

THE UNSTOPPABLE ANTHROPOCENE ENGINE: ANIMAL STUDIES IN  
LITERATURE AND THE LACK OF INDIVIDUAL ANIMAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

### THE UNSTOPPABLE ANTHROPOCENE ENGINE: ANIMAL STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND THE LACK OF INDIVIDUAL ANIMAL STUDY

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Animal studies is a growing field in the Humanities and, in particular, Literature studies. This dissertation, *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*, focuses on canonical literature of the fin de siècle and Modernist eras that utilize animals in their narratives. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* are the literary texts examined throughout the dissertation to discuss the importance of looking at specific animals that represent particular groups. Through these novels and poem, readers will see that when we look closely at animals and give them the time and recognition they deserve, we benefit from learning more about our animal kingdom neighbors and our own human species.

*The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* explores the way humans interact with animals on the page and reveals when a reader examines the animal closely, it creates a more holistic understanding of the text/character. By exploring the animal groups: farmed animals, vivisection, hunting, privileged animals, and exploited animals, these narratives open in ways that scholars have not shown before. Human groups that suffer from cultural and political oppression often share similarities with the way animals are abused/exploited. That connection is why it is important that scholars no longer ignore the presence of an animal in a narrative nor categorize all animals as one homologous

group. Each animal throughout this dissertation will be treated as an individual, and this will showcase how animal studies enhances our understanding of literature and the world.

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I wish to thank my daughter, Gwendolyn, who was born just before I began this project and has taught me more about how our actions in life truly make an impact. Thank you for always keeping me grounded and showing that there's always an opportunity to have a little bit of fun.

This dissertation is dedicated to the billions of animals that suffer and die each year due to human intervention and greed. Your voices will never be lost, so long as the humans who know of your plights continue to fight for your right to a life without abuse.

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## Introduction

### Fuel for the Great Machine: Are we Ignoring the Individual?

Every sentient being is an individual, and yet this is something that most humans do not acknowledge in non-humans even within discussions of animal studies and the Anthropocene. This dissertation, *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*, engages with examples from the literature of the fin de siècle and Modernist eras that recognize the individuality in non-human animals<sup>1</sup> and show readers that the animals' plights are analogous to our own. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* are the literary texts examined throughout the dissertation to discuss the importance of looking at specific animals that represent particular groups. Through these novels and poem, readers will see that when we look closely at animals and give them the time and recognition they deserve, we benefit from learning more about our animal kingdom neighbors and our own human species. These canonical works have been studied extensively, and yet the animals in these stories have never received the attention required to unlock a fuller understanding of the characters and plots. I treat every species as equally valuable, as every animal species deserves to be examined on an equal basis: from the majestic elephant to the vulnerable oyster and everything in-between. It is often these individuals who are lost in the grand narratives of the Anthropocene.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of brevity, majority of the dissertation will use the noun "animal" to discuss non-human animals.

Humans consistently try to redefine their atrocities against the Earth as evidenced by the debate surrounding when the Anthropocene started. Was it the Industrial Revolution? The Atom Bomb? The invention of agriculture?<sup>2</sup> These are just a few examples, but all the debates have one thing in common: they are on a grand scale. Much Anthropocene writing looks at the landscape from a high altitude to see the overall damage to humans, nonhumans, nonliving matter, etc. In their introduction to the collection *Anthropocene Reading: Literary History in Geologic Times*, Tobias Menely and Jesse Oak Taylor map out the macro lens which the Anthropocene is discussed:

Any definition of the Anthropocene identifies a point of entanglement between the Earth system and social systems, wherein varied forms of causality, from the imperatives of capital accumulation to the manner in which CO<sub>2</sub> absorbs infrared radiation, intersect. The Anthropocene Earth system, to put this another way, includes not just the hydrosphere, atmosphere, biosphere, and lithosphere, but also diverse economies and energy systems, societies and symbolic orders. In the Anthropocene, all scholars are called upon to become Earth system humanists, which involves thinking about how these systems interrelate with, internalize, and destabilize one another. (Menely, Taylor 156)

These are grand scales for which the Anthropocene is studied and discussed. The impact humans have made on the Earth systems is so profound that the study of the Anthropocene often needs to be examined on a macro level. However, the pendulum has

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<sup>2</sup> The debate surrounding the start of the Anthropocene is regularly contested amongst scholars, and these three start points are involved in nearly every discussion.

swung so far in the macro direction that many micro stories are being forgotten or missed by this lens.

What often gets lost in these grandiose discussions are the individuals who are being churned and destroyed by the effects of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene should be viewed as a combustion engine that devours the Earth and all its inhabitants to use as fuel and keep the gears moving for cultural/societal advancement. Human and nonhuman animals are equal victims in this indiscriminate destruction of the planet, and their individual stories tell us more about the effects of the Anthropocene than any overall view can ever detail. The study of individual animal stories is important in the aid of understanding the Anthropocene more holistically. The views that look at the Anthropocene on a macro level tell important stories about the shifting of Earth's atmosphere, geology, etc. and they are critical to understanding the effects the Anthropocene is having on individuals. However, the macro view sees the changes that can impact the micro (individual), but they do not look at how the individual is changed and suffers from the planetary effects of the Anthropocene.

At least as far back as ancient Rome, humans have realized that their actions to further society have created pain and suffering for animals and have set double standards for individuals who do not fit into the common mold that society desires. The Roman philosopher Plutarch details the contrasts for a crime against nature in his circa AD120 essay "On the Eating of Flesh"; "For my part I cannot think him a worse criminal that torments a poor creature while living, than a man that shall take away its life and murder it. But (as it seems) we are more sensible of what is done against custom than against Nature." To acknowledge pain and suffering is to see the victim as an individual and thus

leads one to question the purpose of the suffering. *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* argues that humankind's selfishness to progress society has not changed throughout their history, and by ignoring the animals that have been affected by human intervention, we have been unable to enact the change that is crucial to improving both animal life and human life. Just as human society has chosen to ignore animal suffering in favor of cultural norms, so too have human authors chosen to point out this depravity. From Plutarch to J. M. Coetzee, authors and philosophers have tried to argue for animal wellness with very little movement to overall animal betterment. In fact, non-human animals suffer at much higher levels today compared to when Plutarch wrote his essay.

Humans must recognize that every animal suffers, and that each individual animal suffers differently, just as two humans can be victims of the same crime and suffer in completely different ways. Ecocritics' attempts to acknowledge human atrocities through studies of the Anthropocene are a step in the right direction toward recognizing the suffering we have inflicted on the animal kingdom (remembering that humans are members of the same kingdom). However, Anthropocene studies make sweeping generalizations of non-human animals to explain the geological effects of human intervention. The Anthropocene is a massive engine that devours all within its path, and it is important to analyze the engine and the parts that make it operate; however, *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* will look at the singular cow crying for her lost child in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the one lioness pacing in a circus cage in Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*, how the puma and the sky-terrier suffer differently from humankind's experiments in H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.

Additionally, *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* will explain how the examples of individuals being destroyed by the Anthropocene Engine do not happen in isolation. Their destruction is an example of the destruction happening at a larger global scale, and so shining a light on it aids in the study of the Anthropocene on both a micro and macro level. The cow forced onto a factory farm devoid of grass is devastating for the cow living a miserable life that will result in a gruesome death. Her suffering is her own, and yet her miserable experience is shared by millions of other cows throughout the world. It is a human condition to feel apathetic when we view large groups of beings that suffer. The mind can only comprehend so much pain and suffering before it refuses to acknowledge the scale. By acknowledging this pain and suffering resulting from human intervention is happening on the micro level, we can empathize with the pain and suffering of the cow's plight and begin thinking about our impact on cows at large. It is important to understand the massive engine, as well as the drops of fuel that keep the pistons rotating, which is why it is important to look at the effects of the Anthropocene on the individual level and how that outwardly projects to the effects on the planetary level.

### **Why Literature is Important for Animal Studies**

By analyzing literature, readers will see the value in grappling with the facts that animals are being exploited, ignored, murdered, etc. without acknowledgement of the suffering or damage they endure. Literature has always provided a lens to view the stories of those that are not regularly noticed by society (especially human culture) and this is not only limited to human stories.

Readers will notice that this dissertation (apart from *The Island of Doctor Moreau*) does not analyze novels/poems that are obvious for animal studies. *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* does not dwell on the obvious examples of stories like Virginia Woolf's *Flush*, or Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*; instead, this dissertation wants readers to understand that animal studies can be found in virtually any text as human culture always affects animals and they are reflections of the misuse/abuse of individuals at the hands of human progress (Anthropos). Throughout the history of literature animals have played important roles in the stories being told about human experiences, and the timeframe this dissertation focuses on is a transitional period in both human culture and the change in the animal landscape.

The fin de siècle through World War I saw the human world forced to change rapidly as the Industrial Revolution changed the use animals had for humans, and the Great War showcased the capabilities of human depravity. This time-period grapples with sentimentality and the fringe Others of society beginning to find their voices. Literature is a fertile ground for humans to glimpse the effects humans have on each other and the animals in their world. Sentimentality toward animals was condemned until the realization of shellshock changed how humans treated mental wellness and began to understand that loving another species is not a sign of weakness, but instead a sign of selflessness. By acknowledging the suffering of other species, authors such as Virginia Woolf, H.G. Wells, and Thomas Hardy teach lessons about their characters and the greater world around us. By acknowledging that human actions do not occur in a vacuum, but affect the world around us, including other animal species, we gain a greater holistic view of the world and the individuals that cause change and are affected by change.

This exploration of individuality will combat the generalization of every non-human animal under general categories such as: animalistic, savage, wild, etc. By using language and actions that group all nonhuman species into stereotypes and general classifications humans are participating in a term coined by Peter Singer, speciesism.

### **Speciesism**

Modern animal studies began with the publication of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* in 1975, which revealed how animal oppression and suffering can be seen in relation to racism and sexism. The same cultural biases that allow society to be racist and sexist exist in the oppression of animals through the form of speciesism;

Speciesism—the word is not an attractive one, but I can think of no better term—is prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species. It should be obvious that the fundamental objections to racism and sexism made by Thomas Jefferson and Sojourner Truth apply equally to speciesism. If possessing a higher degree of intelligence does not entitle one human to use another for his own ends, how can it entitle humans to exploit nonhumans for the same purpose? (Singer 29)

Speciesism exists in everyday life from medical experiments to the food system and everything in between. Singer's term changed the landscape for the way animal rights activists fight for the animals who suffer at the hands of humans. The chapters in this dissertation all grapple with the different ways in which humankind has participated in speciesism and the rare moments when a character dissolves the barriers separating human and animal and truly sympathize and understand the animal. Literature has a

power to reveal the depths of human compassion and understanding for the suffering of an animal that no other form (science, history, art, etc.) can accomplish. The invisible walls of speciesism dissipate in scenes where a human forgets that part of their humanity which makes them feel more important than the rest of the animal kingdom and stops to truly acknowledge the individual in front of them in pain physically and emotionally. It is this feeling of empathy that separates the humans who fight for animals, and those who do not.

Every human is a speciesist, from the factory farmer to the vegan, there is always an internal hierarchy in a human being. A self-proclaimed “animal lover” who still eats animal products chooses to ignore the suffering of farmed animals. Even vegans are speciesists, although they refrain from using animal products or products tested on animals, they still live a life that causes indirect harm to animals (housing, mass produced plant food, transportation, etc.). A vegan lives their life to cause the least amount of harm as possible but recognizes avoiding all harm completely is impossible. This dissertation is written by a vegan activist, and at times will have harsh criticisms for those who write about animals and do not look deep enough into the problems of speciesism. However, this not to say that all of the animal studies movement is forgetting to look closely enough at the animals themselves. A few good examples of looking closely at animals are Jonathan Balcombe *What a Fish Knows* (2016) that explores the many senses and relationships that fish species experience in their lifetimes, as fish are one of the least sympathized animals. Tony Weis *The Ecological Hoofprint: The Global Burden of Industrial Livestock* (2013) breaks down the history of animal agriculture and its effects on the environment, with a specific view of livestock. Hal Herzog *Some We love, Some*



*We Hate, Some We Eat: Why it's so Hard to Think Straight About Animals* (2011) analyzes the psychology behind why humans view/treat various animal groups differently. This book also delves into how there is very little difference between the species we love (pets), we eat (farmed animals) and we hate (vermin). Mathew Scully *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* (2002) is an eye-opening view of just how cruel humanity is toward animals and has been a very important book for the animal rights movement. The issue is that the movement at large misses the opportunity to better understand the animal's plight.

It is important to remember that each animal species is different, even when they are categorically similar. Big cat species have similarities, but even the ones who share the same territories have different habits. A lion's life differs greatly from a cheetah despite that they are both big cats who live in the African plains and hunt the same prey. Thus, when prominent animal studies scholars, such as Carrie Rohman, state that a character is repressing their "animality" there needs to be further discussion of just what animal that term is referring to. It is the hubris of humans to group the rest of the animal kingdom into one single word "animal." Every time an animal is used to explain or analyze literature, it is the critic's responsibility to analyze the scene, plot, character, etc. by looking at the animal as an individual and to understand the different ways that individual species are affected. Although "animality" is a common phrase used to describe a human losing their "humanity" it is a word that scholars should begin to reconsider just how it is used for analysis. It is speciesist to use this word, which implies that non-human animals are all grouped into one type of creature that has no morals or compassion. "Animality" is a destructive word for non-human animals because it implies

negative stereotypes of animals who appear to human eyes as mindless beasts that act on instinct rather than noble motivations of family and survival. Erica Fudge details how “Animals have virtue naturally, while humans are dangerously vicious; whereas animals fulfill their domestic duties without deliberation, human must be schooled to complete theirs” (Fudge 122). The examples of selfless duty in the animal kingdom are endless, and these are qualities not found in many humans, yet the term “animality” is used as an insult. “Animality” is speciesist and the animal studies movement should be condemning further use of the word in any sense and rather take the time to be specific toward the individual species they are referencing.

### **Losing our Connection to other Species**

Modern animal studies invented the term speciesism and realized just how detrimental humankind’s separation from animals was on society and nature. The most prominent animal studies examination of our separation from animals was written two years after Singer’s *Animal Liberation*; John Berger’s 1977 essay “Why Look at Animals?” criticizes human culture for moving too far away from animals through urbanization and anthropomorphism. Berger claims:

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, anthropomorphism was integral to the relation between man and animal and was an expression of their proximity. Anthropomorphism was the residue of continuous use of animal metaphor. In the last two centuries, animals have gradually disappeared. Today we live without them. And in this new solitude, anthropomorphism makes us doubly uneasy. (Berger 11)

How can humans realistically see animals as individuals if they are physically and culturally separated from them? Berger's condemnations are harsh, but they are true. Humans recognize farmed animals more by the products of their dead bodies than to the animal itself. The most common relationship a human has with an animal is the meat on their plate. A cow is more commonly experienced as a steak or a burger or a cup of milk, rather than a sentient, gentle, empathetic creature who experiences joy, sadness, fear, etc. Bovines are known to physically cry tears on the slaughterhouse line as they await their fate. Most humans who consume them do not know that, because they have never experienced the companionship of a cow/bull/steer. Animal studies must remember these separations that cause a gap of knowledge and empathy for the animals that are examined in literature. It is wrong to assume any reader can see the animal as an individual without being explicitly reminded what differentiates these animals from other species beyond their physical traits. Too often this recognition of animal sentience and individuality is taken for granted as the scholar tries to explain the use of an animal in literature. This presumption by the scholar leads the author to miss a critical importance in the use of an animal in literature.

### **Absent Referent**

Throughout animal studies' modern history, missing critical connections to other adjacent movements was commonplace. Peter Singer introduced the idea that animal rights can be studied and supported in conjunction with other human rights activism, such as race, sexuality, and feminism. When Carol Adams published *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* in 1990 she showed what a study of animal rights alongside feminism should look like and changed the animal studies landscape.

Adams' analyses reveal how society's abusive tendencies harm women and animals alike by implementing real-life examples of abuse toward animals and women and how the male dominated society treats both types of abuse nearly identically. Adams demands that her readers no longer see the cultural violence against animals as something that happens in isolation, but instead see it as a sign that the male dominated human culture teaches humans that it is acceptable to abuse those who are not at the top of the male hierarchy. Adams coined the term "absent referent" to explain just how society hides their atrocities to make them more palatable for the general public:

Animals are made absent through language that renames dead bodies before consumers participate in eating them. Our culture further mystifies the term "meat" with gastronomic language, so we do not conjure dead, butchered animals, but cuisine. Language that contributes even further to animals' absences. While the cultural meaning of meat and meat eating shift historically, one essential part of meat's meaning is static: One does not eat meat without the death of an animal. Live animals are thus the absent referents in the concept of meat. The absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present. (Adams 21)

Adams further explains how the absent referent of "meat" is regularly used in abuse and rape victims who feel like pieces of meat as a result of the way they are treated by their attackers. When a person or animal is redefined by a societal construct such as the word "meat" that individual loses all distinction and is seen less as a victim and more as a product. This redefinition of the absent referent cannot be overstated. Being viewed as a

product, rather than as a victim, implies that society is going to consume you. Instead of maintaining their identity, the victim is just another piece of matter chewed up by the cultural machine that wants to lessen the crime in order to move on with little guilt. Adams explains how society creates absent referents to hide from their atrocities against women and animals. It is easier to sit down to dinner and consume a hamburger rather than call it what it really is: ground up bovine flesh.

In a work written four years after *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams warns that society's penchant to redefine victims as absent referents has catastrophic effects. Adams gives examples of how the abortion debate coincides with the danger of absent referents:

A similar process of decontextualizing the fetus occurs. Whereas animals in most people's imaginations are only body, the fetus has been disembodied, floating as though in space and not at all dependent on a woman's body for sustenance...If any "individuality" is referred to by the antiabortion side, it is that of the aborted fetus. The claims of the fetus are often articulated as though they exist in a moral vacuum, detached from any individual woman." (Adams 58-9)

The abortion debate separates the mother from the fetus to fit the need of the pro-life crowd who only recognize the fetus as important in the pregnancy process and is thus the only life that is worth noting as an individual. The woman carrying the fetus is no longer seen as an individual mother, but rather as a vessel whom the fetus travels inside.

Removing/ignoring one's individuality is damaging for any living creature's ability to garner respect, decency, life, and so on... Humans are far less likely to empathize with a victim who is seen as part of some homogeneous group with no

identity. Humans may have an easier time sympathizing with animal species classified as mammals, but still have a hard time empathizing with lesser understood animal species in the insect, mollusk, or rodent categories (to name a few). Just because humans cannot understand these species as well as canines or bovines, does not mean they do not deserve our sympathy. All animal species have a central nervous system, and therefore they feel pain and can suffer. That is enough for humans to grant them the ability to live in peace without unjust harm. It will be harder for humans to recognize these lesser-understood groups as individuals, but the fact that they can thrive and/or suffer is enough to allow them to be recognized as individuals. The oyster that is unluckily plucked and eaten suffers while the one left alone in the sea can thrive.

It is not just animals at stake in a culture of non-identity, but humans as well; particularly, humans who live on the fringes of society based on their race, gender, sexuality, or class. When society redefines a person as someone who does not fit in with the cultural norm, they lose their individuality and instead are defined by what makes them different and are accordingly ostracized. Humans use language and naming as an influential tool to keep themselves in positions of power over those who are vulnerable and lack the strength and/or tools to defend themselves.

### **The Power of Naming**

Jacques Derrida shifted the modern view of humankind's power over animals by calling attention to humans' use of the word "animal." "The animal is a word, it is an appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves the right and the authority to give to the living other" (Derrida 23). Humans defined animals by one single word, and thus created a power structure through language that non-human animals can

never combat. In this one instance they did irreparable damage to humankind's ability to see animals as individuals. Humans further their hubris to culturally exclude themselves from the billions of species who make up the animal kingdom under the definition of animal and create another separation through language. Human's history and present are suffering from ignoring the animals themselves and just looking at them as non-humans not worthy of being looked at separately from each other, or at the very least, based on their species. Humans are not seeing the animals; they are simply looking past them at the larger structure without understanding the smaller pieces that are continuously building the animal kingdom.

Derrida questions the philosophers who came before him as to whether they observed the animals they analyzed and defined in their own words: "The experience of the seeing animal, of the animal that looks at them, has not been taken into account in the philosophical or theoretical architecture of their discourse. In sum they have denied it as much as misunderstood it" (Derrida 14). It is a common human failing to ignore or deny that which one does not understand. Humans must try to understand animals based on physical and vocal cues that are observable in every species. Without granting animals this basic courtesy, a human will never be able to see them as individuals who relate their experiences to us without human speech.

After granting an animal the acknowledgment that their actions will be observed, humans must then recognize the traits and patterns common in the species being observed. This is where the term "animality" begins to fall apart as the species must be considered every time an animal is observed or referenced. Two different species put into

a similar situation will behave differently based on their common traits. Even similar species of domestic dogs and wolves will react differently to the same puzzle.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Privileged Species**

Humans give all non-human species less acknowledgement to their individual needs and pains, than they do fellow humans; but some animal species are treated with more respect and acknowledgment than others. In the hierarchy of the animal kingdom, humans have privileged some species over the rest. Some examples of privileged animals are those who garner more sympathy and a willingness to understand their plights. These animals include: elephants, dolphins, lions, gorillas, horses, to name a few. No single animal species represents the privileged status more than the domestic dog. Donna Haraway's groundbreaking study *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, answers the question of how dogs managed to stay at the right hand of humankind for nearly all recorded history.

There is a co-dependent relationship between dogs and humans throughout history. Dogs aided humans in hunting for food, and humans provided protection from nature and (more importantly) other humans. Haraway's work is so powerful because she explains the privilege of dogs through the lens of what dogs have done to maintain their spot just below humans in the animal kingdom. Instead of writing a history of how dogs should be grateful for all the things humans did for them, Haraway credits the canines for their adaptiveness to remain alongside humans; "The Companion Species Manifesto' is thus about the implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historical specific, joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in significant otherness." (Haraway 108).

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<sup>3</sup> In chapter 3 there is a discussion of an experiment that shows how domestic dogs will give up on a puzzle and look for the aid of a human, whereas a wolf will not look for human aid.



According to Haraway, emphasizing that dogs are willing partners in humankind's crimes, allows them to remain by humans' side: "Dogs are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with. Partners in the crime of human evolution, they are in the garden from the get-go, wily as a Coyote" (Haraway 98). This co-evolution with humans has afforded a "specific kind of freedom for dogs possible; i.e., the freedom to live safely in multispecies, urban and sub-urban environments with very little physical restraint and no corporal punishment while getting to play a demanding sport with every evidence of self-actualizing motivation" (Haraway 138). Dogs have lived throughout human history and their abilities to be useful to humans is what has created a special bond between the two species.

Dogs garner attention throughout this dissertation due to their privileged status, which is important to study when considering why humans lack attention for nearly every other animal species. Dogs are the most common Western pet and have a vast history in human development. Many scholars and readers will be able to relate to sentimentality toward a dog, and this dissertation will showcase how the only difference in how we treat a dog compared to any other species is merely perception. Dogs are not the only animals that are loyal, smart, easily domesticated, and useful for humans. Yet, they are the only ones perceived this way by majority of humans. By analyzing the changing landscape in sympathy toward dogs in the fin de siècle 19<sup>th</sup> century through the late 1930s *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* will unveil how dogs are often spared from the Anthropocene Engine, and how human understanding and sympathy for animals begins with the dog.

Dogs' loyalties to humans have afforded them a privileged status, and their adaptability has also paved the way for this privilege. No other animal could adapt to the changes brought on by human evolution as thoroughly as dogs. Dogs have aided humans as hunters, soldiers, farmers, and companions for tens of thousands of years. No matter what change was brought on by humans or the Anthropocene, dogs have adapted and thrived. Haraway credits dogs as a species for remaining alongside humans throughout all the changes. That is an important distinction, and one that is missed by nearly every scholar when writing about animals. To realize their individuality, we must remove our human hubris, and recognize that non-human animal species are sentient creatures who think and feel for themselves. Any action or reaction toward humankind belongs to the individual animal, and humans have no control<sup>4</sup> over the ways they think and feel. It is arrogant to believe that an animal will change their way of life to suit a human's needs.

Throughout the chapters in *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*, I will credit certain authors such as Hardy for recognizing the plight of a dairy cow and Barnes for truly taking the time to understand the pain one lioness endures in a circus. These authors use their ability to give animals a moment of individuality and how their choice to grant this individuality aids in the understanding of their human characters' plights, while other authors and scholars will be criticized for only looking at the animals on the surface and choosing to use human biases to skate by in their interpretations. In this dissertation there are specific categories of animal species being analyzed throughout the chapters and they will all be analyzed with respect to their individuality: farmed animals, exotic animals, privileged species, captured animals. Each category also brings with it the human Other

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<sup>4</sup> Humans can certainly influence the way an animal thinks and feels, but they cannot control their thoughts.

connection and why it is important to look at these stories in relation to human suffering and inequalities.

### **Farmed Animals**

In Chapter 1, titled “Farmed Animals,” the misunderstood pain and torment of the animals used in the human food system will be analyzed in comparison to the mistreatment and cultural lack of empathy for female victims of male abuse. Dairy cows are valuable to analyze for at least two reasons: first, they are misconstrued to have a more favorable life as farmed animals, because the public does not understand they are victims of forcible impregnation and ultimately end up on the slaughter floor. Secondly, the dairy cow’s loss of her child within two weeks of giving birth is not a well-known fact and is relatable to the suffering that Tess undergoes in Thomas Hardy’s novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Tess’s rape at the hands of Alec, and the pregnancy and child loss that follows, are treated eerily similarly to that of the dairy cows. Tess finds no sympathy amongst her fellow humans, even when her son is dying and all she wants is a Christian baptism for him. There is a distinction between a farm animal and a farmed animal in that the species are the same, but their treatment and purpose for humans are different. The farmed animals are the 99% of farm animals who suffer at the hands of human agriculture, and in this chapter the dairy cow will be the focus of the analysis. Through analyzing the history of English farming practices, and the comparable language used to disempower women and farmed animals via Carol Adams’ works, we find that Tess can be better understood and empathized with when looking at the silent suffering of her life and its reflection of farming practices in the dairy industry.

### Exotic Animals

The following chapter, “Exotic Animals,” compares the critical reception of H.G. Wells’ *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* to showcase what the animal studies movement is missing. Wells’ novel has aged far better than Conrad’s as Wells was ahead of his time with how he looked at vivisection and his choice to make the animal the victim of the story, rather than a vulnerable female human—which was the common vivisection novel victim in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. While Conrad’s choice to write a purposefully ambiguous novel that centers around the ivory trade, yet never once recognizes the source of the ivory (elephants). *Heart of Darkness* is a racist novel as Conrad’s ambiguous prose never takes the time to examine the personal suffering of the African person. *Heart of Darkness* is also a speciesist novel as he never acknowledges the suffering of elephants, even though writers before him were publishing articles and books about the cruelty behind ivory. The suffering of foreigners (humans and exotic animals) is absent from the narrative in most cases, while in the rare cases where Conrad describes the suffering of an African, he does not acknowledge their individuality. The readers can never fully immerse themselves in the pain caused by the imperialists, as Conrad’s ambiguous writing style keeps readers from empathizing with the victims.

In contrast with Conrad’s style, H.G. Wells’ *The Island of Doctor Moreau* explores the suffering of animals subjected to human medical experimentation (vivisection). Wells reveals the callous toxic masculine treatment of animal suffering, through Prendick’s inaction in response to the Puma’s screams. The novella describes the beast people as individuals through their actions. While the novella does not give the

individual beast people names, Wells makes it clear that each species adapts to the experiments in unique ways that are consistent with the way that species acts in the wild and/or in domesticity. The Ape-man acts differently than the puma, and the dog species acts differently than both. Wells understood the importance of showing how each animal species is affected by human intervention. This is an aspect of Wells' novella that virtually no scholars acknowledge, and that is a reason why this novella should be looked at by animal studies scholars. Instead of only analyzing the novella as a warning tale of humankind's hubris, scholars need to look at the novella as a landmark work in the acknowledgement that animals are individuals and when we treat them as such, there is much more we can learn about humans and animals.

### **Privileged Animals**

Chapter 3, "Privileged Animals," examines T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* for their commentaries on World War I, shellshock, and the ways in which society and science treated mental illness. The animal species examined in this chapter about privilege will be dogs and birds. Both Eliot and Woolf make use of these animals in their respective works. T.S. Eliot's poem is the sole poem in the dissertation. *The Waste Land* is employed here due to its cultural significance in the Anthropocene as well as being a critical text for the writings around WWI and shellshock. The poem analyzes the effects of WWI and how it made humankind reconsider the capacities of its friends. The ending lines of Part I "The Burial of the Dead" sees Eliot change a John Webster line from a wolf to a dog to reveal that humans can no longer trust its closest friend. Man's best friend betrays its human by digging up

the bones of the past and making humankind relive its trauma. Eliot's choice to change the wolf to a dog speaks volumes for the way we read those final lines. This noun change increases the fear that humans cannot trust their closest friends, and that danger is no longer outside in the wilds, danger is within the home. Despite the vast array of scholarly work on *The Waste Land* this word change is not acknowledged for the importance of changing the species from wolf to dog. The animal studies approach cannot just focus on the ecological symbolism that is prevalent throughout the poem but must also read into the small change Eliot makes here and just how important it is to way we interpret his lines. Virginia Woolf makes use of dogs throughout her novel as an example of their privileged status and the way they reflect Clarissa and Elizabeth's lifestyles that allow them to live a life of luxury without the pain and stress that comes with a lack of money and status. However, there is one scene involving a dog that no scholars give much credence toward. In a flashback scene told by Peter Walsh, we see Richard Dalloway mend Clarissa's injured dog. This scene showcases all the good qualities of Richard<sup>5</sup> in the way he bucks societal expectations that men should lack sentimentality. Richard even reveals that he is not above treating the dog as an equal in a situation where the dog is experiencing physical pain that does not separate the two species.

