repeatedly Brontë's characters see each other through the lens of the other forms of life that exist around and about them. The intensity of verbal metamorphosis throughout the text is such that we should think of it as a characteristic mode of perception within the novel. The characters appear to see humanity and animality as fluid rhetorical categories, as well as ontological states. To an exceptional extent, the language of Brontë's novel draws its (for the most part) human characters into comparison or equivalence with other animals.[63] This is a constitutive element of the novel's depiction of figures whose bodily and structural integrity is never assured; as Leo Bersani puts it, 'we no longer have coherent, individuated, intelligible structures of personality; in a sense, we no longer even have a locatable self'.[64] It is a truism of the criticism of *Wuthering Heights* that its 'manifestation[s] of human life' are 'much more readily understandable as forms of energy than as characters',[65] but the significance of its construction of a hazy border between humans and other animals in understanding this has not been adequately explored. While even early reviewers noted the idiomatic animality of the novel, no one has yet shown how this discursive pattern tessellates with Brontë's broader interest in the 'mythic limit of questions about human identity'.[66] Bersani suggests that we find at that limit 'a question about the necessity of being human at all', about 'the possibility of a human body concealing or switching to nonhuman identities'.[67] He stresses the difference between characters and human beings—only the former

[63] Mark Schorer termed this the novel's 'matrix of analogy', in a perceptive account of its incessant play of likeness and unlikeness. 'Fiction and the "Matrix of Analogy"', *The Kenyon Review* 11.4 (1949), pp. 539-60.
[64] *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (London: Martin Boyars, 1978 [1976]), p. 190.
[65] Denis Donoghue, 'Emily Brontë: The Latitude of Interpretation', *The Interpretation of Narrative Theory and Practice*, ed. Morton Bloomfield (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 106-24, p. 116.
[66] Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, p. 189.
[67] Ibid.

can offer clear representations of a switch to a nonhuman identity—as well as the transformative powers of the language of *Wuthering Heights*. However, the psychoanalytic impetus of Bersani's reading leads him away from the importance of other animals to the effects he describes. He illustrates how the matryoshka-doll narrative structure, the involuted genealogies, and the 'striking parallelisms' of the text create 'affiliations and resemblances [that] disperse individual identities'.[68] However, the verbal play between different forms of life I have just noted also creates a textual atmosphere in which distinctions between different orders of being are blurred.

Animals and human-animal hybrids are a tonal keynote for the novel, establishing a thematic interest in uncertain limits between the figures in its plot. These liminal creatures are also a means of thinking about other kinds of boundary. In the rest of this chapter, I argue that Brontë's representation of animals feeds into and shapes her interest in forms of afterlife, an interest that is readily apparent in both the novel and her poetry. For Brontë, animals were not only 'good to think', as Lévi-Strauss's epigram has it (which I discuss in the introduction).[69] It might be truer to say, as Laurie Shannon has in another context, that, for Brontë, animals were impossible to think without.[70] They were an essential part of her world, and not merely objects of use (metaphorical or mechanical); as Kathleen Frank recounts in her biography of Brontë, on the eve of her death, wracked by consumption and weak with fatigue, 'still she would allow no one to interfere when she went to feed the dogs after tea'.[71]

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[68] Ibid., p. 200.
[69] *Totemism*, p. 89.
[70] Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), p. 5.
[71] *Emily Brontë: An Unchained Soul* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), p. 259.

Threshold Poetics: Death

Poetically, *Wuthering Heights* is structured at the micro and macro level by boundaries, and the possibility of crossing over or lingering at them. Lockwood's entry into Heathcliff's home is treated as a kind of intrusion; Heathcliff and Catherine escape from their confinement to the kitchen onto the moors, and into the park of Thrushcross Grange; Heathcliff perpetually lingers at the doorways and gates of the Grange during Cathy's illness; Cathy is forbidden to go beyond the walls of the park (an edict that she promptly transgresses). This thematic preoccupation is highlighted most vividly, of course, during Lockwood's dream in which, his hand caught in the grip of the child-ghost at the window, he 'pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bed-clothes'.[72] More specifically, *Wuthering Heights* exhibits a fascination with one border in particular: that between life and the afterlife. (The opposition between life and death hardly seems an adequate description of the novel's treatment of the latter.) In Janet Gezari's words, a 'concern with endings, and with how we defy, resist, blur, or transcend them, characterizes Brontë's life [and] art'.[73] Death appears in *Wuthering Heights* in several guises. It is marked by inscriptions: the carving of 'Hareton Earnshaw' over the door of the Heights is as much the headstone of its former owner as it is an augur of its future one; and, when Lockwood reads Catherine's three names in her diary she is already dead. Revenants haunt the surviving characters, while objects of the deceased are invested with relic-like significance, as when Heathcliff removes Edgar's hair, and buries Cathy with a lock of his own.[74] Even love is conceived of as the annihilation of the self: 'Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff'.

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[72] Ibid., p. 21. For explorations of the literary significance of thresholds, see *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, ed. Subha Mukherji (London: Anthem, 2011).

[73] Janet Gezari, *Last Things*, p. 6.

[74] On relics in the novel, see Deborah Lutz, *Relics of Death in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 52-73.

Edward Chitham has argued that the novel's oral texture is part of what allows the 'live and dead [to] meet and mingle'.[75] Brontë's immersion in ballads as a young girl constructed a literary landscape in which stories were passed down from generation to generation, mouth to mouth, and in which death was often no impediment to continued participation in the narrative.[76] This poetic *habitus* perhaps influenced the oral structure of *Wuthering Heights*. Because of its intricate tessellation of retrospective and current action, the boundary between the living and the dead is often unclear during the time of the story's telling. Indeed, the verbal texture of the narration also threatens to blur this distinction, exhibiting the stylistics of transition noted by Garrett Stewart.[77] Syntax and punctuation are used to represent death in the novel, as the pauses in both sense and breath that they register, or indeed enforce, indicate spaces in which the bar is crossed. Hindley's wife, Frances, for example, dies after 'a fit of coughing took her – a very slight one – he raised her in his arms; she put her two hands about his neck, her face changed, and she was dead'.[78] The parenthetical 'a very slight one' minimises the significance of the fit only to emphasise her fragility. The hushed pause of the narration, as it enters into this slight detail, is magnified by the rhythmical and semantic gaps either side of it, elbowing out a little breathing space for itself in which to kill off the character. The combination of compound and complex clauses sets up what is simultaneously a stuttering and an organically spaced rhythm of action and rest. It is in one of those rest beats which the prose has set up—between 'changed, and', over or perhaps within the unvoiceable comma—that the event happens: 'And she was dead', not 'and she died'. Brontë's attentiveness to the originary orality of her story is notable (see, for instance, Joseph's dialect speech, and the anguished groans of Heathcliff), and the fact that it is consequently 'transliterated' onto the page reminds

[75] *A Life of Emily Brontë* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 200.
[76] Ibid.
[77] *Death Sentences*, pp. 99-138.
[78] *Wuthering Heights*, p. 57.

us that this process necessarily introduces partitions into the speech of her characters that are not always audible when spoken.

Death is frequently imperceptible in *Wuthering Heights*; just as death does not prevent characters and figures from being present to the living in the novel, the moment of passing between the two realms is not clear-cut either. The following examples indicate the extent to which dying is a gradual rather than decisive event:

> 'She's fainted, or dead,' I thought: 'so much the better. Far better that she should be dead, than lingering a burden and a misery-maker to all about her.'[79]
>
> About twelve o'clock, that night, was born the Catherine you saw at Wuthering Heights […]; and two hours after the mother died, having never recovered sufficient consciousness to miss Heathcliff, or know Edgar.[80]
>
> She drew a sigh, and stretched herself, like a child reviving, and sinking again to sleep; and five minutes after I felt one little pulse at her heart, and nothing more![81]
>
> I sent for Kenneth, and he came; but not till the beast had changed into carrion: he was both dead and cold, and stark; and so you'll allow it was useless making more stir about him![82]
>
> His pulse imperceptibly stopped and his soul departed. None could have noticed the exact minute of his death, it was so entirely without a struggle.[83]

The first three quotations refer to Catherine's death, the penultimate to Hindley's, and the last to Edgar Linton's. It is characteristic of Brontë's imagination to portray death both in the image of 'carrion', and as a transcendent leap from a world of suffering to one of peace and rest. As in her poetry, a corpse is both inanimate matter and a memorial to the spirit that animated it,

[79] Ibid., p. 143.
[80] Ibid., p. 145.
[81] Ibid., p. 147.
[82] Ibid., p. 165.
[83] Ibid., p. 251.

while death is both a separation ('Cold in the earth and the deep snow piled above thee')[84] and a liberation ('Stretched her wings and soared to heaven').[85]

The question of heaven and hell is, as Thomas Winnifrith argued, a vital one within the novel.[86] Almost every character articulates more or less clearly their own personal vision of heaven or hell—most famously, of course, when Catherine describes her dream of being thrown out of heaven, and when Cathy and Linton compare their starkly different conceptions of heavenly bliss (on which more below). In Winnifrith's influential reading, Heathcliff and Catherine attain heaven after death through suffering on earth. However, Marianne Thormählen has pointed out the inconsistencies and ambiguities in this reading: for instance, what is Edgar Linton's reward for his devotion and suffering? Is the nature of the suffering relevant, or only the fact of it?[87] Instead, she suggests, Brontë's writing reads more like a 'sample-card' of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century views on what happens after death.[88] In *Wuthering Heights* alone, for example, Catherine haunts Heathcliff and Lockwood, Linton's death is a gentle release from suffering, and Heathcliff's dead body appears fixed in an epitome of 'ghastly paleness'.[89] That Heathcliff twice exhumes Catherine's grave *and* begs to be haunted by her indicates a belief on his part that both the body and the spirit matter after death (or that, perhaps, the two might be indissoluble). The novel demonstrates a similar position, privileging neither the material nor the spiritual above the other, and it is in this complication of Cartesian dualism that we can see one of the reasons why animals are peculiarly important to the novel. 'My soul's bliss', says Heathcliff, 'kills my body, but does not satisfy itself'.[90] The material facts of

[84] *Poems of Emily Brontë*, p. 166.
[85] 'Hope', Ibid., p. 143.
[86] *The Brontës and Their Background* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 63-75.
[87] *The Brontës and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 105.
[88] Ibid., p. 106. This included the doctrines of 'annihilationism' (in which 'the body and soul form an indissoluble unit which perished whole in death'), and 'soul-sleeping' (in which 'body and soul sleep until roused by the Last Trump').
[89] *Wuthering Heights*, p. 293.
[90] Ibid., p. 296.

death are as significant as the spiritual ones, and so, as fellow possessors of a body, the deaths of other animals shed light on our own. In this sense, death reveals both continuity and difference between humans and other animals.

Inarticulacy

At the novel's close, Lockwood reflects on similar questions, wondering 'how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth'.[91] The repetition that is only just buried in unquiet/quiet signals not only an allusion to Shelley's elegy for Keats ('Pale ocean in unquiet slumber lay'),[92] but also an interest in the meaningfulness of silence. In what sense could 'quiet' disclose unrest? How could such an apparently definitive scene ('harmonized […] turf, 'benign sky', 'the soft wind breathing through the grass') signify so counterintuitively? Like all such constructions, *un*quiet summons the ghost of that which it negates. In this, it prompts a reminder of how Brontë's work plays with the significance of silence, and how it creates meaning through inarticulacy. Though 'the rest is silence' in *Wuthering Heights* as it is elsewhere, the silence itself is prone to speak.

As we saw in the narration of Frances Hindley's death, punctuation is one way in which Brontë introduces meaningful silence into speech. Her use of orthography also constitutes a form of classification, in that it constructs syntactic groups from individual words, defines the relation of those groups to each other, and reconstitutes those groups into coherent, systematic wholes. What is more, punctuation marks have no meaning on their own, being simply a tool that is used to segment written language into sense-making units. At the level of typography and syntax, then, Brontë's novel imposes a kind of visual classificatory order on language that

[91] Ibid., p. 300.
[92] 'Adonais', *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Freistat (New York and London: 2002), p. 415.

may also carry within it its own expressive, rhythmic, or ungrammatical arrangements. Brontë's poems, we should remember, are much more sparsely and erratically punctuated—as in the following:

> The wide cathedral Isles are lone
> The vast crowds vanished every one
> There can be nought beneath that dome
> But the cold tenants of the tomb[93]

Here line breaks are pressed into service as makeshift grammatical markers, but without the definitive stops, pauses, and connections indicated by orthographical marks the effect of reading these lines is halting and slippery; the first two lines use the break as a full-stop, but the third line requires an enjambment to make sense. More than perhaps any other writer of this period, Brontë's language inscribes intersecting boundaries, both visible and otherwise, within its textual fabric.

Enid Duthie has noted how Brontë foregrounds action in the novel at the expense of contemplation, and this is another aspect of its interest in conveying meaning without speaking.[94] By comparison to her sisters' novels, and, paradoxically, in a novel that is all reported speech, narrative action brings comparatively scarce amounts of comment or reflection. The terse reception of Lockwood's unwelcome garrulity at the novel's opening announces its own 'aversion to showy displays of feeling'.[95] Virginia Woolf's famous summation of Brontë's aim for the novel is exemplary of the critical sense that the text's final significance remains, in important ways, unutterable: her 'gigantic ambition […] a struggle, half-thwarted but of superb conviction, to say something through the mouths of her characters

[93] *The Poems of Emily Brontë*, ed. Derek Roper and Edward Chitham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 52.
[94] *The Brontës and Nature* (New York: St Martins Press, 1986), p. 235.
[95] *Wuthering Heights*, p. 3.

which is not merely "I love" or "I hate," but "we, the whole human race" and "you, the eternal powers …" the sentence remains unfinished'.[96] A similar sense of this quality prompted Arnold Kettle to suggest that 'Emily Brontë works not in ideas but in symbols, that is to say concepts which have a significance and validity on a level different from that of logical thought', and that the ideas of the novel 'cannot be abstracted as a neat sentence'.[97] This interest in meaningful inarticulacy provides another reason for the pervasive presence of animals in the novel—they supplement the expressivity of Brontë's representation of inarticulacy. For example, in the poem 'The linnet in the rocky dells', the birdsong, 'The moorlark in the air, | The bee among the heather bells', and the 'murmur' of the West wind and 'Summer streams' are what 'soothe my Lady's dreams'—not the human voice. 'There is no need of other sound'.[98] The tension between expressivity and intelligibility is visible in both the novel itself and in critical responses to it.

Animals extend the expressive range of human language. In the range of their non-verbal expression, and in the assumed-but-unstable familiarity of the stories we tell about animals, they offer both flexibility and recognisably common points of reference. Indeed, Winifred Gérin points out that the images in Thomas Bewick's *British Birds* (1797-1804) provoked in Emily a desire to respond imaginatively to animals even before her language skills had developed: 'Her copy of his "Winchat" and "Ring Ousel" (dated 1 March and 22 May 1829 respectively) were drawn long before her handwriting was even decipherable'.[99] Joseph, of course, speaks in an untranslatable dialect, and Charlotte was worried that the 'rude and strange' language of the novel might be 'in a great measure unintelligible'.[100] However, the messiness as well as the possibilities of translation between verbal and non- or peri-verbal

[96] *The Common Reader* (London: Hogarth Press, 1929), p. 202.
[97] *An Introduction to the English Novel* (London: Hutchinson, 1951), p. 140.
[98] *Poems*, p. 152.
[99] Gérin, *Emily Brontë: A Biography*, p. 12.
[100] Editor's Preface to 1850 edition, in *Wuthering Heights*, p. 307.

utterances are an important part of its everyday life—particularly with regard to animals. When Lockwood arrives at the Heights, his own attempts at gaining entry have limited success, until Heathcliff 'saw [his] horse's breast fairly pushing the barrier'.[101] On his second visit, after an unfriendly welcome previously, the dog 'Juno […] deigned, at this second interview, to move the extreme tip of her tail, in token of owning my acquaintance'.[102] While Isabella is at the Heights, further fleeting moments of human-canine communication occur, almost accidentally: as she cleans up a mess on the floor, 'An unexpected aid presently appeared in the shape of Throttler, whom I now recognised as a son of our old Skulker; it had spent its whelphood at the Grange […] I fancy it knew me – it pushed its nose against mine by way of salute'.[103]

The limit-case of this trope in the novel is Heathcliff. He is also the figure in which animality, inarticulacy, and death are tied together. Throughout the novel, Heathcliff is depicted as a marginal being, only partly human. Lockwood's uncharacteristically canny presentiment that Heathcliff deserves 'perpetual isolation from [his] species' is the first indicator of this,[104] but more soon follow. As a baby, he is 'as dark almost as if [he] came from the devil'.[105] Catherine, desperate to explain this to Isabella, cycles through several analogies: 'He's not a rough diamond—a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic; he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man […] a bird of bad omen';[106] an 'evil beast', as Nelly puts it.[107] Isabella asks Nelly in earnest 'Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad?',[108] later deciding for herself that 'He's a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being!'.[109] Around him, Nelly does 'not feel as if I were in the

[101] Ibid., p. 1.
[102] Ibid., p. 7.
[103] Ibid., p. 127.
[104] Ibid., p. 6.
[105] Ibid., p. 31.
[106] Ibid., pp. 90-91.
[107] Ibid., p. 95.
[108] Ibid., p. 120.
[109] Ibid., p. 134.

company of a creature of my own species':[110] he is 'only half a man—not so much',[111] and finally she describes him as 'a goblin […] a ghoul, or a vampire'.[112] It is clear that Brontë herself wanted to depict Heathcliff as only partly human, and this is reinforced by his tendency to slip into inarticulate roars and cries: 'he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog';[113] 'He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears.'[114] More than this, though, characters in the novel also repeatedly attempt to distinguish Heathcliff as a different *kind* of being. At Thrushcross Grange, after he and Catherine are caught trespassing, the Lintons 'made a distinction between her treatment and mine',[115] while, in Catherine's famous speech asserting their affinity, she describes how 'our souls are made' of the same material.[116]

His death is the slowest in the narrative. It is an act of implacable willpower, but it is also the least definitive. When Nelly finds his dead body, 'His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then, he seemed to smile.' 'I could not think him dead', she continues, 'but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bed-clothes dripped, and he was perfectly still'.[117] The novel, of course, hints very strongly that this death is not his final act. In this respect, Heathcliff is both the least human of the human-like characters, and, as it were, the least dead.

[110] Ibid., p. 141.
[111] Ibid., p. 155.
[112] Ibid., p. 293.
[113] Ibid., p. 141.
[114] Ibid., p. 148.
[115] Ibid., p. 44.
[116] Ibid., p. 71.
[117] Ibid., p. 298.

Animal Afterlives

Through her avid reading of Byron (of which there is much evidence),[118] Brontë was obliquely exposed to a tradition of thought in which the assumed supremacy of humans over other animals, and reason over feeling, was far from given. Alongside this was a tradition which often manifested, in its habitually elegiac mode, a concomitant curiosity about the afterlives of other animals. This provides an important context for the novel's notable attention to Heathcliff's death and ambiguous afterlife. A second significant context, however, is found in the novel's theological landscape. As I note above, orthodox Evangelical Protestant theology regarded animals as 'beasts that perish'—that is, creatures without the promise of rebirth and salvation in the afterlife. Hence, for example, the narrator's reference in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* to 'the perishing birds' being oblivious of the larger forces at play in deciding their fate.[119] In *Wuthering Heights*, however, this model fails to account either for the plurality of afterlives hinted at in the text, or its preoccupation with the possibility that Heathcliff is at once part-human and spiritually enduring.

Two prominent visions of heaven are described by Catherine and Cathy, respectively. They are clear indicators of the novel's interest in the nature of the afterlife, and both are notable for their blurring of the boundary between earth and heaven. In the first, Catherine describes a dream in which she found herself in heaven: but 'heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth'.[120] The implication, of course, is that 'the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights' is heaven for Catherine. In the second, Linton and Cathy have compared their visions of heaven. The former's was like 'a hot July day […] lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors,

[118] John Hewish, *Emily Brontë: A Critical and Biographical Study* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1969), pp. 33-45; Gérin, *Emily Brontë*, pp. 44-46; Chitham, *Life*, pp. 201-202.
[119] *Shirley*, p. 295.
[120] *Wuthering Heights*, p. 71.

with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up over head'. The latter's was 'rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright, […] and not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side'.[121] All three are emphatically earthly images of heaven, but it is also worth stressing the creatureliness of them—particularly the latter two, where the presence of other animals is stated rather than implied. To the minds of these characters, life and the afterlife appear to be contiguous, both accommodating of the presence of other animals. If we are to take these views as in some sense refractions of Brontë's own ideas of heaven, it would suggest that her vision of the afterlife involved both the accommodation of humans and other animals, and distinctions between them. For while the rhetorical fluidity I have already noted, and the presence of animals in the above passages, suggest a level of equity between the novel's humans and other animals, the insistence with which the characters distinguish Heathcliff as other-than-human focuses our attention on difference as well as similarity.

Soon after Catherine dies, Nelly notices that Heathcliff has sequestered himself in his room, not eating and 'praying like a methodist'.[122] The lower-case *m* indicates the practice of regular prayer, rather than the dissenting society which drew its name from this practice, but it also indicates another forming context for Brontë's interest in the ontological and classificatory questions raised by death. Although Patrick Brontë's Evangelical Protestantism was the dominant current both in the Brontë household and in the Church of England during the nineteenth century,[123] the Branwells (Emily's mother's side) were Wesleyan Methodists, and the dissenting society exerted a strong influence on the West Riding area of Yorkshire.[124] Emily

[121] Ibid., p. 218.
[122] Ibid., p. 153.
[123] Thormählen, *The Brontës and Religion*, p. 14.
[124] See Winnifrith, *The Brontës and Their Background*, pp. 48-50; Chitham, *Life*, p. 26; Mark Knight and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 35.

Brontë was surrounded by Methodist history growing up in Haworth, her clergyman father succeeding the notoriously fiery preacher William Grimshaw—a 'friend of Wesley, who during his ministry had made [Haworth] the centre of [the Evangelical] revival in Yorkshire'.[125] As Thormählen has noted, there were significant points of confluence between the three main branches of Protestantism in the early nineteenth century (Calvinism, Evangelicalism, and Methodism): specifically, 'their commitment to justification by faith accompanied by the pursuit of holiness, manifest in practical action as well as in the glorification of God'.[126] However, though immersed in this cultural and social environment, Emily's own relationship with 'all forms of organised religion' tended to be hostile, as is evidenced in the sardonic treatment of the fire-and-brimstone Calvinist Joseph, or in her unflattering portrait of the fictional Jabes Branderham (in Lockwood's first dream)—which was probably based either on Jabez Bunting, the founder of independent Methodism, or Jabez Bums, a 'Baptist and temperance pioneer'.[127] Nonetheless, in spite of Emily's aversion to Methodism, it was clearly a significant part of her personal and cultural landscape.

With this in mind, and further remembering Emily's attachment to other animals, we might consider a sermon by John Wesley, which advocates a view of other animals as included in the Creator's salvation. While it is unlikely that Emily read these sermons (there is no record of Wesley's sermons being owned by the Parsonage, though it does contain a number of sermons that were written and owned by Grimshaw), it seems entirely plausible that the ideas contained in the sermons were circulated in conversation around Haworth, given the strong Methodist presence in West Riding. Brontë's bleak assessment of human-animal relations—explicit in her Belgian *devoirs*, implicit in *Wuthering Heights*—echoes Wesley's in 'The

[125] Dulith, *The Brontës and Nature*, p. 5.
[126] Ibid., p. 15.
[127] Ibid., p. 18. See also John Lock and Canon W. T. Dixon, *A Man of Sorrow: The Life. Letters and Times of the Rev. Patrick Brontë* (London: Nelson, 1965), pp. 147-48.

General Deliverance', in which the fallen world is described as being essentially one of suffering and cruelty, and man is a beast to man and other creatures alike. In Wesley's words:

> how little shadow of good, of gratitude, of benevolence, of any right temper, is now to be found in any part of the brute creation! On the contrary, what savage fierceness, what unrelenting cruelty are invariably observed in thousands of creatures; yea, is inseparable from their natures! Is it only the lion, the tiger, the wolf, among the inhabitants of the forest and plains – the shark, and a few more voracious monsters, among the inhabitants of the waters, – or the eagle, among birds, – that tears the flesh, sucks the blood, and crushes the bones of their helpless fellow-creatures. Nay; the harmless fly, the laborious ant, the painted butterfly, are treated in the same merciless manner, even by the innocent songsters of the grove! The innumerable tribes of poor insects are continually devoured by them. […] Yea, such, at present, is the miserable constitution of the world, to such vanity is it now subjected, that an immense majority of creatures, perhaps a million to one, can no otherwise preserve their own lives, than by destroying their fellow-creatures![128]

This sentiment is echoed very clearly in Brontë's essay on 'The Butterfly': 'why was man created? He torments, he kills, he devours; he suffers, dies, is devoured – there you have his whole story'.[129] The fundamental question arising from both of these passages, of course, is how we can understand the beneficence of the Creator in such a world. The answer, for both, is in the Edenic arrangement of the afterlife. In both Wesley's sermon and Emily's *devoir*, the world will not 'remain in this deplorable condition' but will be 'delivered from the present bondage of corruption, into [...] glorious liberty'.[130] Emily's image for this transformation is the metamorphosis of the butterfly. The main thrust of Wesley's sermon, though, is that butterflies (along with the rest of the 'brute creation') will be literally, not merely figuratively, changed.

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[128] *Sermons on Several Occasions*, 8 vols (London: New Chapel, 1788), V, pp. 135-36.
[129] Charlotte Brontë and Emily Brontë, *The Belgian Essays: A Critical Edition*, ed. Sue Lonoff (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 178.
[130] *Sermons on Several Occasions*, V, p. 138.

Wesley's sermon affirms that other animals are part of God's plan for the afterlife, but nonetheless it bases itself upon the traditional Chain of Being metaphor. As humans will advance a step up the *Scala Natura*, he claims, so too will animals:

> They will be restored, not only to that measure of understanding which they had in paradise, but to a degree of it as much higher than that, as the understanding of an elephant is beyond that of a worm. And whatever affections they had in the garden of God, will be restored with vast increase; being exalted and refined in a manner which we ourselves are not now able to comprehend.'[131]

However, Wesley is also at pains to maintain a fundamental distinction in kind, not merely degree, between humans and animals: the former alone is 'capable of knowing, and loving' the Creator.[132] Although, in their capacity to know and obey humans, other creatures have a 'shadowy resemblance' of humanity's relation to God,[133] he argues that God's regard for other animals is not *equal* to his regard for humans. It is, nonetheless, significant and 'tender'.[134] Wesley's sermon therefore argues for a similarity without equality between humans and other animals when it comes to their afterlives:

> The whole brute creation will then, undoubtedly, be restored, not only to the vigour, strength, and swiftness which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed. They will be restored, not only to that measure of understanding which they had in paradise, but to a degree of it as much higher than that, as the understanding of an elephant is beyond that of a worm. And whatever affections they had in the garden of God, will be restored with vast increase; being exalted and refined in a manner which we ourselves are not now able to comprehend. The liberty they then had will be completely restored, and they will be free in all their motions. They will be delivered from all irregular appetites, from all unruly passions, from every disposition that is either evil in itself, or has any tendency to evil. No rage will be found in any creature, no fierceness, no cruelty, or thirst for blood.[135]

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[131] Ibid., p. 139.
[132] Ibid., p. 144.
[133] Ibid., p. 132.
[134] Ibid., p. 140.
[135] Ibid., p. 139.

In Wesley's vision, not only humans but other animals are to be saved by God. The radical import of this sermon is precisely this assertion—that animals are included in the Day of Judgement. Such was its significance, the Society for the Protection of Animals printed and distributed copies of the sermon the year it was founded.[136] However, Wesley was careful not to equate humans and other animals. Though 'I doubt not that the Father of All has a tender regard for even his lowest creatures', he admitted, 'and that, in consequence of this, he will make them large amends for all they suffer while under their present bondage; yet I dare not affirm that he has an equal regard for them and for the children of men'. 'God regards his meanest creatures much', but, the sermon concludes, 'he regards man much more'.[137]

In this light, we can see that Brontë's interest in the ways death might both connect and divide humans and other animals is not entirely *sui generis*, even if its expression in *Wuthering Heights* is unique. The theriophilic tradition's use of animal death as an occasion for an inversion and critique of human exceptionalism, and Wesley's dissenting belief in animals' spiritual existence, were soft and perhaps inchoate influences on her representation of Heathcliff. In a spiritual sense, death distinguishes between different forms of life—between those creatures for whom it is the end and those for whom it is another beginning. As Bataille suggested, though, there is also a difference between animals who encounter death in the normal course of their life (in, for example, a predator and prey situation), and human animals who experience death as a 'break in continuity' between themselves and the world.[138] By extension, we can distinguish between two kinds of death: one that confirms the deceased as part of the world (even in death); and one that takes them out of it (and delivers them into the

[136] John Wesley, *A Sermon* (London: SPCA, 1824), accessed on *The Making of the Modern World* < http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2119/mome/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=MOME&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T001&docId=U107874468&type=multipage&contentSet=MOMEArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE >, accessed 8 February 2018.
[137] *Sermons on Several Occasions*, V, p. 140.
[138] *Theory of Religion*, p. 25.

afterlife). In Bataille's terms, the former corresponds to the animal's and the latter to the human's relation to death. In *Wuthering Heights*, though, the characters who can lay most definitive claim to an afterlife—Catherine and Heathcliff—are also the ones most insistently associated with other animals. What is more, Heathcliff imagines his desperate attempts to reunite himself with Catherine's body as a dissolution and reunion with the earth:

> 'I dreamt I was sleeping the last sleep by that sleeper, with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers.'
> 'And if she had been dissolved into earth, or worse, what would you have dreamt of then?' I said.
> 'Of dissolving with her, and being more happy still!' he answered.[139]

In this image, both Heathcliff's and Catherine's deaths are pictured as a return to the elemental *habitus*. As much as Heathcliff yearns for death as an escape, Brontë casts it as a confirmation of his belonging to the world of the Heights.

Brontë recognised that humans share a bodily vulnerability with other animals, and that death was, in an important sense, a point of experiential convergence for all creatures. Both human and animal bodies return to the earth, after all. But death also distinguishes between kinds of being: in the orthodox conception of the afterlife; in the differentiated afterlife expressed in Wesleyan theology; and in Bataille's sense of death as the final confirmation of humanity's transcendent relation to the world. Nor are such implications limited to religious belief. The secular word for afterlife may well be memory, and it is noteworthy that the literary-critical afterlives of the animals that appear in nineteenth-century literature have a particularly patchy quality to them—they are remembered in a qualitatively different way to the human characters in novels and poems. Brontë herself was evidently interested in the relative capacities for memory in humans and other animals, as when she has Nelly muse of Skulker

[139] *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 255-56.

the bulldog, 'I fancy it knew me'.[140] The tone is equivocal—Nelly's thought may well be what she terms it: a *fancy*—and the use of 'it' rather than 'he' casts further doubt on the idea. At the same time, however, it requires only a small leap of faith to believe that a dog that had 'spent its whelphood at the Grange' in company with Nelly would indeed remember her.

Throughout the novel, it is suggested that spiritual and secular afterlives are a kind of ontological sorting hat: the fate that awaits characters is illustrative of their nature and status. Repeatedly, though, Brontë renders this assumption ambiguous. Homologous to Wesley's efforts to extend the circle of God's mercy without abolishing distinctions between humans and other animals, in Brontë's novel death both joins and divides. It represents an imperceptible but categorical threshold, in both senses of the word: a threshold between the states of being and non-being, but also one that is supposed to be emphatic and unconditional. Her grammar of relation—to pick up on a phrase I used in chapter one—was shaped by similar limits, like the line breaks of her poetry that serve double-duty as markers of punctuation and syntax, in the absence of conventional orthography. Yet, within, and indeed through, those limits, she imagined an ontological taxonomy in which, as David Cecil noticed, individuals are defined not in relation to each other, but in relation to 'the cosmic scheme of which they form a part'.[141]

Neither human nor animal figures in literature are any more 'real' than the other; yet their different fates in literary history gives us a further instance of how the afterlife can draw distinctions retrospectively between different kinds of being. In this sense, it is the subsequent literary-critical fate of animals that may be said to mark them out as different in kind from humans, as much as a difference that is intrinsic to the literary beings themselves. Animals have never been absent from the texts that are discussed in this thesis, but they have often been forgotten, and that in itself constitutes a taxonomic distinction—albeit one that is conditional

[140] *Wuthering Heights*, p. 127.
[141] *Early Victorian Novelists*, p. 150.

on the work of readers. Looked at one way, the task of literary criticism is always an act of posthumous selection and differentiation: a matter of distinguishing the significant from the incidental, the meaningful from the functional, the structural from the ornamental—as well as of deciding which aspects or figures in a text deserve to be perpetuated or reanimated. In deciding who to pay attention to, or not, each critic decides into which beings they breathe fresh life. Historically, animals have not been among those revivified.

Yet Brontë's focus in *Wuthering Heights* on thresholds, on silence, and on the afterlife prompts a reconsideration of this fact, calling attention to the fates of her own creations. It is implicit, for example, that Heathcliff and Catherine's ghostly wanderings on the moors are a result of the intensity of their attachment both the Heights and each other—of, in other words, their belonging in that place and in each other's company. Heathcliff, though, in a novel full of liminal beings, is the limit-case of that sense of belonging, lingering on various borders established by the narrative: human and animal, alive and dead, native and foreign, even the two parts of the novel itself. It is as though Brontë's novel intimates that the more liminal the individual, the greater their chance of a life beyond the text; as though the thresholds depicted in the text were also its most porous junctures with posterity. Combined with the novel's interest in forms of meaningful inarticulacy, this aspect of *Wuthering Heights* challenges the taxonomies of significance that critics necessarily utilise in making sense of it. For Brontë's remarkable novel reorients its readers' attention to the margins of the text, and the creatures that inhabit them: to those which linger on thresholds, or are heard dimly through its lines.

4. Charles Kingsley's Amphibian Fictions

Defining the Human

In the last chapter, Brontë's novel was shown to explore aspects of both continuity and distinction between humans and other animals by relying on death and the afterlife as a means of differentiating between orders of being. The character of Heathcliff represented a threshold existence, poised between human and animal. In this chapter, I look at a genre of Victorian literature that depicts a series of ambiguous, hybrid creatures. Focusing particularly on the work of Charles Kingsley, I show how the discourse of Victorian fairy tales was shaped by prominent mid-century questions about the nature and definition of the human. These issues were posed as questions of both external relation (what distinguishes us from nonhuman animals?) and internal differentiation (are there different kinds of human?).

The chapter will first show how debates around race, childhood, and the history of the human species formed a discursive constellation in which distinctions between human and animal, or human and nonhuman, were especially significant. It will then give examples of how the categories of human and animal were shaped not only by contemporary scientific conversations, but also by the formal qualities of fairy tales themselves. It will go on to consider how Victorian fairy tales reflected on the process of categorisation—satirising the desire for stable taxonomies evident in the 'classifying imagination', but also drawing its own boundaries and categories. Like *Wuthering Heights*, Victorian fairy tales contain elements of the supernatural as ways of thinking through the relation between humanity and nature. Unlike Brontë's work, however, these texts were also decisively influenced by contemporary conversations in the life sciences.

It will also be found that Victorian fairy tales reflect this sense that the 'human' increasingly appeared to be an unstable category, in ways that are consonant with recent

philosophical work in the field of posthumanism.[1] As we will see in this section, in the middle of the century 'humanity' as a species was beginning to be understood as a historical phenomenon: that is, as having a lifespan (or several) that was not coextensive with the divine creation of the world, and therefore as mutable. The response of many scientists and anthropologists to this was to draw more numerous and finer distinctions between the 'human' (typically defined as white, male, European, and heterosexual) and the 'not-quite-human'—women, children, other races, primates. Rather than producing a stable definition of humanity, however, the very fact that the nature of humanity was up for debate, as it were, generated uncertainty. Like all fairy tales, Victorian versions of this long-enduring genre feature a diverse population of marvellous or mythical creatures. More than other eras, however, the tales of this period blur the lines between human and animal through their formal, semantic, and visual organisation. Such moments trouble the conceptualisation of 'the human' as a natural fact, which was posited by Victorian science. That is to say, the fairy tales discussed in this chapter depict the human as one species among many for two reasons: first, to understand what humanity is by comparison; and secondly, to understand its connection to the natural world.

Thomas Henry Huxley put the matter in magniloquent terms (as he often did), when he declared in 1863 that the 'question of questions for mankind—the problem which underlies all others and is more deeply interesting than any other—is the ascertainment of the place which Man occupies in nature and of his relations to the universe of things'.[2] At the bottom of this, of course, lay a question of categorisation (what was or is a human?), and of arrangement (what

[1] I refer in particular to the work of Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), and *When Species Meet*; and Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009). This tradition aims to show, broadly speaking, that the naturalisation of 'the human' as an ethical, epistemological, and ontological category constitutes a fundamental mischaracterisation of humans' place in the world. It does not seek to abandon the concept of the human altogether, but rather to redefine it as an idea with a particular history, which has been shaped by vested interests in preserving humanity's privileged position of dominance over what it defines as the natural and technological world. That is, as Wolfe puts it, posthumanism is not 'post-human', but rather 'post-humanist'. *What is Posthumanism?*, p. 3.

[2] *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863), p. 1.

place do humans have in the world?). This section considers the first of those questions as they were discussed in the middle of the nineteenth century, focusing particularly on race and childhood. The monogenist/polygenist debates about racial classifications, and the focus on the youth or embryo of a species (in recapitulation theory, and the idea of 'survivals') constitute a necessary and illuminating scientific context for understanding the taxonomic questions which influenced Victorian fairy tales.

Within the broader question of the development of species, human or otherwise, mid-Victorian writers and thinkers began to question how far the category *homo sapiens* extended, and how accommodating it was. Race became an important term: in the eighteenth century its meaning had 'centred around a group's shared language, customs or culture', but it shifted in the nineteenth century 'from […] a descriptive term to a classificatory one, from a focus on languages and culture to morphology'.[3] Like the idea of breeds, the transformation of race into a taxonomic concept provided a way of distinguishing within species. During what has become popularly known as the 'golden age' of the Victorian fairy tale (roughly the second half of the nineteenth century), one of the most debated issues with regard to race was the question of whether the different 'races of man' could be traced back to a common ancestor. What was known as the monogenist/polygenist debate dominated discussions of race in the middle of the century. Monogenists claimed that all current races of humans were descended from a single stock or type, diverging initially because of environment; polygenists believed that different races had distinct origins and should thus be considered separate species.[4]

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[3] Jonathan Conlin, *Evolution and the Victorians: Science, Culture and Politics in Darwin's Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 131.

[4] Alfred Russel Wallace's 1864 talk, 'The Origin of Human Races and the Antiquity of Man Deduced from the Theory of "Natural Selection"', given to the Anthropological Society of London, is perhaps the clearest example of the former position (delivered in front of the polygenist ASL). Robert Knox's 1850 collection of essays, *The Races of Man: A Fragment*, is an early example of the other side of the debate. For more on this see Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid* p. 124; J. W. Burrow, 'Evolution and Anthropology in the 1860's: The Anthropological Society of London, 1863-71', *Victorian Studies* 7.2 (1963), 137-54; and Kathy Alexis Psomiades, 'Polygenist Ecosystems: Robert Knox's *The Races of Man* (1850)', *Victorian Review* 36.2 (2010), 32-36.

In chapter seven of *The Descent of Man,* Darwin addressed the question of human genealogy 'in the same spirit as a naturalist would any other animal'.[5] More than anything else, he concluded, an almost infinite fluidity of forms and variations is characteristic of the human species. The idea that the differences between races are constant, let alone that those differences constitute separate species, fails to hold up under the weight of scientific evidence. A 'naturalist *might* feel himself fully justified in ranking the races of man as distinct species', he hazarded, having reviewed the arguments of the polygenists. They are indeed 'distinguished by many differences in structure and constitution, *some* being of importance'.[6] 'But the most weighty of all the arguments against treating the races of man as distinct species, is that they graduate into each other, independently in many cases, as far as we can judge, of their having intercrossed'.[7] The awkwardness of syntax in Darwin's expression is a subtle reflection both of the cultural (and not just scientific) stakes involved in admitting that all humans are, figuratively and literally, men and brothers to one another, and of the considerable diversity of scientific opinion on the matter. As Darwin points out,

> Man has been studied more carefully than any other animal, and yet there is the greatest possible diversity amongst capable judges whether he should be classed as a single species or race, or as two (Virey), as three (Jacquinot), as four (Kant), five (Blumenbach), six (Buffon), seven (Hunter), eight (Agassiz), eleven (Pickering), fifteen (Bory St Vincent), sixteen (Desmoulins), twenty-two (Morton), sixty (Crawfurd), or as sixty-three, according to Burke.[8]

Characteristically, Darwin resorts to a long procession of evidence to prove his point, hinting at the avid naturalist's love of lists and categories. However, the previous passage also highlights the fact that what makes the clear distinction of species, races, and varieties so

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[5] *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, ed. James Moore and Adrian Desmond (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 195.
[6] Ibid., p. 202; emphasis added.
[7] Ibid., p. 203.
[8] Ibid.

difficult is hybridity. 'The diversity of judgement does not prove that the races ought not to be ranked as species, but it shews that they graduate into each other, and that it is hardly possible to discover clear distinctive characters between them'.[9] As important as transmutation and change are to Darwin's theories, *The Descent of Man* makes it clear at numerous points that the 'blended or intermediate form[s]' created in those transformations are also key:[10] 'the distinctive characters of all the races were highly variable'; 'leading […] "insensibly down from the crown and summit […] to the lowest, smallest, and least intelligent"'; the 'numberless gradations' 'between an ape and a man'; 'a series of forms graduating insensibly from some ape-like creature to man as he now exists'.[11] 'In this respect', Darwin argues, 'man resembles those forms, called by naturalists protean or polymorphic, which have remained extremely variable, owing, as it seems, to such variations being of an indifferent nature, and to their having thus escaped the action of natural selection'.[12] 'Polymorphic' might also be a description of the extraordinary menagerie of marvellous 'creatures' which inhabit fairy tales, and the analogous uncertainty regarding their taxonomic categories. Humanoid figures like fairies, elves, dwarfs, trolls, goblins, giants, djinns, and others, were a way for Victorian writers to explore this idea of 'protean or polymorphic' figures, and their 'graduating insensibly' from one to another. They hinted at the idea that something could *look* human, but not quite *be* human.

The monogenist/polygenist debate was in many ways a battle over origins, in which the present taxonomic status of human beings could be determined by a diachronic narrative, ranged alongside synchronic comparison. As Friedrich Max Müller put it,

> in order to know what Man is, we ought to know what Man has been […]. To us, man is no longer this solitary being, complete in itself, and self-sufficient; man to us is a

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., p. 201.
[11] Ibid., pp. 202, 184, 86, 210.
[12] Ibid., p. 229.

> brother among brothers, a member of a class, of a genus, or a kind, and therefore intelligible only with reference to his equals.[13]

By 'reference to his equals', Müller means the history of humanity—to understand humanity at present, we need to understand it in the past. And this double vision of the past and present was, of course, a characteristic feature of nineteenth-century culture more broadly, in which innovation and modernity were sought in parallel with revivalism. New kinds of literary genre, movement, and mode appeared with rapidity (the dramatic monologue, the realist novel and its cognates, spasmodic poetry, Pre-Raphaelitism, Aestheticism, and nonsense, among many others) and children's literature was decisively altered from didactic moralism to a preoccupation with wonder and the fantastical.[14] On the other hand, the nineteenth century also looks persistently backwards in its fascinations with, and revivals of, the gothic, medievalism, Hellenism, and folklore. This tendency left its mark in our vocabulary, too: a host of 'neo-' compounds first appeared in the century, including neoclassic (1878), neo-Catholic (1842), neoconservative (1883), neo-Gothic (1878), and neo-Hellenic (1869), according to the *OED*. In short, the past endured in the present, and I turn now to recapitulation theory and Edwin Tylor's idea of 'survivals' for a concrete articulation of this conviction.

The revivalist tendency in Victorian art and literature—its desire to have both past and present simultaneously available—was mirrored in Victorian debates about the definition of the human and its place in nature, particularly in its recourse to the theory of recapitulation: the idea that the lifespan of the individual replays the history and development of the species.[15] First definitively formulated by German scientist Ernst Haeckel in 1874,[16] versions of this

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[13] Friedrich Max Müller, *Selected Essays on Mythology, Traditions, and Customs*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, 1881), I, pp. 4-5.

[14] In many different ways 'the nineteenth century saw major developments in the fairy tale as a literary form', Caroline Sumpter, *The Victorian Press and the Fairy Tale*, p. 2.

[15] For an extended account of the idea in history, see Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1977).

[16] *The Evolution of Man: A Popular Exposition of the Principal Points of Human Ontogeny and Phylogeny*

argument proved especially popular with evolutionary scientists, as it allowed the history of generations of missing or fossilized species development to be replayed in a readily observable timeframe: 'a living chronicle of the species' complete evolutionary progress'.[17] In *Man's Place in Nature* (1863), Huxley laid out a version of this argument to illustrate the 'structural unity of man with the rest of the animal world',[18] showing how the development of the embryo in humans is no different—up to a certain point—from other animals, the length of this developmental similarity being determined by how closely 'any animals resemble one another in adult structure'.[19] The progression of the embryo, Huxley argued, illustrates humans' essential relatedness to other animals, but it also confirmed humans as the most developed animal: 'the mode of origin and the early stages of the development of Man are identical with those of the animals immediately below him in the scale'.[20] The idea that ontogeny recapitulated phylogeny thus both challenged and buttressed human exceptionalism, proving that humans were indeed animals, but that they were special ones.

Early nineteenth-century theories of recapitulation like Huxley's, Jennifer Straley explains, 'referred only to the physical growth of the embryo', but recapitulation theory's conceptual reach soon extended beyond the womb, and 'the next fifty years saw the analogy between ontogeny and phylogeny extrapolated to explain the child's intellectual, emotional, and moral development after birth'.[21] The most influential mouthpiece of this theoretical development was the social theorist Herbert Spencer, who 'deftly united the pedagogical prescription that education repeats human history with the new evolutionary construction of that history'.[22] This led to a special emphasis on childhood in these debates, a shift that had

(London: Watts, 1879 [1874]).

[17] Jessica Straley, 'Of Beasts and Boys: Kingsley, Spencer, and the Theory of Recapitulation', *Victorian Studies* 49.4 (2009), 583-609 (p. 586).

[18] *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*, p. 2.

[19] Ibid., p. 2.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Straley, 'Of Beasts and Boys', p. 587.

[22] Ibid., p. 590.

two correlatives. First, children could now represent and help explain not only the physical development of the human species, but the development also of human (specifically western European) culture. Secondly, according to the logic of this line of thinking, as metonymic representatives of the early stages of humanity children would not quite be fully human themselves, as counterparts of the 'lower' animals. As Straley observes,

> [The] relationship between man and nature radically shifts when children appear within the texts – not as independent observers of nature's beauty but as integral parts of an often base and bestial natural world. From ideas regarding recapitulation, children's literature adopted a theory of development that turned children into animals.[23]

Turned the other way, the expanded logic of recapitulation meant not only that children represented a bestial past, but that the 'childhood' of the species could be witnessed in so-called contemporary 'savage' or primitive societies. Consonant with these ideas was the notion that the 'savage' races of humanity were themselves embryonic, or immature, manifestations of the species phylogeny.[24]

Imperialist ideology, of course, relied on a discourse of benevolent paternalism that cast its subjects as infants in need of guidance and instruction, and mid-nineteenth-century anthropological science buttressed this logic by affirming that other races—particularly people of African descent—were not merely culturally but physiologically correspondent to European children. As Amanda Hodgson points out, anthropology in the 1860s 'equate[d] contemporary savages with early humankind, persistently describing them as standing to civilized cultures as children do to adults'.[25] The President of the polygenist Anthropological Society of London, for instance, argued in the second volume of the Society's journal that the 'brain both of Negro

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[23] Ibid., p. 586.
[24] On this, see also Carole Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 82-86.
[25] Hodgson, 'Defining the Species: Apes, Savages and Humans in Scientific and Literary Writing of the 1860s', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 4.2 (1999), pp. 228-51, p. 240.

and ape more resembled that of the European when the latter was in an infant state than when older; at puberty all development in the brain of the Negro ceased'.[26] Similarly, the year before, William Winwood Reade could assert blithely that 'it has been proved by measurements, by microscopes, by analyses, that the typical negro is something between a child, a dotard, and a beast'.[27] Herbert Spencer, too, made this connection in *The Principles of Sociology*:

> For on the hypothesis of evolution, the civilized man, passing through phases representing phases passed through by the race, will, early in life, betray this impulsiveness which the early race had. The saying that the savage has the mind of a child with the passions of man […] thus possesses a deeper meaning than appears'.[28]

This association between 'savagery' and childhood replicated the language of bestiality habitually used in colonial discourse.[29] As Carole Silver has shown, though, the influence went both ways, and the language and ideas of folklore and fairy tales was also used to make sense of the discovery of new tribes of 'pygmy' or 'dwarf' tribes in Africa, South America and Asia from the middle of the century onwards.[30] We should also remark that the language of animality formed (and, of course, continues to form) an implicit rhetorical legitimation of racist ideologies. The main point here though is that the false physiological argument lent a veneer of empiricist rigour to the conclusion that 'there is as good reason for classifying the Negro as a distinct species from the European as there is for making the ass a distinct species from the zebra'.[31]

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[26] James Hunt, 'On the Negro's Place in Nature', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 2 (1864), xv-lvi, p. xv.

[27] *Savage Africa: Being the Narrative of a Tour in Equatorial, Southwestern, and Northwestern Africa* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864 [1863]), p. 399. Reade was a member of the Anthropological Society of London.

[28] *The Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), I, p. 58.

[29] This rhetoric is evident in the language of prominent writers of the period, such as (in some particularly infamous examples), Thomas Carlyle, 'Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question', *Fraser's Magazine* 40.240 (1849), 670-79; Charles Dickens 'The Noble Savage', *Household Words* 7.168, 11 June 1853, 337-39.

[30] *Strange and Secret Peoples*, pp. 129-37.

[31] Hunt, 'On the Negro's Place in Nature', p. xvi.