Eliot and Woolf also make use of birds throughout their works. Eliot provides bird symbolism in "A Game of Chess" where a nightingale sings a song of hope throughout the desert. In the poem no one is there to hear it, but Eliot shows readers that hope still exists in desolate places, so long as we are ready to hear it. The connection between this moment and war is that birdsong was commonly employed to lift the spirits

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<sup>5</sup> The chapter does not only describe Richard as a chivalrous person, as the chapter also points out the ways in which Richard purposefully keeps Clarissa and Elizabeth from climbing the socio/political ladders.

of soldiers and citizens alike. Through both World Wars, local radio stations in England would play birdsong each night to help with the stress of the day (Guida, Michael). The animal studies importance is just how humans can find comfort in the simple actions of the animals we share our planet with. In *Mrs. Dalloway* birds are incredibly important at the end of the novel regarding Septimus' suicide and Clarissa's reaction. Septimus sees himself as a hawk under the protection of a hen (Rezia) and when that protection is not enough to save him from the doctors, he commits suicide. By contrast, Clarissa sees herself as a songbird who can crouch by Richard and revive herself from the world outside and realizes that this must have been missing from the life of the young man who killed himself. The novel recognizes that Clarissa has a privileged man to protect her from men such as doctors Bradshaw and Holmes, whereas Septimus has no protection from the intolerable life brought on by the men of science. Rezia, being a little hen, has no power to stop these men from driving Septimus to suicide. Clarissa has Richard to protect her when the world outside becomes too harsh. Donna Haraway's pivotal work *The Companion Species Manifesto* and her more recent essay, "The Anthropocene and its Discontents: Toward Chthulucene?" help to explain the human reaction to dogs and how the Anthropocene's definition is problematic and may need a change in title such as Chthulucene.

### **Performing Animals**

The final chapter, "Performing Animals" looks at Djuna Barnes' novel *Nightwood* and examines the way otherness is put on display for the common people that make up societal norms. Following the examples set by John Berger's essay "Why Look at Animals" that details the misuse of animals in captivity (Primarily zoos) and

humankind's loss of kinship with animals due to their separation, we see a more profound way to examine the animals in the novel. The scene that carries significantly more weight after considering the animal as an individual is the lioness at the circus who shares a painful glance with Robin. Barnes treats this lioness scene with care, and her acknowledgement of the lioness and her pain as an individual is not given the credit it deserves. By studying the scene with this acknowledgement, we can see that it mirrors Robin's torment as a nonheteronormative woman who does not fit in with the world enclosed around her. Robin and the lioness are victims of the Anthropocene Engine that pushes toward systemized progress and pushes those who do not meet the status-quo to the fringes. These fringed individuals are reduced to sources of entertainment for the general population. In this novel about Others, Barnes takes care to treat the animals in the story with respect and shows just how that respect toward animals is ostracized (Guido Jr.) or completely misunderstood/ignored (lioness). The people living on the fringes of society are not treated as a threat, so long as they stay in the shadows; instead, they are treated as sources of perverse interest for the common people to view how the fringe lives.

### **Moving Forward**

Writings about animals tend to reframe an animal's actions to fit the narrative or point the author is trying to prove. This is not something that is specific to animal studies, but what is often forgotten in the writings about animals, is what impact our reframing has on a species that cannot defend itself through language. An animal who is misinterpreted, cannot correct a human, because the power of language strictly belongs to humans. These misinterpretations lead to unfair biases and stereotypes about animals who



are being analyzed while under duress. Very often an animal is labelled as aggressive because the human analyzing the individual sees it in an unnatural predicament that is the direct result of human intervention.

The use of language to speak on behalf of the animal subject is a responsibility which most humans ignore. To forget or ignore the fact that these animals are individuals causes misinterpretations which stem from a lack of understanding of the way specific animals will react to certain situations like how the wolf and the domestic dog problem solve. Animal studies needs to move forward and away from these surface level analyses of animals and recognize the complexity of the individuals being victimized by human intervention. With a better understanding of how animals suffer, animal studies can truly incorporate their struggles with the struggles of fellow humans in the same vein that Singer invented the term speciesism, Adams thought up “absent referent” and Derrida recognized how we weaponized our ability to use language against the rest of the animal kingdom.

## Farmed Animals

### *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and the Omission of Suffering

“The question is not, Can they reason?, nor Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?

Why should the law refuse its protection to any sensitive being?” –Jeremy Bentham

The English Philosopher, Jeremy Bentham first posed this question in 1789 and in 2021 animal rights activists, such as Peter Singer, are still repeating this question to those that are not aware of the suffering of those around them. This quote is not just influential in modern animal rights activism but was a quote that Thomas Hardy himself thought about when he observed the suffering of non-humans. Hardy Scholar, Anna West describes his relation to Bentham’s quote through the explanation that “Hardy’s novels are filled with suffering, and it is in the scenes of suffering that the neutral space created by the word ‘creature’ as he zooms in and out on the figures in the landscape becomes electrically charged” (West 129). West’s analysis of Hardy and suffering centers around animals and women that are physically harmed and/or killed, and how suffering is universal to all living things, not just humans. No animal throughout human history has been more exploited, punished, killed, abused, and ignored than the farmed animal. These are the animals that ultimately end up on a human’s plate, or as the material used for their clothes, furniture, etc. West’s criticism of Hardy does put focus on farmed animals, such as the slaughtered pigs in *Jude the Obscure*, but West falls into the same trap as many that focus solely on the farmed animals that are raised for their meat, she forgets about the animals abused for their reproductive systems.

Chapter 1 will focus on one farmed animal in particular, the dairy cow, and unveil how the use of these animals in Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is a reflection

of Tess's story of suffering throughout the novel. In order to understand Tess's struggles throughout the story, Hardy's novel showcases an inherent rape culture (which is expanded upon by the male-female double standards) and the indifference to suffering common in Victorian society. The rape-culture explored in this chapter centers around the way Victorian men preyed upon docile women and how this is one of the symptoms of human depravity that makes possible the reality of exploiting weaker beings that is seen throughout farming practices. The discussion of indifference reveals how human society is full of pragmatic apathy toward women and cows. Tess is a victim of suffering that is ignored by the way in which Hardy omits the entire timeline between the rape and when Tess has already given birth to her son, Sorrow. The omission of this time period where Tess was pregnant, reflects the indifference (also ignorance) of the state of dairy cows not only in the novel, but in public conception throughout the last two and a half centuries. Lastly, the double-standard Tess is subjected to throughout the novel stems from her rape by Alec d'Urberville and the guilt Tess feels because she is no longer a virgin. She must carry this burden as if she was the attacker and not the victim because of the cultural bias of the "pure woman." It is her experiences as a rape victim and losing her child that allows Tess to empathize with the plight of the dairy cows later in the novel, when she observes them getting ready to give birth and subsequently lose their children to common farming practices. She sees the cows as sentient creatures just trying to survive in this harsh world of dominion. She sees them as individuals before they become just another piece of matter chewed up by the Anthropocene Engine. Chapter 1 spotlights the exploitation and suffering that Tess endured because of her gender, which reflect the issues of the Victorian era and even the modern era of how humans have

selective empathy for the types of suffering women endure. This selective empathy is the first example of the Anthropocene Engine<sup>6</sup> and the prominent example that no animal (human or non) will be spared in society's expansion.

Writings about the Anthropocene focus on the changes to the environment brought on by human invention; obviously, Hardy's lifetime is in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and this is one of the epochs that scholars of the Anthropos focus on as the beginning of the Anthropocene or at the very least a major factor in its growth. While the technological advancements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are a major factor in changes to nature, these are usually explored on a grand scale. This dissertation, *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*, is focused on the individual that is shaped and/or destroyed by the Anthropocene. Looking through the massive lens of Anthropocene, humans easily overlook the individuals chewed up by the changes in the world. This chapter will showcase that the changes to the way animals (specifically farmed animals) transformed dramatically in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in large part due to the urbanization made possible by the Industrial Revolution, that resulted in humans becoming much more distant (literally and metaphorically) from the animals that are used as food. Jacques Derrida, Carol Adams, Harriett Ritvo, Matthew Scully, and John Berger all recognize that Hardy's time period was the beginning of seeing farmed animals more as the products they become, rather than the animals they are. Adams and Derrida dissect the change of language and the disempowering effect of defining an animal's purpose through words such as "meat" or "leather" and how that noun change affects humans' relationships with farmed animals.

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<sup>6</sup> As discussed in the introduction, The Anthropocene Engine is an exploration of the Anthropocene that is not discussed often enough. The Anthropocene Engine recognizes the individual animals that are chewed up and destroyed by the Anthropocene. While epochs deal in massive scopes, it is important to recognize the smaller parts of the epoch to fully comprehend the damage of the changes brought on by human intervention, ingenuity, greed, etc.

Adams showcases the language barrier through the exploration of “absent referents” while Derrida explores the use of names in human language to disempower non-humans. This power of language enables a rape-culture that makes it acceptable to promote double standards that fail to see women and dairy cows as victims. Society does not want to be burdened with the thoughts of Others’ sufferings<sup>7</sup> and would rather distance themselves through forgetting (how the Londoners forget where their milk comes from) or through cultural biases of purity. Suffering is overlooked and surrounded by an apathetic world of humans that want to move forward without the burden of caring about the weak, docile, or dominated. It is through a human apathy and ignorance about the suffering of the weak, docile, and dominated that allows societies throughout history to destroy the individual rather than listen to their “sobbing, groaning, praying, and cursing” (Hardy loc. 4685). Hardy criticizes this human apathy throughout the novel by the way he focuses on Tess’s misguided feelings of guilt by contrasting it with the male apathy shown to her throughout the novel. Many readers feel even more sympathy toward Tess through the actions of the Alec, Angel Clare, and the vicar as all three men are unsympathetic to her plight at different moments in the novel.

Selective empathy comes into play for both women’s suffering and farmed animal suffering throughout the chapter, but they are not a 1:1 comparison. As mentioned in the introduction, there will be moments when an animal’s suffering is compared to a human’s suffering throughout *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*, but it must be reinforced, in this chapter in particular, that the suffering of a human is vastly different than the suffering of an animal, specifically on the emotional spectrum. Topics covered in this chapter involving rape, the loss of a child, pregnancy, and lactating will all involve

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<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, the Other refers to women and farmed animals

discussions of animals and humans at the same time. The physical suffering will be the only time these comparisons will come close to each other, as there is no way to truly know how much or how little animals suffer emotionally from these events in their lives. Humans have more context in the suffering of fellow humans, but even in those cases, no one truly knows the full emotional pain except for the individual who suffers. However, there is an interconnectedness of the cultural mentality that leads to humans ignoring the suffering of their fellow humans and farmed animals. Therefore, it is important that this chapter begin by outlining the plight of the farmed animal, to give as much context as possible before entering the discussions of more delicate topics.

### **A Road is Paved to Factory Farming**

Thomas Hardy wrote *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* during a transitional time in agriculture, as factory farming was not a method of farming in the Late Victorian era, but the paths to that form of industrialization were being forged. The first step toward that form of farming are seen in *Tess* through the fast production of food that is fed to livestock. Briefly in *Tess* the readers see a machine thresher that is being used on the corn crops and Hardy notes the disparity of this machine with agriculture;

A little way off there was another indistinct figure; this one black, with a sustained hiss that spoke of strength very much in reserve. The long chimney running up beside an ash-tree, and the warmth which radiated from the spot, explained without the necessity of much daylight that here was the engine which was to act as the premium mobile of this little world. By the engine stood a dark, motionless being, a sooty and grimy embodiment of tallness, in a sort of trance...it was the engine man...He

was in the agricultural world, but not of it. He served fire and smoke; these denizens of the fields served vegetation, weather, frost, and sun. He travelled with his engine from farm to farm, from country to country, for as yet the steam threshing-machine was itinerant in this part of Wessex.

(Hardy 7557)

Engines such as this created the ability to harvest tremendous amounts of vegetables that were not possible before the invention of the steam engine. The Industrial Revolution did not immediately impact animal agriculture, but machines such as these made it possible for farms to feed more livestock than they ever could in the past. No longer would farms, such as Talbothays, require the grazing land for cattle to be properly fed to produce milk. This also made it possible to overfeed animals being bred for meat, so that they could be slaughtered earlier in their already short lives.

Many humans do not realize that “Globally, livestock consume around one third of all grains and a much higher share of oilseeds...with much usable nutrition lost in the metabolic process of animals before getting converted to meat, eggs, and dairy.” (Weis 4). In Hardy’s time, livestock were not plentiful enough to be consuming 1/3 of grains produced, but this is an example of just how much food it takes to sustain animal agriculture, and in the late Victorian period, livestock production was already beginning to grow past capacity causing a strain on land and farmed animals. The steam engine was a source of industrial pride for English people and Harriet Ritvo emphasizes that during this period in England, mass farming was also a source of pride and began the factory farming strategies employed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries:

According to one analyst in 1840, that 22 million French agricultural laborers working 40 million hectares produced only 40,000 horses, 800,000 oxen, and 5,200,000 sheep annually. While 5 million British farm workers with only 13 million hectares produced 170,000 horses, 1,200,000 oxen, and 10,200,000 sheep. (Ritvo 80)

The English would boast about their "efficient" farming methods of cramming as many living bodies on as little land as possible. The sheer number of animals on these plots of land showcase how many lives were being farmed with very little regard for their worth as sentient creatures. These numbers would not be possible without a fast and cheap method of harvesting grains for the livestock to eat. Another alternative benefit of this mass food production for livestock is that it helps to avoid tedious and wasteful farming time that accompanies grazing livestock. In the novel, Hardy's narrator describes an entire day wasted at Talbothays because one cow ate a shoot of garlic:

With eyes fixed upon the ground they crept slowly across a strip of field, returning a little further down in such a manner that, when they should have finished, not a single inch of the pasture but would have fallen under the eye of some of them. It was a most tedious business, not more than half a dozen shoots of garlic being discoverable in the whole field; yet such was the pungency that probably one bite of it by one cow had been sufficient to season the whole dairy's produce for the day. (Hardy 3224)

The loss of work for an entire farm for a day, plus the amount of dairy that needed to be discarded just because one cow ate one shoot of garlic would make any farmer want to forego the pasture and just resort to feed troughs of cheap grain.



The steam engine being used in England was a reason that English farmers could be proud of the limited amount of space they required to raise significantly more livestock than their French counterparts. This was not due to some revelation in grazing or animal care, it was simply due to replacing natural methods of sustainability for the livestock (grazing and fresh water sources) with cheap and quickly produced food sources of grain and oilseed that replaced both the nutritional benefits of grass for the cows, but also the happiness of grazing in a field. It is not just their natural environment humans are taking away from the animals when they shift to more efficient feeding practices; humans are taking away the simple pleasures that these animals enjoy: grazing, sunlight, interacting with their fellow animals. The more animals that farmers fit on their limited land, the less quality of life the animals are afforded. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the first significant jump in agricultural production that only dramatically accelerated in the following century; “Agricultural production doubled between 1820 and 1920” (Scully 29). Before the Industrial Revolution, farming productions were fairly stagnant as there was no way to trade the products over great distances, therefore “agricultural societies were predominantly oriented within bioregions, bound by limits of technology, surpluses, storage, and usable biomass” (Weis 14). Farming “efficiency” is only designed to make the lives of the farmer, or more appropriately the farm owner, easier. Efficiency was never designed to make the life of the farmed animal any easier, and as humans developed ways to be less reliant on natural feeding methods for the farmed animals, these victims became even more exploited and abused. Specifically looking at dairy cows, there are a number ways in which efficiency targets these animals and how the narrative around their reproduction is hidden from society.

Majority of humans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not realize that milk comes from pregnant animals, (much the same as the Londoners in *Tess* do not realize all of the efforts the dairy farms have to undergo just to get dairy products to their tables on time) which is a sad truth about how much the public has learned about farmed animals since we migrated to cities and stopped farming our own food. Many animal rights activists that abstain from eating meat, still believe it is morally acceptable to consume dairy products. Matthew Scully even comments that “using milk and wool and the like is perfectly acceptable provided they and their young are treated humanely, as they are on smaller farms.” (Scully 28). However, what Scully and others of like mind miss is that dairy is never without a victim, no matter how small or “humanely” the farm operates. At least two victims occur in every glass of milk, the mother forcibly impregnated (penetrated by bull or artificially inseminated by a farmer) and the calf deprived of its mother’s milk. If that calf is unlucky enough to be a male, he is shipped off to a veal farm and chained to a pole with barely enough room to stand up in order to keep its flesh tender. The mother does not willingly give up her baby to the farmer. Many leaked videos have come to the public’s attention of dairy cows fighting farmers and chasing after the cart or vehicle that is taking her child away from her all so that her milk can go to human consumers.<sup>8</sup> It is reasons such as these listed above that have caused animal rights and feminist activists to have a large intersection with the dairy industry. The popular term “Not your mom, not your milk” has grown over the last twenty years, particularly with feminists.

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<sup>8</sup> For further reference, <https://animalequality.org/issues/dairy/> provides a concise explanation of the horrors of the dairy industry.

Feminism and animal rights activists have exposed a tremendous amount of interconnectedness between animal agriculture and female oppression. Carol Adams is perhaps the most influential author beginning with her seminal book *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* where she analyzes the similarities between the way humans speak about animals, meat, and women. Adams introduces the term “absent referent” to begin to bridge the gap between animal oppression and female oppression:

Through butchering, animals become absent referents. Animals in name and body are made absent *as animals* for meat to exist. Animals’ lives precede and enable the existence of meat. If animals are alive they cannot be meat. Thus a dead body replaces the live animal...The absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present. (Adams 20-21)

Humans rename the animal after it has been butchered to terms such as: meat, veal, pork, beef, dairy; even terms that don’t seem to replace the animal, still change the view (chicken wings instead of chicken’s wing and leg of lamb instead of lamb’s leg). The animal no longer exists in the language of food, thus they become absent referents as an attempt to distance the human from the animal.

According to Derrida, humans have a long history of usurping weaker beings through the tyranny of words. Humankind’s use of language is one of the ways they seek to control animals; “The animal is a word, it is an appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves the right and the authority to give to the living other” (Derrida 23). Before humans employed absent referents to redefine certain animals, they

usurped the animal's power of naming with the use of words. This power of naming would seem to be a minor thing because animals do not realize humans have taken the power of naming away from them; but when one considers the power words and names have in human culture, they can see just how powerless animals can become just by their names. Animals are culturally defined by the labels they are given: dogs are pets, mice are pests, pigs are food. All these animals can peacefully coexist with humans, yet only one is given the benefit of the doubt in human culture simply by their category. The power of naming is a human power that defines an animal before it is given a chance to prove itself.

In particular for this chapter, Derrida also examines the way human words have redefined animals over the last two centuries:

It is all too evident in the course of the last two centuries these traditional forms of treatment of the animal have been turned upside down by the joint developments of zoological, ethological, biological, and genetic forms of knowledge, which remain inseparable from techniques of intervention into their object, from the transformation of the actual object, and from the milieu and world of their object, namely, the living animal.

This has occurred by means of farming and regimentalization at a demographic level unknown in the past, by means of genetic experimentation, the industrialization of what can be called the production for consumption of animal meat.” (Derrida 24-5)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> I believe Derrida missed an even larger argument here with the choice of the word “meat” at the end of this quote. “Products” would be more a more accurate word in order to include skin, eggs, and dairy, which are subject to the same abuses Derrida is addressing.

The use of language to move humans farther away from the farmed animal through the use of absent referents is a new aspect in the millennia-old history of farming. Beginning in the Victorian era, humans lose contact with the animals they consume, first through urbanization and then through the names used to describe the animals. When humans are no longer exposed to the animals that end up on their dinner table, they lose perspective of these animals in life. Pigs, cows, and sheep (to name a few) lose all power as living beings when humans lose contact with them and simply know them by name. In the last two-hundred years the name of the products these animals create is more familiar to humans than the actual animals themselves. Farmed animals always had a lack of power throughout human history; but beginning in the Victorian era they lost almost all of their power through human distance and rhetoric. Humans (especially the ones that profit from animal products) abuse their power over farmed animals by making them more familiar by their absent referents than their actual names. Humans disempowered farmed animals by hiding and ignoring the abuses they suffered. This ability to weaken those that are virtually powerless is used to manipulate humans as well when considering the ways naming and language are used to diminish the power of a word through the tactic of absent referent.

### **Rape-Culture**

Adams continues to draw the connection of absent referents for animals to women as she discusses true accounts of battered and raped victims that confess they “felt like a piece of meat” Adams explains; “meat’s meaning does not refer to itself but to how a

woman victimized by male violence felt” (Derrida 21). The language of the oppressor<sup>10</sup> is being used by the oppressed to explain the terrible way these women were treated by their attackers. The important link is that the assault makes these women view themselves as being diminished and exploited for their body parts. Just as meat is only a portion of the animal’s actual body that the human desires, so too are these rape victims reduced to specific body parts by their attackers.

There is a sad connection when examining how human language has also transformed rape into an absent referent, as Adams points out:

Rape, in particular, carries such potent imagery that the term is transferred from the literal experience of women and applied metaphorically to other instances of violent devastation, such as the “rape” of the earth in ecological writings...The experience of women thus becomes a vehicle for describing other oppressions. Women, upon whose bodies actual rape is most often committed, become the absent referent when the language of sexual violence is used metaphorically. These terms recall women’s experiences but not women. (Adams *Beast* 22)

Even in the case of one of the most horrible crimes a human can commit, the word rape has its impact reduced by using it as a metaphor. People victimized by the heinous act of rape become the absent referents when humans use the verb to describe other actions that don’t involve sexual violence. Rape is already something that people do not like to talk about, and many rapes go unreported because the victims are afraid to talk about what happened to them. Tess herself is a victim of rape that is terrified to tell anyone about her

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<sup>10</sup> The arrogant male eye, as Adams puts it in *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals*. Continuum, 1994.

experience. Tess is justified in her fear of speaking out about being raped (although the word rape is never actually used in the novel, see below) when she tells her mother about what happened. Her mother responds with frustration about Tess not forcing Alec d'Urberville to marry her and continuing to make her feel worse by claiming:

“It would have been something like a story to come back with, if you had!” continued Mrs. Durbeyfield, ready to burst into tears of vexation. “After all the talk about you and him which has reached us here, who would have expected it to end like this! Why didn’t ye think of doing some good for your family instead o’ thinking only of yourself? See how I’ve got to teave and slave, and your por weak father with his heart clogged like a dripping pan. I did hope for something to come out o’ this! To see what a pretty pair you made that day when you drove away together four moths ago! See what he has given us—all, as we thought, it must have been done because of his love for ‘ee. And yet you’ve not got him to marry!” (Hardy 1997)

Not only does Tess have to endure being a victim of rape, but she has to endure the cultural backlash of ignoring the violating act of Alec in leu of seeing this as an opportunity to marry the man that took her virginity. The word rape is not just an absent referent in *Tess*, it is completely absent from the minds of every character, including Tess. While there was a debate by literary scholars as to whether Alec actually raped Tess or there was consent<sup>11</sup> from Tess; when Hardy wrote *Tess* most of his readers would not have seen this as a violent sexual act. This ambiguity about the heinousness of Alec’s

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<sup>11</sup> The debate has lost most of its relevance by 2021, with most readers seeing this act as rape, but the word “seduction” is still associated with Alec’s actions. The “rape-seduction” term is being used to this day and should stop. More on this idea in the below section.

actions is in large part due to popular cultural theories of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century involving women's sexual desires for which Penny Boumelha summarizes:

There can be no doubt that the sexual feeling in the female is in abeyance, and even if aroused (which in many instances it can never be) is very moderate compared to that of the male. The best mothers, wives and managers of households, know little to nothing of sexual indulgences. Love of home, children, and domestic duties are the only passions they feel. As a general rule, a modest woman seldom desires any sexual gratification for herself. (Boumelha 10)

Boumelha describes the issue with Victorian writing and culture as being a result of the subjective male gaze that Hardy exposes in *Tess* through the sympathetic lens he uses for the eponymous Tess. For much of the lifespan of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* The Chase scene was not viewed as rape, but as a seduction. During the 1980's a number of writers, including Boumelha, exposed the hypocritical reasonings why Tess was described as being "seduced" rather than raped.

Boumelha's argument centers around the perception in Victorian culture that a woman must be modest and should never enjoy sexual indulgences; therefore, creating the excuse for men to not feel that they raped a woman when she did not consent or enjoy the sex. In this male view, a woman is not supposed to enjoy sex, and her lack of consent is just a tactic in modesty. Ellen Rooney (1983) discusses the history of using the word "seduction" in place of rape as a symptomatic problem: "In one sense, the compound 'seduction or rape' is symptomatic of our failure to escape the 'old Patriarchal system,' the system that bound seduction to rape. The singular subject 'seduction or rape' is



grounded in the notion of a female passivity that operates both within seduction and within rape.” (Rooney 1269) Again the argument mentions female passivity/docility to the patriarchal system that dominates the lives of Victorian women. This patriarchal system was so prevalent that it led most (if not all) readers of Hardy’s novel to see Tess as seduced and yet also innocent because she maintains her modesty through her non-consent and hatred of Alec’s actions. Even as Hardy’s narrator describes the unfortunate turn of events, he questions “where was Tess’s guardian angel? Where was the providence of her simple faith?” (Hardy 1806) as a further example of how Tess’s innocence should remain intact since she is a victim of the patriarchal system. Tess is a passive, innocent, modest, and docile young woman that is taken advantage of by Alec while she sleeps, which is also another popular motif in Victorian culture.

Havelock Ellis, a prominent physician in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries who studied human sexuality believed that women’s tendency to repress sexual desires made them more likely than men to be autoerotic in the sense that their sexual desires were brought on spontaneously by sexual caresses or sexual dreams. Ellis even notes studies and procedures (for which he disagreed with) during his time to treat female hysteria by removing their sexual organs (Ellis155-60). Therefore, Hardy writing Tess’s rape scene while she is asleep helped lead to more ambiguity about the legitimacy of Tess’s consent. As it was popular opinion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that some women’s sexual desires needed to be awakened by a “lover’s caress,” (Ellis 237). this made it possible for people to argue that Alec was simply acting on this belief that Tess’s sexual desire in him would awaken in her dream state.

The idea that Alec's actions can be seen as anything other than rape is an example of "rape-culture" specifically regarding an unconscious or semi-unconscious female body, which also can be described as a docile body which is a word often used to describe the ideal woman in Victorian culture (docility will be explored further below). The rape culture surrounding unconsciousness defines Tess in one way as an avatar of sexual womanhood:

In the vulnerability and relaxation of sleep, Tess exists in a state between self and not-self, a state in which she appears to represent not only a vision of herself, but of all of sexual womankind, in the eye of the beholder. This projection takes place without Tess's awareness and without her agency... When she is sleepy, Tess appears most desirable to her suitors as she seems to become a Platonic form of the female body, an avatar of all sexual, semi-conscious womankind. (Gurman 159)

Tess being portrayed as desirable in a semi-conscious state by the narrator is problematic for her agency throughout the novel. Her rape is not the sole time her semi-consciousness is portrayed alongside a sexual attraction. There are a few moments in the novel when Tess's dream-like state is sexualized. In one particular scene involving a dairy cow, Angel Clare views her milking in a state of "dream-like fixity" followed by him approaching Tess and kissing her causing her to sink "upon him in momentary joy, with something like an ecstatic cry" (Hardy 3515). *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is not alone in late Victorian stories/novels that create a sense of desirability around semi-conscious

women<sup>12</sup> as this was a popular cultural view of women's sexual desirability. Ultimately, the popularity of women being in a semi-conscious or docile state is proof that it was the exploitation of women's sexual desires that infatuated late Victorian culture.

Docility is the most common trait amongst farmed animal breeds. Pigs, cows, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, etc. are all known as calm species willing to follow human orders and boundaries. These animals (particularly the bigger livestock species) are kept behind fences that they can break through without much trouble, however they choose to stay on the farm, because that is the path of least resistance. Many humans wonder why we eat certain animals and the easy answer is that these farmed animals are the easiest to control. The reason humans eat chickens instead of hawks is because of their natural tendencies to be docile. This fact about the personality traits of farmed animals is not a revelation, nor was it new to Victorians. Dating at least as far back as Plutarch (c.AD 46-120), the Roman philosopher points out that humankind's choices in the animals they eat are not a coincidence:

For we eat not lions and wolves by way of revenge; but we let those go, and catch the harmless and tame sort, and such as have neither stings nor teeth to bite with, and slay them; which, so may Jove help us, Nature seems to us to have produced for their beauty and comeliness only.

Plutarch not only belittles humans' choices in their diets but also condemns cultural norms that lead humans to believe it is morally acceptable for them to consume animals flesh: "For my part I cannot think him a worse criminal that torments a poor creature while living, than a man that shall take away its life and murder it. But (as it seems) we

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<sup>12</sup> Gurman's essay points out at least four canonical authors (George Eliot, Edith Warton, Kate Chopin, George Gissing) and a pair of lesser-known authors as examples of how prevalent this depiction was during Hardy's lifetime.

are more sensible of what is done against custom than against Nature” (Plutarch). Therefore, what wrongs humans commit against Nature (this includes non-human animals) often goes unpunished, unnoticed, or altogether ignored; as opposed to crimes against human laws/culture which are often condemned.