The scientific classification of *homo sapiens* was thus framed by work in anthropology and evolutionary science. However, we should also remember that the 'thesis that the individual reprises the rise of human civilization was already commonplace in early nineteenth-century pedagogy, wholly independent of later arguments about embryonic morphology'.[32] Even before the popularization and dissemination of evolutionary anthropology, childhood was a time epistemologically charged with questions of a much more distant past. Fairy tales carried some of this weight. 'Geology', for instance, as Melanie Keene has observed, 'had a particularly close relationship with fairy tales, with identifications often being made between fragmented fossil discoveries and creatures of lore'.[33] It was not only prehistoric or antediluvian times which fairy tales could recall or reconstruct; inspired by the Brothers Grimm and their collection of the 'authentic' folklore of an undisturbed and continuous national history, 'scholars across Europe, both amateur and professional, began to make equivalent collections designed to represent, and if necessary to fabricate, the traditional heritage of their own nations, regions and ethnicities'.[34]

Victorian fairy tales thus brought the past into the present, and were therefore narrative examples of what the anthropologist Edward Tylor called 'survivals'. These 'are processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved'.[35] A student of Tylor's work, the folklorist and fairy tale author Andrew Lang in the 1870s and 1880s applied his theory to the study of fairy tales, arguing that they represented vestigial remnants of older societies and beliefs. The animistic and anthropomorphic elements of fairy

[32] Straley, 'Of Beasts and Boys', p. 589.
[33] *Science in Wonderland*, p. 22.
[34] Andrew Teverson, *Fairy Tale* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 72.
[35] *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray, 1871), p. 15.

tales especially were, for Lang, 'primitive ideas' which have ceased 'to be seriously entertained and so become obsolete'.[36] These tales indicate both a link to, and distinction between, 'savage' and 'civilized' ('the savage ideas out of which civilization has evolved'),[37] and a reminder that these narrative survivals indicate a much closer continuity between humans and other animals than such arguments were often construed to uphold.[38]

This anxiety can be discerned in Lang's response to a claim made by Friedrich Max Müller. The German philologist suggested that an old Sanskrit tale about the 'Frog King' indicated a metaphorical equivalence between a frog and the sun that was present in Sanskrit, but that has been subsequently disenchanted. As the introduction to this thesis demonstrated, new theories of language imported to Britain from Germany in the middle of the century had re-characterised the development of human language as shaped by impersonal natural laws. As such, it charged the history of language with new significance. Whereas Müller saw the Sanskrit equivalence between the Frog King and the Sun as revealing a deep correspondence between the two concepts, Lang argued instead that such equivalence was not revelatory of the relation between speech and thought, but was instead evidence of the conceptions of animals held in the past by primitive humans:

> To the savage intellect, man and beast are on a level, and all savage myth makes men descended from beasts; while stories of the loves of gods in bestial shape, or the unions of men and animals, incessantly occur. 'Unnatural' as these notions seem to us, no ideas are more familiar to savages, and none recur more frequently in Indo-Aryan, Scandinavian, and Greek mythology. An extant tribe in North-West America still claims descent from a frog. The wedding of Bheki and the king is a survival, in Sanskrit, of a tale of this kind.[39]

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[36] Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, p. 94.
[37] Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London: Longmans, 1884), p. 25. Lang dedicates this book to Edward Tylor.
[38] Patrick Brantlinger has discussed this paradox of imperial ideology in *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 65-86.
[39] Lang, *Custom and Myth*, p. 79.

Fairy tales thus occupy an ambivalent but important place within this cultural Venn diagram of evolutionary science, anthropology, natural history, and philology. The similarity of fairy tale monsters to newly-discovered prehistoric pasts, as well as to evolutionary narratives of transmutation from fish-like creature to human (frog to prince, almost); understandings of *märchen* (tales) as survivals from a 'primitive', 'semi-human' past;[40] and the often fluid relatedness of human and animal—all these conceptualizations of fairy tales created a highly-charged literary node at which writers could explore and rewrite the identity and development of the human species. Telling a story about childhood could therefore be a way of telling a story about the species as a whole.

Classifying the Fairy Tale

Victorian fairy tales were influential in shaping the reception of nineteenth-century natural history.[41] Their compound of imaginative freedom and apparent straightforwardness made fairy tales particularly good vehicles for the dissemination of complicated, hard-to-picture scientific theories like evolution (a feature of Victorian fairy tales noted earlier). It is therefore not surprising that the energies of the 'classifying imagination' found direct and oblique outlets in Victorian fairy tales, given the significance of questions of classification in nineteenth-century natural history.

Curiously, though, fairy tales themselves have tended to generate questions of categorisation as well. In a survey of the genre, Andrew Teverson points out that it is usually categorised as a kind of 'folk tale', often in quite starkly taxonomic models of folk literature—noting how, in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's seminal *The Types of Folktale* (1928), 'folk

[40] Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 158.
[41] On this, see Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Fairy Tales, Natural History and Victorian Culture*; Keene, *Science in Wonderland*; Jessica Straley, *Evolution and Imagination in Children's Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

tales are divided into Animal Tales, Ordinary Folk-Tales, Jokes and Anecdotes, and Formula Tales. The category of Ordinary Folk-Tales is then further subdivided into Tales of Magic, Religious Tales, Novelle (Romantic Tales), and Tales of the Stupid Ogre'.[42] Other accounts which adopt a classificatory approach include Vladimir Propp's seminal *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928, translated 1958), Katherine M. Briggs's *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language* (1970-71), Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1970, translated 1971), and Hans-Jörg Uther's revision of Aarne and Thompson's model, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography* (2004). All genres are forms of taxonomy, but the 'rich and metamorphic' fairy tale often has a peculiarly ambivalent relationship with order, structure, categories, and boundaries.[43] This ambivalence is clear not just in the tales themselves, but in the way nineteenth-century anthologies were put together. In contrast to the structuralist thought that has influenced later anthologies, classifications, and morphologies, Victorian collections of folk tales are usually 'jumbled up indiscriminately'.[44] The immensely popular edition of the Grimms' fairy tales edited by Edgar Taylor offers no sense of categories or classification in its introduction (written by John Ruskin), its preface (written by Taylor himself), or the contents.[45] In his introduction, Ruskin spoke tellingly of the forms of fairy tales as slow, Burkean accretions of history. The fairy tale, he suggested, was

> historical, at least in so far as it has naturally arisen out of the mind of a people under special circumstances […]. It sustains afterwards natural changes from the sincere action of the fear or fancy of successive generations; it takes new colour from their manner of life, and new form from their changing moral tempers. As long as these changes are natural and effortless, accidental and inevitable, the story remains essentially true, altering its form, indeed, like a flying cloud, but remaining a sign of the sky.[46]

[42] Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, pp. 20-21. See Stith Thompson and Antti Aarne, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, trans. Stith Thompson, 3 vols (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeaktemia, 2011).
[43] Ibid., p. 15.
[44] Ibid., p. 21.
[45] *German Popular Stories*, ed. Edgar Taylor, intro. John Ruskin (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869 [1823]).
[46] Ibid., pp. ix-x.

Once again, we can see the linking of fairy tale with an almost evolutionary timeframe; 'accidental and inevitable' is, in one sense, a very Victorian reading of Darwinian evolution, but Ruskin, of course, is not thinking of fairy tales as evolutionary in any proper sense. Darwin's genealogical method of classification is, in fact, contradicted here by Ruskin's choice of image for the form of the fairy tale: 'a flying cloud'. The accidents and alterations of history provide a kind of culturally-shaped idiosyncrasy, rather than taxonomic clarity. This anticipates a similar remark made by George MacDonald thirty years later, where he described the fairy tale as like 'a sonata, a gathering storm, a limitless night'.[47] 'That may be strong in colour', MacDonald said, 'which has no evident outline'. Like Ruskin, MacDonald described the fairy tale as a form that was recognisable, but not delimited by strict boundaries.

Any urge to categorise Victorian fairy tales themselves is also likely to struggle with what Nicola Bown identifies as 'the huge variety of contexts in which [fairies] appear'.[48] They crop up in a wide range of nineteenth-century literature and art, and in some ways this even makes singling out particular Victorian fairy tales to explore tricky. As Maria Tatar notes, the insights and conventions of fairy tales infiltrated decidedly different modes and genres, such as the way Charlotte Brontë incorporates elements of fairy tale romance in *Jane Eyre*.[49] What constitutes a Victorian fairy tale? The presence of fairies? Hardly, since any number of creatures can appear in their place: trolls, elves, goblins, sprites, 'loquacious animals', or other unusual beasts. J.R.R. Tolkien once remarked that 'fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories about fairies or elves'.[50] Yet, as we will see in the next section, animals play a significant part as generic and narrative markers within Victorian fairy tales.

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[47] 'The Fantastic Imagination', *The Complete Fairy Tales*, ed. U.C. Knoepflmacher (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 8.
[48] *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 5.
[49] 'Introduction', *The Classic Fairy Tales* (New York and London: Norton, 1999), p. xvii.
[50] J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* (London: Unwin, 1964), p. 15.

These ambiguous characteristics make it difficult to distinguish definitively between fairy tales and other modes of short fiction like parable, allegory, or fable. The last of these, for example, is now most likely to be understood as a 'short story devised to convey some useful lesson; esp. one in which animals or inanimate things are the speakers or actors; an apologue', but, according to the *OED*, the now less common sense of a fable as a 'fictitious story relating to supernatural or extraordinary persons or incidents, and more or less current in popular belief' was active in the nineteenth century. The best-selling fairy tale author Margaret Gatty's most famous work was *Parables from Nature*, a term whose definition appears to be caught between another mode of short fiction and a figure of speech ('an allegorical or metaphorical saying or narrative; an allegory, a fable, an apologue; a comparison, a similitude', *OED*). And the allegorical mode of a work like Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River*, or indeed *The Water-Babies*, is hard to ignore. The *OED* implicitly acknowledges this in including these smudged boundaries as part of its definition of 'fairy tale': 'any of various short tales having folkloric elements and featuring fantastic or magical events or characters'. For most writers of Victorian fairy tales, though, this haziness or hybridity appears to have been—as it was for the heteroglossic nineteenth-century novel—less of a problem than it was a fertile source of meaning and imaginative play.

In teasing out the differences between different versions of supernatural short fiction, we might look to Todorov's distinctions between the uncanny, the fantastic, and the marvellous.[51] In the uncanny, events that initially appear beyond explanation are revealed as rationally understandable according to the laws of everyday life. In the fantastic, 'the reader is made to hesitate between a realistic and a supernatural explanation for the events described'.[52] Fairy tales are part of the last category, the marvellous, where normal rules do not apply, 'and

[51] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans Richard Howard and Robert Scholes (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973).
[52] Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, p. 29.

there is no ultimate realisation that apparently supernatural events admit of a rational explanation'.[53] There are no explanations for why animals speak, or might appear to do so; in Teverson's words, the 'cat just talks'.[54] Fairy tales foreground their fictionality, but unlike parables, fables, and allegories, the purpose of this is not to indicate the presence of a second-order meaning. The talking cat is important not necessarily because of what it says, but because of its indication that the reader is in another world, a fairy land, with other laws. That is to say, the anthropomorphic animal is a distinguishing mark of the marvellous, a characteristic trait of the fairy tale.

This emphasis on fictionality in the fairy tale, as a world of alternative laws, was concisely articulated by George MacDonald at the end of the nineteenth century. For him a narrative in general is successful if, and only if, it conforms to laws, which are a question of fundamental human cognition: 'The mind of man is the product of live Law; it thinks by law, it dwells in the midst of law',[55] and 'The natural world has its laws, and no man must interfere with them in the way of presentment any more than in the way of use'. However, those laws 'may suggest laws of other kinds, and man may, if he pleases, invent a little world of his own, with its own laws; for there is that in him which delights in calling up new forms—which is the nearest, perhaps, he can come to creation'.[56] The fairy tale, MacDonald believed, is a form or fictional world governed by laws that resemble those of the natural world, but that are invented by the author. A fairy tale foregrounds its difference from the real world, and one way in which this generic characteristic can be marked is through talking, anthropomorphic, or otherwise non-realistic animals. These animal figures signal a relation to the natural world and its laws—or at least a recognisable version of them—at the same time that they evince the capacity to break or alter those laws, for example by talking. Even if 'all narratives are

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., p. 30.
[55] 'The Fantastic Imagination', p. 6.
[56] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

necessarily the product of some human agency', animals play an important part in identifying their generic identity.[57] MacDonald's essay also picks up on this, in a tellingly classificatory analogy, suggesting that a fairy tale must announce its categorical identity within its form, by internal marks, rather than by an external proclamation:

> If my drawing […] is so far from being a work of art that it needs THIS IS A HORSE written under it, what can it matter that neither you nor your child should know what it means […] If, again, you do not know a horse when you see it, the name written under it will not serve you much. At all events, the business of the painter is not to teach zoology.[58]

This analogy is designed to point out that a fairy tale, and a true work of art, 'must mean many things', rather than faithfully 'convey a [single] meaning'.[59] But it is also not the only time that MacDonald uses an animal figure in attempting to describe or define the fairy tale. A paragraph later he claims that a 'fairytale, like a butterfly or a bee, helps itself on all sides, sips at every wholesome flower, and spoils not one',[60] and in the penultimate paragraph he asks that the reader let 'fairytales of mine go for a firefly that now flashes, now is dark, but may flash again'.[61] A fairy tale might be like a horse, a butterfly, a bee, or a firefly, but fixing on one of these analogies or metaphors will cause the meaning(s) of a particular tale to slip through one's fingers.

Animals in Fairy Tales

At this point it will be helpful to note those consistent generic conventions of the Victorian fairy tale that are marked by animals. First, these tales usually take place in a kind of borderland. George MacDonald's stories are excellent examples of this, and his works are

[57] Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, p. 10.
[58] Ibid., p. 7.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., p. 8.
[61] Ibid., p. 10.

typical of many Victorian fairy tales that begin, or take place, in a liminal space. In 'The Shadows', we learn that 'it is only between life and death that the fairies have power of grown-up mortals, and can carry them off to their country',[62] while 'The Giant's Heart' begins: 'There was once a giant who lived on the borders of Giantland where it touched on the country of common people'.[63] An emphasis on the enchanting quality of border spaces is also evident in 'Cross Purposes': 'No mortal, or fairy either, can tell where Fairyland begins and where it ends. But somewhere on the borders of Fairyland there was a nice country village, in which lived some nice country people'.[64] It is evident elsewhere in MacDonald's writing too, as in the poem 'Better Things': 'Better the twilight of dawn | Than the noonday burning bright';[65] or in 'A Story of the Sea-Shore', which begins 'I sought the long clear twilights of my home'.[66] It is in such borderlands that the children of the tale themselves hover on thresholds—of adventure, discovery, and personal development. In Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River*, for example, the final of three tests faced by Little Gluck is 'a little dog lying on the rocks, gasping for breath', marking a magical boundary in Gluck's progress—the boy of course gives the dog his last drops of water, upon which it 'sprang up and stood on its hind legs' and 'in three seconds the dog was gone', to be replaced by the eponymous King who then gives the righteous Gluck his reward.[67] As we saw with dogs and homes in chapter one, in fairy tales animals signify the domain of the marvellous by their appearance on the thresholds of those spaces. The characters that encounter such borders, moreover, are always children because, as we have seen, they were commonly regarded as liminal creatures in the period. Children appeared to many writers and scientists to embody an intermediate stage in the development of the species,[68] seeing them,

[62] *Complete Fairy Tales*, p. 54.
[63] Ibid., p. 81.
[64] Ibid., p. 104.
[65] *Works of Fancy and Imagination*, 10 vols (London: Strahan, 1871), III, p. 163.
[66] Ibid., II, p. 3.
[67] *Works of John Ruskin*, III, p. 341.
[68] 'They were borderline creations, a species midway between humans and the brutes', Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples*, p. 83.

variously, as 'naive innocent, living in a world of wonder and mythological fancy, or animalistic product of a savage past'.[69] During the period covered by this thesis, not only the physiology but also the psyche of the child constituted new territories of scientific investigation, offering instructive glimpses of both individuals and the species as a whole before they had reached full maturity.[70]

At such borders, the children often notice an unusual creature or animal, signalling their presence in fairyland. Just after the quotation from 'Cross Purposes' above, Alice notices 'a lovely little creature', with a 'crown of twisted tendrils' and 'a little gold beetle in front', and as she slowly makes her way down gentle slopes she notices that, surprisingly, there 'were deep pools here and there, but there was no mud, or frogs, or water-lizards, or eels'.[71] Similarly, in 'The Giant's Heart', 'somewhere near the borders', Tricksy-Wee spies 'a little hole at the bottom of the door which had been nibbled by some giant mouse', and 'crept through it' to find herself in the home of Mr and Mrs Giant.[72] In MacDonald's poem 'A Story of the Sea-Shore' (the title of which itself alludes to a liminal space), the speaker remembers a magical port where, 'Under the fairy leap of a wire bridge', 'grave swans, white splendours—crept'.[73] Upon entering the land of giants the children must scurry through mouseholes, 'the channel in the heart of a tree',[74] spider's webs, and bird's-nests; in this conceit, the shift in scale that is observable in many fairy tales is reworked so that the children have the physical perspective of animals. This perspectival shift is also evident in Dickens's *The Cricket on the Hearth: A Fairy Tale of Home*, where the all-but-invisible cricket in essence sings the home from the title into existence 'with a Chirrup, Chirrup, Chirrup of such magnitude, by way of chorus; with a voice

[69] Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 4.
[70] Ibid.
[71] *Complete Fairy Tales*, p. 104-05.
[72] Ibid., pp. 81-82.
[73] *Works of Fancy and Imagination*, II, p. 7.
[74] Ibid., p. 86.

so astoundingly disproportionate to its size'.[75] Taken together, these scenes point to how animals, particularly small ones like mice, spiders, and birds, could be conflated with supernatural creatures. Indeed, Melanie Keene suggests that the similarity between insects and fairies became 'enshrined' in the nineteenth century: 'fairies shrank to Tinkerbell proportions, became be-winged, became benign', and were given 'butterfly-like wings, cricket-like voices, and a mayfly existence'.[76] Not only did tales like Andrew Lang and Mary Kendall's *That Very Mab* (1885) exemplify the entomological makeup of fairies, but introductory works on entomology itself, like Louise M. Budgen's *Episodes of Insect Life* (1849-51), consciously adopted the conventions of the fairy tale to render the minutiae of the natural world.

It is not only the size of 'Giantland' that is important; while there, 'to their astonishment, the children found they could understand every word [the birds] sang'.[77] This points to another trope of the fairy tale: talking animals.[78] MacDonald's animals are only intermittently anthropomorphised, and this fact allows him to mark another border within his work, where his characters become able to understand the language of other creatures. Often, MacDonald's talking animals are symbols of a return to an Edenic innocence, before the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden. It is also part of what gives his work its strange quality of enchantment, for it is never clear when, or even if, animals might talk in his fairy tales—meaning that the laws of fairyland are always in a shifting relation to the laws of nature. The 'astonishment' with which the children in 'The Giant's Heart' find themselves able to understand animals works, then, is an ironic marking of the tale's genre, for it is clear from the beginning that we are in a fairy tale ('There was once a giant…') and therefore in the realm of talking animals.

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[75] *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Books*, ed. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 167.
[76] Keene, *Science in Wonderland*, p 55.
[77] Ibid., p. 87.
[78] For a book-length study of the evolution of the 'Talking Animal' genre over the long nineteenth century see Tess Cosslett, *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1789-1914* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006).

In a different tone, 'The Golden Key' also uses the revelation of animal speech as a mark of the marvellous, but in this case the comprehension is an indicator of transformation. More clearly than 'The Giant's Heart', the ability to understand animals gives shape to a Christian fable within the main narrative. (Or perhaps more properly a parable—MacDonald also wrote a short ballad that he titled 'The Golden Key', and included it in the 'Parables' section of volume four of *Works of Fancy and Imagination*).[79] 'In Fairyland', explains a beautiful mother-like figure, 'the ambition of the animals is to be eaten by the people; for that is their highest end in that condition. But they are not therefore destroyed'.[80] This alludes no doubt to Genesis 1:28-31, in which Adam and Eve are given 'dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth […]; to you it shall be for meat'.[81] The animal which the children do eat is an extraordinary fairy tale creature, a combination of 'the fish of the sea' and 'the fowl of the air': 'a curious creature, made like a fish, but covered, instead of scales, with feathers of all colours, sparkling like those of a humming-bird. It had fins, not wings, and swam through the air as a fish does through the water. Its head was like the head of a small owl'.[82] 'As soon as the fish was eaten […] a lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings, rose out of it, and flew round and round the roof of the cottage',[83] implying both the establishment of something like the Garden of Eden, and a parable in which those of God's creatures who understand their place and duty are properly rewarded. At the 'moment she had swallowed a mouthful of 'their strange meal', the girl, Tangle,

> heard a murmuring all about her, which became more and more articulate, and at length, as she went on eating, grew intelligible. By the time she had finished her share, the sounds of all the animals in the forest came crowding through the door to her ears; for the door still stood wide open, though it was pitch dark outside; and they were no longer

[79] *Works of Fancy and Imagination*, IV, pp. 88-92.
[80] *Complete Fairy Tales*, p. 127.
[81] *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, p. 9.
[82] Ibid., p. 124.
[83] Ibid., p. 128.

> sounds only; they were speech, and speech that she could understand. She could tell what the insects in the cottage were saying to each other too.[84]

Once again, a recognisable generic trope is defamiliarised. The children must learn to understand animals—to discover and learn one of the expected givens of the genre.

MacDonald's fairy tales are much concerned with borders and boundaries, but along with different folkloric traditions and genres in the nineteenth century many other fairy tales also found the idea of blended categories imaginatively fertile. Hybrids and hybridisation form an important part of the nineteenth-century imaginary. 'In a society that valued boundaries of all kinds, and that devoted great energy to establishing and defending them', Harriet Ritvo suggests, 'taxonomic border areas and the intermediate animals that inhabited them inevitably appeared as analogies or extensions of similarly ambiguous human categories'.[85] The fascination around hybrids extended beyond literature, inspiring a mixture of 'horror as well as pleasure' as living examples of hybrid creatures were exhibited across the country.[86] It also played an important part in the post-*Origin of Species* debate around the very definition of a 'species'.[87] Lord Monboddo's eighteenth-century theory that humans were descended from orangutans was directly and indirectly revived in the 1840s, in Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' and in Dickens's reference to it in the opening of *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844),[88] and a similar debate was reanimated in the 1860s by the discovery and exhibition in Britain of the gorilla.[89] Case studies of so-called 'feral children', which were viewed as more-than-usually intermediate forms between humans and other animals, also intermittently galvanised public

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[84] Ibid., p. 127.
[85] Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, p. 104.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] *Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. Margaret Cardwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 6.
[89] On this, see Paul Du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1861); Peter Raby, *Bright Paradise: Victorian Scientific Travellers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1996); Hodgson, 'Defining the Species'; and Charles Kingsley, *The Water-Babies*, ed. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013 [1863]), pp. xxii-xxiii.

attention.[90] At the same time, the 'immensely popular idea' of the 'missing link' between 'mankind and other primates' returned again and again, particularly after Darwin's *Origin*.[91] Influencing scientific debates as well as providing popular entertainment throughout the century, hybridity loomed large in the nineteenth-century imagination.[92] We can see two examples of this fascination with hybrids and halfway beings in the nineteenth-century interest in whales and mermaids; like Kingsley's 'water-baby', Tom, these figures were creatures of both air and water.

As inhabitants of the sea which were nonetheless much more closely related to humans than fish, whales were both enormous and anomalous. As water-dwelling mammals, they represented a taxonomic problem—'a class of animated creatures distinct from both fishes and land animals, though partaking of the character of both'.[93] In his *Natural History of the Ordinary Cetacea or Whales*, published in 1837 as part of the popular Naturalist's Library series, Robert Hamilton praised 'the wonderful adaptations by which an animal of such a structure and habit of body is fitted to become the inhabitant of a different element',[94] while Henry Dewhurst suggested in 1834 that these peculiarities meant that the 'natural history of the whale is an object well worthy of the utmost attention of the zoologist, theologian, and philosopher'.[95]

Whales proved the real existence of mammals that lived in water, while mermaids had long represented this idea in the realm of fantasy. Appearing across different genres, languages,

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[90] See Michael Newton, *Savage Girls and Wild Boys: A History of Feral Children* (London: Faber, 2002).
[91] Gillian Beer, 'Interdisciplinary Studies: Forging the Missing Link', in *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 117.
[92] Ibid., pp. 85-91, 92-104. On this, see also *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*, eds. U.C. Knoepflmacher and Logan D. Browning (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).
[93] Anonymous, 'Cetaceous Animals—The Whale Fisheries', *Chambers's Edinbugh Journal* 193, 10 October 1835, p. 293.
[94] *The Natural History of the Ordinary Cetacea or Whales, with a memoir of Lacépède* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1861 [1837]), p. 37.
[95] *The Natural History of the order Cetacea and the Oceanic Inhabitants of the Arctic Regions* (London: privately printed, 1834), p. 13.

and periods, the folkloric figure of a half-human half-fish illustrates both the Victorian obsession with hybridity and the breadth of imaginative inspiration it offered. A short list of nineteenth-century mermaids would include: Tennyson's early twin poems, 'The Merman' and 'The Mermaid'; chapter thirteen of Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, which, as well as using an epigraph from W. S. Landor's poem 'The Mermaid', stages a debate over a mermaid sighting between a credible sailor and a rationalist natural historian; P. T. Barnum's famous hoax the 'Feejee Mermaid'; mermaid poems by poets including Walter Scott, James Hogg, Thomas Lovell Beddoes, John Keble, Joanna Baillie, Sydney Dobell, to choose but a few; Arnold's 'The Forsaken Merman'; Burne-Jones's *The Mermaid* and *The Depths of the Sea*. All of these indicate a fascination with, as Nina Auerbach describes it, 'nonhumanity in human form', the mermaid's 'hybrid nature, her ambiguous status as creature'.[96] Among this flood of mermaids, in 1846, the first three English translations of Hans Christian Andersen's tales appeared, rendered into English by Charles Boner, including 'The Little Mermaid'.[97]

Mermaids and whales thus straddled the elements of air and water, and as we will see in the next section of this chapter, this particular hybridity was a significant one for the period. It is also evident, for instance, in the ambiguously frog-like figures in Henry Morley's *Melilot*. Until the eponymous orphan's saintly acts of renunciation and sacrifice lift the wicked raven's transmutational curse, a group of toady benefactors are described as 'men sat together in [a] puddle, squatt[ing] like frogs', 'a hand that had all its fingers webbed together', 'three creatures', 'ugly creatures', 'web-footed', 'monsters', and 'half frog-like faces'.[98] The hedged bets of the language are directly contradicted by Charles H. Bennet's illustrations, though, which feature not just 'frog-like faces', but—unmistakably—frogs. (This is a reminder that one

[96] *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 94.
[97] *Encyclopaedia of Literary Translation into English, A-L*, ed. O. Classe (London: Taylor and Francis, 2000), p. 48
[98] *The Victorian Fairy Tale Book*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: Pantheon, 1998), pp. 118-21.

of the most enduring fairy tale tropes in western folklore is the kissed frog turning into a prince—a trope that is brilliantly parodied in MacDonald's 'The Light Princess' when the princess accidentally floats into a boy page 'so that, along with the kiss, he received, on the other cheek, a slap with the huge black toad', which she had earlier picked up.) The tension between the description and the illustration in *Melilot* reminds us of another way in which we need to conceive of fairy tales as hybrid forms: as text and image working together, or sometimes against each other.

The term 'creature' has already been mentioned a number of times, and while it is a valuably flexible term across the period's literature, it takes on a particular resonance and usage in the Victorian fairy tale.[99] 'Was it a human creature?' asks the narrator of MacDonald's 'Little Daylight', a question that is paradigmatic of the taxonomic ambiguity on which Victorian fairy tales sometimes turn.[100] It is this ambiguity, for instance, that is vital to Robert Browning's 'The Pied Piper of Hamlin'. 'I'm able', says the Piper, 'By means of a secret charm, to draw | All creatures living beneath the sun, | That creep or swim or fly or run'.[101] The naïve mayor and citizens, of course, fail to understand that 'All creatures' does not refer only to the rats but also to the town's children. The full significance of Browning's use of the word also, as Sophie Ratcliffe has shown, includes the intimation of a creator,[102] and the lines resonate with a number of other Christian sources: the hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', first published in 1848; Psalms 104:25 ('*So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts');[103] as well as the lines from Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner' which run, 'He prayeth best, who loveth best | All things both great and

[99] On the idea of the 'creaturely' see Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), and Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). On Thomas Hardy's use of the term, see Anna West, *Thomas Hardy and Animals*, pp. 15-45.
[100] *Complete Fairy Tales*, p. 155.
[101] *The Major Works*, eds. Adam Roberts and Daniel Karlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 124.
[102] *On Sympathy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 71-122;
[103] *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, p. 697.

small'.[104] Victorian writers—especially those versed in natural history—would have been familiar with the link between creature and Creator through the natural theology of William Paley (discussed in the introduction).

'Mischievous' and 'curious creatures' were also an important generic feature of the fairy tale,[105] an epithet that might be said to arise because such creatures are beings—human or animal—out of place: 'nothing', MacDonald wrote, 'is ever so mischievous in its own place as it is out of it'.[106] Fairyland is where creatures creep and crawl, and where they can be undecidably human or otherwise. Unlike zoological exhibitions of cross-breeds such as 'ligers',[107] however, the creaturely hybrids of fairy tales need at one point or another to resolve into a familiar form. The term 'creature' suspends, or defers, the taxonomic imperative to identify—but not indefinitely. It is possible that this temporary suspension of certainty, this momentary hybridity, is one of the defining features of the fairy tale itself, a way of creating its aura of the fantastic and the marvellous. For MacDonald, as I note above, such stories had to have an indefinite form—'strong in colour', but with 'no evident outline'—like 'a sonata, a gathering storm, a limitless night'. And like the shadows in the tale of the same name, fairy tales oscillate between the evidently human and the palpably not so: 'In the light of the diamond, too, some of their forms became more simple and human, while others seemed only to break out into a yet more untameable absurdity'.[108]

A more literal lack of gravity afflicts the aforementioned Light Princess, and the only cure, one of the court physicians avers, is to ascertain more definitely her taxonomic place in her environment; she requires a reestablishment of the 'relation between her and this world

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[104] *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano (New York and London: Norton, 2004), p. 99 (ll. 614-17); all subsequent references are to this edition, taken from the 1834 version.
[105] Ibid., p. 124. On the mischievousness of fairies, see Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin, 2001).
[106] Ibid.
[107] On animal hybrids in Victorian science and culture, see Ritvo, *Platypus and the Mermaid*, pp. 85-130.
[108] MacDonald, 'The Shadows', *Complete Fairy Tales*, p. 59.

[…] She must study every department of its history – its animal history; its vegetable history; its mineral history […] But first of all she must study geology, and especially the history of the extinct races of animals – their natures, their habits, their loves, their hates, their revenges'.[109] Creatures in fairy tales often hang momentarily and ambiguously between states or categories. Is the Light Princess, for example, a creature of the earth or the air? Dinah Mulock Craik's 'The Little Lame Prince and His Traveling Cloak' distils this taxonomic suspension into a usefully concentrated scene:

> The voice that squeaked out this reply was an excellent imitation of the human one, though it came only from a bird. No lark this time, however, but a great black and white creature that flew into the cloak, and began walking round and round on the edge of it with a dignified stride, one foot before the other, like any unfeathered biped you could name.[110]

Clearly this creature is a magpie (her name turns out to be Mag), but although we are told that the noise came 'from a bird', the 'great black and white creature' momentarily reorients our expectation, and the desire to name it and categorise it apparently sits side by side with the desire to name it wrongly (as 'any unfeathered biped').

The Water-Babies

In distinguishing between three versions of nineteenth-century fairy or folk tale, Teverson identifies *Volksmärchen* (people's tales, with an emphasis on authenticity and orality), *Buchmärchen* (book tales, which derive from the French courtly tradition exemplified by Charles Perrault, existing in a 'murky hinterland between tradition and literature'), and *Kunstmärchen* (art tales, of the kind written in a distinctively literary style, such as those of Wilde, MacDonald, and Andersen).[111] He describes the *Buchmärchen* as 'amphibian fictions',

[109] Ibid., p. 27.
[110] *Victorian Fairy Tales*, ed. Michael Newton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 187.
[111] Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, p. 31.

and the same term can be used to make sense of the hybrid, creaturely markers of the nineteenth-century fairy tale—especially one of the strangest and most enduring of them: Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies*.

'Tom was now quite amphibious', begins chapter three. '"Amphibious. Adjective, derived from two Greek words, amphi, a fish, and bios, a beast. An animal supposed by our ignorant ancestors to be compounded of a fish and a beast; which therefore, like the hippopotamus, can't live on the land, and dies in water"'.[112] This is not even close to being correct, as Kingsley knew very well. Meaning, rather, 'living in both', as the *OED* has it, this deliberate mistake suggests that Kingsley wanted his reader to train a sceptical—and perhaps wry—eye on the natural history put forward in the work. What is more, this moment also indicates that the novel's interest in doubleness and hybridity will be reflected in its form. The 'T' in 'Tom was now quite amphibious' is part of an illustrated initial perched on a lily pad in a pond, and the 'om' is part of the main body of text, in a kind of performance of amphibian hybridity in form and content (indeed, it makes it clear that the two cannot be easily separated). The initial is also preceded in each chapter by epigraphs, entities which are themselves amphibian paratexts, to use Gérard Genette's term:[113] 'He prayeth well who loveth well, | Both man and bird and beast', reads chapter three's.[114] This quotation is drawn, of course, from 'The Ancient Mariner', noted above, and the fact that there are a number of epigraphs taken from this poem indicates Kingsley's sense of a dialogue between his work and Coleridge's.

Little has been said about the significance of Kingsley's allusions to Coleridge's poem, but, at second glance, there are instructive parallels between the two. Both narratives are at root fantastic or supernatural tales of redemption: Tom is rescued from his sooty life of immorality,

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[112] *The Water-Babies*, p. 46.
[113] *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, foreword Richard Macksey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[114] *The Water-Babies*, p. 46.

and the mariner from his disregard of other living creatures. Both must learn that every part of God's creation is a testament to the divine; Tom achieves this by living *as* one of these creatures ('from the beasts which perish he must learn'),[115] while the mariner learns through a prolonged act of penance. Furthermore, both go through this process on or in the water—they are also therefore tales of baptismal regeneration. And beyond these structural and thematic similarities, more local details also insist on the comparison. As Tom seeks out the 'Other-end-of-Nowhere', where he is to find Mother Carey, within the frozen landscape of the Arctic he comes across 'the wrecks of many a gallant ship; some with masts and yards all standing, some with the seamen frozen fast on board'.[116] This echoes the 'naked hulk' which the mariner encounters just before his shipmates 'dropped down one by one':

> And straight the sun was flecked with bars,
> (Heaven's mother send us grace!)
> As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
> With broad and burning face.
> […]
> Are those her ribs through which the sun
> Did peer, as through a grate?
> And is that Woman all her crew?
> Is that a Death? and are there two?
> Is Death that woman's mate?
>
> Her lips were red, her looks were free,
> Her locks were yellow as gold:
> Her skin was as white as leprosy,
> The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
> Who thicks man's blood with cold.[117]

For both protagonists, it is the strange inhabitants of the sea (water-babies, lobsters, efts, eels, 'a ribbon of pure silver',[118] 'a thousand thousand slimy things')[119] who provoke or catalyse the

[115] Ibid., p. 32.
[116] Ibid., p. 143.
[117] *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, pp. 71-73 (ll. 177-92).
[118] *The Water-Babies*, p. 75
[119] *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, p. 75 (l. 238).

resolution of the narrative: Tom 'could never find a water-baby till after he had got the lobster out of the pot',[120] while the mariner's salvation begins when he 'blessed […] unaware' 'the water-snakes', which 'coiled and swam'.[121] At the same time these strange inhabitants—and in both stories they come from the natural and supernatural worlds—raise knotty questions of classification. The epigraph to Coleridge's poem added in 1817 is from Thomas Burnet's seventeenth-century Latin text, *Arcaheologiae Philosophicae*, the sense of which is 'I can easily believe that in the totality of things there are more invisible than visible beings. But who will describe the family of all these, their ranks, relations, differences, and distinctive functions? What do they do? Where do they live?'.[122] How dissimilar this is to Kingsley's satirically obstinate Professor Ptthmllnsprts, who spent nearly 150 years writing a paper

> in which he assured everyone […] that there were not, never had been, and could not be, any rational or half-rational beings except men, anywhere, anywhen, or anyhow; that nymphs, satyrs, fauns, inui, dwarfs, trolls, elves, gnomes, fairies, brownies, nixes, wilis, kobolds, leprechaunes, cluricaunes, banshees, will-o'-the-wisps, follets, lutins, magots, goblins, afrits, marids, jinns, ghouls, peris, deevs, angels, archangels, imps, bogies, or worse, were nothing at all, and pure bosh and wind.[123]

The fact is that the list put forward by the Professor (one of the many lists in *The Water-Babies*, a form in which Kingsley takes considerable pleasure), in its desperate attempt for comprehensiveness, paradoxically invites the limitless addition of other forms which complicate or disprove the theory: what about giants, centaurs, or changelings? One cannot, as the narrator points out, 'prove an universal negative'.[124] To know positively that there are no such things as water-babies one would need to see every part of the world at once, on every scale; one would need to be omnipotent—or, in other words, God. This resonates with

[120] *The Water-Babies*, p. 99.
[121] *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, p. 77 (ll. 280-87).
[122] Ibid., p. 59.
[123] *The Water-Babies*, p. 82.
[124] Ibid., p. 83.

Coleridge's 1817 epigraph, in Burnet's certainty that 'there are more invisible than visible beings', for invisibility can be a trick of the eye, a perceptual lapse, a function of scale, or simply a consequence of looking the wrong way. Kingsley's narrator makes it clear early on that, just as Coleridge wants 'The Ancient Mariner' to be, *The Water-Babies* is a tale about what is unseen: 'The most wonderful and the strangest things in the world, you know, are just the things which no one can see. There is life in you; and it is the life in you which makes you grow, and move, and think: and yet you can't see it'.[125]

To return, briefly, to the epigraphs at the head of Kingsley's chapters, it is worth noting how these paratexts themselves recapitulate some of the issues raised in this chapter. When the quotations are referenced, readers are offered a glimpse of a possible source or origin for the current text—or at least, in more Darwinian terms, a distant ancestor. Yet, at the same time, the nature of the epigraph, sutured onto the main text without supplementary explanation, renders the nature of the relation between the text and the paratext perennially ambiguous. Kingsley's epigraphs thus intimate the existence of meaningful precursors, without articulating precisely in what the significance consists. The epigraphs hint at partially revealed connections between *The Water-Babies* and its literary precursors—ones that are observable without being self-evident. What was termed intertextuality in the twentieth century might, in this context, be renamed amphibiousness, for Kingsley's epigraphs remind us that a literary work is itself a hybrid composition, stitched together from different sources and styles and containing within it multiple orders of being.

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[125] Ibid., p. 33. This could be an allusion to a wide variety of forces and concepts: love; sacrifice; gravity; electricity; the divine spark; but it is also perhaps a simultaneously less appealing nod to contemporaneous debates about water sanitation, in which Kingsley was deeply involved. The obsession with what lives in the water, and with cleanliness, throughout the tale is a reminder of this, as Melanie Keene has pointed out in *Science in Wonderland*, pp. 82-109. See Charles Kingsley, 'The Water of Life' in *The Water of Life, and Other Sermons* (London: Macmillan, 1867), pp. 1-18. For general histories of nineteenth-century water sanitation, see also Lee Jackson, *Dirty Old London: The Fight Against Victorian Filth* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 46-105; and Rosemary Ashton, *One Hot Summer: Dickens, Darwin, Disraeli, and the Great Stink of 1858* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017).

With respect to the unseen, science and the cultural imagination moved in tandem. Nineteenth-century developments in glass production made microscopes (among other optical instruments) more powerful, more accurate, and more widely available. As Kingsley's fairy tale itself suggests, writers began to argue that paying attention to the minutiae of the world was an act with moral, and indeed spiritual, implications—a kind of reverence for the natural creation. The Scottish chemist and minister John Ferguson, for instance, saw an opportunity to buttress claims for a transcendent divine presence. One of the possible implications of the discovery of smaller and smaller worlds, of course, is that the fact that they keep receding from view tends, inevitably, towards a kind of infinity. As Ferguson put it: 'there may lie a region of invisibles; and that […] a universe within the compass of a point so small as to elude all the powers of the microscope, but where the wonder-working God finds room for the exercise of all His attributes'.[126] This, then, is part of what shaped Kingsley's narrator's idea of 'the life in you which makes you grow, and move, and think: and yet you can't see'. As this discussion has shown, *The Water-Babies* draws together many of the threads running through this chapter, and perhaps nowhere else in the period are they explored so legibly or so weirdly. Synthesising and complicating those tropes, it is a text which reflects, particularly in its form but also in the literal sense of its words, on the work of classification. It continually draws attention to, and questions, the conventions of its genre, as if its subtitle, 'A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby' implied a category error that keeps needing to be addressed; it revels in Rabelaisian lists (lists, of course, form the basis of any category or class); it draws on a wide range of nomenclatural conventions—scientific, amateur, nonsense, folk—sometimes giving a creature or plant more than one name; it invests itself in borders and boundary-crossing; it insistently foregrounds its 'amphibian' form; and, most of all, it is a tale which is centrally about what it means to be

[126] *The Microscope, its revelations and applications in science and art* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1858), p. 5, quoted in Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 413.

human, and how easy it is to slip out of that category altogether. Its moral message (if there is one, for as Kingsley reminds the reader more than once, 'this is all a fairy tale […] and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true'),[127] is in fact dependent on the representation of a fluid relation between humans and other animals.

Kingsley's tale, as Valentine Cunningham points out, is deeply invested in margins and boundaries:

> the border, the edge, that place […] for doubtful, feared people and substances, the place of physical exuvia that are ejected and rejected at the margins of the human body, the skin (that edge), the exits at the borderline of the body, place of human debris and castaways, people construed as discardable and inferior, the places where sanity is at hazard […] and where the wholeness of societies, individuals, and writing is in question.[128]

But if *The Water-Babies* displays a preoccupation with the borders that get crossed—or where the integrity of beings, places, and concepts are called into question—it also draws attention to what those borders define and describe: the walls and gates that Tom crosses surround and define Sir John's land, as well as what exists outside; the valley which Tom tumbles down also delimits the quasi-magical Vendale; and the riverside on which Tom leaves his clothes forms the boundary of the water world of which he becomes a part. A focus on the margins within Kingsley's text runs the risk of obscuring his fascination with classification, categories, and lists. This preoccupation is reflected in the 'ragged, baggy', hybrid nature of its own generic identity,[129] as well as in its avowed and animated response to Darwin's recently published *Origin of Species.* Kingsley's allusions to contemporary science also include comparative anatomy, for which he reserves particular scorn, and a large part of these references are to do with either the definition of the human, or the collection and classification of species.

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[127] *The Water-Babies*., p. 181.
[128] 'Soiled Fairy: *The Water-Babies* in its Time', *Essays in Criticism* 35.2 (1985), pp. 121-48, pp. 125-26.
[129] Ibid., p. 121.

Responding, for example, to the imaginary protestation that there is no such thing as a water-baby, Kingsley asks:

> 'Well. How do you know that somebody has not [caught one]?'
> 'But they would have put it into spirits, or into the Illustrated News, or perhaps cut it into two halves, poor dear little thing, and sent one to Professor Owen, and one to Professor Huxley, to see what they would each say about it.' […]
> 'But a water-baby is contrary to nature.' […]
> You do not know what nature is, or what she can do; and nobody knows; not even Sir Roderick Murchison, or Professor Owen, or Professor Sedgwick, or Professor Huxley, or Mr Darwin, or Professor Faraday, or Mr Grove.[130]

The narrator goes on to argue that if you described an elephant to someone who had never seen one they would say the same thing: did 'not learned men, too, hold, till within the last twenty-five years, that a flying dragon was an impossible monster? And do we not now know that there are hundreds of them found fossil up and down the world? People call them Pterodactyles: but that is only because they are ashamed to call them flying dragons, after denying so long that flying dragons could exist'.[131] Settle 'no more what strange things cannot happen, till [one] has seen what strange things do happen every day', the narrator advises.[132] In one of the text's most famous barbs, Kingsley reincarnates the amphibian hippopotamus who appears at the beginning of chapter three as 'the great hippopotamus test', a parody of the debate between comparative anatomist Richard Owen (who argued that possession of the hippocampus minor in the human brain was the definitive marker of the human, thus reducing its definition to the purely physiological), and detractors of the theory, such as T. H. Huxley. [133]

Throughout our attention is drawn to the question of what belongs where, and of our names for things—from chapter epigraphs to the 'Moral' at the end. If Tom is a being who must

[130] *The Water-Babies*, pp. 38-39.
[131] Ibid., p. 40; emphasis added.
[132] Ibid., p. 41.
[133] Ibid., p. 81.

undergo a metamorphosis in order to become that which he/we thought he was to begin with (human), part of the environment of his transformation involves the very idea of stable categories being put under pressure. In order to produce a category of 'the human' with which we can be comfortable and certain enough, the text both mocks attempts to classify too avidly, neatly, or minutely, and insists on the moral necessity of such attempts.

For Kingsley, as I noted earlier, one of the enchanted boundaries of his tale is that between the visible and the microscopic world, and the relation between the two is one of the most engaging aspects of taxonomy and classification, as the narrator points out: 'That is not surprising: size has nothing to do with kindred. A tiny weed may be first cousin to a great tree; and a little dog like Vick knows that Lioness [dogs of Kingsley's] is a dog too, though she is twenty times larger than herself'.[134] Tom is, after all, measured at the jocularly specific '3.87902 inches long',[135] and as it does in 'The Giant's Heart' this newly miniature life enables communication between Tom and other animals. 'The imagination', Christopher Hamlin writes, 'is an especially important analogical bridge to animal minds' for Kingsley,[136] and Hamlin is right to point out that in *The Water-Babies* the imagination is indeed a category-confounding faculty. This is in part what allows Kingsley to cross the divide between macro and micro, and it is also evident in his *Glaucus; Or, The Wonders of the Shore* (1855), where Kingsley argues that one of 'the wonders which the classification of marine animals affords' is that they confuse our expectations of neat distinctions between vegetable and animal:[137] when things get very small, categories tend to get blurred in exhilarating and imaginatively productive ways. For instance, see how 'zoophytes are microscopic animalcules' which are difficult to classify, 'in which our old distinctions of "animal," "vegetable," and "mineral," are

[134] Ibid., p. 94.
[135] Ibid., p. 37.
[136] 'Charles Kingsley: From Being Green to Green Being', *Victorian Studies* 54.2 (2012), pp. 255-81, p. 262.
[137] *Glaucus; Or, the Wonders of the Shore*, 4th edn (London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Co, 1859), pp. 37-39.

trembling in the balance'.[138] According to Kingsley, we are surrounded by tiny worlds of surprising and unlikely forms, 'world[s] hid from us even when in plain sight':[139] 'in the tiniest piece of mould on a decayed fruit, the tiniest animalcule from the stagnant pool, will imagination find inexhaustible wonders, and fancy a fairy-land'.[140] 'You need not go […] far', he concluded in a lecture on natural history, 'to find more than you will ever understand'.[141] The world of fairies is, in the sense of wonder and scale, equivalent to the microscopic realms of the classifying imagination.

The Water-Babies is then, in part, a reminder to both adults and children alike of the delight and moral improvement to be gained from the close observation of nature—an outward 'class of objects' which 'excite wonder, reverence, the love of novelty and of discovering'.[142] (The terms echo those of William Paley's *Natural Theology*—'The meanest creature is a collection of wonders'—and weave in a distinct religious inflection to the kind of looking Kingsley wanted his readers to do.)[143] Tom's judicious, brave, and 'English' resolution to leave the comfort of the stream and 'see the world' of the ocean is also analogous to the precocity and dedication of the 'few earnest seekers', like Carl Linnaeus and John Ray, who, Kingsley argued elsewhere, endeavoured to disencumber 'their own minds of the dreams of bygone generations', and to make the science of natural history 'popular, which as yet was not even a science at all'.[144] Like these pioneers, Tom has to make his own way, and listen earnestly to the laws of nature (or Mother Carey, or Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs Doasyouwouldbedoneby), and to 'face facts manfully, to discriminate between them skilfully, to draw conclusions from them rigidly'.[145]

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[138] Ibid., p. 33.
[139] Ibid., p. viii.
[140] Charles Kingsley, 'On the Study of Natural History', in *Miscellanies*, 2 vols (London: John Parker, 1859), II, p. 355.
[141] Ibid., p. 357.
[142] Ibid.
[143] *Natural Theology*, p. 209.
[144] *The Water-Babies*, p. 61; *Glaucus*, pp. 10-11.
[145] 'Natural History', p. 348.

It follows, then, that the most valuable of these experiences are the most difficult, that the keenest observation and discriminating mind will be evident when things are most confused: 'the successful investigator of the minutest animals takes place unquestioned among men of genius'.[146] In its own generic hybridity and classificatory promiscuity, the form of *The Water-Babies* self-consciously poses the problem of the rock-pool or forest pond—that the tiniest worlds are the messiest. It is, Cunningham observes in a particularly apt and nearly amphibian metaphor, 'a great hermeneutical sponge',[147] inviting and soaking up essays of interpretation without granting any one priority. As Robert Douglas-Fairhurst points out, as 'a playfully plural narrative' Kingsley's work resists being 'turned into something more manageably singular'.[148] But the sponge is also an appropriate analogy for the text in its classificatory uncertainty: in *Glaucus* Kingsley spoke of the 'surprise' that two 'dead horny polypidoms', which seem identical, are actually 'as far apart in the scale of creation as a quadruped is from a fish', or that the 'first cousins' of 'a beautiful madrepore or brain-stone' are 'soft, slimy sea-anemones'.[149] Those indeterminately animal/vegetable/mineral beings are neat models for the slipperiness of *The Water-Babies*.