Hardy faces criticisms for his descriptions of Tess as being in a dream-like state and this state of being making her more attractive to the men pursuing her and the narrator; (Gurman) however, I would argue that Hardy’s treatment of Tess as a tragic heroine makes those dream-like descriptions a negative critique of his culture rather than an attempt to make Tess more sexually attractive. While there is a large discussion near the end of this chapter about Hardy’s narrator ignoring some of Tess’s suffering, that does not occlude the fact that he has moments where the suffering of Tess is fully explained to the readers. Hardy is known for his pessimistic views of the world through his novels and yet that also gives his writing strength to reveal cultural and worldly faults that other authors fail to unveil. George Levine details that Hardy’s pessimistic prose showcase that a “particular greatness as a novelist emerges most prominently in those sequences that may seem gratuitous if one focuses only on the movement of story, but that demand attention because of their own remarkable attention to the world that lies outside of the story a novel can tell” (Levine IX). No one scene in *Tess* depicts this strength in Hardy’s writing better than the infamous Chase scene.

The Chase scene is fully implied, as Hardy does not describe the physical rape. What Hardy presents to the reader instead, is an interesting choice of observations about the surrounding nature:

Darkness and silence ruled everywhere around. Above them rose the primeval yews and oaks of The Chase, in which there poised gentle roosting birds in their last nap; and about them stole the hopping rabbits and hares. But, might some say, where was Tess's guardian angel? Where was the providence of her simple faith? (Hardy 1803)

Through the indifference of the wild birds and hare, Hardy is using animals in two ways in this passage. The first way is the more Darwinian of the two, these animals are indifferent to the trials and tribulations of humans much the same as humans are indifferent to animals. Hardy's writing "brings out the animistic sense that all life is equally alert and equally passive" (Beer 239). Indifference is a quality of nature that humans have not been able to separate themselves from the rest of the animal kingdom. As Darwin's theories blurred the fragile lines humans devised to separate themselves from the rest of the animal species, here Hardy points out another trait that humans share with animals by their passivity to Tess's torment. The roosting birds and hopping rabbits do not trouble themselves with Tess's problems because they are focused on their own survival, part of which involves keeping a safe distance from these two humans. Rather than risk injury or pain, they simply ignore what the humans are doing, regardless of how much or how little they understand of what is happening to Tess. This last point also emphasizes how Hardy often avoided anthropomorphizing the animals in his novels, much the same as Darwin was against anthropomorphism.<sup>13</sup>

The second way Hardy is using the animals in this passage is the way he is forcing the readers to acknowledge their existence. As the Levine quote above points out,

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<sup>13</sup> Both Levine and Beer point out various moments of Hardy and Darwin's shared distaste of anthropomorphizing nature and animals.

Hardy is demanding that readers pay attention to the natural world around Tess. Along with avoiding anthropomorphism he is also avoiding tired metaphors. The reader is expecting a description of Tess's rape, and instead Hardy points out birds and rabbits acting naturally. Many authors would have used some heavy-handed symbolism if they shifted to animals during a rape scene. Instead of describing a hawk attacking a field mouse, or a scavenger feasting on a fresh body to symbolize Tess's lost innocence, Hardy just points the reader toward birds comfortably sitting on tree branches and rabbits hopping about. These are animals acting naturally not concerned with human actions or conventions. There is no alternative meaning placed on the animals by Hardy, they are not being defined by some human metaphor, and they are acting true to their observed tendencies. Even in one of the most tragic scenes of the novel (rivaled by Tess's execution) Hardy exposes nature in its true form, equally alert and passive to humans.

Violent acts against women have a history of being ignored and omitted from human speech. This tendency to omit violence when discussing the treatment of women is one of the ways in which feminists such as Adams have found an interconnectedness with farmed animals and women. Until this point in the chapter, the comparisons have been largely involving meat and the connection to the way women are viewed. The avenue most feminists use involving dairy cows has less to do with slaughter than it does with reproductive rights.<sup>14</sup> Adams once again paves the way for thinking about dairies through the lens of feminism and how patriarchal oppression redefines pregnant humans and non-humans. In Adam's book *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of*

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<sup>14</sup> Although, it should be noted that dairy cows do ultimately end up being slaughtered after they either "go dry" which is a term used for when a dairy cow's milk production decreases to a rate that no longer justifies the cost of keeping her alive (typically around 4 years old), or if they have trouble getting pregnant. Dairy cow meat is the cheaper beef such as ground beef, whereas the brown and black cows that are raised for their meat are the ones used for steak and other "high quality" beefs outside of veal.

*Animals* she spends a chapter on reproductive rights that investigates the way women are redefined when they are pregnant and the discussions around abortion rights.

Adams begins her argument by pointing out that animals and women become decontextualized in the topics of meat and reproduction:

All that remains when we consider animals is the outer shell of “rabbit” or “cow,” but not a relational animal. A similar process of decontextualizing the fetus occurs. Whereas animals in most people’s imaginations are only body, the fetus has been disembodied, floating as though in space and not at all dependent on a woman’s body for sustenance...If any “individuality” is referred to by the antiabortion side, it is that of the aborted fetus. The claims of the fetus are often articulated as though they exist in a moral vacuum, detached from any individual woman.” (Adams *Beast* 57-8)

When conversations surrounding pregnant women occur, the focus shifts from the woman carrying the fetus to the fetus itself. All the importance moves to the unborn child, relegating the woman carrying the child to be viewed as a vessel that must do whatever is in her power to provide proper sustenance and protect her future child. While caring about the health of the fetus is important, it should not have to come at the expense of caring for the woman carrying said fetus.<sup>15</sup> The woman is largely omitted from most of the rhetoric surrounding her pregnancy, and in the case of rape, where the woman is not

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<sup>15</sup> Adams’ point about the discussion surrounding antiabortion rhetoric is important as well and deserves more attention than it is being given in this chapter, but as the relevance of abortion to *Tess* and farmed animals is limited, it would be an injustice to briefly touch on that topic here without the proper framing to do that topic justice.

ready or never wants to be pregnant, she is shamed into accepting her fate by those who remove all of her importance and place it solely on the fetus.

Shame is a powerful weapon used against women in the Victorian era, and Hardy exposes the injustice of this weapon throughout the novel. Women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century often were separated into one of two categories due to the perspective of what a woman should be; “The women who were either the ‘chaste’ or the ‘depraved’ were either praised for their ignorance and *docility* or condemned for their assertiveness and knowledge” (my italics) (Odubajo 9224-5). A Victorian woman was valued for her ability to produce children and maintain the household for her husband and children. Therefore, the woman must be subservient to the male patriarch and is expected to take his abuse without any resistance. The “docility” expected from women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the same quality farmers expect from their animals. Obviously, what separates Tess from farmed animals is the mental anguish she endures throughout the novel. This mental anguish is described through the guilt Tess experiences from breaking away from the culturally accepted mold of a proper wife. Following her rape and refusal to marry Alec, Tess experiences guilt for being a victim of Alec’s actions. The narrator even goes as far to claim that Alec was Tess’s “seducer” which has caused a lot of confusion of Tess’s rape.

Many scholars still agree with the narrator that Tess was “seduced” by Alec<sup>16</sup> and then raped. This is just another example of the “rape-culture” that exists in this novel. Regardless of the words used by the narrator, it is impossible to view Tess as being seduced by Alec. At best, Tess is (to use a modern term for perspective) date-raped by

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<sup>16</sup> Most articles and books I came across still hold on to the notion that Alec “seduced” Tess, and often used the term “rape-seduction.” Even articles written in 2020 still use this word for their relationship.



Alec. The sexual attraction to a woman asleep or semi-conscious is the equivalent to slipping a rohypnol into her drink and sexually penetrating her after she is virtually unconscious. There is no seductive effect on the victim—she is a rape victim. Tess never showed Alec any signs of sexual attraction, nor any physical attraction. Scholars need to stop using the word “seduced” when referring to Tess and Alec because that only feeds into a “rape-culture” mentality that plagues the stories of women such as Tess.

Hardy does not emphasize Tess’s “seduction” and it is likely he only used the word as a common euphemism to explain a rape, as he never actually uses the word rape<sup>17</sup>. The rape-culture evident in Tess that made it OK for men to sleep with women in brothels, but women needed to be pure and chaste is the main factor behind Tess’s guilt. Levine explains that “For a character like Tess, however, shame and guilt entangle; Tess bears the burden of her culture and feels the guilt that Hardy writes to condemn” (Levine 15). The best example of this guilt caused by culture is on her wedding night with Angel Clare. After Clare tells Tess “of that time of his life to which allusion has been made when, tossed about by doubts and difficulties in London, like a cork on the waves, he plunged into eight-and-forty hours’ dissipation with a stranger” (Hardy 5237). Tess informs Clare about her story involving Alec, and Clare responds with the faults of his cultural upbringing; “O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case! You were one person; now you are another. My God—how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!” (Hardy 5296), as Clare continues his words that Tess is not the woman he fell in love with, she is stuck with immense guilt once again:

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<sup>17</sup> There is a lot more to explore here from a linguistic and syntax standpoint, but that would start to take this chapter too far away from its purpose of the use of farmed animals in Tess’s story.

She perceived in his words the realization of her own apprehensive foreboding in former times. He looked upon her as a species of imposter; a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one. Terror was upon her white face as she saw it; her cheek was flaccid, and her mouth had almost the aspect of a round little hole. The horrible sense of his view of her so deadened her that she staggered, and he stepped forward, thinking she was going to fall. (Hardy 5334)

Clare, who is a better man than Alec d'Urberville, still treats Tess as a lesser creature through his hypocrisy that he can be with another woman before they met, but Tess must be punished for being raped by Alec. Lack of empathy from Clare can stem from the fact that as a man he does not have to be worried about being taken advantage of the way Alec took advantage of Tess. Clare also does not have to worry about cultural judgements for his sexual experiences. Clare is incapable of seeing this situation from Tess's perspective, and does not show any desire to try and see it from her perspective. It is inconvenient for Clare to see Tess any other way than as a woman guilty of sexual promiscuity. Rather than battle against his culture that makes it OK for men to sleep with prostitutes, but women are blamed for being raped; Clare falls into Plutarch's categorization of people who decide to support "custom" rather than "nature." Rather than face the crime against nature, Clare ignores Tess's pain, much like all the suffering that goes unwritten throughout the novel.

Tess's plight is so typical of her time that two scholars summarize her experience with Clare by explaining how:

Tess's character and experience touches the core of contemporary society the most. Tess's character is a representative of all working-class Victorian women who had no choices about their lives and future...Angel Clare falls in love with a mirage; an ideal and spiritualized Tess. He abandons her at the time she needed him most. He represents the hypocritical Victorian gentleman, one who is swayed by the principles of intellectualism. (Odubajo 9231)

Angel Clare is not the exception to the rule, rather he is an example of the majority of men in Victorian society. Clare is not an immoral criminal that sexually abuses vulnerable women, he is the typical man that takes advantage of a patriarchal society. Much how majority of Clare's society views Tess as being seduced rather than raped he feeds Tess's guilt by treating her the way all of society treats women. Clare has an opportunity to be better than his peers, but Hardy's realistic pessimism shows the readers that even men who seem better than other men through their upbringing, intelligence, kindness in public, and wealth: are just as apathetic to women's plights as the rest of the men in their society.

The lack of empathy for Tess' abuses due to cultural bias is yet another area that coincides with the dairy industry and the view of cows. As this chapter has been outlining, Tess' life has many parallels with the life of a dairy cow. The cultural apathy surrounding Tess through the example of defining her experience with Alec as a seduction rather than a rape reflects our cultural apathy to the dairy process. As described above, the cultural definition of The Chase scene has changed through the decades; at first it was viewed as a seduction, than a rape-seduction, and now most scholars see it as

nothing other than rape. Also described above, prominent animal rights activists like Matthew Scully feel that it is acceptable to consume animal products that are not the result of slaughter and mistreatment.<sup>18</sup> However, we are starting to see this view that animal products from small farms that “treat their animals humanely” is nothing but a lie. The animal rights community is going through a similar effort to redefine the way people should think about the dairy industry as being just as cruel as the meat and skin industries. With the vast rise in plant-based milks and the deteriorating dairy industry that is losing profits at an alarming rate every year, the future of defining the dairy industry as “less cruel” or “morally acceptable” is fading fast. In the same way human cultures evolved to see that Tess was a victim, so are human cultures evolving to admit that the dairy industry is as guilty in animal cruelty as the meat industry.

### **Omission**

Hardy is rightfully praised for his attention to detail, specifically surrounding nature and animals, in the way that he sees natural world and verbalizes it in his novels. This is often why scholars study the impact Darwin had on his writings. There are many examples of Hardy bringing attention to the animals that often go unnoticed by humans in *Tess*, including what is as close to a literal description of the Anthropocene Engine as there exists in literature:

The narrow lane of stubble encompassing the field grew wider with each circuit, and the standing corn was reduced to a smaller area as the morning wore on. Rabbits, hares, snakes, rats, mice, retreated inwards as into a fastness, unaware of the ephemeral nature of their refuge, and of the doom

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<sup>18</sup> See Scully, Matthew

that awaited them later in the day when, their covert shrinking to a more and more horrible narrowness, they were huddled together, friends and foes, till the last few yards of upright wheat fell also under the teeth of the unerring reaper, and they were every one put to death by the sticks and stones of harvesters. (Hardy 2132)

The unspeakable truth of even a plant-based diet is that small animals are killed daily by harvesters, therefore no human diet that uses mass produced food is completely harm-free. Hardy puts the reader's eyes on these small animals chewed up by a reaping machine. Virtually no one thinks about animals being caught by machinery not designed to harm them. However, Hardy notices this darker side of plant harvesting brought on by machinery. Moments like this one describing the death of rabbits, rats, and snakes are what rightfully gives Hardy the reputation of being an "original seer" (Levine XVII) of the world around him. Therefore, if we as readers and analysts of Hardy can praise him for his attention to small details of nature, we must also examine sufferings in the world of animals and women that he deliberately omits from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Hardy deliberately adjusts the reader's attention during The Chase scene, and one could argue that explicitly detailing the rape is not necessary for the reader to fully grasp the pain and suffering of Tess's situation. While the rape is strongly implied through the actions of the plot in chapter 11, Hardy does completely omit the sufferings for most of the months following the rape, including Tess giving birth. Readers often need to be shown the suffering in order to recognize that there is suffering, or at the very least, the suffering needs to be heavily implied. For most of human history this applied to women, in particular with childbirth. The recognition of the physical pain associated with

childbirth was left out of most male writing, including *Tess*. The readers of *Tess* do not have any descriptions of Tess's pregnancy or her labor during childbirth, but only see the suffering of losing the child. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* also leaves out the suffering of the dairy cows, therefore giving the readers the opportunity to view this part of Tess's life as a prominently blissful time spent amongst her fellow dairymaids, milking: "Dumpling, Fancy, Lofty, Mist, Old Pretty, Young Pretty, Tidy, and Loud" (Hardy 2854).

Left out of the novel's narrative for these cows is the same thing Hardy omitted in Tess's life, the actual pregnancy and childbirth. Therefore, as responsible readers of animal studies one must point out that women and farmed animals are treated as Others by the omission of their suffering. This is not to simply suggest that pregnancy is a form of suffering, however, there is some physical pain during the months a woman is pregnant, even if the pregnancy itself has no complications. In cases where the woman wants to be pregnant with the end goal of having a child, this suffering is a necessary evil. But where Tess and dairy cows have a common thread is that they are impregnated forcibly without consent and lose their right to self-determination surrounding their reproduction.

The final and perhaps most important interconnection of farmed animals (specifically dairy cows) with Tess, is the cultural norm that strips self-determination away from the mothers.

It should be up to the woman to decide when or if she wants to become pregnant and have a child. When that decision is taken away from her through rape, she loses that self-determination and either decides to give birth, or abort the fetus resulting in cultural

backlash from some communities. Adams expands on this idea with the use of farmed animals:

Controlling animals and controlling access to abortion is the opposite of self-determination and liberation. Chickens, cows, mice, pigs, *and* women should not be forced to be pregnant against their will. If cows had reproductive freedom, there would be no veal calves and no milk for humans to drink.

Deceptive cultural images deflect us from understanding either animals' or women's right to self-determination. (Adams *Beast* 58)

The “deceptive cultural images” are not just a modern invention, but also existed in the Victorian era. The main reason Tess was not awarded her own self-determination by Clare was his lack of understanding due to cultural images of the “pure woman.” Once Tess does not fit into that perfect category, Clare abandons her to a miserable fate because his “love” for Tess is only as strong as culture will allow. Deceptive culture allows humans to be ignorant of the suffering around them, both human and non-human. It allows humans to release themselves from the guilt of ignorance and omission due to the fact that these wrongs (Tess's rape, dairy cows refused the opportunity to give their milk to their calves) are not “done against custom” but are done “against Nature” (Plutarch).

One of the greatest omissions in human food culture is the same omission that Hardy makes in the life of Tess and the lives of the cows at Talbothays farm: pregnancy. Much as Hardy shows the indifference to the animals in the vicinity of Tess's rape, the readers also see the human indifference of the absent referent practices on the dairy farm.

In the Victorian era, artificial insemination was not yet a common farming practice which is why every dairy farm had a bull. Cows are forced into a pen with a young virile bull who forces himself on the cow in the farmer's hopes of impregnating her. I constitute this as animal cruelty because it is not the natural order of a bull and a cow, due to human intervention. One could argue that the neglect used against the bull (depriving him of being around the cows so he stores up sperm) forces him into the role of an accomplice. While the bull commits the physical penetration of the cow, he is but a product of human manipulation, and is forced into this role in an unnatural environment. This method of impregnating cows has widely been eradicated in modern farming practices for two main reasons: artificial insemination is much more efficient, and greatly reduces the risk of injuring the cow. In many cases, cows have had their backs or hips broken by the pent-up bull which results in the farmer having to kill the cow without getting any milk from her.

Hardy never mentions that the dairy cows on the farm are pregnant until the topic of birthing calves happens at the very end of Tess's tenure at Talbothays (more on this scene below). These cows are described for the product they produce, without ever mentioning how the product became possible. Beginning in Hardy's time, more and more of his readers would not have known that a cow needed to be pregnant in order to produce milk. Hardy's novels often depict the shrinking countryside, and this comes at a cost of the humans flocking to cities and losing common knowledge of animals in general. Tess and Clare discuss that the Londoners who will drink this milk must be "Noble men and noble women, ambassadors and centurions, ladies and tradeswomen, and babies who have never seen a cow...Who don't know anything of us, and where it comes from" (Hardy 4326). The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the beginning of humans losing their



knowledge and connection to farmed animals, particularly the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the first half of the century, humans living in cities were still exposed to farmed animals: “The streets were full of cabhorses and carthorses; flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were driven to market once or twice a week” (Ritvo 5) but the Industrial Revolution quickly shifted these animals out of cities, thus the reason Tess comments that London was full of babies who never saw a cow. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time period that John Berger described as “the beginning of a process...by which every tradition which has previously mediated between man and nature was broken” (Berger 3). He goes on to explain that this separation between human and animal paved the way for humans to view certain animals by the products they are transformed into by farming practices (the precursor to Adams’ absent referents); “Yet to suppose that animals first entered the human imagination as meat or leather or horn is to project a 19<sup>th</sup> Century attitude backwards across millennia” (Berger 4). I would add the product of milk to Berger’s list as humans do know that milk comes from cows but they do not know the processes involved to ensure how the milk makes it to human glasses.

Animal agriculture and Thomas Hardy omit the forced impregnation of cows, yet their motives are completely different. Animal agriculture omits this fact to keep people blind to the gruesome truth behind that glass of milk. Hardy omits the abuse of the cows just the same as he omits the time-period of Tess’s pregnancy to show a parallel indifference. Tess never has a moment where she shares empathy for the cows’ loss of reproductive self-determination. Some may read this and infer that this explanation of indifference by Tess is an attack on her character. This is not an attack of Tess, it is an example of Hardy’s deeper understanding of Darwin’s theories and “his persistent

emphasis on the indifference of nature, his persistent dramatization of the suffering both nature and society inflict on those who are not privileged” (Levine 73). Neither Tess nor the dairy cows are privileged, which is why their suffering is surrounded by the indifferences of humans and nature.<sup>19</sup> The cows and Tess have shared life experiences of losing their rights to reproductive self-determination and yet they are indifferent about that truth; and I am taking liberty here that the cows would understand that Tess was forcibly impregnated, but to Hardy’s credit he does not use cheap metaphor or allegory to create melodrama of Tess’s experience with the cows.

What is particularly interesting is the interconnectedness of Tess and the cows as victims of a society that preys on the weak. Tess does have a moment of sympathy for the cows at Talbothays at the end of her time at the dairy. Tess’s sympathy is through another shared experience that Hardy does show in his novel. While Hardy omits the pregnancy and birth of Tess’s son, Sorrow, he does detail the death of the baby and the fear Tess has about her child dying without being baptized:

The baby’s offence against society in coming into the world was forgotten by the girl-mother; her soul’s desire was to continue that offence by preserving the life of the child. However, it soon grew clear that the hour of emancipation for that little prisoner of the flesh was to arrive earlier than her worst misgiving had conjectured. And when she discovered this she was plunged into a misery which transcended that of the child’s simple loss. Her baby had not been baptized. (Hardy 2239)

Tess’s distress over the baby’s baptismal status is followed by thoughts of the child burning in the fires of hell, and how unfair it is that this innocent child who did not ask to

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<sup>19</sup> See chapter 3 “Dogs and Birds” for a larger discussion on privileged animals

be born must burn for her “sin.” Despite Tess’s feelings about the baby’s father and how he was conceived, she cares deeply for the child and she not only wants to baptize the child, but it is her “soul’s desire” for the child to continue living. Tess resents the events that brought him into this world, but that does not mean she resents her baby. Tess wants to continue to spend her life with her son, but unfortunately, she has no choice or ability to preserve that future.

Tess somewhat succeeds in getting the baby baptized by performing it herself because the Vicar refused to perform the ceremony. Tess also has a partial victory by negotiating with the Vicar to allow her to give Sorrow a burial (also done by her own hands). Tess’s struggle to have Sorrow baptized and buried is an example many scholars point to when examining the harsh treatment of women in the Victorian period. The fact that Tess has to battle a man responsible for being the moral guide of her community, is yet another example of the powerlessness of being a woman in Hardy’s time. Tess takes this double-standard in stride and makes the best of her situation by burying Sorrow herself with “a little cross of two laths and a piece of string, and having bound it with flowers, she stuck it up at the head of the grave one evening when she could enter the churchyard without being seen” (Hardy 2345). Hardy does not detail Tess’s pain of loss in explicit detail, which has led some scholars to believe that “Tess’s feelings for the child are ambivalent, her motherly love collides with the rejection and self-condemnation conditioned by social and religious norms and rules” (Kalaba 165). It is evident that Tess’s feelings for her child are not ambivalent through the way she fights for his baptism and burial. In the example of Tess fighting for her baby’s burial, she acts out of character and admonishes the vicar for his refusal to perform the service himself:

“Another matter—why?” asked Tess, rather warmly.

“Well—I would willingly do so if only we two were concerned. But I must not—  
for certain reasons.”

Just for once, sir!”

“Really I must not.”

O sir!” She seized his hand as she spoke.

He withdrew it, shaking his head.

“Then I don’t like you!” she burst out, “and I’ll never come to your church no  
more!” (Hardy 2335)

There are no other moments in the novel where Tess fights so fiercely for another person in order to accomplish what she believes to be the best moral outcome in a completely selfless act. She has other moments where she fights for a better outcome, but these are when her motives are selfish (murdering Alec being the most obvious example). One final example to combat Tess’s “ambivalence” is that Tess does not feel (or at least express) empathy for the way in which the cows become pregnant, but she does feel sympathy for the coming losses of their children<sup>20</sup>. Knowing the fate of these mothers and their babies, Hardy’s prose and Tess’s observations become much darker:

For it was a time of the year that brought great changes to the world of kine. Batches of the animals were sent away daily to this lying-in hospital, where they lived on straw till their calves were born, after which event, and as soon as the calf could walk, mother and offspring were driven back to the dairy. In the interval which elapsed before the calves were sold there

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<sup>20</sup> I choose this word deliberately in place of calves so as not to take power away from the pain of loss these animals are forced to endure over and over again through their short lives.

was, of course, little milking to be done, but as soon as the calf had been taken away the milkmaids would have to set to work as usual.

Returning from one of these dark walks they reached a great gravel-cliff immediately over the levels, where they stood still and listened...From the whole extent of the invisible vale came a multitudinous intonation; it forced upon their fancy that a great city lay below them, and that the murmur was the vociferation of its populace.

“It seems like tens of thousands of them,” said Tess; “holding public-meetings in their market-places, arguing, preaching, quarrelling, sobbing, groaning, praying, and cursing.” (Hardy 4685)

The first line takes the reader briefly out of Tess’s story and into “the world of kine” where there are great changes coming to these bovines. Hardy deliberately chooses a depressing theme throughout the description; the cows are “sent away,” “driven back,” calves are “sold” and “taken away” from their mothers. Tess’s empathy enters the scene in the description that this is a “dark walk” as she hears the mothers’ “multitudinous intonation” vocalizing, amongst other things, “sobbing, groaning, praying, and cursing.”

Tess is not embellishing when she describes the cows as sobbing, groaning, praying, and cursing. Cows are known to visibly cry tears when they lose their calves and when they are trapped in a slaughterhouse waiting to be murdered. Although humans cannot understand what cows are saying, it does not prove that they do not pray or curse, as like all animals, they experience fear and rage. It is important that Tess is the person to point out what the cows’ noises mean, for had it been Clare, the whole description would have changed from empathy to pragmatic apathy. Tess understands what it feels like to

lose a child and for most of these cows this is not the first time they are being driven to this field where they will more than likely lose their child. Some of the lucky mothers will keep their babies (it is not a reach to assume that Old Pretty and Young Pretty are mother and daughter) although that is rare. It is rare for these cows to stay with their calves because, as the narrator describes there is “little milking to be done” while mother and child are together, because the mother’s milk will be fed to the young calf. Typically, in farming practices this period lasts about two weeks, which is when the calf will be strong enough to be taken off of its mother’s milk. If the calf is a male, he will be sold to a veal farm and slaughtered in the next six months. If the calf is a female, she will be auctioned off to another dairy, provided she is strong. The weak and dying are disposed of in a variety of ways.<sup>21</sup>

Both the fact that these mothers will soon lose their children and that the babies who are too weak to be sold will be unceremoniously disposed of, strike a chord with Tess. Tess and these cows were forcibly impregnated, they give birth despite never wanting to be pregnant this way, and they sob, groan, pray, and curse the fact that they will not be able to live with their newborns for more than a few weeks. Tess’s child lasted in her life a bit longer, but the ending is the same. Despite how these animals may plead and beg in their own way, it will fall on deaf ears. Woman and animal share the same lesser status than that of the men in control of their lives. This is a time in the cows’ lives that is primarily controlled by men as Angel tells Tess that dairyman Crick “merely observed that, as a matter of fact, it was a time of year when he could do with a very little

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<sup>21</sup> Many sanctuaries will attend these auctions and rescue the weak and dying calves and nurse them back to health. See the documentary “The Ghosts in Our Machine” (2013) for the specific story of Sonny who was left for dead on one of these piles, until he was rescued by the nonprofit organization, Farm Sanctuary.

female help” (Hardy 4685). Men will oversee these mothers and make sure that they are properly separated from their children. These men will be the gatekeepers to the cows’ tragedies, and they will not listen to cows’ prayers or curses. They will not recognize that the cows are sobbing, they will perform their tasks with pragmatic apathy. Tess was at the mercy of the male vicar when she wanted Sorrow baptized and buried. This vicar, afraid to go against his religious culture, was the gatekeeper of Sorrow’s fate in the afterlife. He refused to baptize the child or give it a proper burial. Tess had to take it upon herself to do both tasks and the only comfort she received was that the vicar told her the child’s fate would be just the same whether she baptized the child or the vicar did. (Hardy 2201) Despite Tess’s pleas and prayers, the male vicar would not perform the baptism or burial. Tess and these cows are at the mercy of men who do not understand what it means to birth a child and care for it immediately. Men are primarily the ones that decide the fates of these children. For humans, a proper baptism and Christian burial are important to them due to their cultural beliefs. For cows, being able to provide their sustenance to the child they birthed is important to them, but human milk culture deprives them of that outcome.

This scene of Tess describing the suffering of the cows is even more important in relation to the patriarchal society theme that dominates Tess’s life and the perception of her throughout most of the novel’s history. As stated earlier, The Chase scene has a complicated history surrounding the discussion of rape, and how this discussion was thoroughly studied during the 1980’s. Along with Boumelha and Rooney, Kaja Silverman (1984) wrote about Tess’s perception and how it was entirely influenced by the dominant male gaze. Silverman writes that “Tess remains the privileged object of

male gaze” through the way she is always described through her modesty and innocence (Silverman 19). Hardy criticizes this view of Tess throughout the novel by showcasing how a modest and innocent woman is destroyed by Victorian society. The readers sympathize with Tess because of the pain she endures more so than the purity she represents. However, the dominant male gaze of the narrator along with Alec and Angel, want the readers to only view Tess’s worth by her modesty and innocence. Silverman elaborates on this view point by asking who the real Tess is; “All of this begs some very large questions as to what ‘in’ Tess withholds itself from the gaze, and attempts to resist figural history—what constitutes in other words, the ‘real’ Tess” (Silverman 22). Ten years after Silverman wrote those words, Adams writes about the male gaze being a social construct of looking at someone or something only through the value the object provides the subject. Typically, this gaze is used by a man that covets a woman, but both men and women “assimilate patriarchal culture...when looking at other animals. The practice of animal experimentation is both enabled and reinforced by the unquestioned culturally established *to-be-looked-at-ness* of animals” (Adams *Beast* 41). Adams expands the argument to include not only animal experimentation, but all forms of exploitation, including food products.

This is where I would answer Silverman’s question as to when we see the “real” Tess is when she breaks cultural and human norms while looking upon the cows waiting to give birth. The readers view the scene through Tess’s eyes and not through the patriarchal gaze of the narrator. This is evidenced by Tess’s sympathy for the cows because it is not only contrary to a dominant male gaze, it is a contrary view of a dominant human gaze. She does not just see the cows as objects that produce milk. She



sees them as their own society that is just another pocket swallowed up by the dominant culture in which she lives. The “real” Tess has a fleeting moment when she not only sympathizes with a weaker species but views them as more than just poor beasts.