On the other hand, if the inhabitants of the pool seem to embody some of the qualities of Kingsley's work, the rock-pool itself might strike us as a model of fictional narratives more generally. Naturalists such as Kingsley and Philip Gosse drew attention to the extraordinary variety of life to be found in these unassuming and apparently uninteresting nooks and crannies, located on the margins of the land and the sea. Gosse, for instance, in the 'August' chapter of *A Year at the Shore,* finds the following fauna and flora in British rock-pools: *Saxicava* (a burrowing mollusc), 'elegant little sea-weeds […] worms, and shrimps, and polyps', 'Corkwings' ('lovely little emerald fishes') and other members of the 'great Wrasse family',

[146] *Glaucus*, p. 6.
[147] 'Soiled Fairy', p. 122.
[148] *The Water-Babies*, p. xxxvi.
[149] *Glaucus*, pp. 37-38.

'the Gilthead and the Sea-Wife', 'Parasitic Anemone', 'Prawns, Æsops, Opossum-shrimps, Spider-crabs, and many other *crustacea*', 'that little bull-headed rogue, the Father-lasher', 'a Blenny or Goby or Pipe', the 'Sea-scorpion', 'some of the smaller species of Pipe-fishes' and 'the Worm Pipe', 'the Painted Sea-adder', and the 'Shanny'.[150] Besides the ticklishly Dickensian nature of some of the nomenclature used by Gosse, there is another analogy to be made between the novel and the rock-pool—for Gosse's point is that the tiny basins and pools ground out among our 'rocky sea-margins' are worlds in miniature,[151] containing an abundance of life that is at once amusing and instructive. The study of rock-pools, he suggests,

> would prove a spacious field of observation for a curious, inquiring mind, which would often turn into a train of profound meditation, as he surveyed the nature and function and relations of the inhabitants of the vast ocean, from the minutest insect, scarce perceptible to the eye, to the monstrous whales, together with the seemingly fabulous great sea-monsters, and the equally inconceivable zoophytes.[152]

Like the realist novel (in its collected and final, rather than serial form) the rock-pool is a little bounded space, populated by a variety of colourful characters, some of whom dwell visibly near the surface while others are nestled obscurely in its murky depths. It is a space that belies its reduced and bounded form by opening out imaginatively onto hidden depths, grander vistas, and more complex networks.

As I noted earlier, like most fairy tales, one of the features of *The Water-Babies* that helps us place it generically is that many of the animals Tom comes into contact with are able to talk, or he is able to understand. What gives fairy tale worlds their peculiar character is, to a significant extent, their zoological makeup—their textual ecosystem, we might say. Not only are fairy tales populated with quasi-human, quasi-theriomorphic creatures such as goblins, fairies, trolls, and the like; animals that become understandable and understanding occur are

[150] *A Year at the Shore* (London: Strahan, 1865), pp. 195-220.
[151] Ibid., p. 220.
[152] Ibid.

also likely indicators of fairy-land. This is particularly clear in Kingsley's tale in the demarcation of different spaces within the story's world, in which Tom's ability to talk to, or understand, other animals is differentiated. In fact, Kingsley frames Tom's journey as a series of border crossings into new worlds. To take its beginning, we could note in succession: the 'grand iron gates, and stone gate-posts' of Harthover Place;[153] the 'pictures in gilt frames' of horses, dogs, and aristocrats which 'amused Tom very much';[154] the window out of which he escapes and the numerous gates he runs through or vaults in his escape from the house;[155] and the wall fencing off Harthover Place from Harthover Fell, which Tom 'run[s] his head against'.[156] Once over this wall, having been compared to a 'hunted fox', 'a squirrel', and an 'old Exmoor stag', the narrative begins to afford both Tom and the reader a glimmer of inner animal life:

> He saw great spiders there, with crowns and crosses marked on their backs […] he saw lizards […] and thought they were snakes […] a great brown sharpnosed creature, with a white tag to her brush, and round her, four or five smutty little cubs, the funniest fellows Tom ever saw […] and up jumped Mrs Vixen, and caught one up in her mouth.[157]

He meets a cock-grouse who gets in a flap when Tom treads on his tail, and then hurries back to his family to tell them about it.[158] Something changes in crossing the wall from estate to moorland, and although Tom 'hardly knew why […] he liked the great, wide, strange place'.[159]

It takes a door and a mirror for Tom to realise his unfitness, as Kingsley saw it, for certain spaces and classes. Seeing the soot, and the mix of simian and black-caricature features in Ellie's mirror, Tom 'burst into tears with shame and anger'.[160] The scene draws a racial (and

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[153] *The Water-Babies*, p. 12.
[154] Ibid., p. 16.
[155] Ibid., pp. 18-19.
[156] Ibid., p. 20.
[157] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[158] Ibid., p. 22.
[159] Ibid., p. 23.
[160] Ibid., p. 17.

racist) distinction between the 'little black ape' Tom and the 'little white lady' whose room he is in, and it is uncertain whether Tom is to be regarded as a member of the same species.[161] He is chased 'like a small black gorilla fleeing to the forest', distancing him taxonomically from his pursuers in a way that echoes the contemporary discourse of polygenists discussed above in this chapter.[162] In Vendale, he imagines a mirroring of his own dismay in others, and aspires to change species altogether: 'the people would never let him come in, all over soot and dirt like that. He must go to the river and wash first […] he dipped his hand in and found it so cool, cool, cool; and he said, "I will be a fish; I will swim in the water; I must be clean, I must be clean"'.[163] Degrees, not kinds, of difference between humans and other animals had, in the 1860s, led to the assumption that the 'lowest' races or forms of humanity were more similar to, and less distinguishable from, the 'highest' apes than white Europeans. In *The Water-Babies*, Hodgson notes how this manifests in the 'peculiar collection of alienating adjectives which apply to Tom – pagan / dirty / black / bestial', reflecting 'the need to distinguish humankind from animals (particularly apes), and an associated attempt to redefine the difference between white European civilized races, and what were then generally known as savages.[164] That there was a natural 'progression' 'from a semi-human condition' to 'the modern savage' seemed self-evident to the majority of Victorian scientists, as is discussed above.[165] In Kingsley's tale, though, this 'progression' is condensed into the life story of an individual. If we are to be the critical readers that Kingsley desires, who are able to spot the mistranslations and absurdities introduced into the text by the author (think, for instance, of the 'hippopotamus major', or *amphi-* as 'fish' and *-bios* as 'beast'), then we are also prompted to query how far a single life can in fact be representative of the species. In what sense can we read Tom's journey as

[161] Ibid., p. 19.
[162] Ibid., p. 21.
[163] Ibid., p. 31.
[164] Hodgson, 'Defining the Species', p. 229.
[165] *Descent of Man*, p. 158.

recapitulating the progression of the human race? Should we read it as a kind of fable, in which Tom is an allegorical figure for all humans? Or is it more like a tale of the 'marvellous', with its own set of laws and conventions that differ from our own? Or, perhaps, it is more like a parable. The point is, of course, that it is all and none of these: it is an unstable, amphibian text, with one foot in the realm of contemporary science and one in the land of fairy. As such, any definition of the human we might draw from it is necessarily provisional, subject to the natural variation of different interpretive perspectives. By telling a story about human nature, it makes human nature something to be interpreted. Like the rockpools on the shore, or the madrepores and polypidoms inhabiting them, attending closely to a natural phenomenon invites further scrutiny. Kingsley himself enjoyed observing the unlikely relations between apparently disparate beings, as we have seen, and so it is perhaps fitting to observe how the attitude evinced in his work—of trying to understand 'the human' by drawing more intimate and differentiated connections with other animals—is the distant ancestor of those motivating current posthumanist inquiry.

5. Edward Lear's Dancing Lines

In the previous chapter, we saw how Victorian fairy tales responded to, and reworked, questions about the definition of the human raised by contemporary science. Debates around the taxonomic status of different races, and the nature of the difference between humans and apes, were recast as an emphasis on boundaries and hybrid creatures—particularly in works by Kingsley and George MacDonald. In what follows, I offer another example of the influence of nineteenth-century classificatory science on Victorian literature.[1] In his poems and illustrations, Lear's inclusion of multiple species leads to a vision of creaturely cohabitation: forms of taxonomic order and arrangement determined by aesthetic and poetic principles, rather than biological ones.

The flexible collaboration of image and text in Lear's work, as well as their diverse populations of inhabitants and actors, offer visionary glimpses of the coexistence of different species across different environments. Not, however, in the aesthetic or affective modes that we usually inhabit to think about these questions; because they are nonsense, Lear's poems and images implicitly posit communities in which humans, animals, and even inanimate objects are equal participants—without a need for this fact to be justified or explained. Stripped of the necessity to represent causation or consequence, as well as the responsibility to depict social and ecological relations mimetically, Lear's nonsense liberates its readers, allowing them to imagine the possibility that the conventional arrangements of the world might be thought in other ways, or seen from different angles. Like the works of Emily Brontë and Charles Kingsley, one of the most characteristic features of Edward Lear's work is the presence of animal and nonhuman characters and figures, as readers of it have long noted, and their

[1] For a different example of the influence of the classifying imagination on Victorian nonsense, see Gillian Beer, *Alice in Space*, pp. 135-55. However, while Beer's essay traces possible sources for the taxonomic play evident in Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, this chapter focuses more on the kinds of relationship between humans and other animals discernible in Lear's work.

abundance generates recurrent opportunities to observe these rearrangements.[2] This aspect of Lear's work is a significant legacy of his early work as a zoological draughtsman, as well as his consequent familiarity with nineteenth-century classificatory science.[3] Responding to this legacy, Lear orders his creaturely world by a singular taxonomic imagination, and in doing so offers a redescription of the forms of relation that might be possible between humans and other animals.

In this redescription, we can discern a much earlier version of the principles of creaturely cohabitation put forward by the contemporary historian of science, Donna Haraway. Since the 1980s, Haraway has sought to challenge traditional ideas about the integrity and exceptionalism of the human species.[4] More recently, her work focuses on the different ways in which humans and animals interact and coexist—including animal agriculture, petkeeping, and animal testing in laboratories—in an attempt to construct a more nuanced picture of what we habitually call human-animal relations.[5] In particular, Haraway focuses on what she terms 'contact zones' between humans and other animals: points at which the two 'touch' with effects on both sides.[6] Haraway's language is couched in the discourse of contemporary science (particularly genetics), as well as in the inflections of poststructuralist theory, while her examples are invariably drawn from real-life instances of human-animal 'contact zones', such as, for example, the genetically-engineered OncoMouse™ and dog agility training. As such, it is difficult to see the significance of her work for a better understanding of works of art and literature, beyond using it as a framework of interpretation for depictions of such encounters.

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[2] 'In all, animals appear in over one-fifth of the limericks', as Ina Rae Hark notes in *Edward Lear* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), p. 41; see also Thomas Byrom, *Nonsense and Wonder* (New York: Dutton, 1972), pp. 61-81.

[3] On Lear's relation to nineteenth century classification and his work as a zoological illustrator, see Robert McCracken Peck, *The Natural History of Edward Lear* (Woodbridge: ACC Books, 2016).

[4] See especially Haraway's 'Cyborg Manifesto', in *Manifestly Haraway* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), pp. 5-68.

[5] See, for example, Haraway's description of 'mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings', in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 1.

[6] *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 263.

In spite of its wide influence and evident potential for rethinking human-animal relations, Haraway's thought thus seems peculiarly unamenable to literary and artistic representations of other animals, especially in her emphasis on their real embodied existence.[7] Lear's nonsense, however—particularly his virtuosic use of lines that both separate and connect—allows its readers glimpses of what literary and aesthetic 'contact zones' might look like: compositions in which the cohabitation and interaction of different kinds of creature affect the shape of the whole in appreciable ways. I return to Haraway very briefly in the conclusion to this chapter; however, this chapter throughout finds in Lear's work both an anticipation and a translation into the aesthetic sphere, of Haraway's discourse of creaturely cohabitation. Individuals, both human and other, are always shaped simultaneously by idiosyncrasies as well as 'the twisted skeins of conflicting categories and systems of measure or standardization', as Haraway puts it.[8] The combinations of Lear's nonsense and natural history afford an understanding of what this can look like in art and literature.

Metamorphoses

In Lear's nonsense, humans and other animals are transformed into page-bound creatures, and the relations between them become functions of poetic and artistic lines. Lear creates a place in which beings of different orders might coexist; the place of non-sense where 'cats', 'tables',

[7] See, for example, her assertion that 'Dogs are not an alibi for other themes; dogs are fleshly material-semiotic presences in the body of technoscience.' *The Companion Species Manifesto*, p. 5. Her position is not simply a naïve division between 'real' and 'signified', however. 'Figures', a word which in her usage seems to encompass both individuals and their representation in text and image, are always, for Haraway, a compound construction of their 'biological and literary and artistic' histories (*When Species Meet*, p. 4). In this sense, she confounds the distinction between organisms and their representational figures. However, to emphasise the 'semiotic' nature of a living body is not, by extension, to render verbal or visual representations more 'fleshly'. The differences between the two categories—material organisms and verbal/visual depictions of them—cannot be bridged by a rhetorical equivalence, even though it is politically important to recognise both the shaping of the experience of living bodies by discourse, and the material aspects of the circulation of those discourses (which might include human and animal labour, organic materials such as paint, chalk, or leather, and the consumption of fossil fuels, for example).

[8] *When Species Meet,* p. 134.

'Germans', and 'tongs' might 'waltz madly'.[9] The jumble of orders might call to mind the sort of taxonomic confusion evoked by Borges in his famous account of a Chinese encyclopedia. Foucault, who helped to make it famous, terms the locations in which diverse orders may coexist 'heterotopias', places of many. For Foucault, heterotopias 'desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the possibility of grammar at its source […] and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences',[10] but Lear imagines a place of both lyricism and accommodation, where the laws of poetic and artistic structure allow 'a large number of possible orders [to] glitter separately in the dimension' of the page.[11] As W.H. Auden rightly said, his work 'became a land'.[12]

One of the reasons that Lear's nonsense works as hard as it does to order things, is because the 'personages' (to use Anne Stillman's term)[13] that people it frequently hover on the border of indistinguishability. If there are two or more figures in a poem or illustration, it's likely that they will resemble each other, or conflate in a flicker of ambiguous syntax.[14] He was always drawn to 'muse on the way that one thing can morph into something else while not losing its identity entirely, or how something can lose a part of itself but still retain a feeling of intactness', as Anna Henchman puts it.[158] The poems are full of fantasies of cross-species confusion, as in the limerick which speaks of the 'Old Man of Kamschatka', for instance:

> Who possessed a remarkably fat cur;
> His gait and his waddle, were held as a model,

[9] 'Edward Lear', in *The English Auden: Poems, Essays, and Dramatic Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 245.
[10] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xvi.
[11] Ibid.
[12] 'Edward Lear', p. 245.
[13] '*Not* characters, but something both more and less than an ordinary person'. Anne Stillman, 'T. S. Eliot Plays Edward Lear', in James Williams and Matthew Bevis, eds., *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 260-80, p. 273.
[14] Matthew Bevis has shown how insistently Lear thought of, and illustrated, himself as bird-like, in 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight', *Journal of the British Academy* 1 (2013), pp. 31-69.
[15] Anna Henchman, 'Fragments Out of Place: Homology and the Logic of Nonsense in Edward Lear', in Williams and Bevis, eds., *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, pp. 183-201, p. 191.

To all the fat dogs in Kamschatka.[16]

Whose gait and whose waddle? we might momentarily wonder.[17] The line turns and ostensibly resolves the ambiguity: the 'cur' is the likeliest model for all the other fat dogs in Kamschatka. But it remains possible, grammatically at least, that the dogs have found the Old Man's gait just as impressive. Choices of syntax always themselves raise questions of order, but the ambiguous 'His', bearing the extra weight of the beginning of a line as well as the rest beat at the end of the one preceding it, offers a studied pose of uncertainty. The leash which joins the two figures in Lear's illustration reiterates, with a visual prompt, the yoking together of man and dog contained in the words. At the same time, however, both their coexistence and connection are accidental, a meeting occasioned by the simultaneously strained and ingenious rhyme of 'Kamschatka' with 'fat cur'. It is not that an intrinsic resemblance between the Old Man and his dog is suddenly revealed, but rather that no other being could take the fat cur's place and maintain the form of the limerick. The 'Old Man of Whitehaven, | Who danced a Quadrille with a Raven' is caught in a similar syntactical confusion: they 'said – "It's absurd, to encourage this bird!"',[18] but again, we might ask, *which* bird? For this is a limerick written by a man who was wont to say, 'Verily, I am an odd bird'.[19] However, in this limerick, the roles are reversed, in that it seems most likely that 'Whitehaven' happened to be a convenient rhyme for 'raven', rather than the other way round. This inversion suggests a kind of equality between the different elements of the limerick, shifting between roles that are shaped by both accident and design. Just as the turn into the final line of the first limerick promises a kind of

[16] Edward Lear, *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*, p. 76.
[17] James Williams also makes this point in 'Lear and the Fool', in *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, pp. 17-51, p. 23.
[18] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 172.
[19] See Bevis's discussion of this ambiguity in 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight', p. 41.

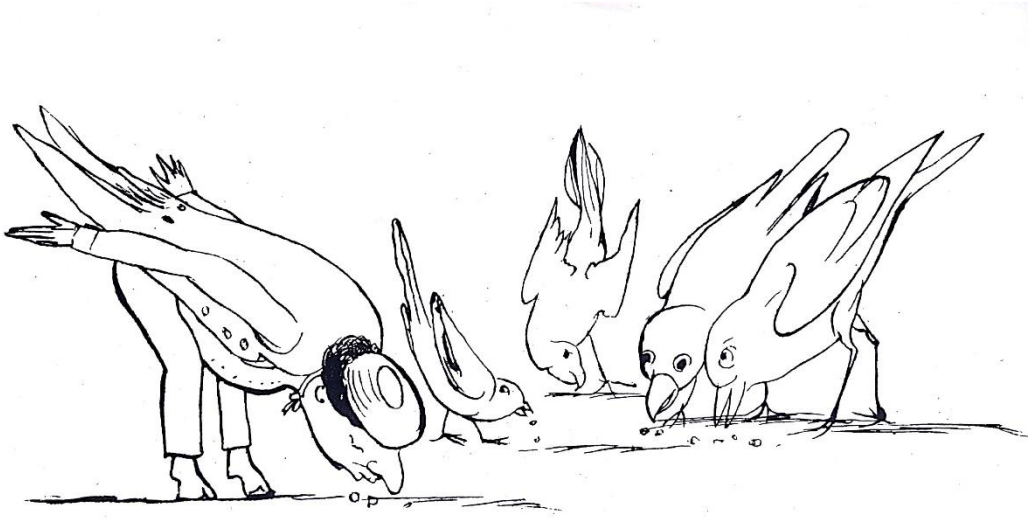
resolution, without fully delivering it, Lear's work in general is constantly proposing orderings and arrangements that are provisional.

As well as syntactical ambiguities, a transformative 'process of empathy', as John Lehmann has called it, runs through the nonsense, grotesquely and absurdly exaggerating aspects of anatomy, clothing, or posture in order to clarify the points at which one figure most resembles or approaches another.[20] We might witness this aesthetic empathy in the following limerick:

> There was an Old Man who said, 'Hush!
> I perceive a young bird in this bush!'
> When they said – 'Is it small?' He replied – 'Not at all!
> It is four times as big as the bush!'[21]

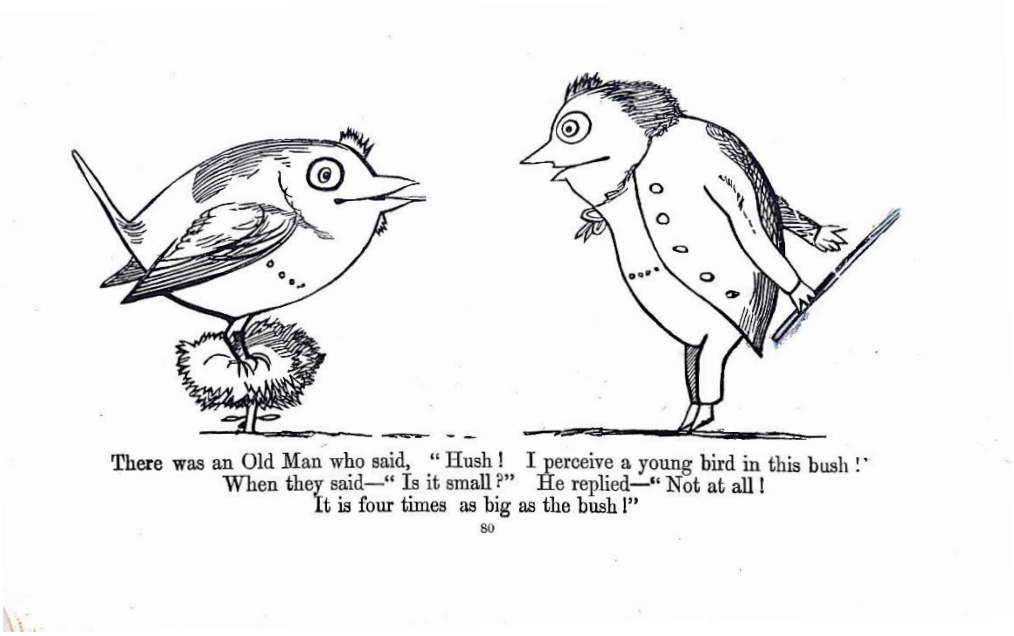
Like the 'Old Man of El Hums', who lived on 'crumbs, | Which he picked off the ground, with the other birds round' (figure 7), the Old Man who says 'Hush!' mirrors the pose and appearance of the creatures with whom he associates (figure 8).[22] This habit of mimicry runs through Lear's limericks—a kind of contagious aesthetic—and is the most visible and characteristic way in which his nonsense blurs the boundary between humans and other animals.

[20] John Lehmann, *Edward Lear and His World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 55.
[21] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 173.
[22] Byrom notes this mirroring in *Nonsense and Wonder*, p. 76.



There was an old man of El Hums,
Who lived upon nothing but crumbs,
Which he picked off the ground, with the other birds round,
In the roads and the lanes of El Hums.

Figure 7. More Nonsense, Pictures, Rhymes, Botany, Etc. *(London: Robert John Bush, 1872), scanned by author*



There was an Old Man who said, "Hush! I perceive a young bird in this bush!"
When they said—"Is it small?" He replied—"Not at all!
It is four times as big as the bush!"

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Figure 8. A Book of Nonsense, *10th edn (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, c. 1866), scanned by author*

Lear's creatures mirror each other in ways which make it hard to say precisely where the differences and similarities between humans and animals lie. At times, this mimicry is deliberate:

> There was an Old Man of Peru,
> Who never knew what he should do;
> So he tore off his hair, and behaved like a bear,
> That intrinsic Old Man of Peru.[23]

The use of 'intrinsic' in the last line teases us with the idea that there might not be any intrinsic difference between the Old Man and the bear; it might also call up thoughts of Darwin's coinage of 'incipient species' (a 'group of plants or animals in the process of becoming sufficiently distinct to be described as a full species').[24] It draws attention to 'like' in the previous line, sharpening its interpretative import; how far can an Old Man behave 'like' a bear? How far is the distance between the two reduced by this acting likeness, and how far does its being merely a likeness further reinforce the distinction?

These are also transformations which can occur over the course of a volume. The 'Old Man of Peru' first appeared in the 1846 *A Book of Nonsense*, and the final limerick in this volume witnesses a 'Young Lady of Clare' being 'sadly pursued by a bear'.[25] That Lear should conclude his first volume of poetry with an allusion to *The Winter's Tale*—'Exit, pursued by a bear'—hints at the importance to the volume of magical, inexplicable transformations, and the suspension of disbelief they require. As with the 'Old Man of Kamschatka', a reader might be snagged by a syntactical ambiguity: is the fact of her being pursued 'sad', or is the bear pursuing her in a sad manner? The difficulty in attributing the adverb to either creates a sense of their

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[23] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 87.
[24] *OED*. On the relation of Darwin's writings to Lear's nonsense, see Bevis, 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight'. James Williams was also kind enough to point me to his discussion of the term 'intrinsic' in a manuscript of a forthcoming study of *Edward Lear* (Plymouth: Northcote House).
[25] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 88.

sharing it, and so draws an equivalence between the two figures. There is also a hint that Lear's characters might migrate and continue their metamorphoses; that behaving 'like a bear' might involve more than tearing one's hair out. Behaving like a bear can mean, figuratively speaking, to act like a boor—'a rough, unmannerly, uncouth person' (*OED*). But it is possible to imagine both a 'thick-furred plantigrade quadruped' (*OED*) *and* a rough, uncouth person pursuing young ladies down the street, and so the words of the limerick suggest some elision between metaphorical language and creaturely metamorphosis. It would be possible, in other words, for a human to behave like a bear (perhaps by hunting salmon with their bare hands in Alaska, or by making inappropriate comments at dinner), but it would be impossible for a bear to behave like a 'bear' (perhaps by drinking too much marsala and gambling recklessly on horses). Lear's language and images are sensitive and always alert to instances of what we might call theriomorphism; and, indeed, the young lady herself appears to have been transformed by the chase; she resembles a gleeful mermaid, or perhaps a shrimp, in the accompanying illustration (figure 9).

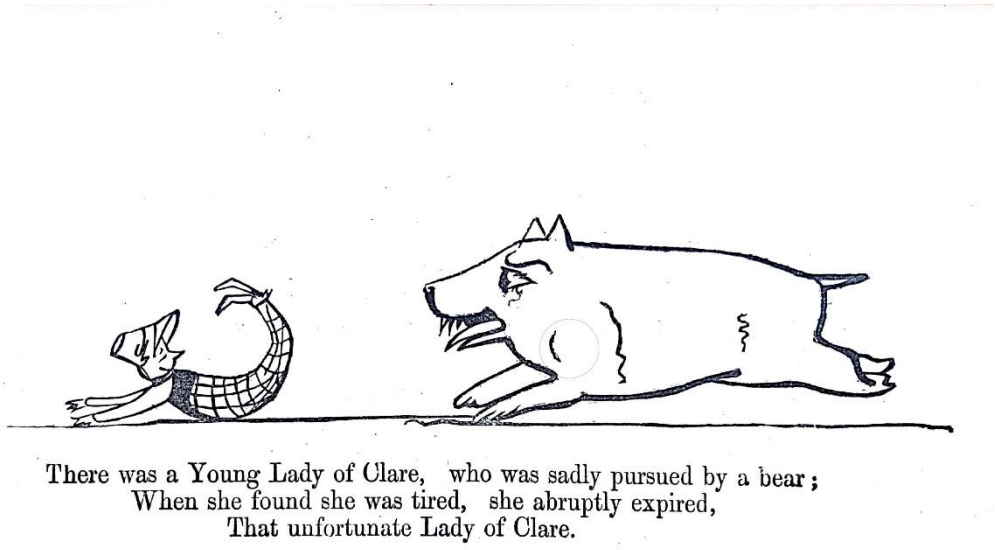


Figure 9. A Book of Nonsense, *scanned by the author*

Parts and Wholes

Nonsense is a game played with a fixed multiplicity of individual parts, as Elizabeth Sewell showed in her foundational study. It is a kind of structured play, in which 'certain object[s] or class[es] of objects' may be played around with, 'within a limited field of space and time and according to fixed rules'.[26] As T. S. Eliot observed, nonsense is not 'a vacuity of sense; it is a parody of sense',[27] and Sewell makes a similar point regarding nonsense literature's relation to logic, which 'requires for its operation a collection of discrete units, and the nature of the mind's operation in logic consists in attending to certain relations existing, or considered as existing, between those terms'.[28] The 'only aspect of language which Nonsense can be said to disorder' is the relations between terms, not the terms themselves.[29] The game is one of structure and arrangement, like a Rubik's cube or game of solitaire, and it therefore depends 'upon the integrity and separation of the units, each unit remaining constant in itself and separate from every other unit'.[30] Sewell's model works so well because it offers a way of structuring our reading of Lear's often baffling verse; if we can at least trust that the 'units' within the game remain reliably discrete, then their slippery relations with each other need not be so disorienting. Ann C. Colley makes a similar point when she notices how 'always a gap intervenes' between the personages in Lear's limerick illustrations: 'Rarely does a figure touch another'.[31] Lines, though, complicate this claim, for they span those intervening gaps as much as they measure them. Lear's nonsense is rarely straightforwardly segmented, and the relations which emerge between characters (both person and inscribed mark) and figures (both rhetorical and visual) tend to blur the sharpness of their distinctions.

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[26] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), pp. 26-7. Subsequent references are incorporated in the text.
[27] T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 53.
[28] *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 49.
[29] Ibid., p. 38.
[30] Ibid., p. 29.
[31] 'Edward Lear and the Reversals of Nonsense', *Victorian Poetry* 26.3 (1988), pp. 285-99, p. 295.

The work of lines, and the versions of structured disarray, to be found in Lear's nonsense trouble Sewell's insistence on discrete parts. Lines separate, but they also join, and throughout Lear's career the desired clarity of the 'classifying imagination', which I have explored up to this point chiefly as a question of definition and distinction, is blurred by the complex orderings of humans and other animals staged by his lines. Working out of, and alongside, the formal and conceptual frameworks of Victorian taxonomy, Lear's poetry and illustrations create worlds in which relations are provisional, arrangements can be all kinds of shapes, and bodies (old and young; animal, vegetable, and mineral; textual and pictorial) lean on each other. Lear's 'nonce taxonomies' reimagine and redescribe the relations between human and animal (among others) each time they come into contact,[32] and the resources of the written and printed page (shifts in perspective or scale; colour; line; shade, tone, and gradation; juxtaposition and sequence) enable these experiments. Following Lear himself, we might call this unpredictable mesh of relations his 'spasmodic rhapsody of arrangement'.[33]

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, before his emergence as 'Old Derry down Derry' Lear worked as a zoological draughtsman. One early 'watercolour of a small rodent (*Hyrax Capensis*)', from 1829, offers a glimpse of the relation between word and image which would go on to characterise Lear's work (figure 10).[34]

[32] 'Nonce taxonomies' is a phrase coined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to describe 'the making and unmaking and remaking and redissolution of hundreds of old and new categorical imaginings concerning all the kinds it may take to make up a world': *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 23.

[33] Letter to Emily Tennyson, 12 November 1857, in *Complete Nonsense*, p. 465.

[34] This was long considered to be Lear's first datable illustration, but a recent study has shown this to be based on a misreading of the notes around the watercolour. Peck, *Natural History of Edward Lear*, p. 91.



Figure 10. 'Hyrax Capensis', in Susan Hyman, Edward Lear's Birds *(London: Trefoil, 1980), scanned by author.*

The rodent's body is both surrounded by, and bears traces of, the faint but legible marks of Lear's writing. This is characteristic of Lear's work as a young man, as Susan Hyman points out: an 'early sketchbook […] contains paintings of birds, insects, shells, flowers, fish, feathers and landscapes […] all meticulously precise, and across a drawing of a nettle Lear has written the Latin names of its class, order and species'.[35] This hint of a permeable relation between figure (the image depicted) and character (the inscribed letters) becomes more evident in the illustrations to the limericks, but other examples of Lear's early zoological images point to a keen interest in the flexibility offered by the arrangement of words and images on the page, and in their possible revision of classificatory systems of knowledge.

In a recent essay, Daniel Brown picks up on the taxonomic imperatives which energised Lear's work. He notes how 'being identified with a place name', as the Old Persons of the limericks habitually are, 'implies belonging, fitting in with a habitat or social group. Usually native to a particular place, the protagonists of the limericks are presented as peculiar species that each consist of only one member'.[36] Other figures in Lear's poetry organise themselves even more neatly into classificatory schemes. In *The History of the Seven Families of the Lake*

[35] Susan Hyman, *Edward Lear's Birds* (London: Trefoil, 1980), p. 13.
[36] Daniel Brown, 'Being and Naughtiness', in *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, pp. 162-82, p. 168.

Pipple-Popple, by the 'closing chapter of this little natural history the children from the Seven Families of animals have all fallen prey to a nonsensical "nature red in tooth and claw"', leaving only their parents 'to represent the full taxonomical array of the Lake, a role they fulfil conscientiously, as they decide to leave their remains to science, pickling themselves in seven bottles and giving "strict orders" in their wills that they be carefully sealed and labelled and "presented to the principal museum of the city of Tosh"'.[37] This ending mimics the sealed forms of Lear's limericks, and while some of the language games 'fold back upon themselves in tautologous reiteration', turning to the natural history illustrations of his youth requires us to revise and complicate claims of an involuted self-sufficiency.[38] The figures of Lear's nonsense emerge from this early work, and his nonsense exhibits a delicate balance between a circular, closed form, and a desire to orient itself in relation to co-ordinates beyond that limit.

Lear's main early career work came from his instalment at Knowsley Hall, near Liverpool. Lord Stanley, the heir of the earl of Derby had requested the young illustrator to sketch the vast menagerie housed within the grounds, a situation that Jenny Uglow describes as a 'vast visual filing system', where 'all the species – familiar and unfamiliar – had to be fitted into the Linnaean taxonomy that Derby and his colleagues favoured, according to strict rules'.[39] She also shows, in her groundbreaking biography of Lear, that the artist's invitation to Knowsley was a consequence of his deep immersion in the world of contemporary natural history, and his growing fame as an illustrator in those circles.[40] In perhaps the happiest period of his life,[41] Lear spent five years at Knowsley, and contributed several illustrations to the impressive, privately produced *Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall*

[37] Ibid., pp. 168-9.
[38] Ibid., p. 170.
[39] *Mr Lear: A Life of Art and Nonsense* (London: Faber and Faber, 2017), pp. 67, 71. Vivien Noakes notes that the Knowsley Menagerie 'was famous throughout Europe' for its size and quality: *Edward Lear: Life of a Wanderer* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 40.
[40] *Mr Lear*, pp. 45-65.
[41] Noakes, *Edward Lear*, p. 40.

(1846). Some of the creatures illustrated by Lear offer a tempting source for characters in later poems: the 'Whiskered Yarke', the 'Yagouarondi', the 'Banded Mumgous', the 'Jelerung Squrrel', the 'Eyebrowed Rollulus', and the 'Piping Guan' all feel as though they might fit alongside the Scroobious Pip or the Dolomphious Duck. As Uglow notes, these names 'rolled off the tongue, different and alien',[42] while the antics of species such as the Maned Goose might be lifted from one of Lear's longer nonsense 'songs': 'On the approach of a stranger they have the habit of raising their bodies nearly erect, swelling out their breasts, and flapping their wings against the legs of the intruder. They sometimes bend themselves backwards to such an extent, that they appear as if they would fall on their backs'.[43] In some ways, nineteenth-century taxonomy must have felt like a load of old bosh.

In contrast to the illustrations by other authors in *Gleanings from the Menagerie at Knowsley*, Lear's highlight the relation between the blank space of a page and the creature depicted. Rather than masking or filling the empty space with multiple figures of the same species, and fleshed-out backgrounds, Lear's paintings contain only the most minimal background—such as part of a branch—and are framed by the white expanse of the page on which they are set. Rather than Hawkins's Audubon-esque scene, where the various versions of the same species (young/old, male/female) interact with each other in a diorama of species self-sufficiency, the abrupt break-offs at the edges of Lear's backgrounds meet unpredictably with the white page. Lear's poetry—like all verse, of course—repeats this pattern in its own line breaks, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why poetry seems to lend itself so well to thinking about relation and categorisation. To place an individual in blank space is to invite the possibility of a connection, just as the final word in a line carries the possibility of its connection

[42] *Mr Lear*, p. 73.
[43] J. E. Gray, *Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall* (Knowsley, 1846), unpaginated. For a detailed and astute account of Lear's time at Knowsley, see Uglow, *Mr Lear*, pp. 66-73.

to a rhyming partner, or its continuation and modification into a longer syntactic unit.[44] Indeed, to read poetry is largely to practise making groups or units—wholes out of parts, the singular out of the multiple—in rhymes, metrical feet or syllabic lines, alliteration, units of syntax, or stanzas: in this sense, the art of reading poetry is a taxonomic one. As much as the isolation of Lear's limericks might seem to cut them off from the world, preserving them like specimen jars in a paginated museum, their strange mix of exemplarity and individual character contains within it the impulse both to categorise and to particularise; to identify the species as a definable and complete whole, and to set it in relation to everything beyond it (figures 11 and 12).



Figure 11. 'Yagouarondi', Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall *(Knowsley, 1846), scanned by author*

[44] On lineation in poetry, see Christopher Ricks, 'William Wordsworth I: "A pure organic pleasure from the lines"', in *The Force of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 89-116; James Longenbach, *The Resistance to Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 12-25; and Mary Rosko and Anton Vander Zee eds., *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line* (Iowa City: Iowa State University Press, 2011).



Figure 12. 'Jelerung Squirrel', Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall, *scanned by author*

Joining and Separating

In Lear's verse, the determination of identity or category can offer a measure of satisfaction akin to relief. The 'Old Man of Dunrose', for instance, finds that 'A parrot seized hold of his nose'; but 'When he grew melancholy, they said, "His name's Polly," | Which soothed that Old Man of Dunrose'.[45] As before, we might ask: whose name? Like a true taxonomist or natural historian, learning the names of things is a gratifying outcome to a potentially uncomfortable situation—a way of taking back control from unruly nature—but grammatical ambiguity complicates the nominative process it describes. The same impulse animates a moment of comedy in Lear's *Journals of a Landscape Painter in Southern Calabria*. Lear's local guide, who consistently answers the party's enquiries with 'Dógo; díghi, dóghi, dághi, dà', sparks the classifier's desire to categorize: 'What the "Dógo" was we never knew, though it was an object of our keenest search throughout the tour to ascertain if it were animal, mineral, or vegetable'.[46] One possible answer to this conundrum, as Vivien Noakes suggested, is that 'dóghi, dághi, dà'

[45] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 334.
[46] In *'Over the Land and Over the Sea': Selected Nonsense and Travel Writings*, ed. Peter Swaab (Manchester: Carcanet, 2005), p. 241.

became the 'Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò', that unfortunate romantic who tries unsuccessfully to woo Lady Jingly Jones:[47] '"On this Coast of Coromandel, | Shrimps and watercresses grow, | Prawns are plentiful and cheap," | Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò'.[48] And indeed it may be the case that this character undergoes a further and final transformation, appearing eponymously in 'How pleasant to know Mr Lear!', who 'weeps by the side of the ocean, | He weeps on the top of the hill; | He purchases pancakes and lotion, | And chocolate shrimps from the mill'.[49] The keynote ringing across the two may be melancholy—the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò leaves Lady Jones 'On that Coast of Coromandel', where 'Still she weeps, and daily moans'[50]—but it is the shrimps as well that draw our attention to the similarities between the two.

Lear's ability to capture the comic in the taxonomic can also be glimpsed in a limerick concerning 'a Young Lady of Wales, | Who caught a large fish without scales; | When she lifted her hook, she exclaimed, "Only look!" | That extatic Young Lady of Wales'.[51] The accompanying sketch shows a large aquatic creature on the hook, part of its body out of the water. Implicit in the unspoken rhyme for 'Wales' is, of course, that a 'large fish without scales' might not be a fish at all, but a whale. As we saw in the previous chapter, although by the time of the limerick's publication in 1845 in *A Book of Nonsense*, 'all systematists ha[d] agreed in placing these animals [cetacea] among Mammalia',[52] earlier in the century their classificatory status was less clear. At the start of the nineteenth century, when 'Thomas Bewick asserted that although the walrus seemed "to partake greatly of the nature of fishes," it was "nevertheless classed by naturalists under the denomination of quadrupeds", he hardly spoke for a consensus'.[53] Pinnipeds (seals and walruses) seemed to many naturalists contemporary with

[47] Noakes, *Life of a Wanderer*, p. 193.
[48] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 325.
[49] Ibid., p. 429.
[50] Ibid., p. 327.
[51] Ibid., p. 101.
[52] Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, p. 49.
[53] Thomas Bewick, *A General History of Quadrupeds*, 5th edn. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Edward Walker, 1807 [1790]), p. 503, cited in Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, p. 47.

Bewick to be a missing link between creatures of the land and creatures of the deep, while, Harriet Ritvo suggests, 'Bewick probably assigned the role of mediating between mammals and fish to the walrus, because he considered whales and dolphins […] to be incontestably fish'.[54] The fish's place in the illustration, partly in and partly out of the water, winks at this historical ambiguity regarding their classificatory status (figure 13).

Lear's eye for the specificity of natural history, the particularities of individuals within

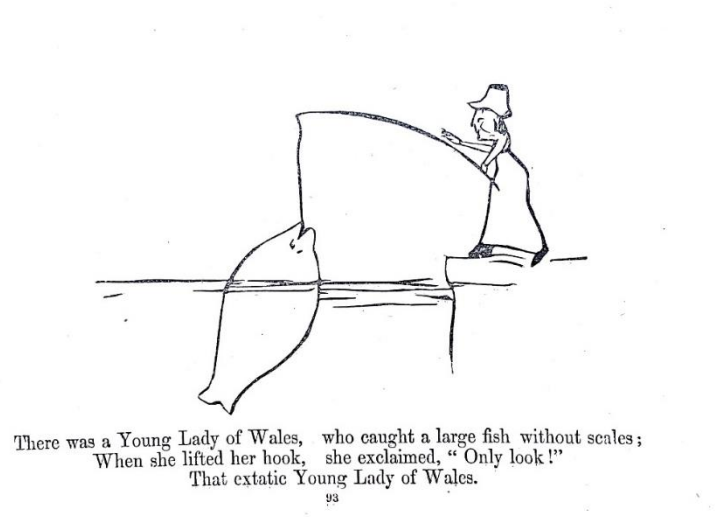


Figure 13. A Book of Nonsense, *scanned by author*

species, was keen. It was also proliferative and accretive. For example, he records, during a trip to Egypt, '4 black storks – one legged: apart. – 8 pelicans – careless foolish. 17 small ducks, cohesive. 23 herons – watchful variously posed: & 2 or 3 flocks of lovely ivory ibis'.[55] The oddness of some of the adjectives in this passage seems again to illustrate the inseparability of Lear's natural-historical eye from his nonsense one. That 'one legged', 'careless foolish', 'cohesive', and 'watchful variously posed' are the telling descriptors suggests the importance of posture for Lear, an artist and individual who always seems to have been 'more understanding of the idiosyncratic than of the exquisite'.[56] The outward appearance of the birds

[54] Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, p. 48.
[55] Cited in Hyman, *Edward Lear's Birds*, p. 69.
[56] Hyman, *Edward Lear's Birds*, p. 49.

Lear records marks them out as species: 'lovely ivory ibis', 'small ducks, cohesive'. But this focus on exterior similarity ran counter to the burgeoning studies of homology appearing at the same time.[57] Richard Owen, in 1848, castigated the lack of a wider, multi-species perspective in anatomical study: 'when the exigences [*sic*] of the veterinary surgeon, or the desire of the naturalist to penetrate beneath the superficial characters of his favourite class, led them to anatomise the lower animals, they, in like manner, seldom glanced beyond their immediate subject, and often gave arbitrary names to the parts they detected'.[58] As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, Owen argued that in order to understand anatomy it was necessary to understand it comparatively; to look for the hidden indicators of homology and shared structure, rather than relying on the 'superficial' characteristics of a species: structural, rather than functional, correspondences indicated true relation. The nonsense birds he produced for young acquaintances suggest that Lear paid little heed to Owen's warnings, organising them by colour and character—'Blue Bird', 'Brown Bird', 'Yellow Bird', 'Scroobious Bird', 'Runcible Bird'—while nonetheless differentiating them in form as well as hue (figures 14-16).[59]

[57] On the relation of Lear's work to Owen and homology, see Henchman, 'Fragments Out of Place'.
[58] Richard Owen, *On the Archetype and Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton* (London: John van der Voorst, 1848), p. 1.
[59] Hyman, *Edward Lear's Birds*, p. 82.



Figure 14. 'The Gray Bird', in Queery Leary Nonsense, *ed. Lady Strachey (London: Mills and Boon, 1911), source: Marco Graziosi, Edward Lear Home Page, <http://www.nonsenselit.org/Lear/QLN/cb01.html> [accessed 31 May 2018]*

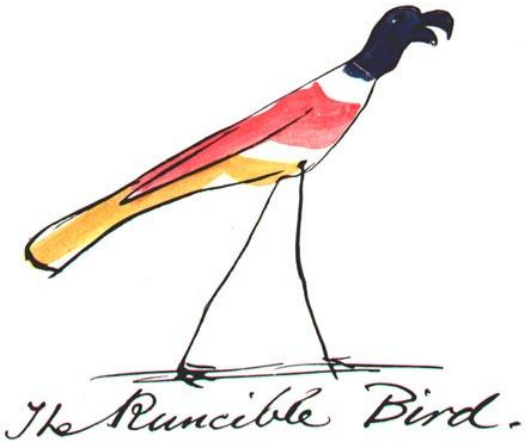


Figure 15. 'The Runcible Bird', Queery Leary Nonsense, *source: Marco Graziosi, Edward Lear Home Page*



Figure 16. 'The Scroobious Bird', Queer Leary Nonsense, *source: Marco Graziosi, Edward Lear Home Page*

For Lear, the imaginative potential in the frustration of the impulse to categorise was something worth singing about. We have just seen an image of the 'scroobious bird', and perhaps we might detect in that strange adjective a meaning corresponding to this suspension of confident classification. The poem 'The Scroobious Pip' derives its refrain precisely from the titular creature's lack of clear-cut generic signification. The stanzas are arranged according to the order of creatures which feature in it—beasts, birds, fish, and insects—but the Scroobious Pip sits placidly athwart this taxonomic structure, integrated only by the same rhyming couplet which occurs in each stanza: tip/Pip. '"Tell us about yourself, we pray! – | For as yet we can't make out in the least | If you're Fish or Insect, or Bird or Beast"', the creatures exclaim, only to be rebuffed with a name, and nothing more: '"Chippetty Flip – Flippetty Chip – | My only name is the Scroobious Pip"'.[60] The poetic structures of stanza and rhyme thus constitute both the categories which fail to accommodate this 'scroobious' creature, and the means by which it escapes categorisation—for the repeated couplet in each stanza, or group of creatures, fits identically into each one, and thus belongs properly to none of them.

[60] *Complete Nonsense*, pp. 387-88.

Noakes's transcription of the likely unfinished seventh stanza of the poem even fortuitously echoes Lear's interest in the work of lines. Orthographically, the stanza tests out their ability to signal breaks in a verse while still holding it together. 'The Scroobious Pip went into the sea', it begins, following the established rhyming couplet scheme—until the seventh line

> The —— spluttered, the Porpoise puffed
> —— Flounder ————
> And when the Whale began to spout –
> ———————————————————
> And every Fish he shook the tip
> Of his tail as he gazed on the Scroobious Pip.[61]

It almost works: we might almost believe that, in a moment of virtuosity and carelessness, Lear could institute a daring breakdown of rhythm, *melos*, and rhyme, in which the length of the interruption escalates, as though testing out how long an absence he might leave and the poem still continue. Either way, it invites readers to reflect on the lengths to which they are willing to go to preserve continuity and relation, as well as what kind of gaps they might be willing to leap; and, characteristically of Lear's verse, even a gap hints at a form of playfulness, with 'spluttered' itself splashing and stuttering out of the silence preceding it, and the not-quite-blank space provided for the whale's spouting perhaps requesting an approximation of such a sound. It suggests the kind of experimentation and willingness to test, stretch, and break the line that Emily Rosko and Anton Vander Zee see in contemporary verse. 'If one thing defines how poets approach the line', they suggest, it is 'acquisitiveness and curiosity'.[62]

Lear enjoyed playing with classification and taxonomy; and in large part what enables the extraordinary degree of play in his writing is the page-boundedness of his creatures. Ann

[61] Ibid., pp. 388-89.
[62] *A Broken Thing*, p. 10.

Colley has picked up on Lear's sensitivity to the variety of effects possible on the page, arguing that we can understand both the serious landscape/fine art, and nonsense/caricature aspects of his work better if we see them as reversals of each other. This is most evident, Colley argues, in a comparison between Lear's landscapes, and his limerick illustrations. She argues that the attention to detail in Lear's landscapes paradoxically tends to blur distinctions, while the nonsense drawings, by contrast, particularize and highlight them. In the limerick illustrations, the 'stretching, approximating, and exaggerating [of] the idiosyncrasies of their compositions' lends to their surface 'an explicitness which the orientation of realism dismisses'.[63] As a result of the absence of desire to represent accurately that which is observed, Lear's nonsense illustrations draw attention to their immediate environment, the page. With context, depth, and contour stripped away, the figures in the images are pushed to the exterior of the page, as well as into juxtaposition with each other. They become more a part of the page, 'flattened and letter-like', than a representation of something beyond it.[64]

The gaps and blanks within the limerick illustrations foreground questions of space and connection: 'faces of subjects turn to look out beyond the text, and serialized, sometimes isolated, images frolic on a frameless page, admitting and displaying the gaps that fall between them'.[65] In juxtaposition to the limericks' 'shopping list[s] of places, events, and items', the illustrations seem just as often to be pulling things together, as apart.[66] An illustration of Lear's competing instincts to separate and agglomerate can be found in an 1864 letter to Evelyn Baring:

> deerbaringiphownacuppelloffotografsthismawningwitchisendjoothereiswunofeechsort soyookankeepbothifyooliketodoosoanweyoohaveabetterwunofyourselfletmehavit.
> Yossin seerly,

[63] 'Reversals of Nonsense', p. 287.
[64] Ibid., pp. 289-90.
[65] Ibid., p. 291.
[66] Ibid., pp. 292-93.

DwdL[ear].[67]

Again, Lear's nonsense imagination works in lines of poetry, ink, and thought, as a 'means of exploring the claims that art might make on our attention'.[68] For instance, while the protagonists of the 'Adventures of Mr Lear, the Polly and the Pusseybite' are arbitrarily reassembled from their various parts, at the conclusion of their adventures they end up, along with 'the 2 Jebusites & the Jerusalem Artichokes and the Octagonal Oysterclippers', in a 'deep hole', which is pictured as seven pairs of legs and feet protruding above a single horizontal line (figure 17).[69] Such lines of individuals are characteristically 'Learical' forms of arrangement, both joining bodies together and separating them.