The end of Tess’s time at Talbothays prepares the readers for the depressing tale that will unfold for Tess the remainder of the novel. While her time at Talbothays was the happiest time of her life, the end of it is littered in tragedy and reminds the reader of Hardy’s pessimism. The happy moments on the dairy are a façade for Tess and the cows. Much the same way the novel is structured, so too is the life cycle of a dairy cow; begins in violent oppression resulting in sexual abuse and pregnancy, A brief respite from the horrors of life as Tess and the cows can happily rest in their natural environment with the comradery of fellow females, concluding with an ending of pain and loss brought on by the cultural rules of apathetic men.

## Exotic Animals

### The Intersection of Speciesism and Racism

“Speciesism—the word is not an attractive one, but I can think of no better term—is a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species.”

(Singer 29)

The late Victorian period’s anti-imperialist fiction presents readers with a look into the English people’s conquest and exploitation of exotic territories, peoples, and animals. This exploitation was bred at home where the English empiric pride developed a viewpoint that the English explorers and traders brought civility to savage peoples<sup>22</sup> in foreign lands. The two novels in this chapter expose the cruelty of men in exotic locations, where those in charge do not accept their limitations. H.G. Wells’ *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* expose the cruelty men will commit on those they can dominate. In each novel the readers are witnesses to humans taking liberty with their power over nature, animals, and vulnerable humans whom all fit into one category for the English and American reader, exotic.

In reflection of Peter Singer’s word “speciesism” this chapter studies how two canonical authors in the Late Victorian period expose the toxic power imperial culture held over men who felt sympathy for beings who lived on the fringes of society (animals and non-white peoples). Animal studies and racial studies intersect when looking at these two texts that expose cruelties being committed by the English elites. However, one novel has fared better over the course of time due to its ability to look at the victims with

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<sup>22</sup> Plural “peoples” is being used to give acknowledgement to the different cultures of the people ruined by imperialism.

more detail in an attempt to better understand their plights. Wells and Conrad both felt sympathy for the abused individuals in their respective novels, however I will argue that Wells convincingly shows readers that he condemned vivisection and the abuse of the vulnerable populations at the hands of powerful men; whereas Conrad does not convincingly illustrate a condemnation of racism or speciesism in his novel which tries to portray the abuse imperialism exercises on a vulnerable population. The main difference between the two novels will be in conversation with the main theme of this dissertation (*The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*) that readers, scholars, and humans in general, must acknowledge the destruction of individuals if we are to truly understand the impact of the Anthropocene. The crux of *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* is to fill in these gaps in literary analysis for works of fiction that have a history of missing the importance of looking at animals on the individual level.

The primary animals represented in both novels are exotic animals (animals non-native to Western Europe and North America) and the two animals that are the focus of this chapter: Pumas (native to Central and South America) and African Elephants are viciously abused with no regard to their wellbeing. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* stands apart from *Heart of Darkness* with two chapters that reveal Wells' sympathy for the suffering animals at the hands of science, while Conrad's ambiguity in his novel hurts the overall message of exposing abuse against African people and animals. Wells has sympathy for the animals abused by science, which is shown by his actions and writings outside of the novel. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* was Wells' foray into the antivivisection movement popular in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wells' novel does not just join the conversation of anti-vivisection, but his novel does more to encourage sympathy for the

animal victims than his contemporaries in the same field. In contrast, Conrad sets out to condemn the actions of imperial Europe on the African continent. However, his choice to write a novel that is ambiguous leaves a lot to the interpretation of the readers and has created a negative response to the novel over the course of time. The ambiguity surrounding the African people and animals has led to this novel becoming defined as a racist and speciesist novel. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is impossible to read *Heart of Darkness* as anything but racist and speciesist because Conrad omits the individuality of the African peoples, and he completely ignores elephants in a choice that baffles many modern scholars. Thus, the plight of the exotic animal is on full display in Conrad's novel. When someone or something is exotic, its value becomes monopolized by the invaders. The white European man decided the value of the Africans and the exotic animals in relation to their greed. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau* that greed takes the form of scientific exploration and in *Heart of Darkness* that greed is empiric domination. While both authors tried to expose the evil of these forms of greed, one did a better job of exposing the evil without neglecting the exotic individuals.

Exotic animals represent a number of cultural and human aspects that were particularly strong during fin de siècle England. The vast majority of exotic animals suffer one of four outcomes: Death for profit (ivory and vivisection), Death for convivence, Enslavement, or Domestication.<sup>23</sup> Even non-native humans suffer similar fates as their animal neighbors. In 1906 (seven years after *Heart of Darkness*) the Bronx Zoo opened an exhibit, in their monkey house, of an African male. (Newkirk) This man

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<sup>23</sup> In one of the most influential aspects of exotic animal domestication, the English domesticated Eastern horses and began to breed and sell them as their own. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, English horse breeders nearly wrote the Arab nations out of history in horse breeding in the attempt to make these powerful horses integrated with English culture. See. Landry, Donna. *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

who was an exotic human for the Bronx Zoo patrons was put on display behind a cage in the exact same manner as the exotic animals throughout the zoo. A spectacle to be gawked at, rather than a sympathetic figure to learn from in the hopes of better understanding his culture. As shown during the previous chapter, humans dominated domestic animals at near absolute levels through their ability to farm animals at an incredibly efficient rate. Any domestic animals that are not farmed, are shown to be easily removed or destroyed by human intervention, thus there is no longer any additional pride to be found in the domination of the animals domestic to England. The import of exotic animals was not new to Victorian England, but the access to view these animals by the general public was new. The zoological society of England was founded in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and they brought the public menagerie to England. Regents Park Zoo and the London Zoo were formed during the Victorian era, and they were not just symbols of human ingenuity, but also symbolized empiric power; “The maintenance and study of captive wild animals, simultaneous emblems of human mastery over the natural world and of English dominion over remote territories, offered an especially vivid rhetorical means of reenacting and extending the work of empire” (Ritvo 205). The dominion of exotic animals served as yet another source of pride for the English country. This dominion symbolized the English empire and its ability to conquer foreigners (including animals, lands, and peoples). In animal studies, the capture, hunting, imprisonment, and exploitation of exotic animals is the greatest example of humanity’s objectification of the Other.

Exotic animals are not a parallel for the status-quo or those who easily fit within society’s walls. Exotic animals are those that exist outside of societal norms, are

interesting to study, but are not welcomed into the established order of society. For the purposes of this chapter, exotic animals are associated with the non-masculine<sup>24</sup> and foreigners<sup>25</sup>. To the English people, exotic Others served the purpose of being dominated and exploited. If England could not dominate the exotic, there was only one common option the English employed: expel them from society. If the person or animal could not serve a purpose for the empire, they were pushed out and dismissed as hysterical or dangerous. In the two novels studied in this chapter there are specific examples of how society pressured the masses to acquiesce to cultural norms or become outcasts. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* explores the topic of scientific exploration and its effective use of toxic masculinity to keep the antivivisection movement from gaining power. *Heart of Darkness* examines economic exploration, and how domination of foreign peoples and animals was lucrative and dangerous for both the English and the African natives.

### **Vivisection**

*The Island of Dr. Moreau* is different from most of the works examined in *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* because it is the only novel that has an obvious animal studies aspect. The novel is predominantly an examination of mankind's hubris through the practice of vivisection. In addition to the apparent animal studies angle Wells, unlike Conrad, is not an author with a rich history of scholarly research and is not commonly studied in colleges/universities. Wells is often viewed as a prominent author who played a large role in the modern invention of science fiction, which is often dismissed as a pop-culture genre with little depth by the literary community. Thus, this

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<sup>24</sup> Masculinity is not limited to men. Women who willingly participate in the patriarchal society fit into this category as well.

<sup>25</sup> Mostly Africans in this chapter

chapter will dispel misconceptions of Wells' writings through the example of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* which is one of the least examined novels of Wells' canon by literary scholars because of the heavy science-fiction elements. In fact, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* receives less attention than Wells' other popular sci-fi novels, *Time Machine* and *War of the Worlds*. I argue that *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is not as respected as *Time Machine* and *War of the Worlds* because it is the only story that focuses on animals as the sympathetic characters. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is more than a popular sci-fi story with little depth about man playing God. Wells' novel displays what cruelties men of science are capable of committing on creatures they can exploit, and when compared to other antivivisection novels of the time period, Wells' choice to pay more attention to the animals than his contemporaries make this novel's message of antivivisection more impactful.

*The Island of Dr. Moreau* was published in 1896, only two years after vivisection became widely accepted by the public following a fluid 60 years of animal rights activism that began when the Martin's Act was extended to outlaw animal fighting in 1835 (Ritvo 153). This additional protection to the animals used in fighting was brought about by the nascent Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) with the support of Queen Victoria as a patron, giving this group its royal status in 1840. With the RSPCA's win to gain protections for animals used in fighting or baiting, the group was able to turn its attention to the antivivisection movement. This was the hardest fight to win for the RSPCA and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the movement against animals used in scientific experiments is still an incredibly difficult fight. The cultural issue that hindered the RSPCA's fight against vivisection both during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and today is the idea

that, if the experiments are performed by trained professionals with no ill-will toward the animals and the experiments are designed to produce a treatment for humans (or even animals), then the vivisection is a necessary evil. Harriet Ritvo explains that the RSPCA's "attempt to posit a distinction between inflicting pain during 'justifiable' experiments and mere cruelty showed the founders of the society uneasily desiring to spare animals without discouraging research. Scientists, in their view, automatically belonged in a different moral category from drovers and omnibus drivers" (Ritvo 158). The RSPCA wanted to protect animals, but they also did not want to hinder scientists who were performing experiments important to advancing scientific knowledge or creating treatments that could benefit many living creatures.<sup>26</sup>

Many organizations were created during this time period to fight against animal experimentation and these groups were composed of ordinary men and women that did not belong to "fringe" groups (more on this below). There was public support for ending animal experimentation until the science community made a tremendous discovery in 1894:

The appeal of the antivivisectionist case was also weakened by proofs of the medical benefits of research on living animals, the discovery of the diphtheria antitoxin in 1894, which promised to save thousands of lives each year, was a decisive blow. By the early years of the twentieth century antivivisection had become a fringe movement, appealing to an assortment of feminists, labor activists, vegetarians, spiritualists, and others *who did not fit easily into the established order of society*. (Ritvo 162 [my italics])

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<sup>26</sup> Not all vivisections were performed for the benefits of humans, as there were experiments performed on dogs to create a treatment for distemper. Ritvo pg. 157



This discovery virtually ended the RSPCA's fight against vivisection as the public no longer felt the experiments were immoral after the treatment for diphtheria was discovered. The antivivisectionists became relegated to fringe movements that did not have public support or the support of powerful men. The latter fact is the issue that made the RSPCA so ineffective against vivisection from the beginning.

H.G. Wells lambasts the hypocrisy of the animal rights groups in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* through his depiction of Dr. Moreau and his dismissal of the narrator, Edward Prendick's, objections to vivisection: "'But,' said I, 'I still do not understand. Where is your justification for inflicting all this pain? The only thing that could excuse vivisection to me would be some application—' 'Precisely,' said he. 'But, you see, I am differently constituted. We are on different platforms;'" (Moreau 74). Moreau quickly dismisses Prendick because he is on a "different platform" and could not possibly understand a scientist's motivations because Prendick is not a scientist and thus an inferior type. The hubris of scientists in vivisection is explored by Wells regarding the pain that is inflicted on animals. Wells unveils more issues with the pro-vivisectionists throughout the novel that are influenced by the current events when the novel was written/published: hypocritical views of acceptable experiments, toxic masculinity, the types of animals used in the experiments. Most Wells scholars focus on Wells' criticism of scientists trying to prove that they can "improve" animals by bringing them closer to humans, in essence anthropomorphizing them: "Wells anachronistically blends science fiction and folktale in his novel so that his reader might recognize in Moreau's vivisections a form of anthropomorphism that is monstrous or grotesque for being

literalized” (Danta 697).<sup>27</sup> While Moreau wants to accomplish this anthropomorphic feat in the novel, there is more to Wells’ prose than this theme.<sup>28</sup>

There are many antivivisection novels that were written in the Late Victorian period, yet the only one that is well-known is Wells’ novel. The science fiction aspect plays a large role in the novel’s mass appeal<sup>29</sup>, but one aspect that is not well explored is that Wells’ antivivisection novel differs from his peers because of his focus on the animal. Anne DeWitt explains that Wells’ novel differs from “the majority of antivivisection novels: the vivisector in this book is not experimenting on human beings and no young woman becomes the victim of immoral science” (DeWitt 165). Wells’ choice not to make the vivisector more monstrous by experimenting on humans is incredibly important. As stated above, this is the only novel in this dissertation that has an obvious animal studies theme, yet one of the most important aspects of it is understudied. Wells not only chooses to make animal pain the focus of this novel, but he also spends time trying to understand the plight of experimented animals<sup>30</sup> that are the real victims of vivisection. The choice by other antivivisection novels to insert a female victim or put humans on the operating table, make vivisections into a parody rather than a serious issue. Wells displays his sympathy for the animals and his distaste for vivisections in three major plot points of the novel. The first two examples are parallels that Wells uses to criticize the masculine culture that stigmatizes men who feel sympathy for animals as

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<sup>28</sup> Other examples of this view that Moreau is predominantly a story about a vivisectionist trying to “improve” animals, see Clements, Jennifer. “How Science Fiction Helps Us Reimagine Our Moral Relations with Animals;” Yampell, C. When Science Blurs the Boundaries: The Commodification of the Animal in Young Adult Science Fiction.

<sup>29</sup> This also helps to explain one reason Wells is not respected more in the high literary circles.

<sup>30</sup> The plight of these animals can be unrealistic at times in the novel, especially when they are at their most “human” forms, but there is still a lot Wells is trying to teach his readers.

unmasculine. The last example is spread across the second half of the novel where Prendick tries to understand the beast people and while he is fearful of them, he empathizes with their plight at the hands of a mad scientist. I will argue that Wells sees the issues in his novel as more far reaching than a vivisectionist trying to anthropomorphize animals.

Beginning with the hypocrisy Wells criticizes in the novel, the readers see a very stark example by the difference in Prendick's actions in the chapters: "The Crying of the Puma" and "The Crying of the Man." In the chapter titled "The Crying of the Puma" Prendick is having a conversation with Montgomery who is the only other human on the island outside of Prendick and Moreau. As they are talking, the cries of pain from a puma can be heard on the other side of the door. Rather than be disgusted or disturbed by the cries of the puma, Prendick expresses annoyance:

I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance...The emotional appeal of those yells grew upon me steadily, grew at last to such an exquisite expression of suffering that I could stand it in that confined room no longer...The crying sounded even louder out of doors. It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe—I have thought since—I could have stood it well enough. It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us. (Moreau 35-6)

This moment is one of the most complicated scenes in the novel. Prendick's comment that "Pity comes troubling us," is a very revealing statement about the conflict he is feeling through the sounds of the puma's cries. Prendick has sympathy for the puma's pain and yet he feels that he cannot do anything about the cries other than walk away from the sound. The lack of action makes Prendick's words come across as apathetic because he expresses that the cries are "irritating." However, readers need to explore the full range of emotions that Prendick feels during these moments of painful cries.

Beginning with irritation, Prendick's reaction is a portrayal of the common person's reaction to hearing about animal experiments, then Prendick's growing pity for the puma showcases Wells' step forward in the antivivisection novel and empathy for the animals on the operating table.

Beginning with Prendick's comment that the cries were irritating, makes it seem that he does not feel sympathy or concern for the puma, and he is only worried about the irritation brought on by the puma's painful cries. Later in the novel, Prendick expresses his pragmatic apathy toward vivisection when he talks to Moreau about the experiments after learning the truth about Moreau's vivisections; "The only thing that could excuse such vivisection to me would be some application—" (Moreau 74) Moreau impatiently cuts off Prendick's explanation, but it is easy to predict where his sentence would have ended. Most of the public's view toward vivisection is that it is barbaric and unnecessary unless there is a positive application that results from the experiments, such as the diphtheria treatment. Readers should remember that Prendick's façade of morality toward vivisection does not urge him to burst into the operating room when he hears the puma's cries. Prendick has no knowledge of why Moreau is experimenting on animals at this

point in the novel, yet the facts that he did know—Moreau is a scientist, the island is designed to conduct experiments without outside influence, and those being experimented on are non-humans—are enough for Prendick to give Moreau the benefit of the doubt that the experiments are being conducted for some application that would benefit humanity. Thus, instead of feeling sympathy for the crying puma at first, Prendick expresses that the cries were “singularly irritating.” Prendick’s cold attitude toward the puma’s cries can be viewed by readers as being inhumane, cowardly, dispassionate, and immoral; but it also needs to be noted that Prendick’s reaction is a much more common reaction to vivisection than the feelings of immorality. This opening emotion toward the Puma’s cries are Wells’ criticism on humanity’s about-face with the antivivisection movement brought on by the diphtheria treatment.

Although science had produced a treatment for diphtheria on the operating table, Wells is displaying the pain and agony that has to be produced by the scientists in order to treat humans. Prendick’s initial reaction is the human capability of apathy toward animals. Prendick grows sympathetic to the puma’s cries, but it is the initial reaction and lack of action that condemn Prendick’s morality. Wells is commenting on humanity’s tendency to diminish the pain of non-human animals so long as there is a benefit for humanity. Humanity reveals their apathy toward animals when their strong resistance to vivisection is erased by one medical breakthrough. This erasure of strong public antivivisection sentiments is creating a space for more scientists like Moreau that Wells criticizes in a letter published in the *Saturday Review* in 1895: “Strange as it may seem to the unscientific reader...the manufacture of monsters—and perhaps even of quasi-human monsters—is within the possibilities of vivisection” (Wells 88). Wells wants the public to

realize just how powerful science can be on the operating table. There is no human benefit to surgically manipulating animals to become more human, and geneticists in Wells' time were discussing this possibility. Humans are willing to dismiss the pain that animals suffer in pointless experiments, so long as science is working toward some type of human betterment. Wells is criticizing humanity's lack of action (like Prendick) and warns that inhumane acts toward animals will continue if the public does not react accordingly. Wells has been proven right time and time again as scientists do not always experiment for the betterment of humanity: and in fact, many scientists experiment for the destruction of human lives. Within Wells' lifetime, scientists developed deadly nerve gas called "Soman" that was used in trench warfare in WWI. Soman was developed through primate experimentation (Singer 50).

Prendick's reaction is believable because of humanity's relationship with science. Others are constantly being exploited and abused in the scientific community. The most prevalent Other that is abused by science is the non-human animal, but there are examples of other groups that are ignored and/or abused by the scientific community. In terms of Prendick's predictable reaction to the puma's cries, Carol Adams explains that humans have a poor relationship with animals that are experimented-on due to the subject-object relationship humans have with animals:

Nonhuman animal experimentation is not an isolated case of animal oppression nor is it unrelated to human male dominance. Animal experimentation is inherent in the way men, especially privileged Euro-American men, have made themselves subjects in the world by making

others objects. The human male gaze—the arrogant eye of patriarchy—  
constructs animal experiments. (Adams *Beast* 54)

The arrogant male gaze dominates scientific study and is the driving force behind animals being seen as objects rather than subjects. They are viewed as substances for researchers to manipulate in the hopes of seeing a beneficial result for their experiment. As seen through the RSPCA's difficulty in condemning vivisection, the scientific community is a powerful community led by important members of society and influential men who protect their institutions through their arrogant male gaze. Animal experimentation is perhaps the least questioned form of animal exploitation/abuse. This is not to be confused with animal testing, which is often attacked by the public. Testing cosmetics or the toxicity of fumes on animals is often seen as unnecessary barbarism, which is why in the 21<sup>st</sup> century more and more companies are distancing themselves from animal testing. However, the argument against animal experimentation is still a fringe movement, much the same as it was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Adams explains that this problem is a result of too much faith in the scientific community that they are acting morally in what she calls a “dominant reality;”

The dominant reality is this: the belief in the necessity of animal experimentation is strongly entrenched. Though some may be saddened by the information that animals are experimented upon, they optimistically have faith that the experimenters are not inflicting cruel suffering, or at least not unnecessarily...Scientists can be irresponsible toward animal rights because they are focused on a “higher” right, the rights of humans to survive. (Adams *Beast* 46)

Much how Prendick gives Moreau the benefit-of-the-doubt that the puma's painful cries are for some greater good, the general public gives scientists permission to inflict pain upon animals in the blind faith that these experiments are working toward saving human lives. More importantly to the narrative of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, humans are blindly optimistic that the experiments are worth the pain and suffering of the animal. Wells is challenging his readers through the narrative of the novel when he makes the puma's cries unavoidable in an attempt to "terrify and revolt the ordinary reader" (DeWitt 179). Wells wants his readers to really question whether their blind faith in science is justified (more on this below in the Speciesism section).

Prendick's optimism is tested more than that of the general public, because he is within earshot of the animal's cries of pain. The proximity to the puma's pain, causes Prendick's initial reaction to soften as he begins to feel sympathy for the Puma: "It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us" (Moreau 35-6). Prendick is not an inhuman monster who can listen to the suffering of another living creature without feeling some empathy for the sheer physical pain they are enduring. However, Prendick only chooses to internalize these feelings which is why he does not take any action to stop Moreau. Prendick's reaction ranges from irritation to sympathy, yet there is no description of him needing to practice any restraint or rationalization of the puma's cries. He does not even need to vocalize or actively think that Moreau's experiments on the puma are acceptable. Prendick inherently believes that the experiments are justified. However, the readers see a stark contrast in Prendick's reaction two chapters later when the puma's cries change from animal to man.



In the chapter titled “The Crying of the Man,” Prendick finds himself once again in the room adjacent to the operating room. As he is eating a meal and asking Montgomery more questions about the island, he hears the cries of a human coming from the operating room:

Presently I heard something else, very faint and low. I sat as if frozen in my attitude. Though it was faint and low, it moved me more profoundly than all that I had hitherto heard of the abominations behind the wall.

There was no mistake this time in the quality of the dim, broken sounds; no doubt at all of their source. For it was groaning, broken by sobs and gasps of anguish. It was no brute this time; it was a human being in torment! As I realized this I rose, and in three steps had crossed the room, seized the handle of the door into the yard, and flung it open before me.

(Moreau 48)

All of Prendick’s optimistic faith is erased by the sound of a few sobs and groans he recognizes to be human. No longer is the doctor given the benefit-of-the-doubt as Prendick shows absolutely no restraint and bursts through the door to presumably save this person he hears in pain. The Anthropocene Engine is allowed to churn the bodies that feed science, until that body is a human. Beyond the shock this must have created for Prendick, there is cultural grooming that has led to his extreme reaction to hearing a human’s cries. Culture does not view humans as commodities for scientific experiments, but animals are seen as objects required to be used in science. For science, animals are just pieces of ecological matter whose “abstract and speculative valuation...determines the actual and ongoing production of nature as a commodity.” (Menely and Ronda 30).

Pain and suffering are tolerable (albeit irritating to listen to) for Prendick so long as that distance between human and animal is maintained. As soon as that barrier between human and non-human is destroyed, Prendick's restraint and blind faith in science is eliminated and his morality takes control of his actions. Prendick is a representative of the common person in the novel, which explains why his reactions are predictable throughout the story. Wells is criticizing the common culture that is represented through Prendick's conflicting reactions to pain. While humans may not be comfortable with the cries of an animal, they are less likely to react to the suffering in a meaningful way because that would go against society. As stated in the previous chapter, the ideals of society take precedence over the ideals of nature and humanity is afraid to challenge the status-quo, lest they become outcasts on the fringe.

The idea that humans are less likely to upset society over nature, goes at least as far back as Plutarch where he proclaims that "For my part I cannot think him a worse criminal that torments a poor creature while living, than a man that shall take away its life and murder it. But (as it seems) we are more sensible of what is done against custom than against Nature." (Plutarch) In the previous chapter this quote touched upon crimes of rape that were ignored by society; for Wells, this quote expands into vivisection, which is another category of crimes against nature that goes willfully ignored. In the case of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, vivisection goes willfully ignored by society because of the scientific breakthrough discussed above, but also because choosing to fight vivisection, meant that you were relegated to a fringe group.

I return to Ritvo's observation to emphasize the change in the antivivisection movement after the diphtheria treatment is discovered; "By the early years of the

twentieth century antivivisection had become a fringe movement, appealing to an assortment of feminists, labor activists, vegetarians, spiritualists, and others *who did not fit easily into the established order of society*" (Ritvo 162). This reaction to antivivisection speaks to an intrinsic problem with the white-male dominated scientific culture. The fight against vivisection in the span of ten years turned from a noble cause to a collection of small groups that most did not want to be associated with, due to the fear of being ostracized. This aspect of antivivisection is where the conversation about exotic animals starts to become more relevant. The exotic animal in Wells' novel certainly take on a different form in the beast-people, but these science fiction creatures are exactly what Wells is warning his readers about. If humans begin to question science's motivations instead of only focusing on the small number of medical breakthroughs that are a benefit to humanity, they will realize that they are being complicit in destroying countless animal lives. I am not trying to diminish the impact of medical breakthroughs that have saved many lives, but in a Utilitarian viewpoint (Singer) that views all sentient lives as equals, the amount of animal lives destroyed to get to these breakthroughs minimizes the impact the breakthroughs accomplish. These exotic animals are interesting for humans to observe (zoos), dominate (imperialism), and learn about (experimentation). In terms of how exotic animals are analogous to non-western humans, similar to how Wells uses an exotic animal (puma) as the focus of the pain of vivisection, so too does Leela Gandhi explain how India (a non-western continent) is victimized by vivisection: "In his mature political life [Mahatma] Gandhi continued to invoke the concerns and metaphors of vegetarianism and anti-vivisection, famously describing the partition of India as a vivisection of the subcontinent, the final and cruelest cut of imperial

rationality” (Gandhi, Leela 1643). Non-western peoples are subject to similar fates as the vivisectioned animals in terms of being manipulated to fit the needs of western culture, much the same as scientists manipulate animals to fit the needs of their experiments. Yet, a majority of the western world turns a blind eye to this cruelty and the dominant reality of this blindness rests in the toxic masculinity that fuels much of humanity’s actions.

### **Toxic Masculinity (Wells)**

Those living within the established order of society find the fringe humans intriguing, because they are different, but at the same time they want to keep these humans at a distance. Metaphorically, these fringe movements are best kept separated by bars like a zoo, so that society can watch and be entertained by them, but also avoid feeling threatened by their presence. Humans do not want to risk being put behind these zoo bars and separated from their comfortable societal life. This ostracization of antivivisection made it dangerous to join the fight against the scientific community. It became even more difficult to increase sympathy for animals on the operating table when the powerful science community used “female hysteria” as an explanation for why someone would be an antivivisectionist. The feminist movement was the most powerful movement against vivisection, but their power in society was still miniscule compared to the arrogant male gaze of the science community. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the science community used the negative views of feminism to their advantage with this public discourse of antivivisectionists:

Indeed, this association was so pronounced that across national contexts proponents of vivisection responded to their critics by characterizing antivivisection as an irrational sentimentality common in women but

unbecoming in men. Some went further still, asserting that the excessive love of animals intrinsic to antivivisection was a mental pathology. The French psychologist Pierre Janet thought antivivisectionism to be a specific form of feminine hysteria which he named ‘la zoophilie’ (Kirk 124)

The rhetoric about female hysteria and antivivisection can be explained with a modern term that is popular in animal studies and feminist studies: *toxic masculinity*. Toxic masculinity views sentimentality toward animals as a negative and undesirable trait for men. Toxic masculinity is the driving factor behind Prendick’s stark contrast of actions during the two chapters explored in the previous section. Female hysteria was a popular theme in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and coincided with the push for feminism that sought to dispel the dismissive views of men of science that treated hysteria as nothing more than a nuisance.<sup>31</sup> The most famous literary narrative involving female hysteria, “The Yellow Wallpaper” was published only four years before *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, and was a common term used to explain away issues that men did not want to better understand about the human psyche. It was not until the aftermath of WWI that psychologists began to recognize hysteria as a serious condition that occurs in men and women alike.<sup>32</sup>

Toxic masculinity is a theme that carries over from *The Island of Dr. Moreau* into *Heart of Darkness*, even though the examples are different because the narrators’ motivations and environments are not identical. Prendick’s motivation is self-

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<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 3 for a larger discussion on female hysteria and the response of men of science

<sup>32</sup> Chapter 3 goes into great detail about female hysteria and shellshock. For the purposes of this chapter, female hysteria is something that men did not want to be associated with, and thus sentimentality toward vivisected animals became less popular amongst men.

preservation, to survive on this island of beast-people and mad men. Prendick was wary of overstepping his bounds to intervene when he heard the puma's screams, lest he be ostracized and potentially set adrift at sea. In Marlow's story, his motivation throughout most of the novel is status and greed (reflections of the company that employs him). These motivations guide him toward immoral actions against the Africans in the form of violence and inaction against violence. Marlow also participates in immoral actions fueled by greed that allow for the persecution of elephants. Although both narrators have different motivations, the essence of toxic masculinity that drives Prendick and Marlow's actions are the same. Sentimentality toward Others (animals, women, non-white humans) was a weakness that hindered both scientific exploration (vivisection) and colonial expansion (Imperialism/Ivory trade). Prendick did not want to be seen as a weak man. This fact alone is the most prevalent explanation for all of his reasonings and excuses he expressed before learning the truth about the experiments. One reason he did not want to be seen as weak, was for survival; if he was a feeble man, the residents would have felt him to be a burden and they could have disposed of him. That reasoning is the "survival-of-the-fittest Darwinism" that is the most common interpretation of the novel. The less explored concept of Wells' novel is the critique of social Darwinism through the intersection of toxic masculinity. Gretchen Braun touches on this intersection of masculinity and Darwinism in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by pointing out the competing ideas that a character like Prendick (and by extension the readers) have to combat with:

Reason and its corollary self-regulation are coded as human, and particularly English and masculine, but compassion is creaturely, circulating across social hierarchies and species barriers. In both Darwin's

theory and Wells's novel, embodied empathy is figured as a practical means of group defense, and it reveals kinship that traverses culturally and philosophically sacrosanct divisions. (Braun 501)

The only place I disagree with Braun is that the novel does not establish embodied empathy as a group defense. Empathy throughout the novel leads back to “the house of pain” because embodied empathy will turn the masses against the master. By the end of Prendick's time on the island, the beast-people return to their natural ways and are no longer in groups, and while they are still beast-people there is no shared empathy, there is only the laws that Moreau invented to keep them submissive. The “Speciesism” section below takes a closer look at the laws that the beast people must follow and how Wells really tries to better understand non-human animals through his science fiction tale. For the toxic masculinity discussion, Wells is criticizing social Darwinism and his fellow antivivisectionist authors for the view of compassion as creaturely (Braun).