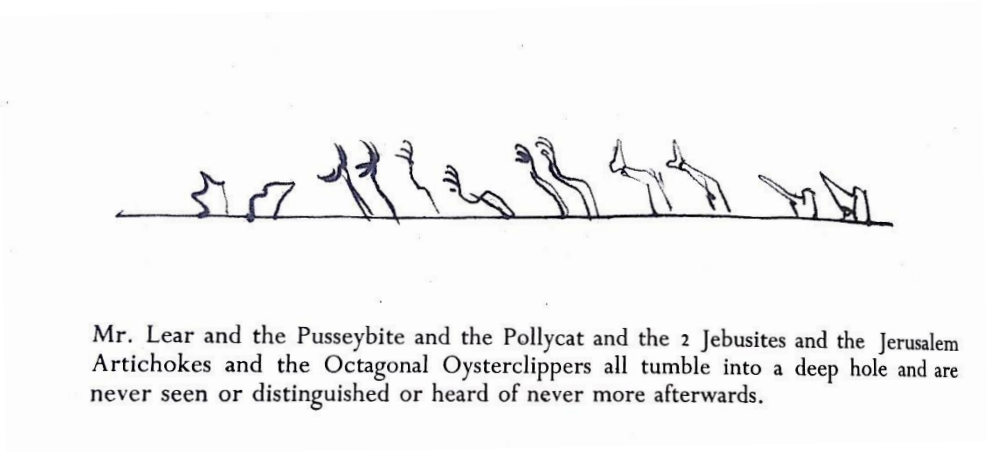


Figure 17. 'Adventures of Mr Lear, the Polly and the Pusseybite', More Nonsense, *scanned by author*

A small, odd sketch by Lear, held in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, offers what is likely to be an early example of a decidedly spasmodic arrangement of exotic creatures. 'Portraites of the inditchenous beestes of New Olland' was probably inspired by John Gould's

[67] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 195.
[68] Bevis, 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight', p. 31.
[69] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 218. Henchman discusses this image in 'Fragments Out of Place', pp. 185-6.

1838 visit to Australia and made at Knowsley,[70] and features a range of sketches of creatures 'inditchenous' to Australia, such as 'ye great kangaroo, or Boomer', 'ye duckbilled Platypuss', 'ye peculiar or prickly porkyoupine', and 'ye greate blacke deville', as well as more quotidian ones, such as 'ye dogge' and 'ye cowe' (figure 18).[71] The sketches range in detail and realism: a number of views of a kangaroo, which is accompanied by notes on its appearance and size; a rougher sketch of a Tasmanian devil, heavily inked in, which weights the bottom of the page like an anchor; and absurd and rudimentary line drawings in profile of dogs, cows, and cats. Each of the animals is isolated in an irregularly shaped cell. Their co-presence on the same page, and in the same disorderly scheme, appears to designate them all as inhabitants of 'New Olland', but the variety of shapes, shades, verisimilitude, and postures of the creatures, alongside their separation into distinctly shaped boxes, pulls the other way: how could this motley band of 'beestes' constitute a single category?

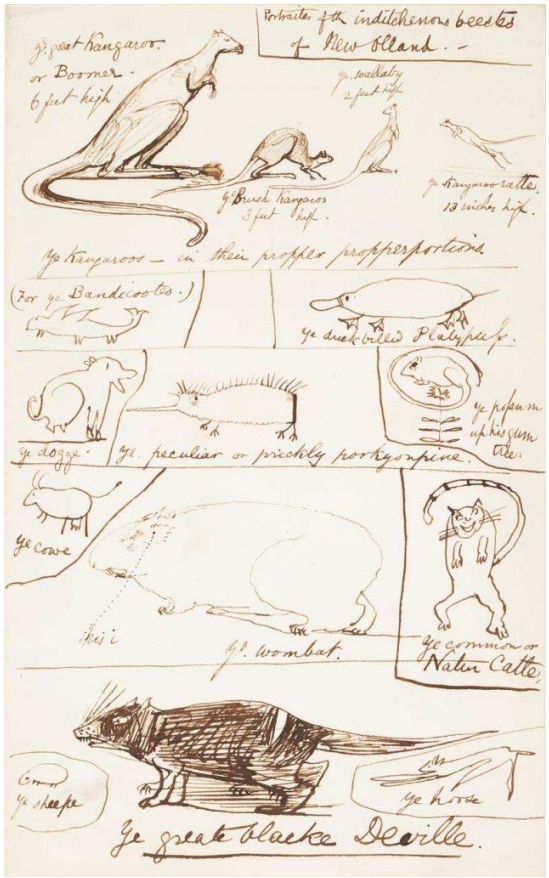


Figure 18. 'Portraites of the inditchenous beestes of New Olland', Morgan Library and Museum, New York, credit: Angus Trumble, National Portrait Gallery of Australia, < https://www.portrait.gov.au/postcards/2016/06/inditchenous-beestes-of-new-olland> [accessed 30 May 2018]

[70] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 483 n.
[71] Ibid., p. 57.

The ‘ditch’ in ‘inditchenous’ plays a pun on other trenches in Lear’s poetry, which separate people, or in which personages find themselves, such as the ‘Young Person whose history | Was always considered a mystery’, and who ‘sate in a ditch, although no one knew which, | And composed a small treatise on history’.[72] Folded snugly in a v-shaped ditch, the young woman pictured gazes serenely at her ‘small treatise’, while the sun sets to her left. Or we could turn to the ‘Old Person of Diss’, whose misadventures might be the result of a deictic misprision: he said ‘“It is this! It is this!” | When they said, “What? or which?” – he jumped into a ditch, | Which absorbed that Old Person of Diss’.[73] The confidence with which the Old Person regards the self-evidence of that which he indicates hints at a joke about the difficulty of naming in general, and is another instance of Lear’s exploration of the ‘relations between language and being’ which Daniel Brown has described. What’s the use of giving something a name, when this process risks *mis*naming? Lear’s limericks often, Brown notes, ‘precipitate their own referents, a set of self-subsisting relations that constitute a curious and discrete little world’.[74] The ‘curious and discrete’ little rooms of the limericks are much more neatly and regularly ordered than the boxes in ‘Inditchenous beestes’, but they still serve the same function. The repetition of the *a*-rhyme in the final line neatly envelopes the limerick, but it also quietly holds out the possibility of another rhyme. As Matthew Campbell puts it, ‘in verse with terminal rhyme endings, the movement of the line is carried both forwards in anticipation from the sound at a line-ending and backwards in recollection from the recurrence of words which sound similar but are not the same’.[75]

Ditches are one kind of line which arrange Lear’s personages, but his verse is full of others, and often they act as a kind of multi-species roost, a foundation for the meeting and

[72] Ibid., p. 374.
[73] Ibid., p. 380.
[74] ‘Being and Naughtiness’, p. 174.
[75] Matthew Campbell, ‘Rhyme’, in Matthew Bevis, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 74-92 (p. 78).

juxtaposition of different kinds of creature. The 'Old Person of Hove' lies on the floor, reading a book, while 'the wrens and the rooks' use 'that tranquil Old Person' for a perch (figure 19);[76] and the same happens to the 'Young Person of Bantry', who 'frequently slept in the pantry', reclining as a comfortable bench for 'the mice' whom she 'appeased […] with rice'.[77] The 'Old Man of Cashmere' gazes across a large horizontal blank (corresponding to a wall in the limerick) at 'two fat ducks'.[78] 'The Old Person of Nice, | Whose associates were usually Geese' (figure 20),[79] exactly mirrors the diagonal inclination of these associates—falling into line, perhaps, in a way that is not always exhibited by Lear's eccentrics. The 'Old Man whose despair | Induced him to purchase a hare', however, determinedly rides the immaculately linear hare (figure 21).[80] Both these individuals' alignment with their companions suggests a shared purpose, a *simpatico* relationship. The 'Old Person in gray', who 'purchased two parrots, and fed them with carrots', illustrates another possibility, holding out her arms and a carrot for the parrots to eat, offering an olive branch even as she seems to be drawing away (fig. 22).[81] Perhaps exemplary is the 'Old Man on whose nose, | Most birds of the air could repose' (fig. 23).[82]

[76] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 352.
[77] Ibid., p. 328.
[78] Ibid., p. 352. Peter Swaab discusses this image in '"Some Think Him … Queer": Loners and Love in Edward Lear', in *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, pp. 89-114 (pp. 103-04).
[79] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 360.
[80] Ibid., p. 329.
[81] Ibid., p. 368.
[82] Ibid., p. 178.



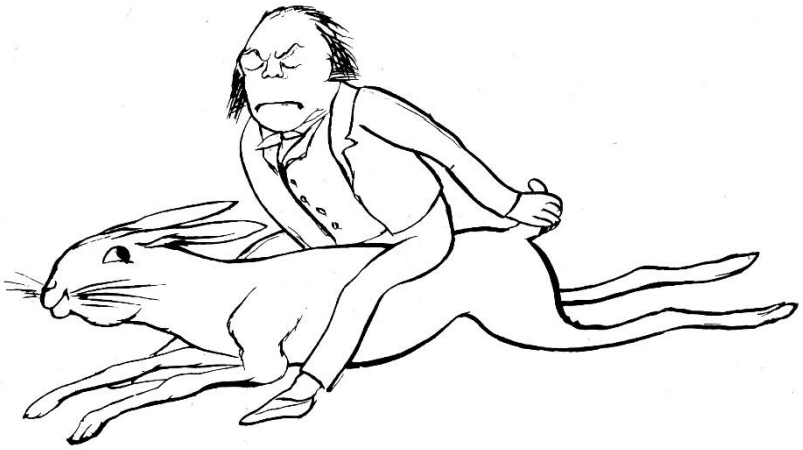
There was an old person of Hove,
Who frequented the depths of a grove;
Where he studied his books, with the wrens and the rooks,
That tranquil old person of Hove.

Figure 19. More Nonsense, *scanned by author*



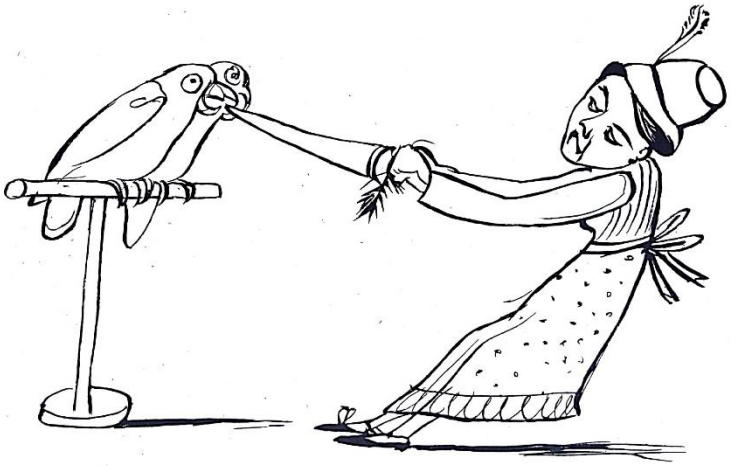
There was an old person of Nice,
Whose associates were usually Geese.
They walked out together, in all sorts of weather.
That affable person of Nice!

Figure 20. More Nonsense, scanned by author



There was an old man whose despair
Induced him to purchase a hare:
Whereon one fine day, he rode wholly away,
Which partly assuaged his despair.

Figure 21. More Nonsense, *scanned by author*



There was an old person in gray,
Whose feelings were tinged with dismay;
She purchased two parrots, and fed them with carrots,
Which pleased that old person in gray.

Figure 22. More Nonsense, *scanned by author*

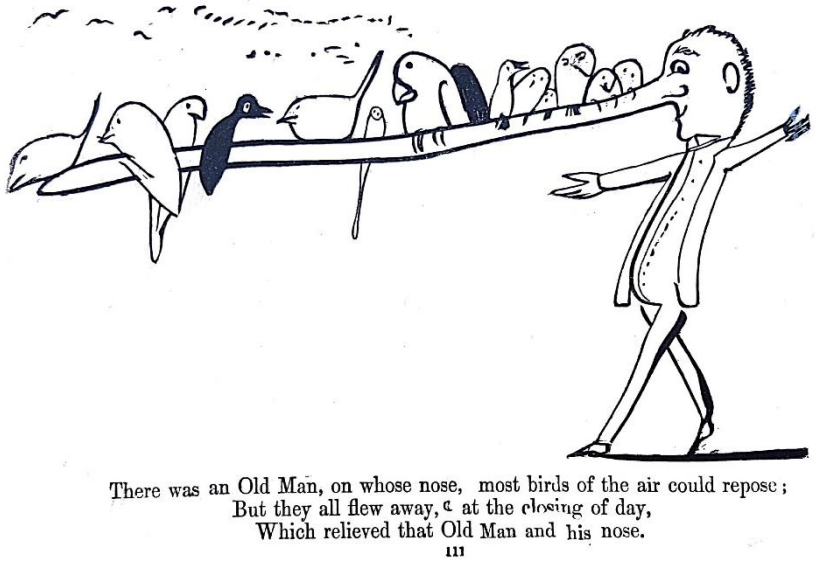


Figure 23. A Book of Nonsense, *scanned by author*

Just like the intrepid and disarticulated adventurers in the 'Adventures of Mr Lear, the Polly and the Pusseybite', organising individuals in or on a line allows them to remain distinct and together. It is as though the sections of branches on which Lear's parrots and other birds perch in his early zoological drawings have been extended, and found to be alive with other kinds of creature. Unlike, perhaps, Lear's verse as a whole, which often resounds with noisy echoes of the voices of preceding and subsequent poets, lines offer a more desirable kind of sociability: connected but independent. The nonsense botanies also seem to replicate this imaginative tic; the long, thin stems of plants turn out to be able to hold a considerable number of creatures, if only of one species. 'Nasticreechia Krorluppia', 'Tigerlillia Terribilis', 'Bluebottlia Buzztilentia', 'Manypeeplia Upsidownia', and 'Piggiawiggia Pyramidalis' all illustrate the accommodating potential of long lines, their use as meeting points for a diverse menagerie of beings and things (figure 24).

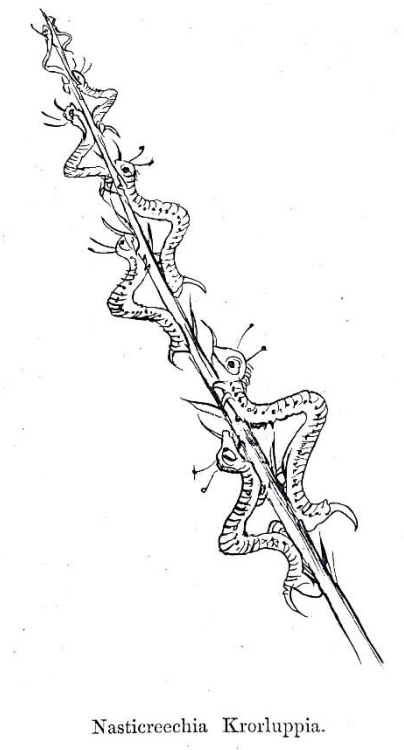


Figure 24. 'Nasticreechia Krorluppia', More Nonsense, *scanned by author*

Some of the most direct examples of this are to be found in the text–image couplets known under the title 'Ribands and pigs'. Combining the roominess of both lines and lists, these pieces of nonsense feature three lines with terminal monorhymes and accompanying illustrations. They list two pairs of objects, and the final line sets a personage or object 'going'. For example, the title piece goes: 'Ribands & pigs, | Helmets & figs, | Set him a jigging & see how he jigs' .[83] 'The form has much in common with the limericks', Hugh Haughton notes, 'and like them and the Alphabets depends on the mirroring of texts and pictures'.[84] They neatly order an apparently disparate set of figures, curating them according to the logic of rhyme and rhythm, rather than homologic resemblance; and they illustrate how the ordering capacity of rhyme might lead to nonsense taxonomies with a hint of sense. 'Ribands and pigs', for instance, might suggest that the jigging man is at a fair or fête, with ribands, piglet-chasing, choice comestibles, and costume pageantry. 'Chimnies & Wings, | Sailors & Rings, | Set him a sing

[83] Ibid., p. 135.
[84] Hugh Haughton, 'Edward Lear and "the Fiddlediddlety of Representation"', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry*, pp. 351-69 (p. 355).

& hark how he sings!' contains a hint of chimney swifts, as well as of Shelley's 'To a Sky-lark'. And, as Matthew Bevis has pointed out, these 'non-epic catalogue[s]' might also be 'an invitation to play': 'Cutlets & eyes, | Swallows & pies, | Set it a flying & see how it flies' traces the thread of an associative circularity which joins them together like beads on a necklace:[85] '"Swallows" are birds, but you can swallow a pie; a pie is made to be eaten, but a pie can be a bird (a magpie or a close relation). [And] like other kites in Lear's poetry, the "it" set a-flying here also has eyes (two little dots), perhaps because a kite is sometimes a bird of prey rather than a plaything'.[86] The 's' at the end of 'flies' is indeed let loose and set a-flying, as it traces a journey up the page as the kite's tether (figure 25). Although the final letter in 'Cutlets and eyes' joins itself to the object it describes, the poem-picture itself also replicates the visual organisation common to many of the other pieces in 'Ribands and pigs', in which the 'imagetexts' (to adapt W.J.T. Mitchell's formulation from a different context)[87] are arranged according to an invisible diagonal line running from top left to bottom right, either side of which sit the words and the illustrations, with the final 'it' or 'him' frequently straddling or hopping over the divide (as in 'Mitres and beams', 'Teapots, and Quails', or 'Tadpoles and Tops' [figure 26]).[88] Arranged as such, they give a further impression of order and structure—a kind of descriptive note to an exhibit in a museum, or, conversely, the illustration to a piece of writing, implying a separating line even as they enact its permeability. Occasionally, this arrangement buckles under the energy of the inhabitants it is trying to contain, as in 'Lobsters and Owls' and 'Saucers and Tops'.[89] Either way, however, in the case of these works, Lear's lines are also axes of composition.

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[85] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 142.
[86] Bevis, 'Edward Lear's Lines of Flight', p. 33.
[87] *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Interpretation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 89.
[88] *Complete Nonsense*, pp. 138-39.
[89] Ibid., pp. 139-40.

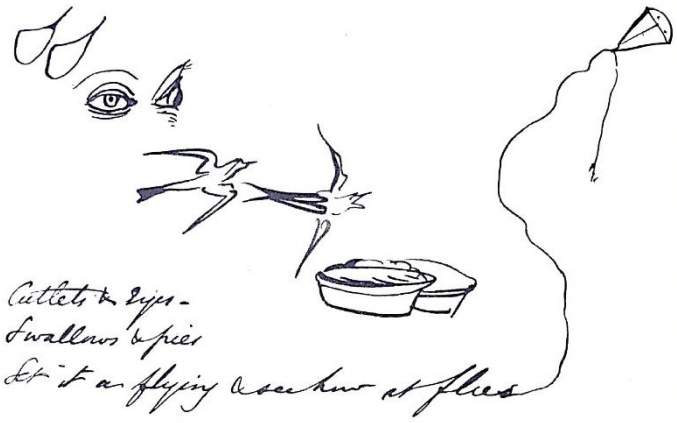


Figure 25. 'Cutlets and Eyes', Teapots and Quails, and Other New Nonsenses, *eds. by Angus Davidson and Philip Hofer (London: John Murray, 1953), scanned by author*

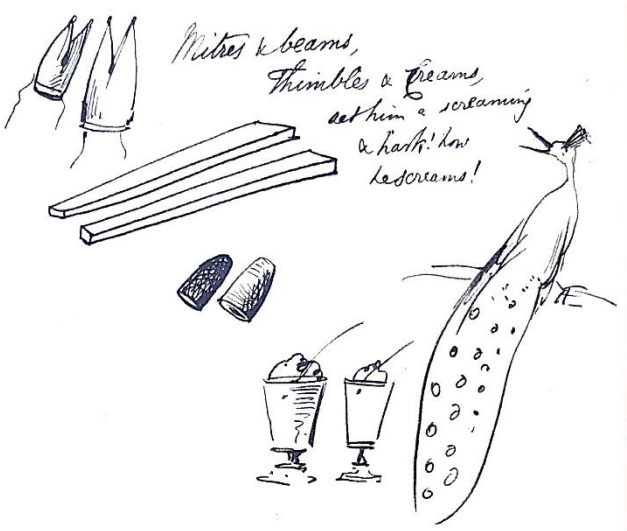


Figure 26. 'Mitres and Beams', Teapots and Quails, *scanned by author*

Similar effects are evident in the longer poems, in that ‘Ribands and pigs’, like all of Lear’s verse, stages questions of relation visually as well as semantically. Lear’s longer nonsense and serial poems and narratives explore with particular interest the possibilities of both narrative and poetic lines. ‘The Akond of Swat’, like ‘The Scroobious Pip’, offers an example of this:

> Does he sing or whistle, jabber or talk,
> And when riding abroad does he gallop or walk or TROT,
> The Akond of Swat?[90]

The ringing finality of the comically hectoring capitalised rhyme disappears at the end of the poem, as Lear ends with a familiar note of categorical uncertainty (in the sense both of emphasis and classification):

> Someone, or nobody, knows I wot
> Who or which or why or what
> Is the Akond of Swat![91]

An accompanying illustration likewise confounds any hope of answering this question. The familiar taxonomic ambiguity with which Lear ends the poem is played out by the metre and arrangement of the line itself. Each penultimate line, with its capitalisation, gallops forward in a flexible five-beat rhythm:

> Is his steward a Swiss or a Swede or a Russ
> or a SCOT[…]
>
> Or a bowl? or a glass? or a cup? or a mug?
> or a POT[…][92]

[90] Ibid., p. 399.
[91] Ibid., p. 400.
[92] Ibid.

As these two examples show, many of the lines lean towards an anapaestic pentameter, but the looseness of the metre ('Do they bring him only a few small cakes | or a LOT', for example) also provides an opportunity for playing with the syntactical relations within the poem. This flexibility means that the multitude of 'or's distributed across the poem can either form an integral part of the rhythm throughout the line (as one of the mechanically important single-syllable words that anapaestic metre relies on, but which nonetheless can keep the sense of the line moving along as well), or each example can sit alone and emphatic, introducing the capitalised rhyme at the end of the line. 'Or' is the most important word of the poem, in terms of both sense and structural function. It keeps open possibilities even as it distinguishes between them, acknowledging the necessity of ordering and categorisation, while simultaneously declining to settle on one order. It gives a sense of an almost bewildering plenitude, a feeling of there being too much to choose from. This shifts in the last section of the final line of 'The Akond of Swat', which forgoes both the 'or' and the capitalisation. In its absence, there is a strong feeling of a missing beat:

> Who or which or why or what
>
> Is the Akond of Swat![93]

The result is that the reader has to emphasise 'Is' in a slightly stilted way. This emphasis on the identity of the Akond renders the final line into a question, contrary to the exclamation mark at its end. The poem's rhythm asks the reader to lean into the final, apparently decisive, verb—'is', *to be*—only for the resolution it promises to give way under the pressure.

[93] Ibid., p. 401.

In the second illustration accompanying ‘The Akond of Swat’, Lear sits atop a gleefully bounding elephant, paintbrush and palette in hand, peering resolutely into whatever is ahead, like an intrepid adventurer—and not without an air of the daredevil about him (figure 27). Perched, apparently less securely, towards the back of the elephant sit two figures carrying a parasol and a canvas respectively. The hindmost figure is in the process of slipping off the leaping elephant. As an inveterate itinerant, Lear regularly had to sit on large animals, and relied on them to transport himself and his belongings to his next destination. The travel journals are full of mentions of loading up his horses and mules, and it is fair to say that Lear depended on the exertions and co-operation of various other species in his wandering—even emotionally, in the shape of his perennial companion later in life, Foss the cat. It is therefore unsurprising, perhaps, that Lear’s nonsense and letters are likewise full of creatures depending on one another, leaning on each other, co-operating or co-habiting space, balanced in poses of variously uncertain equilibrium.