*The Island of Dr. Moreau* differed from its antivivisection novel contemporaries by omitting a young woman as the victim of the scientist. Wells' original draft of the novel did include a female character (Moreau's wife) that fit the popular trope of a young woman whose life is destroyed by a mad scientist. She also plays the role of love interest for Prendick. Wells ultimately chose to eliminate her from his final version of the novel in favor of portraying a more honest rebuttal of vivisection. Choosing not to keep Moreau's wife in the final version, allows the novel to provide “a far more detailed picture of the vivisector's research than antivivisection fiction usually presents” (DeWitt 178). The compassion that fuels the antivivisection movement is about the animals tortured on operating tables. Wells understands this, which is why he felt that including a

female character on this secluded island only cheapens the horrors that the animals suffer at the hands of Moreau. Wells is forcing his readers to sympathize with non-human animals instead of latching onto a sympathetic human character. Had Prendick acted to protect a woman, it would have been construed as chivalrous (masculine trait), but Wells wants us to face our culture of toxic masculinity by feeling sympathy for the puma's cries and the oppressed beast people. These feelings are not seen as chivalrous, instead they are seen as creaturely, sentimental, and unmasculine.

It would be seen as emasculating to empathize with these creatures, which is also why Montgomery tries to hide his sympathy for the beast-people; "I fancied even then that he had a sneaking kindness for some of the metamorphosed brutes, a vicious sympathy with some of their ways, but that he attempted to veil it from me at first" (Moreau 84). Prendick's criticism of Montgomery's sympathy is complicated because Prendick is struggling with his intrinsic masculinity that is fighting his own sympathy for the beast people. By claiming Montgomery's sympathy as "vicious" Prendick shows the hazards of sympathizing with the beast people. The obvious hazard of sympathizing with the beast people is that one would fall out of favor with Moreau, but Prendick is battling with his own feelings of sympathy for these creatures. Prendick is not ready to admit to himself that he feels empathy for the denizens of this island. However, Montgomery has lived on the island for a number of years already and sees the plight of the beast people with more sympathy because he understands them more than Prendick. Even after Moreau is killed and the island descends into madness, Prendick criticizes Montgomery's "evident sympathy with the Beast People," claiming that it "tainted him to me" (Moreau 101). Thus Prendick views Montgomery's embodied empathy as a weakness that



separates him from humanity, rather than as a vessel to traverse cultural and philosophical divisions. Prendick is fighting with his masculinity and his humanity at this point in the novel. He is afraid of descending into madness by his environment, and one of the ways that he is trying to avoid this is by empathizing with the beast people because he believes empathy for non-humans is uncivilized.

What many scholars seem to miss when they analyze animals in novels is that humans are usually taken further away from societal norms by the extent to which they sympathize with non-privileged animals.<sup>33</sup> Any empathy toward the beast people will make a human's rank in the social structure of this society tenuous. Disregarding the beast-people (despite Moreau's experiments, readers should never consider these creatures as human) there are only men living on this island by the time Prendick arrives. Therefore, Prendick needs to keep himself from falling to the bottom of the social ladder in this tiny society. In order to maintain his position within the established order, Prendick has to ignore the cries of the puma, lest he be seen as sentimental or hysterical. Any sign of weakness in regard to antivivisection would cast Prendick into the fringe and make him vulnerable.

After Moreau's and Montgomery's deaths, Prendick resorts to base instincts to survive amongst the beast people until he makes it back to England. Many scholars focus on the analogy Prendick makes at the end of the novel, that the separation between beast and human is more tenuous than humans realize. I would argue that Prendick's view of humanity as being interchangeable with animality is a battle against sentimentality.

Instead of an increased sympathy for suffering in the world brought on by his revelations

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<sup>33</sup> Chapter 3 goes into greater detail about this category. In short, common pets (cats and dogs) along with wildlife that are highly protected (whales, lions, elephants, etc.) are privileged animals that humans are allowed to sympathize with, without the risk of chastisement.

on the island, Prendick's view of humans acting like beast people gives him reason to feel more irritated than sympathetic to their plights, much the same as the puma. Prendick expresses this apathy when he states:

pale workers go coughing by me with tired eyes and eager paces, like wounded deer dripping blood; old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves... Particularly nauseous were the blank, expressionless faces of people in trains and omnibuses; they seemed no more my fellow-creatures than dead bodies would be... (Moreau 137)

Prendick does not learn to be more sympathetic to the plights of compromised or weak individuals who are abused by society. Prendick concludes that man and beast deserve equal apathy, and the best solution for self-preservation is to avoid both completely. A society of toxic masculinists conditioned Prendick to never feel empathy for those weakened by society whether they are a human or an animal. Every animal (human and non-human) became exotic to Prendick and therefore no longer garnered any sympathy. Even after surviving for months on the island following Moreau and Montgomery's deaths, learning to live in the wilderness, befriending some of the beast people out of necessity, and nearly going insane, the moment Prendick readapts to civilized society he is back to his old ways of disregarding the weak. This is Wells' final message to the reader that if humanity continues to distance itself from the weaker creatures (human and non-human), isolation will be the only ending for humanity. Prendick's Darwinian thoughts in these final moments show how lonely he has become and just how sadly his story of apathy toward the weak and vulnerable has ended. Humanity is destined to isolate itself from the rest of the animal kingdom if it continues down this course and in

the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are many that would claim we have already achieved that loneliness. In a national perspective, England is destined to become isolated from the larger world if they do not recognize a kinship with the vulnerable nations they have influence over, and this is precisely the message Conrad wants to convey in *Heart of Darkness*.

### **Toxic Masculinity (Conrad)**

Conrad's protagonist, Marlow, is also prone to toxic masculinity throughout *Heart of Darkness* and one example in particular is striking in its similarities to Prendick's reaction to the puma's cries. In part I of the novel, Marlow is a few hundred miles into his journey when his steamer's hull is damaged, and he needs to wait at a docking station for repairs. While waiting for his steamer to be repaired there is an incident involving a hut burning to the ground. Nobody was hurt during the fire, but the suspected perpetrator was beaten:

The shed was already a heap of embers glowing fiercely. A nigger was being beaten nearby. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly. I saw him, later, for several days, sitting in a bit of shade looking very sick and trying to recover himself; afterwards he arose and went out—and the wilderness without a sound took hm into its bosom again. (Conrad 428)

This beaten African man is treated horribly because he is accused of causing “the fire in some way,” not because he did cause the fire, or that someone saw him burn the hut. This man is being beaten as a show of force and punishment, not because he is guilty of anything. The company men needed a scapegoat in this situation to display their strength.

Despite the fact that this man may have been unjustly punished, Marlow's description lacks any sympathy for him. This reaction can be attributed to the environment within which Marlow finds himself—surrounded by greedy men who are in this camp to prosper from the company. Most of the Africans are just trying to survive this white man invasion relatively unscathed, and the easiest way for them to survive this invasion is to make themselves useful to whatever the white men need. This beaten man does not survive unscathed, and we see him return to the wilderness for comfort.

Marlow's description that the wilderness took him into its bosom is obvious symbolism of motherly love<sup>34</sup> designed to comfort the beaten man. Two aspects of this comfort are important for this discussion. First, this man will find no sympathy in this camp of toxic masculinity, which requires him to withdraw into the African wilderness; a wilderness that is predominantly described as a primeval and savage environment. The African wilderness is used in this moment to welcome and comfort a man who cannot find these kindnesses in a camp of ruthless and greedy men. This contrasting view of the African wilderness leads into the second aspect that is important: nature being a refuge to comfort this man from the pains he suffered at the hands of society. This man was a victim of the Anthropocene Engine and, despite the contempt shown to him from those around him, the reader sees an individual story and example of a person being chewed up by the engine of colonial exploration. The empiric domination ideal of Marlow and the company he works for has degraded nature in favor for profit and colonialism, this beaten

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<sup>34</sup> While the topic of feminism will come up briefly in this chapter, I acknowledge that it is not enough to do the conversation justice and that I am only being brief with this theme to keep the arguments in this chapter focused on race and speciesism.

man is a victim of the Capitalocene<sup>35</sup> that fuels the engine in *Heart of Darkness*. We see a prime example of the Capitalocene and how “for capitalism, Nature is ‘cheap’ in a double sense: to make Nature’s elements ‘cheap’ in price; and also to cheapen, to degrade or to render inferior in an ethico-political sense, the better to make Nature cheap in price” (Moore 2). While ivory is not cheapened in the novel, the rest of African Nature is cheapened, including the natives who are overwhelmingly conjoined with the African wilderness by Marlow and the other white men. By combining the value of human lives with the wilderness, the company and Marlow create an excuse to be apathetic toward their plight. The human lives are cheapened and thus they are deprived of sympathy from their fellow humans by their connection to their native land. Marlow envisions the African wilderness as motherly and caring for the African man because that is the only way he can envision something having sympathy for the man. There will be no human sympathy, only feral/savage sympathy from the wilderness. It is a bothersome vision because the value of the African Nature is devalued, thus the value of motherly love is subsequently devalued. Just the same as toxic masculinity devalues sentimentalism, so too does it devalue this man even more by retreating back into the bosom of Nature. The man is looked at to be less masculine because he seeks out womanly sentimental love from mother nature. The only value to be found is in strength and masculinity. The beaten man is devalued by going to nature for sympathy.

The importance of pointing out that this individual is given a moment in this novel for the readers to feel sympathy and understand the heartless atmosphere of this society is Conrad’s contribution to an Anthropocene conversation on a micro level. Much

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<sup>35</sup> A modern term coined by Jason Moore that replaces the term Anthropocene with a more focused word (Capitalocene) that explores the effects of capitalism on nature and animals.

of *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* examines non-human animals on an individual level because the vast majority of Anthropocene writing does not look at animals on a micro level, and so too does the Anthropocene often fail to acknowledge the individual level of non-white peoples. In *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Kathryn Yusoff criticizes the rhetoric of the Anthropocene that constantly uses “we” to gloss over the individuals that are affected by the geological epoch, in particular the racialized “we” of the native peoples of lands like Africa that are victimized by the Anthropocene;

To be included in the “we” of the Anthropocene is to be silenced by a claim to universalism that fails to notice its subjugations, taking part in a planetary condition in *which no part* was accorded in terms of subjectivity.

The supposed “we” further legitimizes and justifies the racialized inequalities that are bound up in social geologies. (Yusoff 12)

The rhetoric of the Anthropocene is guilty of only looking at the epoch from a universal viewpoint that focuses on the vast changes of human intervention, and either overlooking or purposely ignoring the individuals who participate (willingly or not) in the geological changes. While it may not be obvious that this beaten man is a victim of the Anthropocene, the fact is that he is just as much a victim of the Anthropocene as the vivisected puma in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. This man is put into this encampment through the actions of imperial Europe and its attempt to dominate the natural African landscape. His life is cheapened by the capitalistic endeavors of the ivory trade, which in turn makes him expendable to the rest of the men in the camp. Thus, when his actions allegedly threaten the materials in the camp, he is beaten to serve as an example for

others and can only find sympathy from the Anthropocene in the African wilderness' bosom.

Not only does Marlow take no actions to defend the man, but the other white men in the camp are also apathetic and angry; “the beaten nigger groaned somewhere. ‘What a row the brute makes!’ said the indefatigable man with the mustaches, appearing near us. ‘Serve him right. Transgression—punishment—bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That’s the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future’” (Conrad 469). Marlow then demonstrates that he will not go against the powers in the camp and decides to walk away; “The hurt nigger moaned feebly somewhere nearby, and then fetched a deep sigh that made me mend my pace away from there” (Conrad 469). Marlow’s actions toward this beaten man are almost identical to Prendick’s actions toward the vivisected puma. Marlow quickly walks in the opposite direction of the beaten man because he does not want to risk his status with the white men. It is understood that the European men lack empathy for the Africans, and while Marlow’s thoughts reveal he has some empathy for the man, he makes sure not to show any sympathy for the Africans, lest he be labelled as sentimental and thus be ostracized.

Marlow’s thoughts show that he feels some sympathy for the beaten man, and an earlier instance in the novel involving a grove of death also provide readers with an example that Marlow is not devoid of morals: “‘They were dying slowly—it was very clear: They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom’” (Conrad 281). Marlow even goes as far to give one of these suffering Africans a piece of bread as an act of kindness. Marlow is not as morally defunct as the company he

works for, which is shown through the acknowledgment of the beaten man and the moment to recognize the pointless suffering of these dying people. Conrad shows that when faced with horrible human cruelty, Marlow has the capability to recognize it, and sometimes act kindly. However, the many instances of racism in which Marlow participates condemn him and the novel. Marlow's lack of attention to the individuals, and Conrad's decision to make the narrative ambivalent is a choice that hurts the anti-imperialism message and creates a complicity with racism rather than an attack on it.

### **Racism in Heart of Darkness**

While recognizing the dying people in the “greenish gloom” Marlow still lacks the attention to detail to show that he cares about the Africans beyond their imagery. Dominick LaCapra credits Marlow for acknowledging the death, but also criticizes this scene's “objectifications of the other who is not presented in a recognizably human form or as having a voice” (LaCapra 35). The racism shown in the example of the beaten man, demonstrates the exotic element that makes it easy for the white men to separate themselves from the African natives. Racism and Speciesism intertwine often in animal studies, in the same vein that feminist studies and animal studies often intertwine.<sup>36</sup> Typically, when discussing toxic masculinity, the conversation will focus on male-female dichotomies, but it is important to understand when discussing *Heart of Darkness* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* that toxic masculinity does not only show itself around females. In fact, women can also be guilty of participating in toxic masculinity when they encourage and aid the actions of racism and speciesism that are generated by cultural pressures to dominate vulnerable people and animals. In terms of exotic animals (this

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<sup>36</sup> As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3



case includes humans and non-humans because both lack individuality due to being foreign animals) the element of toxic masculinity that the white empire must dominate the foreigners appears in both male and female characters in Conrad's novel. Marlow's aunt is very much participating in toxic masculinity in the early pages of the novel when she feels triumphant in her actions to get Marlow the job with the company; "She talked about weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways,' till, upon my word, she made me quite uncomfortable. I ventured to hint that the company was run for profit" (Conrad 209). Toxic masculinity is a cultural disease that creates thought patterns for those in power to look down on those without power. In the example of Marlow's aunt, she believes that the company is liberating the "savages" in Africa with English imperialism as if it is a divine right. Marlow has to remind her that the company is just doing this for a profit. While Marlow's aunt is participating in toxic masculinity, this is another example of the sexism that also exists in this novel. Marlow's aunt is playing a stereotypical Victorian female role by celebrating the actions of men of power so she can vicariously live through Marlow's opportunities that would never be afforded to her, despite showing that she has drive and ambition. In terms of the racism and speciesism of this scene, the cultural toxic masculinity has corrupted Marlow's aunt to believe that the white imperialists are superior to the exotic people and animals without knowing anything about the foreign cultures other than what imperialists want the public to believe.

The exotic is viewed by the English in prideful ways that are seen more as a challenge to dominate, rather than an opportunity to learn more about another people, place, or animal they hardly understand. The English imperialists do not want to learn

how to coexist with exotic races, places, environments etc.; they want to completely dominate and exploit them. Exotic animals are sources of income, or they are obstacles to be eliminated. There seems to be no middle ground with non-humans that are not native to England. Western culture had no desire to learn from their exotic neighbors both human and nonhuman. Pumas are excellent subjects for vivisection; African natives are either viewed as tools or savage beasts; and elephants (whom will be explored in detail below) virtually do not exist past their tusks.

Some Conrad scholars claim that the novel is written to provide readers with a “sense of being invaded by outside forces” (Ed. Carola Kaplan 283); through Conrad’s attack on imperialism and the showing of inhumane acts throughout the novel. *Heart of Darkness* has been praised to be a novel that “was able to solicit a direct and personal identification...from a wide range of readers who have felt themselves not merely entertained or enlightened by his work, but in a sense represented in it” (Harpham 19). However, what the novel is really portraying is a white man’s perspective of how Africa was invaded. The issue with this perspective is that this white man (Marlow) never fully immerses himself into the African culture or even makes a heartfelt attempt to learn their culture. The readers get a sense from Marlow that he sympathizes with the African natives, but instead of trying to learn more about them, he just props them up as faceless examples of imperialism’s cruelty. This is where the novel begins to age poorly. Without context, the novel’s attempt to garner sympathy and outrage from the reader can only do so from the white man’s perspective. The readers cannot generate sympathy for the Africans’ plights without taking a lot of liberty with the subtext. Conrad’s choice to write a novel that “is so intimately, if perhaps covertly, concerned with this ambivalent

enterprise... that *Heart of Darkness* is the most notoriously evasive, contradictory, perhaps finally indeterminate of all Conrad's fictions" (Freedman 36), condemns this novel as a racist and speciesist novel. We feel sympathy during the moments that Marlow wants us to feel sympathetic, but that misses the point Conrad's novel is trying to prove. The novel wants to unveil the horrors of an empiric/greedy invasion of a continent that is already oppressed by the white man. The main problem with the novel is that its vagueness causes the victims to become props instead of characters.

The idea of African natives being viewed as tools is a topic that has been explored by Conrad scholars; one of the more influential commentators, Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, critiques this aspect of viewing African natives in the novel as he attacks Conrad's "perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind" (Achebe 8). Conrad is a victim of toxic masculinity in some scholars' eyes. This criticism is an example of how important it is to keep in mind that the culture is inescapable even for these authors that were aware of the shortfalls of their society. The systematic racism that existed in the late Victorian era influenced Conrad's writing, and one systematic issue that plagues this novel is that the exotic does not need to be understood on a micro level. To keep his writing more artful, Conrad chose ambiguity over detail throughout the entire novel. The choice in 1899 to write ambiguously about people, cultures, and animals you do not understand was not seen as a problem. As Western societies grew, that idea to avoid micro details about peoples and animals you do not understand was recognized as systemic racism and speciesism. If humans choose not to try and understand the plights of those foreign to them, they will

never be able to sympathize with foreign individuals and thus never seek to change themselves and their society for the better.

Conrad is guilty of classifying the Africans by common clichés through the way Marlow describes the natives: “the man seemed young—almost a boy—but you know with them it’s hard to tell” (Conrad 306). Even when Marlow has an opportunity to give his helmsman (an African man) greater characterization by recognizing his life and his cultural significance, Marlow can only think of him through a distant kinship:

Perhaps you will think it passing strange this regret for a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara. Well, don’t you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back—a help—an instrument. It was a kind of partnership. He steered for me—I had to look after him, I worried about his deficiencies...And the intimate profundity of that look he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory—like a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment. (Conrad 947)

This is a beautiful moment for Marlow and only Marlow. Once again, the only sympathy the readers are directed to feel is the sympathy of *Marlow’s* loss. We do not know nearly enough about the helmsman beyond his use to Marlow and how much Marlow will miss him—although he will not be missed too much as shown by the use of “distant kinship.” The distant kinship is exactly the problem of racism in the novel. There is no legitimate attempt by Marlow or Conrad to better understand the Africans. That is why Achebe can claim that “Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That is simple truth glossed over in criticisms of his work

is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unnoticed” (Achebe 8).

The lack of individuality for the Africans is akin to the lack of individuality for non-human animals in every novel explored in *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*. Marlow does not tell an African individual’s story throughout the entire novel, even the examples of the beaten man, the grove of death, the African woman at Kurtz’s camp, and the dead helmsman all lack attention from Marlow that shows the readers they are more than just plot devices. Without taking the time to acknowledge the individuality of any of these African characters through an examination of why they act a certain way or trying to understand their point of view, Marlow props them up for some type of message or example that lacks understanding of their stories. This truth about Conrad’s choice to deprive the Africans of any individuality is also a negative quality of how the Anthropocene rhetoric groups together black and brown bodies into a universalized group that Yusoff described above; and further illustrates the interconnection of speciesism and racism demonstrated by how writers in the Anthropocene focus too much on macro ideas that ignore the individuals.

In his essay, “Postcolonial Critique in a Multispecies World” Neel Ahuja examines the interconnection of racism and speciesism in animal studies. He details that there has been a transition in species critiques that are finally beginning to recognize the links between species and race in regard to transnational power. He specifies Africa in his analysis: "By tracing circulation of nonhuman species as both figures and materialized bodies within the circuits of imperial biopower, species critique helps scholars reevaluate 'minority' discourses and enrich histories of imperial encounters" (Ahuja 228). The

importance of Achebe's criticism brings greater depth to Ahuja's critique of speciesism and racism when applied to *Heart of Darkness*. The African characters throughout the novel are primarily used as props who are interesting based solely on their exoticism. Ahuja's critique of imperial biopower is relevant with the exotic nature of the Africans and its relationship to an absent animal that plays a critical role in the narrative of the novel.

### **Speciesism**

Elephants are the animals at the center of *Heart of Darkness*, yet the animals themselves are not present in the novel. Elephants are victims of the company's violence and are never once given a moment of acknowledgement from any character in the novel. Once again, Conrad's choice to write this novel with a great degree of ambiguity creates more harm than good for the victims of his novel. These animals are treated the same way that Conrad treats the African people and the environment as Carrie Rohman links the elephants with the racism that is prevalent in the novel:

Indeed, Africa's material body is invaded by the European: the very real violence against elephant bodies in the ivory trade parallels the colonist violence done to Africans. Of course the speciesist ideology, which justifies violence against elephants, also justifies violence against Africans, as Conrad's tale reveals. (Rohman 52)

All of the violence committed in the novel by the imperialists is condoned so long as it is in the favor of the company and by extension the white man. Neither African humans nor African elephants are exempt from this violence. All the horror is done under the name of empire and capitalism.

Just as Achebe criticized Conrad for being a racist and using African peoples as props, so too does Conrad come across as speciesist by diminishing the living value of animals throughout the novel. To emphasize how Conrad purposefully trivializes animals and nature, Greg Winston states: “Jungle trees and vegetation do make an appearance, ‘but these are not individual species, just a solid undifferentiated mass.’ In their anonymity, they resemble the seldom specified African people” (Winston 47). The anonymity of everything exotic in the novel deprives a lot of the African environment and peoples any power, which reveals that imperialism does not and will not bother to learn about foreigners whether they take the form of humans, plants, or animals. In fairness, one aspect of Conrad’s ambiguity helps with the main theme of the horrors of imperialism: the lack of individuality makes a statement that the English people are willfully ignorant when they read or react to the exotic without learning about the individuals. However, the downside to Conrad’s ambiguity is that it maintains that distance between the reader and the victims with a lack of knowledge of how imperialism is destroying the Africans. In Conrad’s attempt to put the horrors of imperialism on display in this novel while trying to maintain his ambiguity creates too much distance for the readers to sympathize with the victims. Conrad does not hide that the colonists are racist and think very little of the African peoples, yet that is obvious and does not add much to the conversation of the horrors taking place in the African Congo. While Conrad clearly felt that “explicitness...is fatal to the glamour of all artistic work, robbing it of all suggestiveness, destroying all illusion” (Conrad and Armstrong 302); this “artistic” choice is primarily why readers find it hard to sympathize with these anonymous victims that Conrad never spends time defining. Wells, on the other hand, was ambiguous

throughout most of his novel, but the moments where readers have to face the horrors inflicted on the beast people, they understand better what damage the humans have caused to the animals due to the fact that Wells illustrates the destruction of their psyche when Prendick meets the Sayers of the Law.

In the chapter “The Sayers of the Law” Prendick is hiding from Moreau, because he is under the misconception that Moreau is experimenting on humans and trying to turn them into beast people.<sup>37</sup> During his frantic escape from the laboratory, Prendick stumbles into a hut where a group of beast people are gathered to recite the laws of the land. While in this hut, Prendick learns of a number of different animals that have suffered at the hands of Moreau. In the simple and subtle acknowledgement of the different species of animals in this hut, Wells is already establishing a culture and individuality amongst the beast people. There is a sloth-like creature, an Ape-man, a Skye-terrier etc. that are described when Prendick sees them as an acknowledgement that these beast people still hold on to some individuality. The acknowledgement of the different species of beast people is in contrast with the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* who are not even recognized by the different tribes to which they belong. The readers of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* even glean a hierarchy in the separation of species, when the Ape-man describes Prendick: “‘It is a man,’ gabbled my conductor, ‘a man, a man, a five-man like me’” (Moreau 57). The chapter indicates that the closer one beast person looks to Moreau, the more superior they are: such as having five fingers. However, the learning of the laws is the final psychological destruction Wells shows the readers. The laws are Moreau’s attempts to completely eliminate the beast peoples’ animality and

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<sup>37</sup> This is also a comment on most of the antivivisection novels and how they chose human subjects instead of animals.



integrate them fully into humans. Of course, the climax of the novel shows the futility of this process, but in this chapter, when Moreau still has full control, the laws are a glimpse into the hubris that a vivisector possesses:

“Not to go on all fours; that is the Law. Are we not men?”

“Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?”

“Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that is the Law. Are we not Men?”

“Not to claw the Bark of Tress; that is the Law. Are we not Men?”

“Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men? (Moreau 59)

In addition to these laws, the group of beast people also list deity-like proclamations of Moreau; “His is the House of Pain. His is the Hand that makes. His is the Hand that wounds. His is the Hand that heals...His is the lightning flash...His is the deep salt sea” (Moreau 59).

Although, Prendick never admits his empathy for the beast people, and even criticizes Montgomery for openly admitting that he feels sympathy for them, this chapter marks the greatest contribution to Wells’ novel. This recitation of the laws and the deification of Moreau is tragic. Humanity—in its attempt to learn more about animals and nature through vivisection—is removing all of the animality<sup>38</sup> that these creatures possess. They lose their subjectivity and become things to be manipulated for human designs. Not only are they changed physically, but to complete their transformation, Moreau forces them to hypnotically recite the laws that strip them of their animality. Wells wants us to recognize the horrors brought to animals by our hubris. Moreau is guilty of performing the experiments, but humanity’s willing ignorance that gives scientists *carte blanche* to perform their experiments under the guise of “human

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<sup>38</sup> The word is being used as a synonym for “humanity” in this context.

betterment” is stripping animals of their personhood<sup>39</sup>. Humanity has to face these difficult images that Wells presents in order to understand just how dangerous our blind faith in science is to the animal kingdom. Wells takes time in his novel to acknowledge both the physical and mental suffering of the animals. He even makes nuanced recognitions of how the different species are affected; the ape-man being proud of having “five fingers;” the Skye-terrier being the one entrusted to teach the laws to the newly transformed; the cat species’ being directly instructed with the law: “Not to claw the Bark of Tress.” Wells does not spend a lot of time describing the pains for different species, but he takes the time to acknowledge that they are not a homologous group of beast people. They each suffer from the same hand, but they do not suffer the same. This differentiation of how the victims are affected in Wells’ novel is what is ultimately missing from Conrad’s novel. By making the ambiguity so deep in his novel, *Heart of Darkness* has difficulty convincing modern readers that it is not a racist or speciesist novel.

There is no greater example of ambiguity condemning this as a speciesist novel than the way Conrad uses ivory. For an animal studies reading it is impossible to see the word ivory and NOT think of the elephants who have been hunted to near extinction because of their ivory tusks. The issue is that hardly any of Conrad’s readers today see the word ivory and recognize that the product was extracted from the body of an animal. Whereas Achebe critiques the representation of the African people as being no better than props for Marlow’s journey, elephants do not even get on the stage. The word ivory is

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<sup>39</sup> “Personhood” is becoming more common when discussing individuality and animals. It is a word used to recognize that animals deserve to be recognized as sentient beings with their own wants and needs. Personification is not explicitly human and should not be thought as a sole human trait. See: Keenleyside, Heather. *Animals and Other People: Literary Forms and Living Beings in the Long Eighteenth Century*.

used 31 times throughout the novel, and the noun elephant is used once, primarily as a signifier for just how much ivory an African woman is wearing around her neck; “innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck. ... She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her” (Conrad 1150).<sup>40</sup> Thus, in the lone mentioning of an elephant, it is in regard to ivory more than the actual animal. Conrad’s choice for ivory being the main commodity that the company exports is worth noting, because rubber was the main resource being extracted from Africa when the novel was published. However, rubber was not as sought after in 1890 when Conrad travelled in the Congo. Conrad’s journey on a steamboat up the Congo River is the inspiration and basis for *Heart of Darkness* and in 1890 ivory was being extracted at higher numbers than rubber. The rubber trade exploded a few years after Conrad’s visit (Jasanoff). Conrad’s audience was well-aware of the value of ivory, as it has been estimated that the United Kingdom imported an average of 500 tons of ivory a year between 1850 and 1910, which averages out to more than 15,000 elephants killed a year just for their tusks. (Atkinson 52). Yet despite these monstrous numbers, Conrad’s lack of acknowledgement of elephants is scarcely noted by critics. *Heart of Darkness* is not in the same literary category as *The Island of Dr. Moreau* as Conrad’s novel has an overabundance of scholarly research. Therefore, the lack of animal studies approaches (there are some ecocritical studies that focus on elephants<sup>41</sup>) to this novel is just as astounding as the number of elephants killed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>40</sup> Also note the misogyny in the use of the single female African in the novel is a prop for materialism by using her to describe just how much jewelry she wears.

<sup>41</sup> See Meyers, Jeffrey and Mathes McCarthy, Jeffrey. “‘A Choice of Nightmares’: Ecology and Heart of Darkness”

In terms of imperialistic damage, elephants are amongst the greatest victims of European invaders and much like the racist approach to the African natives being relatively unexplored until Achebe's essay in 1975, the speciesist approach to elephants must now be explored by literature scholars. There have been a few essays over the last twenty years that give attention to elephants, but the scholarship is too focused around the comparisons to ivory instead of focusing on the elephants as individuals. Just as *Heart of Darkness* only values ivory, so too do scholars fail to see the importance of each, and every elephant murdered in the name of commerce. The sheer unimportance of ivory to human survival separates this conversation from the farmed animal conversation in the previous chapter. The absent referent<sup>42</sup> of the ivory is much more tragic and frivolous than using a cow's milk which is at least consumed by humans for health purposes,<sup>43</sup> because the death of an elephant for its tusks is just to satisfy some human desire for material power. Whereas Wells unveils the absolute useless horror of vivisection, and the power scientists will enforce on their victims if they do not need to fear public scrutiny or backlash—Conrad's ambiguity again fails to truly condemn imperialism's capacity for cruelty. Readers get a sense of imperialism's cruelty to Africans as a homologous group<sup>44</sup> but they do not even witness a single elephant body throughout the entire novel. Wells pushed the boundary of antivivisection novels by taking time to acknowledge the animal culture; Conrad's novel only falls into the same tired cliché of failing to acknowledge the animals as living sentient beings. There is no logical explanation for Conrad to exclude elephants. The nonchalance with which Conrad uses the word ivory would suggest that it

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<sup>42</sup> See Carol Adams in Chapter 1

<sup>43</sup> The actual "health" benefits of drinking the milk of another species are being actively debunked in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. See Chapter 1

<sup>44</sup> The previous section explains the problem with the lack of individuality in the novel, particularly for the Africans

was a natural resource that grew in Africa, like the trees that produced rubber sap. The problem with this idea is that even in Conrad's time, nearly everyone knew ivory came from elephants: "The text's silence on the subject of elephants is strange. There is no reason to exclude elephants from the story. Everyone knew where ivory came from. People were worried that the elephant population might not survive the depredations of the trade. In British colonies, tusks weighing less than sixty pounds per pair were becoming contraband" (Atkinson 54).

The killing of elephants for material or trophies is the height of human immorality toward animals. While elephants are not alone in this category of utterly pointless destruction, they do receive a considerable amount of attention to this day. Matthew Scully berates hunters who kill elephants for ivory or trophies in his book *Dominion* where he not only notes the immorality, but also goes beyond most ecocritical authors to detail the complexities of an elephant's capabilities in life:

How could anyone find pleasure in shooting an 8,000-pound mammal who has been walking the earth for forty or fifty-odd years, who lives in a complex family structure, needs fourteen or fifteen years to rear the young, charges only in defense of the calves or of the herd, has been observed bringing food to sick members of the herd and even aiding the young of other species. (Scully 75)

Scully does the work that so many scholars fail to acknowledge when discussing animals, he details the individuality of the animal. Elephants are known to have complex family structures, and when one of the herd is killed, it creates a ripple effect that has shown to doom the entire family. In addition, the peaceful qualities of the elephants must be

acknowledged when discussing the sheer destruction of the species over a frivolous thing such as ivory. Elephants hold nearly every physical advantage possible over a human and require very powerful weaponry to be killed. Before the invention of the high-powered rifle, it would take a team of humans to kill a single elephant, and even that was not a guarantee (Atkinson).

The way Wells subtly describes minor cultural differences between the species on Moreau's island such as the Ape-man's pride about having five fingers, or how the cat species were singled out in the laws, creates a better understanding and appreciation for the animals' plights. You can read all of *Heart of Darkness* without thinking about elephants, despite the fact that the entire journey hinges on the existence of elephants to provide the ivory.

From a speciesist perspective, some may point to the hippopotamus anecdote in the novel told to Marlow while he is stranded at the station, waiting for rivets:

There was an old hippo that had the bad habit of getting out on the bank and roaming at night over the station grounds. The pilgrims used to turn out in a body and empty every rifle they could lay hands on at him. Some even had sat up o' nights for him. All this energy was wasted, though.

'That animal has a charmed life,' he said; 'but you can say this only of brutes in this country. No man—you apprehend me?—no man here bears a charmed life.' (Conrad 509)

This passage is infuriating for an animal studies scholar. The bullet repellent hippo can be used as a metaphor for all the animals that are not so lucky, primarily all of the elephants who are killed by high powered rifles. Conrad's choice to only recognize one animal

during an anecdote shows a complete speciesist disregard for the animals suffering at the hands of imperialists. Why give this anecdotal hippo so much attention when the rest of Africa's animals (especially the elephant) are grouped together as part of the wilderness? Because the hippo proves to be enough of a nuisance to the company that it gains the status of individualism? There is no clear answer why Conrad would create an anecdote about a hippo that wanders around its natural habitat, and never acknowledge the existence of elephants. It can be interpreted that Conrad wanted readers to dismiss elephants as being parts of the ivory trade, since he explicitly makes them nonexplicit.

It is important for readers to remember that an elephant was attached to every piece of ivory mentioned throughout *Heart of Darkness* and the lack of acknowledgement from every character in the novel should be a major theme that scholars and teachers convey as there is a direct correlation to the lack of empathy for the elephants and the racism against the Africans. Just as the African's sufferings are used collectively to represent imperialist violence without a true understanding of how the violence and invasion affect the mentality and culture of the African humans, the novel reduces elephants to a single absent referent, ivory. Many scholars point out the ivory quote from the text where it is deified "The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse" (Conrad 408). Even Marlow recognizes the stupidity of the ivory obsession, and his following comment referencing a corpse, acknowledges the death behind the deification of ivory. Marlow knows that this obsession is stupid and violent, but that does not stop him from accepting the job and contributing to the stupidity; because there is a profit for him if he goes along with the imbeciles. The best

example of this imbecilic deification of ivory throughout the novel is Kurtz. Marlow's recognition of the company's "imbecile rapacity" can be seen when one considers that Marlow stands out from the rest of the white men in the novel as he shows sympathy toward the Africans. But Marlow's sympathy has limits, and he does not risk much (certainly not his standing amongst the white men) to aid the Africans. Thus, Marlow's inaction is seen by many as complicity with the company's greed and is a parallel for Conrad's choice to point out the cruelties of imperialism, but never detail the effects it has on the different peoples of Africa.

While there are numerous texts that detail Kurtz's imperialistic downfall from powerful imperialist to animalistic savage destroyed by the African Wilderness; this discussion calls for a different view of Kurtz that enhances the idea of his savagery. Kurtz is a savage, not because he adopts African habits (that analysis has been rightly defined as racist) but because of the lengths he will go through to obtain "more ivory than all the other agents together" (Conrad 884). The readers are given a glimpse of how far Kurtz will go to obtain ivory as the Russian explains to Marlow;

You can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man. No, no, no! Now—just to give you an idea—I don't mind telling you, he wanted to shoot me, too, one day—but I don't judge him.' 'Shoot you!' I cried. 'What for?' 'Well, I had a small lot of ivory the chief of that village near my house gave me. You see I used to shoot game for them. Well, he wanted it, and wouldn't hear reason. He declared he would shoot me unless I gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country, because he could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to



prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased. And it was true, too. I gave him the ivory. (Conrad 1055)

Kurtz will stop at nothing to obtain as much ivory as possible knowing full well that he has the backing of the company and European imperialism to give him both the authority and the immunity to kill whomever he pleases in the name of ivory.

This story from the Russian is the sole example of any violence being directly linked to ivory, and it is only a threat to kill the Russian. Even when discussing the ways Kurtz obtains the ivory, the words used are “collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen” (Conrad 884) but never any mention of hunting, trapping, shooting, or killing. The novel suggests that the ivory from Kurtz is fossilized, in an attempt for the company to pay Marlow less for the ivory. The issue with this statement is that the ivory being degraded also steers readers away from the source of the ivory. This just shows that not only is Conrad avoiding elephants, but he is also distancing his characters from the elephants by only showing ivory that is “found” rather than taken. It is clear that the characters in the novel and Conrad are going out of their way to avoid the topic of how the ivory is harvested. Rohman comments on how this repression affects the novel:

In Conrad’s narrative, the violence done to elephant bodies is repressed from the text, and the elephant tusks are renamed “ivory.” Elephants become the absent referents of this story, yet their bodies propel the confrontation between European and African. Ironically...that confrontation challenges the vey ideology of difference between human and animal that justifies human violence against animals. (Rohman 51)

Not only does the violence propel a confrontation that only exists in the subtext of the word “ivory,” but highlights the imperial mentality that what is done on foreign shores does not need to be discussed, so long as the results strengthen the empire. The exotic aspect of the elephants makes it possible to have a story centered around the ivory trade without ever mentioning the source of the ivory. Humans have a difficult time sympathizing with anything outside of their friends and families, because they are less likely to see the ugly side of the operations, which makes it possible for them to easily ignore the pain and suffering of another species that is not native to their country. The violence committed against exotic bodies is much less likely to engender sympathy from the common people who will never see these bodies. There has been a movement in the last fifty years that have people outraged with “big game hunting.” While there is a lot of sympathy for these exotic animals, much of this is a result of the exposure that trophy hunting has created. This “sympathy” is associated with the visuals—pictures of the dead body, and trophies in the form of taxidermy. The actual sympathy for these animals is only due to exposure of the cruelties, not because these animals are any more deserving of life than other animals. When people learn how “the sausage is made” they grow outraged, but without the “proof” most humans are fine ignoring the obvious truths so long as they can live without any evidence that would cause guilt.

Therefore, elephants destroyed for their ivory, pumas mutilated for science, and foreign humans exploited and killed in the name of empire do not garner the sympathy they deserve from the masses. Much as the slaughterhouses protect the general public from knowing how their food is made, so long as people do not need to witness the death and destruction, they can easily accept how their medicines are founded, and their

furniture is adorned. Willful ignorance empowers imperialist mentalities which are born in part from a culture of toxic masculinity that encourages those men exploiting and killing the exotic inhabitants to do so with skewed reasoning and pride. Both novels explored in this chapter unveil cruelties performed by powerful English men on weak and vulnerable communities. For Wells his victims are the true victims of vivisection that are torn apart on operating tables everyday by scientists with too much power, emboldened by a dominant reality of a society that believes in them with a blind faith. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is a warning by Wells about the real-life fear that scientists will take their power too far and when fueled by their own hubris they will desecrate nature's laws in the name of science. The small glimpses into the beast-people's cultures and idiosyncrasies creates much more understanding and depth to their suffering at the hands of Moreau and science in general. Conrad's powerful prose through *Heart of Darkness* tells a morbid tale of how the English "empire" is deliberately destroying the environment and lives of the Congo. Conrad fails to try to prove that the novel actually cares about the environment or lives in the Congo that are being destroyed. His choice to write in an ambiguous style in the name of art, has condemned the novel over the last fifty years. As the novel has aged, instead of readers empathizing with the native African peoples and animals, they have been left with more questions about why Conrad chose to delve so shallowly into the lives and cultures of the victims being exploited and destroyed by English imperialism. Conrad's lack of attention put on the exotic people and animals that have been ravaged by imperialism and choosing to focus on two white men's experiences in Africa justifies the claims that *Heart of Darkness* is a racist and speciesist novel. While H.G. Wells took a bold step at the turn of the century to focus on the true

victims of vivisection at the hands of powerful English men, Joseph Conrad stayed in a safer zone to show the crimes against Africa through the eyes of a white man who did not take the time to learn about the native people and completely ignored the native elephants that supplied the ivory.

## **Animals in Wartime**

### **Mental Health and the Subversion of Cultural Expectations**

I was much more easily frightened before the war. Since the war nothing is so really frightening not the dark nor alone in a room or anything on a road or a dog or a moon but two things yes, indigestion and high places they are frightening. (Stein 221)

Gertrude Stein's fears were changed through her experiences during wartime; and by looking at the above quotation, it would seem that most of her fears disappeared. An interesting part of this quote is that one of the fears that no longer exists since the war is a fear of dogs; and this is coming from the same author who wrote: "You are you because your little dog knows you" (Stein 52). Stein often wrote about her dogs, and yet she still understood that they can be fearsome. However, once World War I commenced and ended, the fear of canines became innocuous. War changes people and makes them look at the world differently and that includes the animals that coexist in this world with them.

In this chapter, the major epoch moment is WWI. While this war was not as devastating on the environment as WWII, it is still one of the most far-reaching moments in history that ravaged landscapes and humanscapes<sup>45</sup>. WWI's effects on the environment largely consisted of bombings (shell explosions), poisonous gas, and trench warfare. These tactics turned lush green environments into hellish wastelands devoid of any living things. Yet, in this chapter, the focus is not going to be on the physical anthropocentric effects on humans and nonhumans; it will be on the neurological and social effects of the

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<sup>45</sup> An anthropocentric term used to describe situations where humans are at the full heights of narcissism and ignore all the nonhumans (animals and nature) surrounding them and influencing their lives.

war on humans portrayed through authors' uses of animals in the flesh and animal metaphors. The individual stories composing the great epoch of the Anthropocene Engine during WWI are the subconscious effects of fear and anxiety, which coincides with a major aspect of Modernist form. Modernism's focus on the psychological plays well with the animal uses discussed throughout this chapter. When discussing the Anthropocene on a neurological level, the animals used in many Modernist texts are employed to subvert expectations. In particular, the two texts explored in this chapter will be *The Waste Land* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf's works center around a post-WWI Britain that features environments ravaged by shell shock and trauma. The familiar becomes fearsome as human expectations of proud young soldiers are subverted. We see this subversion through an animal studies lens with the use of non-threatening animals (dogs and birds) being fleshy<sup>46</sup> and metaphorical versions of mistrust and anxiety.

These WWI soldiers who suffered from post-traumatic stress due to the horrors of war quickly turned from heroes to nuisances in this post-war world. Society was unprepared for the cultural shock of these men and women returning from the frontlines, and most citizens just wanted to repress their memories of the war. Society wanted to forget the war and heal their wounds, but these war heroes consistently reminded them of the terrible events that unfolded during WWI; this is why *The Waste Land* and *Mrs. Dalloway* do not portray moments of fear and anxiety with animals that are threatening. Eliot and Woolf chose birds and dogs as the embodiments of betrayal, repression, and social rank. Betrayal is seen with the use of dogs as "man's best friend" conducting acts

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<sup>46</sup> This term is being used more and more often in modern animal studies writings. It is used to distinguish a real animal on the page from a metaphorical animal. Ivan Kreilkamp's *Minor Creatures: Persons, Animals, and the Victorian Novel* (2018) makes good use of this term and was featured prominently in the two previous chapters.

that desecrate the dead. Repression is portrayed through dogs and songbirds. British society used the radio to play birdsong to calm the masses with comforting sounds to distract people from the horrors of a war-torn society, because birdsong represented happiness and hope. Lastly, *Mrs. Dalloway* will provide a discussion of social rank through the example of the way dogs are almost exclusively associated with the upper class, while birds are commonly linked to people who do not sit atop the social ranks (i.e. women and disenfranchised men).

The images and effects of these war-torn lands of WWI do not stay in "no man's land," but follow humans home with their invisible tendrils. Two of Donna Haraway's works ring out loudly when discussing the anthropocentric effects of WWI. *A Companion Species Manifesto* interweaves human, animal, and nature through "naturecultures" which Woolf explores through Elizabeth Dalloway. Haraway's other work is more closely related to the topic of the Anthropocene in which she argues against its name, "Staying with the Trouble Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene."<sup>47</sup> This essay argues that the pride of humanity which makes humans claim they are alone in changing the Earth is flawed. One must acknowledge the interlaced organisms all working toward shaping the planet. Haraway's term "Chthulucene is made up of ongoing multispecies stories and practices of becoming-with in times that remain at stake, in precarious times, in which the world is not finished, and the sky has not fallen—yet. We are at stake to each other...human beings are not the only important actors in the Chthulucene, with all other

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<sup>47</sup> While the title has a strong Lovecraftian term, Haraway explicitly states that it has very little to do with the author: "Cthulu (note spelling), luxuriating in the science fiction of H.P. Lovecraft, plays little role for me, although it/he did play a role for the scientist who named my spider demon familiar." Pg. 61

beings able simply to react." (Haraway 58). The moments this chapter emphasizes are a response to Haraway's claim that "We are at stake to each other."

Haraway's point about the Anthropocene being too focused on humans is also a strong claim against the word itself as she notes in a number of locations that this term has only one "real actor" that pays little to no attention to "lowly things" that keep the story going. She uses the example of a hero who would be unable to complete their quest without a bag to hold their tools and weapons. Although the bag is central to the success of the hero's journey, it is never given the proper credit for helping the hero complete said journey (Haraway 42-3). This criticism of the Anthropocene's narrow focus is applicable for looking at the environmental changes through this term. It is centered entirely too much around humans without the acknowledgement of all the other actors that play into, and are affected by, the changes of the Earth<sup>48</sup>.

Instead of solely looking at the changes to the planet through an egotistical (my term) and singular viewpoint of humans, Haraway promotes the term Chthulucene as a simpoietic term with no designated path/ending. A term that gives equal credit/blame to all the actors playing roles in the changing of the environment. Simpoiesis describes "collectively-producing systems that do not have self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries...the systems are evolutionary and have the potential for surprising change" (Haraway 36). The actors of the environment should be viewed as entwined with one another, with no real boundaries, equal in responsibility for the changes that are happening. The environmental changes are not solely due to one big moment by a human or group of human actors—such as the invention of the steam engine—as the term

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<sup>48</sup> Haraway prefers the noun Gaia to Earth because it gives the planet more agency than the common term of Earth.



Anthropocene would have us believe. Not only does the Anthropocene give sole credit to humans for changing the planet, but it also focuses most of its attention on how those changes affect humans. Most Anthropocene writing focuses on apocalyptic events that have humans as the main victims of this bleak future. This view forgets that the Earth will almost certainly continue if humans become extinct.

Haraway's points about the Anthropocene being too human-centered with an unwillingness or blindness toward all the others who are both affected and contribute to the changes of the environment is in line with *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*. The Anthropocene Engine is a focus on all the actors chewed up and used to further the actions of the flawed term, Anthropocene. The lens of animal studies helps readers to both remember the role that other actors in the Anthropocene play and helps readers view certain scenes and characters in a new light with more depth and interconnectivity that Haraway stresses. The moments below from *The Waste Land* and *Mrs. Dalloway* prove that animals matter beyond their human-centric values. There is a symbiosis between humans and animals in these texts that unveils neurological depths in the writing and further examines character traits that will be missed when ignoring animals. The nonthreatening dog and bird can tell us a lot more of how life has changed in just a few lines than most humans realize. Because humans view these animals in specific ways, there are assumptions made by readers about the use of animals in literature that give little thought to the actual breeds or species themselves. Haraway's "we" is not just humans, it is all of the beings in nature. Human bias works against a better understanding of animals by ignoring their wants and needs, which leads to a misinterpretation of the animal's actions. Therefore, situations arise where an animal appears to betray a human's

trust and expectation. These betrayals take form through the subversion of expectations in *The Waste Land* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. A dog digging up bones that a human wants to keep buried, or a flock of sparrows welcoming Septimus toward death are just some examples of the betrayals explored in this chapter. Just as war neuroses was misunderstood after WWI, so too are the animals misunderstood by most readers.

The familiar became untrustworthy during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. That feeling of unease was not just felt on a humanscape, but was a cross-species fear that changed the way authors wrote about animals in Modernist texts. Society created a new set of Others in the post-WWI culture—disenfranchised white men. Many men left their home to go fight in WWI and for those that survived, many suffered terrible damage to their psyche as well as their bodies. These men returned home to a culture that was ill-prepared to accept them back into their lives. These men were misunderstood by friends, family, and the doctors that were charged with repairing their mental states. Like with Septimus Smith, these men were shunned from normal society and given treatments that seemed to be designed around removing them from society (rest cures), rather than helping them to adapt to their condition and help them cope with society. Thus, these men that left for war as welcomed members of the status-quo (white males) returned from war to a new reality of outcasts more closely related to the Others that were already discriminated against. Similar to the Others explored throughout *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine*, animals provide a deeper understanding of the plights of these now disenfranchised white-men.

The connection between white masculinity and animals is not a common comparison due to many reasons, the primary one being that toxic masculinity stems

from whiteness. The previous chapter delves into the connection of toxic masculinity and animals through Wells and Conrad, but for this chapter, the toxic form of masculinity that is associated with *The Waste Land* and *Mrs. Dalloway* are the views of cowardice in the post-WWI era. Cowardice and emasculating traits are tied closely to sentimentalism, which is an attribute that is vehemently attacked in the Modernist era. One of the most sentimental actions that is attacked during this time period is someone who shows compassion towards an animal. Thus, the connection to toxic masculinity and animals is clearly portrayed in these disenfranchised white men when one takes a closer look through an animal studies lens.<sup>49</sup>

The white man was a pillar of society, who not only constructed the cultural rules, but also enforced and protected them. They were culturally nonthreatening in public—but as we will see with Woolf, the private life was very harsh—and respected through their masculinity. The white man was the status-quo. WWI changed all of this and reveals that the strong respectable façade of the white man is brittle and can no longer be trusted. These white men turned Others are the men that are suffering both physically and mentally from their war experiences. These men who suffer from war neurosis, such as shell shock, are seen as blights on society's streets. Not only does society see these men as nuisances, but the men suffering from war neurosis view themselves as less than masculine. While these men suffer with their mental trauma, they also worry if they cannot hide their fears and anxieties, society will view them as cowards. Many soldiers

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<sup>49</sup> See Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. 2015. For further detail on how toxic masculinity has shaped the way culture views masculine traits in regard to treatment of animals.

examined by psychologist William Halse Rivers (W.H.R) Rivers usually repressed their trauma out of fear of being viewed as cowardly.

The Modernist era marks a monumental shift in the focus on the mind brought about through the rise in psychology. Most famously, Sigmund Freud's works on psyche changed the way people thought about trauma. Regarding studying the effects of shell shock on WWI veterans, Dr Rivers was a pioneer in the treatment of repression and how it affected soldiers' recoveries from war trauma. Dr Rivers studied and treated many cases of shell shock and published an address on the subject in the British journal, *The Lancet*, titled "The Repression of War Experience" (1918). This published talk addresses the problems Dr Rivers discovers with the way in which his peers were treating shell shock by encouraging their patients to forget or completely repress the memory of their experience. These soldiers, like Septimus Smith, are treated like machines that can wipe their memories and continue without any lasting mental effects. Dr Rivers explains that "Even when patients have themselves realised the impossibility of forgetting their war experiences and have recognised the hopeless and enervating character of treatment by repression, they are often induced to attempt the task in obedience to medical orders" (Rivers 173). This address goes into greater detail of how medical professionals do not know how to treat shell shock victims and thus end up creating greater problems through the tactic of repression.

Dr Rivers even claims that repression is not only a flawed strategy to treat shell shock but often results in a soldier who "would inevitably have broken down under the first stress of warfare, and might have produced some disaster by failure in a critical situation or lowered the morale of his unit by committing suicide" (Rivers 177). The

repression of shell shock in soldiers and those that treat them, put not only the soldier himself in danger of self-harm, but puts his whole troop in danger. It should be briefly noted here the phrasing of Dr Rivers and how pragmatic/dispassionate his words are about these young men.

Even a doctor who was ahead of his time and had some empathy in treating these mental neuroses can sound apathetic to the individual. When Dr Rivers states that a suicide would have "lowered the morale of his unit" there is a dispassion of the individual in favour of pragmatic applications for the war effort. Dr Rivers' pragmatic approach is not just a common theme from a science-based researcher but is also a reflection of a common theme in Modernist culture, which is a lack of empathy and a resistance to sentimentalism. Many books and journals point to the attack on sentimentality being a major theme of Modernism. It is this loss of sentiment that also creates the mistrust of our friends and neighbours in the animal kingdom. Philip Armstrong points to the lack of sentimentality creating negative feelings toward the societal Others: "Subsequently the taste for sentimental narratives would be associated with the least authoritative expressions of cultural life: femininity rather than masculinity, childishness rather than maturity, fancy and whimsy rather than rationality and realism" (Armstrong 165). This mentality during the Modernist period results in making soldiers, mentally scarred by the war, outcasts in society. What differs from society's treatment of shell-shocked soldiers and the two Modernist authors featured in this chapter, is that there is an empathetic voice when addressing neuroses.

Modernism expands on the ideals of the late-Victorian era that portrayed sentiment as feminine and childish through an even greater admiration for positive

science and industrial capitalism. Armstrong explains that “modernism attempted to regain for art some of the cultural authority lost to science and industry by thoroughly repudiating all forms of sentimental narrative and affect” (Armstrong 165). The attack on sentiment is considered one of the few threads that unites most modernist artists. Even Woolf is accused of attacking sentiment through her portrayal of the lap dog relationship in her novella, *Flush*. The novella consistently plays with the childish aspects of pet ownership and Woolf claims that *Flush* was one of her less serious novels. While those notions about *Flush* will be challenged in the next chapter, it is important to note that Woolf shows a tendency (along with many other Modernists) to attack sentiment toward animals. The attack on animal sentiment does not just come from dispassionate scientists performing vivisections or hunters like Ernest Hemingway who glorified the killing of animals. The attack on sentiment is ubiquitous throughout the Modernist era and well into the latter-half of the twentieth century.

Anyone who feels sentiment toward disenfranchised men, cannot show it, out of fear of being ostracised themselves during this time period. The disenfranchised men cannot even take solace in the emotional attachment of a pet, as sentiment toward animals is also seen as emasculating. In some respects, the loss of trust in some white men subverts society's expectations of how men should handle the horrors of wartime both on the frontlines and when they return home. One of the negative ways sentiment is recognized in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is through an attachment to a non-human species; "conventionally despised above all else: sentimentalism, especially as associated with compassionate identification between humans and animals" (Armstrong 165). It is unbecoming of men to have an "irrational sentimentality" (Kirk 3833). toward animals,

and so these men whom are not allowed to express trauma also cannot show any sentiment toward an animal out of fear of being considered a coward. Understanding this makes a clever change by T.S Eliot in *The Waste Land* all the more revelatory.

### ***The Waste Land's* subversion of the dog**

T.S. Eliot suffered from neurasthenia symptoms of paralysis caused by WWI (Krockel, Carl) even though he never served. Something that is often overlooked is the trauma people suffered who did not fight in the war. Even though most people did not go to the frontlines, many of them still struggled with feelings of paranoia and intense fear. The war had such a strong impact on society that many people were traumatized by the events unfolding around them. This brings back Stein's quote at the top of the chapter. She did not fight in WWI, but the effects of it all around her and throughout society changed the things that she feared. To those willing to see it, the war changed nearly everyone that lived during the first World War. Unfortunately, most of society was not willing to acknowledge that any psychosomatic changes were acceptable in soldiers or civilians.

Krockel describes neurasthenia symptoms of paralysis as "the civilian's equivalent to the soldier's war trauma" (Krockel 2). Eliot's suffering from this condition is met with understanding from psychiatrist Roger Vittoz who helped to teach Eliot how to live with his condition. Eliot was able to channel some of his nervous energy into *The Waste Land* which is described as Eliot's recognition of his sickness while also being a contributing factor to his cure (Krockel). Eliot feels much of the same pressures as the men Dr Rivers described to act masculine and not be a coward. The attack on sentiment is felt by Eliot as he describes to his friend from America, Eleanor Hinkley: "Of course in England the

sentimental heroic phase is gone" (Eliot letters 258). The loss of sentimental heroics in England has strong ties to the ignorance around mental traumas, including shell shock. Eliot did not know how to manage his mental issues in public, and that caused a strain on him even more as he tried to cope with the burden of shaky nerves.

In a number of Eliot's letters in the years preceding *The Waste Land*, he describes himself as feeling "very shaky" while his doctor prescribes three months of rest to calm his nervousness (Eliot letters). In essence, Eliot has to escape society in order to calm his nerves. Living in this war-torn culture that diminishes the mental suffering of men causes Dr Vittoz to prescribe a peaceful sojourn for Eliot where he cuts himself off from society. This is one regard where Eliot and Woolf share a common experience. Christine Froula details that Virginia Woolf also who suffered from mental illnesses and her doctors did not know how to properly treat her, and she was prescribed "rest cures" from the family doctor. (Froula 359)<sup>50</sup> Woolf makes sure to portray the problems with this treatment for war neuroses in *Mrs. Dalloway* through Septimus Warren Smith who is prescribed a sojourn by his doctor, William Bradshaw. Both Eliot and Woolf knew that these methods of healing were flawed and that one needed to address their issues, rather than hide from them in a cabin or mental hospital. Much like the attack on sentiment, Eliot and Woolf are attacking the ignorance surrounding people with mental health problems. The focus on the internal and psychoanalysis is a dominant model of Modernism, and the resistance to the idea that the people of England needed to repress their fears and anxieties was a prominent message in both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waste Land*.

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<sup>50</sup> Woolf was forced to spend time at a home for female lunatics at Twickenham prescribed by her family doctor George Savage.