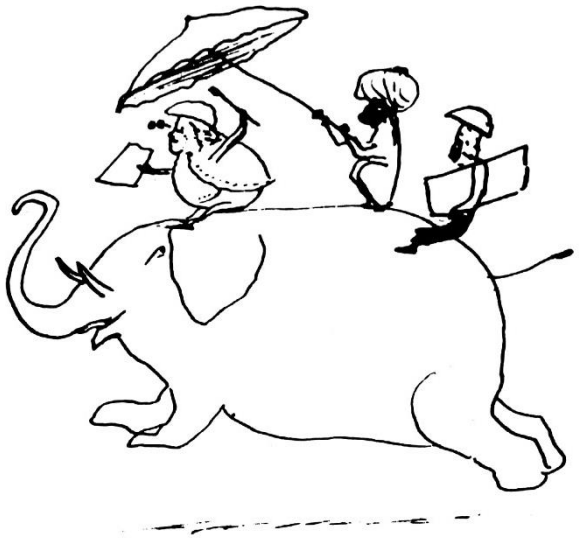


Figure 27. 'The Akond of Swat', The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*, ed. by Vivian Noakes (London: Penguin, 2006), scanned by author*

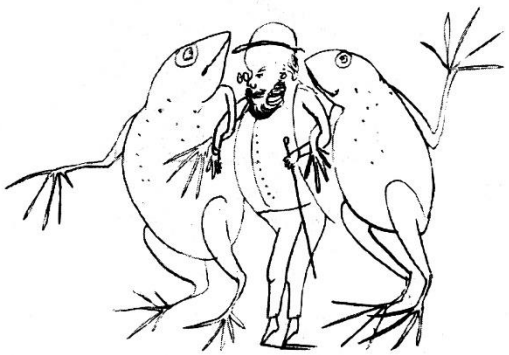
Part of the spasmodic aspect of such arrangements involves playing with the roles of leaner and leaned-on, as in the 'Old Person in black':

> There was an Old Person in black,
> A Grasshopper jumped on his back;
> When it chirped in his ear, he was smitten with fear,
> That helpless Old Person in black.[94]

In the illustration, the Old Person crouches on a stool, a distinctly large and menacing grasshopper perched on his back, who seems stably ensconced, but might just as likely be swiftly shaken off by an inadvertent shudder on the part of the Old Person (figure 29). We might also turn to Lear's letters, and find an ageing Lear in the imaginary company of 'two remarkably large & amiable Frogs, whose arms [he] took & who saw [him] down the lane', in a letter to Anna Duncan.[95] The accompanying illustration shows Lear arm-in-arm between the two 'genteel & intelligent' creatures,[96] on his tip-toes, the frogs' arms outstretched in ambiguous gestures of delight, exhortation, or (perhaps) mid-dance (figure 28). They are likewise poised on the tips of their webbed feet, if not slightly airborne, and the figure on the left seems to have a smile creeping across his face. 'Nothing could exceed', Lear jokes, 'the urbanity of their deportment and the melancholy and oblivious sweetness of their voices' (this from the man who had sung his own musical settings of Tennyson's poems with 'the greatest expression and passion [in] the most sentimental words').[97]

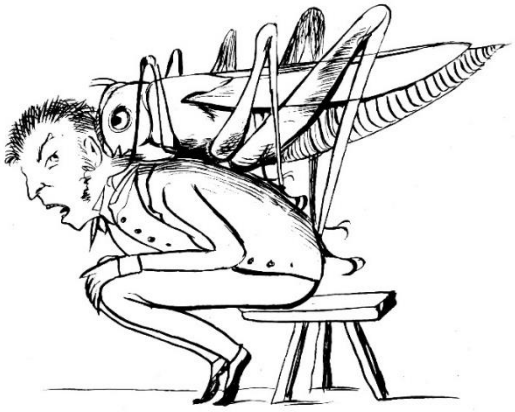
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[94] Ibid., p. 333.
[95] 3 January 1865, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters*, ed. Vivian Noakes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 199.
[96] Ibid., p. 200.
[97] Marianne North's description, cited in Noakes, *Life of a Wanderer*, p. 115.



To Lady Duncan

Figure 28. Letter to Anna Duncan, 3 January 1865, in Edward Lear: Selected Letters*, scanned by author*



There was an old person in black,
A Grasshopper jumped on his back;
When it chirped in his ear, He was smitten with fear,
That helpless old person in black.

Figure 29. More Nonsense*, scanned by author*

The older, frequently lonely, poet and painter clearly found something imaginatively appealing about the idea of an arm to lean on—even an amphibious one. But Lear wasn't above imagining playing a joke on those who might lean on him, as we can see in a letter to Augusta Parker. Complaining about the 'melancholy mucilaginous Molluscs' who have eaten all his 'Higher-cynths & also my Lower=cynths' [*sic*], he hatches a plan to rid himself of these 'enemies': 'by flattering their vanity in taking them friendly walks up & down the garden,—an inganno which blinds them to ulterior consequences', by which Lear means his plan to 'pitch them into the water, where they [may] justly expiate their unpleasant & greedy sins'.[98] The illustration sees Lear with two friendly arms cast around the 'shoulders' of two large and unsuspecting molluscs.

The joke, though, could also be on Lear himself, as a series of sketches showing 'Lear's adventures on horseback' indicates. The series features Lear and a not-so-ferocious 'ferocious horse' (who, in the first illustration, stares characteristically back at Lear, mirroring his own expression to the point that the horse actually has a pair of spectacles) in a succession of comic tableaux, demonstrating Lear's utter incompetence on horseback.[99] The anarchic energy and variety of positions evident in the illustrations speaks to Lear's sharp eye for comedy, the captions beautifully understated: 'L. changes his position for the sake of variety' describes a picture in which Lear clings with arms and legs round the neck of his horse, leaving the saddle unoccupied.[100] But it also speaks to the sense that this variety of positions—diversity of arrangements and accords—between human and other animals might be, not just possible, but a necessary part of living and getting on together.

[98] *Selected Letters*, p. 263.
[99] *Complete Nonsense*, pp. 63-70.
[100] Ibid., p. 64.

Dance as Relation

Michael O'Neill has suggested that there are similarities between Lear's and Lord Byron's approach to rhyme, using an image which picks out one of the more prominent kinds of relationship in Lear's work: both 'delight in the way in which rhyme can seem to mimic social convention and its subversion, behaving as if its two terms were partners in a dance'.[101] Auden's famous poem, too, highlights the importance of dancing to Lear's nonsense: a cat soon has the eponymous 'dirty landscape-painter […] waltzing madly'.[102] John Lehmann claims that 'there is a sense of dance everywhere in [the] drawings, as there is so often in the verses themselves'.[103] He may have been referring to a number of different situations: dancing in Lear's nonsense might bring together individuals in a moving tête-à-tête, as in 'The Owl and the Pussycat', who 'danced by the light of the moon'; or in the 'serial improprieties of a quadrille for two',[104] as in the 'Old Man of Whitehaven, | Who danced a quadrille with a Raven'; or in the 'long catalogue of creatures which come together to play and dance on the Quangle Wangle's hat'.[105] Dancing seems peculiarly liable to bring out aspects of similarity, or even identicality, between individuals. The 'Old Person of Skye', for instance, bears a remarkable likeness to the 'Bluebottle fly' with whom he 'waltz'd';[106] likewise the 'Old Man of Whitehaven'.

The dance of rhyme noticed by O'Neill draws attention as well, said Denise Levertov, to the 'mind's dance among perceptions', the 'slight (but meaningful) hesitations between word and word' enacted by the turn at the end of a poetic line.[107] But while Levertov suggested that

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[101] Michael O'Neill, '"One of the dumms": Edward Lear and Romanticism', in *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, pp. 51-69, p. 69.
[102] Auden also emphasises the importance of the arrangement on the page by choosing an unconventional layout for the sonnet's fourteen lines: two quatrains, rhymed *abab* and *cdcd*, before a quintet (*efegf*) and a single final line (*g*).
[103] *Lear and His World*, p. 55.
[104] *Complete Nonsense,* p. 172.
[105] Matthew Bevis and James Williams, introduction to *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, pp. 1-15, p. 10.
[106] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 55.
[107] Denise Levertov, 'On the Function of the Line', in *Light Up the Cave* (New York: New Directions, 1981), pp.

the 'dance of a-logical thinking/feeling' introduced by line-breaks seems to be limited to the extent that they are incorporated into metrical forms, Lear's deft play with syntax, metre, and sense seems rather to put the creaturely forms of life within his poems into richer relations of thinking and feeling. Sewell noted just this in the final chapter of *The Field of Nonsense*, where dance is considered as a counterpoint to the games of logic found in nonsense literature. For her, dance is at once a kind of magical and somatic thinking: 'a kind of thinking with the body, freedom and mobility combined with the experience of some intuitive make-believe way of understanding things by dancing them'.[108] To adapt some words of William Carlos Williams, Lear's lines are an example of 'that attenuated power which draws perhaps many broken things into a dance giving them thus a full being'.[109] 'The Quangle Wangle's Hat' offers a glimpse of this drawing into relation:

> And the Quangle Wangle said
> To himself on the Crumpetty Tree, –
> 'When all these creatures move
> What a wonderful noise there'll be!'[110]

'Said | To himself' both dramatises and splits the isolation of the Quangle Wangle witnessed at the start of the poem, invoking, in the blank space after 'said', the possibility of another auditor. Though foreclosed, the next lines alter this space to one of kinetic and relational potential: 'When all these creatures *move* | What a wonderful noise there'll be!'.[111]

This multi-species choreography might sound, to a posthumanist ear, something like Donna Haraway's description of the 'material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another': where humans and other beings 'become who they are *in*

61-9, p. 62.
[108] *Field of Nonsense*, p. 192.
[109] William Carlos Williams, *Imaginations* (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 13.
[110] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 392.
[111] Williams and Bevis discuss this moment in *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*, p. 11

the dance of relating, not from scratch, not ex nihilo, but full of the patterns of their sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritages both before and lateral to *this* encounter'.[112] And that might serve as a good description of how relations work in Lear. Dances involve accommodation, a fluidity of positions, organisation and spontaneity, structure and free flow, and these are the qualities of relation which emerge between humans and other animals most strongly in Lear's nonsense. The arrangement of individuals in lines puts them in relation and keeps them apart; preserving some of the integrity of the pieces of the nonsense game, while nonetheless finding ways to articulate the possibility of blurred lines of distinction.

To conclude this chapter with Lear's inter-species waltzing is instructive in another sense, for it shines light on an aspect of his work that has been underplayed in the contemporary reappraisal of nonsense in literary studies: joyfulness.[113] The revitalisation of critical interest in nonsense, and Lear in particular, has been energised in many ways by the rise of interest in affect, feeling, and emotion in the humanities,[114] and this development has enabled readers of nonsense to articulate a much more compelling case for its significance as an object of both personal and literary-critical attachment. However, there is a recurrent emphasis on melancholy in accounts of Lear's feelings that, while justified, needs to be counter-balanced by work that engages with the lighter side of his limericks and songs. Lear's life was a deeply unhappy one in many ways, including the virtual rejection of him as a child by his mother, lifelong epileptic fits, unrequited devotion to men who would or could not love him back, and perennial financial insecurity. In this context, one of the most moving things to which our knowledge of this misery

[112] *When Species Meet*, p. 25; emphasis in original.

[113] See, for instance, Anna Barton, 'Delirious Bulldogs and Nasty Crockery: Tennyson as Nonsense Poet', *Victorian Poetry* 47.1 (2009), pp. 313-30; Haughton, 'Lear and the Fiddlediddlety of Representation'; Bevis, 'Lines of Flight'; Williams and Bevis, *Edward Lear and the Play of Poetry*; Peck, *The Natural History of Edward Lear*; Uglow, *Mr Lear*; Ben Westwood, 'Edward Lear's Dancing Lines', *Essays in Criticism* 67.4 (2017), pp. 367-91; Hassett, '"Does it Buzz?"'; as well as forthcoming monographs on Lear by James Williams, Matthew Bevis, and Sara Lodge.

[114] On this, see the Oxford University podcast series, 'Edward Lear's Feelings', written by Matthew Bevis and Jasmine Jagger: https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/edward-lears-feelings, accessed 9 May 2018.

testifies is his unique capacity for the saving grace of humour. As in life, so in art: it is unlikely anyone would suggest that Lear's work gives us either joy or sorrow unmingled, for laughter and weeping are, in his nonsense, like the sides of a Möbius strip, the one twisting imperceptibly into the other. Nevertheless, this chapter has focused on moments of pleasure and sociability far more than those of loneliness or difficulty, and this is because animals were peculiarly liberating subjects for Lear, emotionally speaking. To demonstrate this, consider one more example:

> There was an old person of Ealing,
> Who was wholly devoid of good feeling;
> He drove a small gig, with three Owls and a Pig,
> Which distressed all the people of Ealing.[115]

As miserable as the limerick sounds, its accompanying picture tells a different story (figure 29); the old person's face, in fact, is in the process of breaking out into a broad smile, while his eyes gaze off into the middle distance in an expression of serene contentment. Taken together with its image, the limerick starts to look a little different. If, contrary to the words, the old person is perfectly happy with both his travelling arrangements and company, our attention is then drawn to the final line: 'Which distressed all the people of Ealing'. This shift in the subject of misery—it is no longer the old person who is 'devoid of good feeling', but rather the townspeople—entails a revision of the first two lines. That is, we should surmise that the perceived absence of good feeling in the person must have been just that: a perception, and likely the perception of the distressed people of Ealing (who are, it should be noted, nowhere to be seen). In its visual-verbal interplay, then, the limerick toggles between good feeling and the absence of it. It is therefore also an apt allegory for Lear himself—or at least the version put forward in this chapter—in which the poet and artist is both glad and morose. In this

[115] *Complete Nonsense*, p. 367.

Wittgensteinian rabbit-duck, though, focusing our attention on Lear when he is in creaturely company reveals, more often than not, the joyful rather than the melancholy.

In a way, the image of the old person of Ealing encapsulates the vision of Victorian

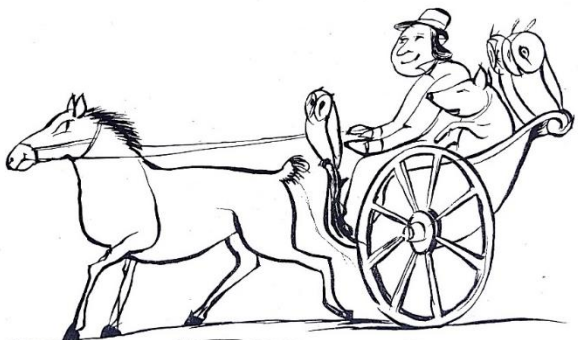


Figure 30. More Nonsense, *scanned by author*

There was an old person of Ealing,
Who was wholly devoid of good feeling;
He drove a small gig, with three Owls and a Pig,
Which distressed all the people of Ealing.

literature that this thesis has described. Three different species share the gig, with apparent equanimity, while a fourth (the horse) trots ahead in harness. While the latter pulls the vehicle along, the other species simply accompany the old person—the animals in the scene are thus both functional and, for want of a better word, companionable. The picture indicates the diversity of Victorian literary ecologies (a horse, 'three Owls and a Pig'), but it also shows the human at the reins—reminding us that these novels and poems were written by humans and for humans. This notwithstanding though, the expression of the old person finds an echo in the pig's smiling countenance, hinting at a kind of commonality. It might also remind us of the phrase of Thomas De Quincey's mentioned in the introduction, about the range of animals that modernity has 'brought into the scheme of human life':

> birds as food, some fishes as ditto; beeves as food and sometimes as appliers of strength; horses in both characters. These with elephants and camels, mules, asses, goats, dogs, and sheep, cats and rabbits, gold-fishes and singing-birds, […] compose the whole of our animal equipage harnessed to the car of human life.

The ‘animal equipage’ of Lear’s picture has indeed been harnessed to the gig of human life, but the image can also help us hear the double meaning of the word ‘equipage’: it is both the apparatus or articles needed for a particular organisation, and a retinue of followers. That is to say, they are functional tools as well as attendant individuals: ‘required’ necessities and ‘ornamental’ accoutrements (*OED*), elements of structure and of style. The ‘animal equipage’ of Victorian literature shares these characteristics, forming one of its most distinctive appurtenances, and the fact of this equipage’s diversity and pervasiveness is everywhere legible in the classifying forms of the period’s imaginative literature.

Conclusion

> Birds, companions more unknown,
> Live beside us, but alone;
> Finding not, do all they can,
> Passage from their souls to man.
> Kindness we bestow, and praise,
> Laud their plumage, greet their lays;
> Still, beneath their feather'd breast,
> Stirs a history unexpress'd.
> Wises there, and feelings strong,
> Incommunicably throng;
> What they want, we cannot guess […][1]

Forty years after Dickens's letters on the death of Grip, in 1882, Matthew Arnold wrote an elegy for his pet bird, Matthias. In it, he crystallised a shift in focus regarding other animals that had been in progress for about two decades. As the introduction lays out, from the 1860s onward, scientific interest in animals changed from taxonomy and systematics to questions of intelligence and consciousness. The emphasis, in other words, no longer fell on the variety of species that stood to be taxonomised, but rather on the internal life of individual organisms. Thus the 'history unexpress'd' in Matthias's 'feather'd breast' is unavailable to Arnold in his poem; 'we cannot guess' at the 'feelings strong' within Matthias because the bird's inner life is inaccessible. This mystery is evidently a source of consternation for Arnold ('What they want, we cannot guess'), but there is also a note of wonder in this ignorance, which stems from the fact that we are in fact surrounded by these 'companions more unknown'. This is a similar sentiment to George Eliot's 'roar which lies on the other side of silence',[2] or G.H. Lewes's awe in *Studies in Animal Life* with which the introduction to this thesis begins—that there are worlds of unknown experience occurring above, below, and around us.

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[1] Matthew Arnold, 'Poor Matthias', *Matthew Arnold: The Oxford Authors*, eds. Miriam Allott and Robert H. Super (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 272.
[2] *Middlemarch*, ed. David Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 189.

Elsewhere in Eliot's work, too, her characters raise the question of other animals' consciousness: Dinah Morris wonders whether dogs 'have more in them than they know how to make us understand';[3] and Dorothea Brooke muses that the 'animals about us have souls something like our own, and either carry on their own little affairs or can be companions to us'.[4] Eliot was fascinated by the horizon of subjectivity other animals necessarily introduced; their presence provided a limit-case for what Raymond Williams termed 'the problem of the knowable community' in the realist novel.[5] For Eliot, as for Arnold in 'Poor Matthias', other animals presented little indices of life that was at once proximate and alien.

This discourse is perhaps the one for which we most readily reach when thinking about the significance of other animals in Victorian literature: as enigmatic puzzles that never run the risk of being solved, or as paradigmatically 'other' creatures whose experience is sealed off from our own. This thesis, however, has demonstrated the importance of the classifying imagination in understanding the animals of Victorian literature, showing some of the different ways in which writers drew inspiration from it, before the shift to epistemological scepticism made animals into ciphers for the problem of subjectivity. Instead of the focus on the individual that this discourse entails, the influence of the classifying imagination caused writers to think in terms of social groups: species, orders, families, kingdoms. In the five chapters of this thesis, animals raise questions of classification and relation, and attending to their presence helps us think with greater sophistication about the social and textual arrangements imagined by these writers.

Arnold's elegy focuses on a single bird, and on the secret history that unfolded in its breast, unknown and unknowable to the poet and his family. But the poem acknowledges at

[3] *Adam Bede*, p. 65.
[4] *Middlemarch*, pp. 29-30.
[5] *The English Novel: Dickens to Lawrence* (London: Hogarth Press, 1970), p. 17.

the same time that, despite this lacuna, birds do indeed 'live beside us'; the psychological barrier that modern science imposed (or perhaps invented) between humans and other animals does not alter the fact that we have to coexist. So, what do we owe to these strange beings and 'companions more unknown'? Community presupposes mutual obligations, and one of the most prominent nineteenth-century philosophers of social life—John Stuart Mill—tackled this question in the same year that the *Origin* and *Adam Bede* were published. In response to William Whewell's assertion of species belonging as a ground for moral consideration, Mill replied indignantly that 'Nothing is more natural to human beings, nor, up to a certain point in cultivation, more universal, than to estimate the pleasures and pains of others as deserving of regard exactly in proportion to their likeness to ourselves', characterising such a position as 'superstitions of selfishness'.[6] Mill rebukes Whewell for his belief that moral responsibility correlates in direct proportion to an individual's likeness to ourselves. In his critique of Whewell's ethics of resemblance, Mill anticipates one of the foundational arguments in contemporary animal studies, particularly within the strands influenced by poststructuralist thought and continental philosophy. Based on Emmanuel Lévinas's account of the ethical responsibility entailed by the 'face of the other', thinkers such as Cary Wolfe argue that any theory of ethics or morality that evaluates animals based on their likeness to ourselves is philosophically indefensible, in that it makes ethics exclusive instead of open and is founded upon an improbably stable conception of humanity itself.[7]

In this tradition, which we can trace back to the epistemological shift in the ten years either side of 1870 outlined above, the unknowability of other animals is a foundational

[6] 'Whewell on Moral Philosophy', *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical, and Historical*, 2 vols (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859), II, pp. 484-85.

[7] For influential arguments along these lines, see, Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 2007); Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, and *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); Tom Tyler, *Ciferae: A Bestiary in Five Fingers* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

premise. As we have seen, though, the classifying imagination in no way found scepticism and subjectivity necessary or helpful. In focusing on questions of taxonomy, this thesis has demonstrated what may be recovered for literary animal studies from a consideration of other animals not as psychological subjects, but as parts of a world or textual system. Paradoxically, given the attitudes of mastery over the natural world which motivated much work in natural history during the nineteenth century, the influence of the classifying imagination on literature was nonetheless also predicated on relation, sociability, and cohabitation.

This is because the classifying imagination shares profound homologic resemblances with what we would now think of as the liberal imagination. Both, for instance, prize diversity at the same time as aspiring to accommodate and, to an extent, homogenise it within an overarching system. Both seek to make groups out of individuals, and then to arrange those groups so as to construct a coherent community. Anomalies are anathema to both taxonomies and liberal politics insofar as they preclude orderliness and comprehensibility, and individuals are important predominantly as representatives or instances of broader aggregate categories. Translated into the registers of social life and literature, the project of classification—making groups out of individuals—begins to look a lot like the practice of politics. To consider the place of animals in the classifying imagination of Victorian literature, then, is also to consider the constitution of the social body in the worlds which those works represent, or from which they emerge. Indeed, it asks us to confront the limits of liberal democracy—both its theory and practice—as well as our presuppositions about who or what can be considered an active participant in social life. Attending to the classifying imagination of Victorian literature is a study of inclusion, an account of the various logics by which personages and things are worked into a coherent whole. This thesis has offered a sample of some of the ways in which animals fit into works of Victorian prose and poetry in patterns that have been hitherto unnoticed. As such, it lays the groundwork for new ways of seeing the profound imbrication of human and

animal lives—conceptually, materially, and aesthetically. Further work in this area may reveal a plurality of taxonomies and frameworks for thinking about that interpenetration of human and animal lives, in both this period and in the *longue durée* of the classifying imagination, stretching back to the middle of the eighteenth century. But it may also turn its focus away from animals, and train it on the importance of taxonomies to literary form more generally. As a heuristic question, asking 'what are this text's operative taxonomies?' opens up questions of both politics and literary form.

As much as the shift towards alterity and subjectivity entailed an understanding of animals as not merely there for human use, and as much as that shift remains vital in combating ecological catastrophe on an unprecedented scale, this thesis has sought to recover something of the strangeness and variety of the classifying imagination. As much as the classification of Victorian natural history was an insuperably colonial endeavour, infused with attitudes of mastery and proprietorship, the literary works produced in dialogue with it also offer glimpses of other forms of relation. Particularly, the last four chapters have shown how taxonomic poetics could also reveal inversions, equality, or improvisation in the arrangements they set up—and why we might want to recuperate these orders.

Understanding the tessellations and interpenetrations of humans and other animals in literary works holds out the promise of an alternative ethics of reading. It creates the conditions for a form of attention in which animals and humans are understood as cohabitants of a shared world, rather than atomised and distinct individuals in a philosophical scheme. Contrary to the implications of posthumanist thought on the matter, we do not necessarily have to think about how animals are resistant to the aims of a writer or a work for us to think ethically about their representation in literature. What if, as well as that line of thought, we attended to the ways in which the diverse relationships between humans and all sorts of other animals in fact generated the conditions for art and literature, and prompted new models of social being? Reading the

taxonomic poetics of Victorian literature, through which writers both drew distinctions between humans and other animals and constructed systematic models capable of accommodating them, allows us to envision a politics of reading that would acknowledge and accommodate difference without valorising it at the expense of sociability.

Charles Kingsley's fictional tailor-poet Alton Locke perhaps put this idea in its clearest form, in his eulogy of Tennyson's verse:

> True, all great poets are by their office democrats […] but in Alfred Tennyson there is an element especially democratic, truly levelling; not his political opinions about which I know nothing, and care less, but his handling of the trivial everyday sights and sounds of nature. […] he has learnt to see that in all nature, in the hedgerow and the sandbank, as well as in the alp peak and the ocean waste, is a world of true sublimity,—a minute infinite,—an ever fertile garden of poetic images […]. The descriptions of the desolate pools and creeks where the dying swan floated, the hint of the silvery marsh mosses by Mariana's moat, came to me like revelations. […] This is what I call democratic art—the revelation of the poetry which lies in common things. And surely all the age is tending in that direction: in Landseer and his dogs—in Fielding and his downs […] from Crabbe and Burns and Wordsworth to Hood and Dickens, the great tide sets ever onward, outward, towards that which is common to the many, not that which is exclusive to the few.[8]

It is, as the presence of his name attests, a very Wordsworthian vision; the prose blank verse of 'the poetry which lies in common things' might be lifted directly from his verse. The argument of this thesis, however, helps us see that what is peculiarly Victorian about this passage is the explicit connection made between the 'sights and sounds of nature' and the democratic qualities of given works of art and literature. Writing the literature of 'the many', Kingsley's protagonist argues, is not simply a question of extending the range of its representation of human characters, but of attending to 'all nature': 'the hedgerow and the sandbank, […] the alp peak and the ocean waste, […] desolate pools and creeks, […] the silvery marsh mosses'. In this passage, what is at stake is the make-up of the *demos*: the

[8] *Alton Locke,* pp. 97-98.

populace of a political community. Who, or what, counts in the purview of a truly democratic novel or poem? For the writers considered in this thesis, these questions found an outlet in the classifying imagination—in its construction and deconstruction of groups, its drawing and blurring of distinctions between different kinds of being. And it is time that we recognised that, in its imaginative reinventions of categories and taxonomies, Victorian literature offers us both the motive and the means for reimagining humans' continuing coexistence with other animals.

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