This brings us to *The Waste Land* where Eliot tries to heal himself through descriptions of a post-apocalyptic landscape and animal imagery to face trauma, rather than repress the trauma. In total, Eliot explicitly names an animal in *The Waste Land* thirteen times in various ways. Some of them are mentioned as pieces of furniture (dolphin mantle) or landmarks (rats' alley, Isle of Dogs), others are used to accentuate descriptions of the environment. This latter use is called upon in different situations, such as when a nightingale sings through the desert in "A Game of Chess."

Birds are a very common animal in poetry, as Mario Ortiz-Robles points out: "The oscine lyrics is thus doubly poetic: poetic in the sense that the songbird as a trope comes to symbolize poetry and poets, and poetic in the sense that it augurs a future for us all" (87). In *The Waste Land* Eliot makes use of the nightingale in the way that Ortiz-Robles describes. Eliot's second section of the poem "A Game of Chess" begins the theme of hope that builds to the conclusion of the poem that the public must embrace what has happened and learn from it so that they can heal. Eliot uses the nightingale to initiate that feeling of hope in a hopeless situation with a reference to Ovid's Metamorphosis story about Philomela's rape. Philomela transforms into a nightingale at the conclusion of the story to escape Terus' (the king that raped her) rage. Eliot uses this as an example of a character that is presented with a hopeless situation, yet finds a way to avenge a wrong and move forward with her life, which is similar to what the people of England were faced with after surviving WWI; "So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale/Filled all the desert with inviolable voice" (*Waste Land* 100-01). Yet the nightingale's song does not convince a world that is not yet ready for its lyrics as they dismiss the song with the derogatory "Jug Jug" used as a euphemism for ignoring women

(Ricks and McCue 629). The connection in Modernist literature between women and birds is strong in *Mrs. Dalloway* as well, as will be shown below; Rezia, Mrs. Bradshaw, and Clarissa are compared to birds in multiple places in the novel. An even greater bond here is the link to Septimus, who will be explored as a disenfranchised man, and he has many connections to birds (sparrows and hawks in particular) and like the women's voices that are ignored as "Jug Jug" he too was ignored by those in greater power.

Eliot is using the nightingale to show that hope can be found in the most unlikely of places (a desert), but if there is no one to hear it or if those in earshot are unwilling to hear it, the song will fail in its message of hope. This use of the nightingale being a reference to the story of Philomel from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* whose life ended in sorrow showcases the resiliency of birdsong. Birdsong represents hope in this situation, because even when all the cruelties of the world are working against someone, if one can hold to hope for that brighter day full of song, they will be able to endure the pain and suffering a little longer. Philomel's freedom came after death, but she used her transformation to sing in a desert for those that may be suffering just as she did, and to fill their ears with hope. So long as the people in the desert are willing to hear the nightingale's song, and not dismiss her.

Eliot wants people to realize that they can find hope, but he also wants to emphasize that people must be willing to hear and accept that hope when it presents itself. If people miss this message of hope out of repression or a lack of sentiment, that will only cause the song to die out in a desert. Eliot's struggle to cope with the horrors of the war is the journey he is trying to take in *The Waste Land* to overcome these feelings of hopelessness that the nightingale is faced with in a "Game of Chess." Yet, using a

nightingale in a conversation about hope/hopelessness was done well before Eliot's time and is not the subversion of expectations that makes a specific animal more effective earlier in the poem. The subversion of expectations comes 26 lines earlier in "The Burial of the Dead."

Much of *The Waste Land* subverts expectations, and in part I "The Burial of the Dead," the opening lines talk about April and spring in an unfavourable light, "April is the cruellest month, breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ Memory and desire, stirring/ Dull roots with spring rain" (*Waste Land* 1-4). The fresh sights and smells of spring have a history of death, as his line, "Lilacs out of the dead land," makes sure to introduce the reader to the idea of the dead being buried immediately beneath the soil. The dead material is beneath something that gives comfort, but this comfort is only a shallow cover. Lilac bulbs are only planted three inches into the soil, and therefore can be easily removed and no longer able to provide that comfort of cover.

The lilacs also have a history of representing death, as they were a powerful image at the funeral of Abraham Lincoln, which is part of what Eliot is referencing in these lines (Ricks and McCue 603). But despite the pessimistic tone of the opening lines, there is hope that is being portrayed through the use of spring and lilacs. Eliot believed that the war was not just a horrible experience, but that it also brought many people together through their collective suffering. As Carl Krockel states: "in his theory of impersonality Eliot suggested a symbolic continuity between the living and dead...*The Waste Land*, despite its apparent pessimism, offered a vision of Europe whose historical wounds were healed over by cultural unity" (Krockel 3). What Krockel does not note is the fragility of this "cultural unity" that Eliot is portraying in *The Waste Land*.

Much is written about Eliot's use of *The Waste Land* to come to terms with his mental trauma surrounding WWI, as noted by Matthew Gold in his essay, "The Expert Hand and the Obedient Heart: Dr Vittoz, T.S. Eliot, and the Therapeutic Possibilities of 'The Waste Land.'" Gold discusses the history of Eliot's biography being examined by scholars since the early 1970s and further elaborates on the influence Dr Vittoz had on Eliot's mental health. Gold summarizes Eliot's goal to better understand and heal from not only his trauma, but the collective trauma of WWI through *The Waste Land* as follows:

If the "main consciousness" of *The Waste Land* is himself ill, then the reading experience itself becomes an exercise in illumination: we may be able to see *The Waste Land* as a sick body that Eliot presents to the reader, in the hope that the sickness would prove revelatory. In other words, if modern society is presented with an image of itself as a body riddled with sickness, then its potential recognition of its ills could prove redemptive. (Gold 528)

This coincides with the previously noted essay by Carl Kroecker that discusses the poem as a way for Eliot to view WWI as an opportunity for growth through the pain of death and loss that could help unite the survivors in England. In "The Burial of the Dead" Eliot begins the recognition of pain and loss when he hints at the deceased being freshly buried beneath the dirt. This shallow burial of the dead creates social instability.

The dead are not decomposed yet, and the slightest action could unearth the dead and make society relive the pain of loss. The lilacs offer a façade for what lies just beneath the soil from a war that left many survivors scarred. Whereas the lilacs offer a pleasant cover for the memories of the past, they are still born from the decomposition of what was alive last spring. Spring blooms are the natural life/death cycle of nature which

humans can accept without much trauma. However, when a non-human animal disturbs this thin layer of security, humans are forced to relive the decomposing past that they are trying to suppress. Eliot reintroduces the dead being buried just beneath the ground at the very end of "The Burial of the Dead" where he not only reminds the reader about the first four lines but plays with animal imagery. The final lines of the section state:

'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,

'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

'O Keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,

'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!

'You! Hypocrite lecturer! —mon semblable, --mon frère!'" (*Waste Land* 71-76)

In "The Burial of the Dead," Eliot struggles with the difficulty of keeping the painful memories in the past. This is illuminated by the opening lines and the final lines that emphasize the shallow depths in which this pain is buried. The narrator does not ask if the corpse was buried, but instead uses the word "planted." This word choice reminds the reader of the lilacs in the opening lines and that the dead corpses are just beneath the surface. It will not take hours of digging to unearth the pain of loss. It will simply take some mild movement of the earth just beneath their feet to make the people relive the harsh realities of the war.

Eliot then moves toward the final lines by asking if the corpse sprouted and/or bloomed. The corpse is presumably expected to bloom into a beautiful flower like a lilac,

which is a positive way of looking at the trauma of the war that Eliot is trying to discover through his poem. Spring blooms are extremely vulnerable and require several factors to work in their favor (proper water, sun, and nutrients in the dirt) and need to be protected from natural predators. These predators come in many forms: insects, birds, rodents<sup>51</sup> and any animal that digs (including humans). Since the corpse is not buried and thus allowed to bloom to help create some beauty from the horror of death, it also presents the threat of being easily disturbed. As with much of *The Waste Land*, Eliot's brief moment of hope is followed by fear and despair. "O Keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,/Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!" (*Waste Land* 74-5). Man's best friend is the source of fear in the closing lines of "The Burial of the Dead." The importance of using a domestic dog as a cause for alarm showcases Eliot's main fear in this opening section of *The Waste Land*.

From an animal studies perspective, one must look at why the choice of a dog is so important for these final lines. Eliot's emphasis on the corpse being buried only a few inches beneath the surface (if we follow the same logic of the lilacs) makes it possible for a dog to smell the corpse and have an opportunity to dig it up. If the corpse was buried six feet beneath the surface, there would be no chance of the dog smelling it and digging up the bones, which shows that reading from this perspective, one must recognize that the human's inability to properly bury the corpse is the reason a dog has an opportunity to betray them.

"The Burial of the Dead" is Eliot battling with repression, as the "body riddled with sickness" that Eliot is trying to examine in his poem is hidden just beneath the

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<sup>51</sup> All of which feature in *The Waste Land*. Birds and rodents play a particularly important role in later sections of the poem.

surface. While society is trying to forget these memories, society manages to create enemies from its friends. The dog is not doing anything truly harmful, yet the potential of it digging up the past transforms it into a threat. Eliot is pointing out that the attempt to repress our anxieties and fears of the war are turning our friends against us. That is why his journey through *The Waste Land* is attempting to "educate its readers about their diseased condition and gives them the means to pull themselves out of that condition" (Ricks and McCue 528). Yet in this opening section, that is not yet evident. Thus, the use of a dog here is a clever way of Eliot subverting the expectations of the reader to question: "why has this dog betrayed us?"

As much of *The Casualties of the Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* points out, when an animal betrays humankind there is always a human string of actions that creates the situation for the animal to act within its nature to disturb cultural norms. The concept of dog as man's best friend that Eliot uses ironically when the narrator cries "'O Keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men'" creates the feeling of betrayal in the reader. The irony Eliot uses is further illuminated after examining Eliot's source for these final lines. Eliot's notes reference Webster's "White Devil" for line 74 about the dog digging up the bones. In the quote Eliot is referencing, many animals are friends to the buried dead. However, the wolf is seen as a menace that digs up the bones of the dead and does not allow them to rest in peace:

Call for the robin redbreast, and the wren,

Since o'er shady groves they hover,

And with leaves and flowers do cover

The friendless bodies of unburied men.

Call unto his funeral dole

The ant, the fieldmouse, and the mole,

To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,

And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no harm;

But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,

For with his nails he 'll dig them up again. (Webster 94-112)

There are a number of animals listed in this quote that Eliot chose to reference. The birds are laying flowers on the forgotten dead, ants, mice, and moles are keeping the bodies warm, yet the wolf is a threat to the deceased.

The common idea is that none of these other animals are real threats to the safety of humans. However, a wolf is a threat to the safety of humans both in life and in death. Wolves are largely misunderstood as savage beasts that will attack humans who get too close. Webster uses that stereotypical fear in this section of the play. However, a wolf is not distinct from a domestic dog in the case of digging. Both species are fully capable and equally likely to dig up items that are shallowly buried in the ground. Webster's choice for a wolf to dig up the buried dead in search of food, is well within the nature of a wild canine. Humankind's fear of wolves would be worth exploring in that text, but the fascinating aspect of this quote is not why Webster chose a wolf, but why Eliot changed it to a dog. The change Eliot makes to Webster's quote is from a threatening animal that humankind generally fears, to an innocuous animal that humans have dominated through



domestication. Dogs epitomize many broken barriers between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom.

Dogs have become so domesticated that their link to their wolf cousins is almost unrecognizable. James Serpell discusses the co-dependent relationship between humans and dogs in his essay: "People in Disguise: Anthropomorphism and the Human-Pet Relationship" where he notes a study that compared the way dogs problem-solve compared to wolves:

A recent study in Hungary compared the problem-solving abilities of dogs and hand-reared wolves and found that when faced with an insoluble problem such as getting food out of a sealed container, wolves worked persistently at the task and ignored their human handlers. Dogs, on the contrary, struggled briefly with the problem and then looked at their handlers "for assistance" – exactly the same kind of behaviour we would expect from a person, especially a young person, in similar straits. The authors interpreted this difference not as a sign of the dog's superior intelligence but rather as a product of evolutionary selection for cooperative, humanlike behaviour in the dog. (Serpell 130)

Dogs no longer act like their "wild" cousins, but instead display the same tendencies as young humans. Through "anthropomorphic selection"<sup>52</sup> the species of dog has become dominated through domestication.

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<sup>52</sup> Serpell's term

This domestication is not necessarily a bad thing for dogs, as their ability to adapt to human culture throughout history has been lauded as a survival tactic that nearly every other animal species has failed to replicate. A prominent Naturalist in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Oliver Goldsmith, helped create the distinction between what is domestic and what is savage in his introduction to the book *A New and Accurate System of Natural History* where he states: "by Domestic I mean, such as man has taken into 'friendship' and 'obedience' were two side of the same coin, as were 'interdependence' and 'ferocity.'" (Goldsmith XVIII) Dogs' abilities to distinguish themselves as friends to humankind has led to them becoming the most privileged non-humans in the animal kingdom. Perhaps the most recognized Naturalist in the 18<sup>th</sup> century who helped create the modern ways we view animals, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, even goes as far to commend dogs for not only their ability to be domesticated, but also their ability to help enslave other animals; "Without the assistance of the Dog, how could man have conquered, tamed, and reduced other animals into slavery?" (Buffon 4-5). Dogs not only became obedient friends of humans, they also helped humans in their tyranny over other animals, thus becoming tools to further humanity's dominion over nature.

The dog's tendency to be obedient and interdependent with humans created a standard that led other animals to be vilified that did not fit this obedient and friendly demeanour, such as cats who are the second most common pet in western culture and their aloof dispositions have been hated by many humans for generations.<sup>53</sup> Eliot takes all of this cultural understanding of the dog and uses it to great effect for his final lines in "The Burial of the Dead." Because dogs are recognized as the best non-human

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<sup>53</sup> "There's more than one way to skin a cat" is a term that dates as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century created by the way stray cats were commonly treated by humans.

companion by most naturalists and the majority of humans, and the fact that they have become this way through a domestication process of “anthropomorphic selection,” their betrayal of human beings at a fragile stage of healing from the war is even more shocking to the readers and that is why Eliot chose them for the final lines of his opening section. It would have been pointless for Eliot to use the whole team of animals from Webster. Eliot only needed to make the savage animal more familiar. Some authors claim that Eliot made the change from dog to wolf as an amusing alteration: "Eliot's contriving of this, by means of a slick transposition of words, affords amusement" (Macklin 6). Virginia Woolf even claims that Eliot told her that he "was having a joke about Webster" with these lines (Ricks and McCue 620). These explanations are only useful to those that want to disregard the change and once again ignore an animal in a literary text. But that is not what the change really symbolizes. When a reader views the dog as an individual capable of causing desecration, this animal change becomes a symbol of the fear of war.

By changing the wolf to a dog that is a friend to men, Eliot is removing the comfort of the familiar (dog) and giving the readers the fear of the savage (wolf). By associating the dog with the wolf, Eliot is reframing the human/pet relationship showing that the most trusted pet is still capable of betrayal. This change is a revelation brought on by the war which showed neighbour attack neighbour. The domestic dog "with his nails he'll dig it up again!" does not paint the picture of a dog finding an old rawhide bone in a flower bed. This ending in a section about burying the dead, pits humankind's friend against humankind. The dog will not show mercy or respect to the dead bones of its friend. The dog is destroying its kinship with humankind because it is showing disrespect to the dead. By domesticating the desecration of the dead, Eliot is familiarizing this

action. Eliot is portraying desecration as something that is normal in society. Eliot is showing his readers that desecration has become society's norm, in this culture of war that he feared was still ongoing. War desecrates cities, governments, traditions, and the dead. War was normal during Eliot's lifetime, and therefore the domestic dog was more apropos than the wild wolf to portray desecration of the buried dead. The domestic dog is no less savage than the wolf. Humankind's friend is simply treating humankind no more or less caringly than humans are treating themselves. Is the dog betraying its friend, or has it simply adapted to the society humans have created; a society that bends the domestic dog to its will? When humankind cannot treat itself well, then its domesticated friend will follow suit.

Thus, Eliot's irony and "fun with Webster" ridicules the very notion that humanity can trust another species when it cannot even trust itself. It is in trusting their fellow humans that Eliot sees hope for the future through humans learning to coexist peacefully and not unearth the dead to revisit the feelings of war. Instead, humans must learn to accept the mistakes of the past, find hope in the fact that they can learn from those mistakes and move forward toward a better future. Unfortunately, humanity fails in its attempts to move forward and out of a war culture, as it takes less than two decades for betrayal to formalize into another World War brought on by humans.

### ***Mrs. Dalloway and the dog scene no one talks about***

While Eliot's use of dogs is a commentary on domestic versus savage, Virginia Woolf's friendly creatures are used to an equally betraying effect in *Mrs. Dalloway*, as dogs are an indication of how profound the separation of class has become. Not only do dogs indicate class struggle, but also female struggles to rise above their stations. While

the Dalloways represent class and gender inequalities, Septimus Smith is tormented by peaceful creatures to signify the lack of empathy in a society that wants to forget about the war. Finally, Septimus' last thoughts before his suicide, that view him and Rezia as birds facing off against human perseverance, resonates with Clarissa who also sees Septimus' suicide as one of the ways his death was trying to communicate.

*Mrs. Dalloway*, like *The Waste Land*, is not a work most animal studies theorists look at as a rich text in the field. If Virginia Woolf is examined in this field, most analyze *Flush* because that is explicitly about animals. For Woolf, dogs were an important part of her life and, judging by her library, she studied them thoroughly:

Woolf had several books on dogs in her library, many of them publications of the anti-vivisectionist National Canine Defence League, with titles such as *How to Keep a House Dog*, *Dog Welfare*, and *Canine Distemper*, all of which were published in the 1920s. But she also owned an 1880 edition of *De Canibus Britannicis*, a treatise by the Cambridge scholar John Caius.

(Goldman 63)

Woolf's affection toward dogs is well studied and it certainly shows itself in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Clarissa is described by Peter Walsh as "dislik[ing] all animals, except that dog," (MD 154) a quote that reveals the way Clarissa feels about Richard. An interesting aspect of Woolf's dog reading list is the anti-vivisection theme in many of her texts. While Chapter 2 of this study, "Exotic Animals," takes a close look at anti-vivisection with *The Island of Dr Moreau*, it must be noted here that *Mrs. Dalloway* portrays a distaste for men of science and a fondness for dogs. Woolf's novel explores the oppressive patriarchy that keeps Clarissa leashed to her parties, Elizabeth stuck in the

naturecultures of male dominance, and Septimus kennelled by his repression. Woolf describes all three of these characters with the use of animals during significant moments in the novel that portray social oppression. Dogs and birds are used as signifiers for the quality of a person and the overall animal theme of the chapter that a nonthreatening creature can sometimes be the most terrifying beast for the unsuspecting human.

Dogs are creatures that the Dalloways love and respect, and enjoy an elevated social position in the animal kingdom due to their companionship with humans. Dogs are the social elites of non-humans and Donna Haraway explores this position in *The Companion Species Manifesto* where she introduces dogs as a subject for the class and whiteness debate; "One of us, products of a vast genetic mixture, is called 'purebred.' One of us, equally product of a vast mixture, is called 'white.' Each of these names designates a racial discourse, and we both inherit their consequences in our flesh" (Haraway 93). In *Mrs. Dalloway* one's "whiteness" is defined by their class and position in society by the 12-hours readers are exposed to in the day of Clarissa Dalloway. In the case of this novel, we are looking at whiteness as "variegated whiteness in which some groups appear better—whiter—than others" (Kolchin 120). Whiteness versus Otherness is what separates Clarissa from Miss Killman; Peter from Septimus; Elizabeth from Rezia; and Richard from everyone else through the social advantages of the English upper class. Through the example of dog breeds, it is the purebred (English upper-class) that is treated to the human experiences (both good and bad) that elevate them above the rest of the animal world.

Why are dogs separated from the rest of the animal kingdom? Because they are “wily” creatures that learned to co-evolve with humans: "Partners in the crime of human

evolution, they are in the garden from the get-go, wily as a Coyote" (Haraway 98). Haraway makes sure to state that dogs are "partners *in the crime* of human evolution" noting a similar point made by Buffon earlier in the chapter that dogs were useful to humans by their ability to help enslave other animals. Dogs are given too much credit (or blame) by naturalists like Buffon, but that does not change the fact that they maintain an elevated social standing amongst humankind due to their ability to adapt to the wants and needs of human society. Overall, as a species, dogs are adept at evolving with the human culture, and this buys them social currency to remain at the top of the animal kingdom. Much the same as social elites are adept at changing with the flow of human society to maintain their positions of power over the rest of the human classes.

The Dalloways' standing in society is analogous to that of dogs' standing in the animal kingdom because Richard and Clarissa Dalloway recognize that they have advantages and powers that the middle/lower classes do not. Much the same way dogs lack sympathy for the plight of the animals they help enslave, so too are the rich indifferent to the plights of the poor. Woolf explicitly states that Elizabeth Dalloway "had never thought about the poor" (MD 131). Not that Elizabeth hates the poor or thinks that their struggles are meaningless, she just never stops to consider them. Clarissa decidedly marks dogs as superior to the rest of the animal world in two specific examples. The first example is a moment in the past that distinguishes Richard from Peter. During one of Peter Walsh's recollections of the youthful days spent with Clarissa, Sally, and Richard, he singles out a moment where Richard proved his kindness and value as a husband:

He ought to have been a country gentleman—he was wasted on politics. He was at his best out of doors, with horses and dogs—how good he was, for

instance, when that great shaggy dog of Clarissa's got caught in a trap and had its paw half torn off, and Clarissa turned faint and Dalloway did the whole thing; bandaged, made the splints; told Clarissa not to be a fool. That was what she liked him for perhaps—that was what she needed. "Now, my dear, don't be a fool. Hold this—fetch that," *all the time talking to the dog as if it were a human being* [my italics]. (MD 175)

Much is written about the value of Clarissa's marriage to Richard in terms of social ranking and that they are happy together even if they are not sexually active.<sup>54</sup> But very little is written about Richard's kindness towards animals outside of it being a character trait he shares with Elizabeth.

There are a number of reasons this moment should be considered more closely, and not just as an analysis of Richard's character. The passage begins with Peter Walsh noting that Richard was "wasted on politics," and this ties directly into the fact that Richard was an empathetic person who cared for those who suffered. This is not exclusively reserved for maimed dogs, but Richard also cares for the Armenians (or Albanians) who were being "Hunted out of existence, maimed, frozen, the victims of cruelty and injustice (she had heard Richard say over and over again)" (MD 120). Richard's kindness is one of the reasons most consider him to be a good husband to Clarissa, and a good father for Elizabeth. However, Richard is a prisoner of his society and participates in actions that keep Clarissa and Elizabeth from ascending the social ladder to his height.

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<sup>54</sup> A number of articles in the *Woolf Studies Annual* talk about this relationship in this way. See: John McGuigan "The Unwitting Anarchism of Mrs. Dalloway" (2013); Candis E. BondSource "Remapping Female Subjectivity in Mrs. Dalloway: Scenic Memory and Woolf's 'Bye Street' Aesthetic" (2017).



Despite Richard's shortcomings as a feminist, he is certainly not what one would call an oppressive husband/father. His good qualities can be explained through his refusal to be defined by toxic masculinity<sup>55</sup> that a man must be pragmatic and cold toward the powerless (in this case a hurt dog), but instead treats a non-human as an equal species. Richard does not hesitate to help Clarissa's dog and as he sees the dog as a suffering member animal kingdom that needs aid. Richard knows that the dog's pain is real, and he acts through both kindness and an understanding. Matthew Scully's pinnacle work for animal rights, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*, defines moments like Richard's non-hesitant aid for a dog as something that should be lauded more than it already is: "When we wince at the suffering of animals, that feeling speaks well of us even when we ignore it, and those who dismiss love for our fellow creatures as mere sentimentality overlook a good and important part of our humanity" (Scully XII).

Sentimentality was a trait that was under attack in Modernism, especially by men, as it was seen as emasculating. Yet here we see Richard disregarding that fear of being emasculated and showcasing his masculinity by taking charge of the situation to do all that he can to ease the suffering of Clarissa's dog. It is also worth noting that this moment is explained to the reader through Peter's memory of the event as opposed to an action that happens during the day that the novel takes place. Woolf is utilizing the modernist form of psychological realism to portray Richard as a kind individual despite the negative feelings around sentimentalism in Modernism. This moment also shows how Richard is calm under pressure and can keep others (especially Clarissa) calm as he works his way

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<sup>55</sup> See Chapter 2: "Exotic Animals"

through a difficult situation. Perhaps more than anything else in this quote, this proves to Clarissa that Richard will make a good husband. Richard is calm, competent, and relaxes Clarissa. Where Richard elevates himself in this situation is the final lines where Peter says that Richard was "all the time talking to the dog as a human being" (MD 75).

Richard's pride and human propensity to feel superior to all other creatures is non-existent while he helps Clarissa's dog. Richard is not consumed by the "arrogant eye" that Carol Adams defines as: "humans, living in a patriarchal society, looking at animals as objects whose only purpose is how they can serve human interests" (Adams *Beast* 41). Except for Clarissa, this suffering dog serves no purpose to the group of humans present, yet it is Richard (not Peter or anyone else) who jumps into action. His kinship with this dog he is talking to as a human being reveals Richard's qualities as a humanitarian. His actions here are laudable not just because he stabilizes the dog's injury, but because he does so with no ulterior motive. Richard sees a living creature that is suffering and disregards all societal divisions between human and dog for the best possible outcome. He bridges the inter-species gap. He does not lower himself to the dog's status and he does not raise the dog to human status. He meets in the middle, because just as he kept everyone around him calm, he also succeeded in keeping the dog calm enough to apply the splint.

Richard talking to the dog as a human is more about his human pride not getting in the way of what needs to be done to help a lesser creature.<sup>56</sup> This dog was not a lesser to Richard, it was a fellow being suffering in a cruel world. This is all to prove that Richard is a humanitarian both in talk (as with the Albanians/Armenians) and action. It

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<sup>56</sup> "Lesser creature" according to most humans, despite my feelings about all animals existing on an equal plane.

does not mean that Richard is a saint. Despite Richard's greater than human kindness to Clarissa's dog, he is a social elite who does not relinquish his position in society for others around him.

As noted above, Richard is a kind person, but he is no feminist. Richard is happy to have a wife whose position in society is defined through the parties she hosts. He also notes that he would have treated Elizabeth differently if she was a boy: "If he'd had a boy he'd have said, Work, work. But he had his Elizabeth; he adored his Elizabeth" (MD 114). Whereas Richard, bridged the species gap for Clarissa's dog, he does not bridge the gender-gap for Elizabeth. In Richard's eyes, Elizabeth's purpose is to follow in her mother's footsteps as the wife of a successful man whose main purpose is to be a mother and party host. Hence, when Richard sees Elizabeth at the end of the party "he had not recognized her, she looked so lovely in her pink frock!" (MD 194). Richard only notices his daughter because of her appearance that is described as "lovely" and harkens back to the way Richard feels about her because of her gender. Elizabeth should look lovely for the party guests and that is what makes Richard proud of her. He does not speak anything of her work ethic or desires for her future as a potential doctor or farmer (MD 136).<sup>57</sup> Through Richard's brief interactions with Elizabeth it is clear that he believes she should be focused on her looks to land a husband and continue the traditional wife role of party hosting. That is why Richard does not bridge the gap with his own daughter and teach her to "work, work." Unlike his equalization for Clarissa's suffering dog, Richard cannot recognize the female suffering of his daughter brought on by societal norms. Shannon Forbes sums up Richard's thoughts by the fact that they "impl[y] that Elizabeth, because

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<sup>57</sup> The two positions Elizabeth mentions on pg. 136

she is not a boy will *not* be told by her father to 'Work, work.' Instead, Richard perceives of his daughter only in marriageable terms as she helps hosts Clarissa's party" (Forbes 46)

Ultimately, this brings up one of the most explored themes of the novel, female oppression. While Richard has laudable qualities with dogs and suffering people in other countries, he is still not a perfect person. His failure as a feminist affects both his wife and daughter; a daughter who is trying to find her place in a world that views her through specific nature/animal forms, which calls in Donna Haraway's theory of natureculture. Haraway describes her manifesto as being "thus about the implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historically specific, joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in significant otherness" (Haraway 108). No other character in the novel fits this description better than Elizabeth who is continually compared to plants and animals, while being described as a dog lover many times. Elizabeth is a prime example of Haraway's naturecultures in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Haraway's famous term, natureculture, can be used to great effect with Elizabeth. During one of Haraway's descriptions of what a natureculture looks like when incorporating dogs, she eloquently describes the beautiful mess of the term:

The shape of my kin networks looks more like a trellis or an esplanade than a tree. You can't tell up from down, and everything seems to go sidewise. Such snake-like, sidwinding traffic is one of my themes. My garden is full of snakes, full of trellises, full of indirection. Instructed by evolutionary population biologists and bioanthropologists, I know that multidirectional gene flow—multidirectional flows of bodies and values—is and has always

been the name of the game of life on earth. It is certainly the way into the kennel. (Haraway 101)

In many ways this describes Elizabeth and the larger problem for women in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The "multidirectional flow of bodies and values" in this garden full of snakes and indirection is precisely what Elizabeth needs to compete with in order to be more than a party host in society's eyes. The world of *Mrs. Dalloway* wants to hunt Elizabeth down and keep her from reaching her full potential. Society's natureculture puts in place obstacles and hidden enemies designed to keep the members confused and thus in one place. Elizabeth's exotic features and untapped possibilities due to her age and class make her a prime target for the hunters.

Nobody in the novel can come to a consensus on how to describe Elizabeth. She's exotic because of her Oriental features, yet the animal most often used to describe her is a fawn.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Elizabeth hates the comparisons she often receives:

People were beginning to compare her to poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies, and it made her life a burden to her, for she so much preferred being left alone to do what she liked in the country, but they would compare her to lilies, and she had to go to parties, and London was so dreary compared with being alone in the country with her father and the dogs. (MD 134-5)

Elizabeth is an aspect of the larger natureculture present in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Human culture wants to keep Elizabeth rooted in society, hence the many plant analogies, and

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<sup>58</sup> As a prominent woman in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Elizabeth avoids most of the bird descriptions that Clarissa and Rezia receive. This also points to her difference from other women in the novel.

Elizabeth just wants to distance herself from society's expectations of her as a young woman, and pursue things she is passionate about. Even her father does not provide extra opportunities for her because of her gender, despite adoring her. In congruence with Elizabeth's unique features, this passage is given to the reader through Elizabeth's stream-of-consciousness. This is not a passage about someone else explaining her situation to the reader. Elizabeth recognizes that she has come to an important stage of her life where she is transitioning into adulthood and the world is watching what she will do with this maturity. Thus, she understands that most people are simply guessing at her future through these different comparisons (poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies). Melissa Bagley comments on this scene that "Elizabeth comprehends and wishes to avoid descriptions that limit and bind, that would make her delicate, just as she wishes to think of her path as distinct from that of her mother... she qualifies their perceptions as well as her knowledge of their perceptions as burdensome" (Bagley 35). This is Elizabeth's battle against culture. She does not wish to be limited by her gender and this is recognized by the comparisons she singles out in her thoughts.

Woolf's use of nature imagery associated with Elizabeth is explicitly attacking the tyranny of the patriarchy that Elizabeth is beginning to recognize. Elizabeth wants to be separate from the culture surrounding her, but she is "kenneled" with all the elements at play in the natureculture. Unfortunately, one of the prominent forces at work is the tyranny of a war culture which Woolf directly attacks in *Three Guineas*. Woolf wants the readers of her essay to recognize that the highly publicized dictators in other countries (Mussolini and Hitler) have much in common with the private dictators inside the English house. Woolf writes that this connection between the public dictator and the private

tyrant “suggests that the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; that the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other” (TG 2593). Throughout *Three Guineas* Woolf criticizes the hypocrisy of condemning the tyranny of dictators while mothers/wives allow the male tyrants inside the home to control their lives and the lives of their children. Woolf’s childhood in a home filled with physical and sexual abuse certainly influences this line of thinking, but her pain allowed her to recognize that her experiences were not in a vacuum. In *A Room of One’s Own* Woolf reveals that the war culture brought on by men like Napoleon and Mussolini whom “both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge” (ROO 30) their male ego; creates a private environment where fathers can be tyrants. Men needed to keep the view of women as weaker than them intact to maintain their standing as the leaders of the household and leaders in society. Nancy Topping and Jane Hamovit Lauter discuss war in Woolf’s novels and recognize that

Woolf claims that sanctioning the patriarchal behavior of males within the family permits such behavior to flourish outside the home...Allowing men to think they are innately superior to women gives them license to think they are innately superior to people of other races, religions, or nationalities. (Topping and Hamovit 24)

This feeling of superiority shows itself through the comparisons that women receive throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*. The patriarchy of the war society that works to suppress women creates the animal comparisons of those who are easily destroyed/tamed by humans: geese, fawns, chickens, songbirds. These are the comparisons women receive

throughout the novel, while men do not typically receive any animal comparisons. The few animal comparisons that men receive are those of predatory animals, thus magnifying the fact that Elizabeth's one animal comparison is a fawn.

Strictly applying the theories of *Three Guineas* in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Elizabeth is at risk of falling to this patriarchal tyranny. Public versus private is one of the main themes of *Mrs. Dalloway* and while Clarissa is the best example of this theme throughout the novel, Elizabeth plays an important role in the discussion at when she thinks about all the comparisons society is making of her. She is at risk of being swallowed up by the male tyranny that is devaluing her strength with these comparisons to flowers and infant deer. Elizabeth still has opportunities to break free of the patriarchy that wants to define her as a vulnerable child dependent on camouflage to protect her from hunters, which is essentially what a fawn is through the *scope* of the patriarchal gaze. Even to Miss Killman, Elizabeth "gallops" away from her. The value of comparing Elizabeth to a fawn is that those around her consider her to be an elusive beauty that has yet to be beaten down by the world. The hunters have not chased her down and captured her. She is not yet leashed to the post of patriarchy like her mother, Clarissa, who during her party she feels that she is attached to a "stake driven in at the top of her stairs" (MD 170) as if there is no escape from the male patriarchy she has chosen to live with in order to gain social advantages.

Clarissa is an example to Elizabeth of how a woman in her social rank remains complacent with a male dominated society. Christine Froula explains this choice by stating that "women must choose between challenging social law and submitting to it in exchange for socioeconomic rewards" (Froula 120). This point about choosing



socioeconomic rewards will be an important distinction between Clarissa and Septimus below during Clarissa's recognition of how Richard has helped to prevent her from succumbing to suicide.

***Mrs. Dalloway: The birds tell us more than we know***

Clarissa as the final Dalloway to explore in terms of dogs, is the most complex. Therefore, she will also play a role in my analysis of Septimus Warren Smith. Clarissa's entire day revolves around the party at the end of the night. As Clarissa's stream-of-consciousness tells the readers that she throws parties as "An offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow it was her gift...could any man understand what she meant either? About life? She could not imagine Peter or Richard taking the trouble to give a party for no reason whatever." (MD 122). Clarissa's parties were a gift, a talent, that elevated her. Perhaps the parties did not elevate her status in society, but they are necessary to maintain her status as a social elite as Clarissa is an example of another victim of the war-controlled patriarchy: the dutiful wife. Being the wife of a social/political leader, Clarissa's role is defined by her abilities as a political hostess, as Masami Usui points out that "The political hostess...played an important part in the British political world throughout its history. As Lady Warwick remarks, such women were 'a dominant factor in English politics' especially in the era of the Great War, and 'they had vast resources, had been trained almost from birth in the art of entertaining, and were excellent judges of character'" (Crow 54). There are a number of important aspects of Usui's quote in regards to Clarissa. As a political hostess, Clarissa is made more dependent on Richard's standing in society and her leash (or stake, in Clarissa's words) is even more tightened to her role as hostess. In addition, Clarissa's success as a political

party hostess is proven through her judge of character. Throughout the party, Clarissa is shown examining her guests and dissecting their lives, habits, and both their positive and negative traits. One character she examines is shown to be much more complex through Clarissa's point of view and is also a wife that is tied to her husband's success: Lady Bradshaw.

Lady Bradshaw is introduced to the reader much earlier in the novel when Septimus and Rezia first visit Sir William Bradshaw. Rezia notices Lady Bradshaw as she "waited with rugs about her knees...thinking sometimes of the patient, sometimes, excusably, of the wall of gold, mounting minute by minute while she waited;" then the description turns to the confining lifestyle of being married to Sir William Bradshaw; "she regretted her stoutness; large dinner-parties every Thursday night...too little time, alas, with her husband, whose work grew and grew; a boy doing well at Eton; she would have liked a daughter too" (MD 94-5). Lady Bradshaw has to play the part of the supportive wife to her highly successful husband. She receives negative reactions from people around her through no fault of her own. Her husband is not well-liked, and he often makes people around him feel uncomfortable for reasons they cannot quite explain. Lady Bradshaw seems to garner the same distaste from people who dislike her husband. When Clarissa first describes her at the party, she comments that Lady Bradshaw is "in grey and silver balancing like a sea-lion at the edge of its tank, barking for invitations, Duchess, the typical successful man's wife" (MD 182) There is certainly a harsh criticism of Lady Bradshaw here that comes across as hypocritical. Clarissa is also the wife of a successful husband who is throwing a dinner party right at this moment to impress the husbands and wives of Richard's contemporaries.

Clarissa undoes this hypocritical reaction later when sympathy for Lady Bradshaw seeps in and she admits, "poor goose—one didn't dislike her" (MD 183), thus adding the second animal reference in regard to Lady Bradshaw. The latter reference is a common expression of sympathy typically applied to women usually as the phrase "silly goose," which is used throughout the novel.<sup>59</sup> The former animal reference of the sea-lion is worth some exploration as Lady Bradshaw is compared to an imprisoned animal. Clarissa does not just think of Lady Bradshaw as a sea-lion; she thinks of her as a sea-lion performing for an audience on the edge of its tank. Woolf creates a world in *Mrs. Dalloway* where "Clarissa Dalloway is the classic female product of a patriarchal culture...with the instrumentalist, misogynistic values of her patriarchal culture yet in conflict with her instincts and actions" (Squier 1832). The "misogynistic values of her patriarchal culture" are at work here in Clarissa's comparison of Lady Bradshaw. Before Clarissa realizes that Lady Bradshaw is a sympathetic character, she falls into the misogyny of her world. She thinks negatively of Lady Bradshaw by comparing her to an animal performing for treats. Clarissa, for a moment, was at the same fault as her husband. Clarissa was acting as the prize-winning breed, superior to those around her, with no intention of helping them rise above their stations. Quickly, Clarissa realizes the commonality of Lady Bradshaw's position and her own.

The entrapped animal is a popular feminist trope and one that Woolf uses to great effect at the party. In this brief moment, the sea-lion comparison is interesting in the choice of animal. Instead of using a small bird comparison that we see used for Rezia and

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<sup>59</sup> "Silly goose" is another example of a disregard for female plights but is a commonly explored phrase. The interesting aspect from an animal studies perspective is that a goose is an animal one could use for a sympathetic term. The phrase would fall apart with any animal that is considered vermin (rats, insects) or already is a metaphor for something unsympathetic (pig, cur, etc.).

Clarissa, Woolf chooses an animal that is most often seen by humans in aquariums and zoos. Zoos are the epitome of imperialist power over nature.<sup>60</sup> In this example, it is Lady Bradshaw that is forced to consistently perform for her husband and their guests/hosts. To remain in this lifestyle, Lady Bradshaw has given up many of her interests in order to perform as the dutiful wife. Woolf is also commenting on the “political hostess” role that Clarissa and Lady Bradshaw represent. The sea-lion is the dutiful wife performing when the spectators (patriarchy) are present to make the zookeeper (husband) look good. “Barking for invitations” indicating that the wives in this political world are reduced to captive animals trying to please their masters through gaining the highest number of invitations to their parties. Can the sea-lion leave its tank and swim in the ocean during off-hours? Of course not; that would run the risk of the sea-lion swimming away. This further emphasizes the inescapability of this patriarchy for the wife that submits to this lifestyle “in exchange for socioeconomic rewards.”

Clarissa seems to realize the kinship with Lady Bradshaw which leads to her feeling sympathy for her plight. As Clarissa watches Richard talk to William Bradshaw, she changes her opinion of Lady Bradshaw from performing sea-lion looking for treats, to a poor goose just trying to make its way in this world of humans. Lady Bradshaw is the last person Clarissa interacts with before she dives into one of the most important parts of the novel, which is the contemplation of Septimus' suicide.

Septimus Warren Smith is the shell-shocked man who took his life, rather than succumb to human nature. A man completely misunderstood by everyone in his life, he sees innocuous members of the animal kingdom betraying him. Returning to the main

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<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 2: Exotic Animals and Ritvo, Harriet.

theme of this chapter, Septimus is betrayed by animals that are normally non-threatening and, in many cases, comforting to humans. Septimus suffers from shell shock that he sustained while serving in World War I. Whereas Clarissa was Woolf's portrayal of patriarchal oppression during her lifetime, Septimus was a compound of both patriarchy and war trauma. Septimus was a good soldier who followed orders and felt no emotions during the war. While hearing of his friend (and potential lover) Evan's death he "congratulated himself upon feeling very little" (MD 86). Septimus repressed his emotions while serving England in WWI and that repression was one of the reasons, he slowly grew mad after the war. Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway* the readers get to know more about Septimus' condition and interestingly, the first view the reader has of Septimus' madness is through the use of an animal that was used during the World Wars to comfort people's nerves.

Michael Guida wrote a wonderful essay in *The Routledge Companion to Animal-Human History* where he examines the use of birdsong during the World Wars to ease peoples' stress and anxiety both on the frontlines and the home front. British radio stations would play birdsongs (usually nightingales) each night in an attempt to help people relax after a day full of stress and anxiety. Guida explains that these broadcasts:

gave humans a valuable way to cope with modern life. Modernity could be *managed*, not rejected, if people would allow themselves to feel nature's presence in their lives. Surprisingly, then, the nightingale broadcasts played a distinct part in the definition of public service broadcasting, a broadcasting that could point human hearts towards a higher realm, catering to people's unconscious needs, not simply their compulsions and routines. (Guida 10731)

The interesting aspect of the way Guida describes the therapeutic effects of birdsong echo W.H.R. Rivers and his treatment of shell shock. Allowing people to cater to their unconscious needs, instead of repressing their emotions, was the way in which Rivers treated his patients suffering from extreme stress and anxiety. These birdsong broadcasts were an attempt by a public service to help people cope with fear and anxiety, instead of trying to smother those feelings.

Animal experts proclaimed that "birds sang because they were happy. This belief seems to lead to the possibility that such bird emotions expressed through song will move human emotions too...the implication is that birds in song are likely to make people happy" (Guida 10808). The use of nightingales over the radio in a real-life situation, echoes Eliot's use of the nightingale as a source of hope in *The Waste Land* examined earlier and relates to Woolf's abundant use of birds in her novels. This common idea and public strategy of using birdsong to calm people's nerves may also help further explain why "there are birds or bird sounds in every novel, including over a dozen types of birds in *Mrs. Dalloway* alone, which is set entirely in a city (and whose characters are described as birdlike)" (Harker 8). Therefore, when Woolf chooses to use sparrows in a haunting hallucination, she is alluding to how advanced Septimus' condition has become and how society is failing to help those with mental illnesses.

As Septimus is sitting on a bench early in the day, with his wife Rezia, he is struggling with his own dark thoughts. While trying to gain control over his fears, he spots a sparrow;

A sparrow perched on the railing opposite chirped Septimus, Septimus, four or five times over and went on, drawing its notes out, to sing freshly and piercingly

in Greek words how there is no crime and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voices prolonged and piercing in Greek words, from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river the dead walk, how there is no death. (MD 24-5)

The sparrows tease and torment Septimus in voices that are described as singing in piercing and prolonged Greek. It is as if these birds have been summoned from Hades' underworld to invite Septimus to his inevitable fate similar to that of an Epic hero in a Greek tragedy. What is missing from this description of a songbird singing is the word "pleasing." Proud English ornithologists "asserted that in no other country was birdsong as powerful, varied and pleasing as in England" (Guida 10941). Yet Septimus is experiencing quite the opposite of pleasing tones from these sparrows, and they are certainly not giving Septimus a "way of coping with modern life." Immediately after hearing these birds speaking Greek, Septimus sees a vision of his dead wartime friend, Evans, standing behind the very railing the sparrows are perched upon. Death is there and it is welcoming Septimus in all of its macabre glory. Yet, Septimus is not quite ready to accept death as his fate, and these visions disturb him. Birdsong betrays him; society's attempts to steer him away from thoughts of death betray him. These innocuous creatures are directing Septimus toward his suicide rather than calming his nerves and making him forget about the war. Much how Eliot's dog was a threat to dig up bad memories of the dead, these sparrows sing a song of death and bring Septimus right back to where he does not want to be; staring at his dead friend<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> There is another moment later in the novel where Septimus sees a skye-terrier transform into a man and walk towards him. While haunting, the exploration of this dog reference strays too far from the central theme of the chapter. This reference would have to involve a specific look at the breed and why it was chosen by Woolf to transform into a man and lead Septimus to contemplations of seeing the future.

Birdsong certainly had its value as a calming presence on the radio, but England was overwhelmed by soldiers like Septimus. Many real-life WWI soldiers wrote letters about their mental suffering and how doctors and nurses were treating them as cowards. In a letter from a WWI soldier, Private Arthur Hubbard, to his mother, he summarizes the misguided feelings of the public perfectly:

The hospital is constantly got new soldiers coming in suffering from nervous exhaustion and shell shock too so I'm not the only one, the doctor said it is an injury to the nerves and told me to rest and they are putting in place electric shock treatment. All the nurses are very sympathetic but sometimes when they think we can't hear them they call us all weak and say we are cowards.

(CBC.ca)

Young men fighting and suffering for their countries during this time were treated with ignorance and disgust. Private Arthur Hubbard committed suicide not too long after the war, as society failed him, just the same as it failed Septimus.

Woolf does not just let the reader draw their own conclusions about the doctors in this post-WWI world and how they mistreated people with mental illness. Holmes and Bradshaw are explained thoroughly enough for the reader to witness the true tragedy of Septimus' struggles. Holmes treats Septimus as if he is just a nervous person who needs some time to calm down; "nerve symptoms and nothing more" (MD 91), Holmes tells Rezia. Holmes only suggests that Septimus try to think of pleasant things when feeling overwhelmed; and if that does not work, try some physical activity or listening to music. Bradshaw is not any better for Septimus. In fact, one could argue that Bradshaw is worse for Septimus, because he is considered to be at the top of his field, and if he cannot help,



than Septimus will feel as if he is truly doomed to his fate. Bradshaw certainly carries himself as a competent man, but his treatment for Septimus consisted of "rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest; until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve" (MD 99). Bradshaw wants Septimus to rest in a secluded cabin without his wife (who up to this point is the only person treating him with empathy) and gain roughly sixty pounds. Even Rezia feels that this treatment is pointless as she admits "They had been deserted" (MD 100). Rezia's concise description is the most accurate portrayal of her and Septimus' life. Society, science, and culture have deserted them. Either Septimus learns to repress his trauma, or he must be eliminated from the public. This too was based on Woolf's experiences during her lifetime. People suffering from mental illnesses were often "prescribed" seclusion. Even Woolf's long-time doctor, Dr George Savage often prescribed "rest cures" for Woolf when her neurosis was bad (Froula 359).

W.H.R Rivers notes specific examples of shell shocked soldiers being treated with electric shock and spending time in "convalescent homes in the country" (Rivers 173). Rivers argues against the use of repression for soldiers suffering from shell shock during WWI. He states that "many of the most trying and distressing symptoms...are due to the attempt to banish from the mind distressing memories of warfare or painful affective states which have come into being as the result of their war experience" (Rivers 173). Throughout his paper, Rivers notes a number of cases he treated that resulted in soldiers being able to cope with their trauma through tactics involving accepting their memories and learning to live with them. These men transitioned from sleepless nights

full of nightmares, to better sleep within days of his treatment. However, nearly every doctor and psychologist in 1918 was prescribing repression.

During one of the notable moments in Rivers' paper he explains that multiple patients he treated were afraid to be considered cowardly. One such patient "was not allowing himself to entertain [his grave apprehensions about further service] owing to the idea that such thoughts were equivalent to cowardice or might...be so interpreted by others" (Rivers 180). Much the same as Private Arthur Hubbard's experience in the hospital, these men were well warranted to believe that society saw them as weak cowards. Even Woolf notes this when Holmes reacts to Septimus' suicide with a cry of "The coward!" (MD 149). Rivers was an exception to the rule, who made a big difference in the treatments of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders during WWII and even today. However, his ground-breaking theories were not being applied to most people in Septimus' situation. Instead, these soldiers were being mistreated by the doctors they trusted.

Birdsong was not helping Septimus, men of science were not helping him either. Feeling more than abandoned by society, Septimus felt hunted: "Once you fall, Septimus repeated to himself, human nature is upon you. Holmes and Bradshaw are on you" (MD 98). Recognizing this, Septimus concludes that he will not let these hunters catch him. He will end his life rather than let Holmes or Bradshaw catch him. Septimus will die free, and freedom is also a common use of birds in literature. Therefore, it is only fitting that Septimus is closely related to birds. His first hallucination is centered around birds, and his final moments in life involve his self-evaluation as a bird. After the readers are treated to the only happy exchange between Rezia and Septimus, his mood quickly sours.

Readers are first introduced to an adoring reference that Rezia gave to Septimus earlier in their relationship: "she had often told him, of a young hawk" (MD 146). This description serves as another innocuous animal with the modifier "young." Rezia sees in Septimus an innocence that separates him from other men which helped her fall in love with him. The youth of the hawk implies that this bird of prey has very little blood on its talons.

Septimus has not done much harm throughout his life<sup>62</sup> when he is thought of as a "young hawk" as opposed to an adult hawk that is a seasoned killer of small animals in order to survive. A comparison, Septimus transforms into a pessimistic vision of himself.

In Septimus' final moments he mutates Rezia's description of him as a "young hawk" as his depression breaks him down; "She sat down beside him and called him by the name of that hawk or crow which being malicious and a great destroyer of crops was precisely like him" (MD 148). Septimus' subconscious transforms him from a young hawk whom Rezia admires and loves, to a hawk and crow that is malicious. Yet Septimus is not finished with the bird references during these final moments. Just as Rezia is trying to prevent Holmes from seeing Septimus, her husband views her as "a little hen, with her wings spread barring his passage" (MD 149). Septimus, the hawk, is being protected by Rezia, the little hen. The prey is protecting the predator from Holmes and human nature. In this metaphorical farm (to follow Septimus' crop reference) the invader is not the hawk perched behind the hen. It is the human invading their lands threatening malice. Despite how powerful the hawk is in the animal kingdom, human's are more powerful and will rearrange their world as they sees fit. Another victim of the Anthropocene Engine churning Others to maintain the human-centric status-quo.

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<sup>62</sup> In Rezia's opinion. One could argue, as a soldier in WWI, Septimus was responsible for much more violence than most people who did not fight in the war.

This piston of the Anthropocene Engine is the man of science persevering despite nature's harmony. The hawk and little hen are happy together, yet human intervention reframes them into predator and prey, just the same as they act in the wild<sup>63</sup>. Septimus must be separated from Rezia for their own good. Despite their apparent happiness together, Bradshaw states that "the people we care for most are not good for us when we are ill" (MD 96). Yet the only thing that keeps Septimus fighting in this world is Rezia. Even though, Septimus' mental illness is a burden upon Rezia, he is still her entire world because she left her home in Italy to follow Septimus to England. Rezia cares about Septimus, and she is tormented by the pain and suffering her husband endures. Yet, despite these hardships, Rezia would rather live in her coop with the hawk, than be subjected to the human nature of scientific men. These birds live in harmony despite their differences and the struggle to find happiness. A hawk and a little hen should not be able to coexist, but they do in the privacy of their home.

These final moments are the only times the reader sees Rezia and Septimus in private. All of their other moments together are in a public sphere. The public sphere is the land of human nature that is constantly upon them. The public world of toxic masculinity ruled by Holmes and Bradshaw, "agents for a society that scapegoats [Septimus] for bringing home murderous aggression it would disavow, that projects its aggression upon him and expels him" (Froula 115). In public, Septimus must repress his fears and anxiety, lest he be considered a coward. If he is prone to cowardly reactions, then he must be secluded from society until he can properly repress his emotions. The public sphere is where "Septimus...saw the 'insane truth'—that a society that rigidly

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<sup>63</sup> Hawks are known to swoop down and snatch chickens caught unaware on farms.

separated the public male world from the private female world contributed to sickness, hatred, and war” (Squier 2054). The public male world referenced by Susan Squire is epitomized by Holmes and Bradshaw in Septimus' world view. If people are not allowed to act in public the way they act in private, then that repressive society is doomed to "sickness, hatred, and war." However, in their private home they are at peace and find ways to be happy for brief moments. They are not happy all the time in private, in fact it would be reasonable to guess that Septimus is miserable most of the time even at home, but he can let his guard down for moments when he can live in the moment with his wife and not have to repress his emotions. The scene of Septimus and Rezia enjoying each other's company is more about showing the readers that there is a glimpse of hope for them if the doctors could understand Septimus better by listening to him, rather than forcing him to repress and seclude himself. But there is no safe place from the Anthropocene Engine where human nature is always on the hunt. Holmes invades their safe place and Septimus refuses to live in Holmes and Bradshaw's world anymore. Yet his suicide was not without regret, as he admits to himself that "He did not want to die. Life was good...Only human beings—what did *they* want?" (MD 149). The hawk asks himself before falling to his death. Life was good in his coop with his little hen, but humanity wanted to take all that safety away from him.

If the reader was given a chance to delve into Rezia's subconscious, we may have been able to better understand Septimus immediately after this moment.<sup>64</sup> Fortunately, Woolf's set-up at the party giving Clarissa higher senses, allows the reader some

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<sup>64</sup> Rezia did show in the novel that her judgment of character is quite skilled, as she dissects Bradshaw better than anyone else in the novel. It is almost a tragedy in itself that she is drugged just after Septimus' death and we do not get to read her subconscious thoughts about the tragedy of Septimus' life.

resolution. As noted above, Clarissa's final animal reference before death enters her party was about Lady Bradshaw, who receives negative attention due to being associated with her husband. While Clarissa does share some sympathy with Lady Bradshaw, by calling her a poor goose, it does not forgive the fact that it is "the Bradshaws [who] talked of death" (MD 184). Not William Bradshaw, but both William and Mrs. Bradshaw allow death to enter the party.

As is evident by this point, Woolf frequently chose birds during *Mrs. Dalloway* as symbols and metaphors for the tragedy of Septimus' life. During Clarissa's contemplations about death and suicide, she chooses a bird image to describe what separates her from the Smiths' suffering in this world. Following Septimus' assessment of predator and prey living peacefully in his relationship with Rezia, the readers see an example of how harmonious opposites can co-exist when allowed to flourish within their private world devoid of patriarchy; devoid from the public images they need to portray while outside of their home. In their home, Septimus does not need to exude manliness or act like a proud soldier. He can let his guard down around Rezia for some time while he forgets about his troubles. Septimus, of course, cannot keep his emotions at peace forever as he portrays Woolf's later point in *Three Guineas* that "the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected" (TG 213) through the fact that his depression does not cease in his private home. The public world of the patriarchy eventually comes back into Septimus' consciousness and warps his thoughts about his image of a "young hawk." Septimus cannot keep himself or Rezia safe from the invading world of humans. For Clarissa, she recognizes that she does have a protector from the harsher male patriarchies. Richard—the dog-lover, champion of the suffering, and social elite—is Clarissa's

protection from the cruel world of male patriarchy. He protects her through his position in society, and by being a decent husband and father. While Richard does not help Clarissa rise above her station, he also keeps her from falling further into the grasp of human nature. This is not the only difference between Clarissa and Septimus, but it is a significant one. To further connect the importance of this difference, Woolf once again employs bird imagery. This is also the only animal imagery in the three plus pages where Clarissa contemplates the suicide.

As Clarissa is thinking about death, she recognizes things about Septimus' suicide that no one else does, such as: "Death was defiance" (MD 184); and "Life is made intolerable; they make life intolerable, men like that?" (MD 185) Clarissa can see that Septimus' suicide was defiance against the Holmes and Bradshaws that made life intolerable. Septimus, the bird of prey, did not die by their hands. He died the way he chose to die, rather than live the way these men wanted to force him to live. Realizing this, Clarissa sees the horror in having to continue to live in this world driven by these intolerable men; "there was the terror, the overwhelming incapacity...this life, to be lived to the end" (MD 185). Septimus feared the same thing. He did not want to live out a long life in this oppressive and repressive world. He was going to be forced to be taken from his little hen, and that was the final breaking point. He took his life to escape from these intolerable men.

Clarissa, in her perspicacity, recognizes the importance of a companion. Septimus had his little hen, until he did not. Clarissa has Richard, who (unlike Rezia) has the power to keep this harsh world at bay. Immediately after recognizing the horror of a long life, Clarissa realizes the value of her relationship with Richard; "Even now, quite often if

Richard had not been there reading the *Times*, so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive, send roaring up that immeasurable delight, rubbing stick to stick, one thing with another, she must have perished. But that young man killed himself" (MD 185). John McGuigan also recognizes the importance of the bird reference in this quote to some extent when he states that "Richard largely insulate[s] her from the "musts" that drive Septimus to the window. When feeling attacked, 'she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive' under the protection afforded by Richard. It is this awareness that helps her 'feel the beauty...feel the fun' in her own life" (McGuigan 136). What is typically missing from the analysis of these lines is the importance in the similarity between Clarissa's single animal reference during this contemplation, and Septimus' thoughts about Rezia and himself. Clarissa's protection provided by Richard are significant, but one must notice that Richard's protections are not described with any animal references. The lack of them here is significant. Holmes pushed past Rezia "the little hen, with her wings spread barring his passage" (MD 149); because he persevered as a human male. Humans persevered over animals and in the inseparable worlds of public and private male tyrannies (*TG*) Richard provides another layer of protection (granted by his gender) for Clarissa that Rezia could never provide for Septimus. In this case, Holmes perseveres over the dominated and submissive female gender along with the most persecuted, abused, and exploited animal community: the farmed animal.<sup>65</sup> The little hen is no match for humanity, just the same as a foreign middle-class woman is no match for a domestic male doctor, resulting in no more than an inconvenience to Holmes. During much of the chapter, the discussion has been about when the innocuous animal turns on humanity, but

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<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 1 "Farmed Animals" for a much more in-depth analysis of how humanity has ravaged these animals.



this is the more common example of humanity turning on the weak and suffering. While a hawk is a formidable predator and can certainly catch an unsuspecting human by surprise, it is no match for a human that perseveres. The hawk would need more than a hen to protect it from humans.

Clarissa does not have a hen to protect her. She has a human man with a high standing in society to protect her. A human who distinguished himself from other humans as a person willing to help the weak and suffering. When she is under attack, Richard's companionship can bar the passage of any Holmes or Bradshaws that attempt to encroach on her life. Clarissa is not a bird being protected by another bird. She is a bird, protected by a human from intolerable men. As Clarissa recognizes this, "we find she can again see the beauty and the fun in her own life, we understand that she has gotten the message" (McGuigan 136) that Septimus' death was attempting to communicate.

### **Conclusion**

In most of the Anthropocene, the harmless animal is driven out of the human domain and provides very little opposition in the process. This chapter looked at very rare and specific examples of how reversing that truth of human oppression on the rest of the animal kingdom can unveil much more about the literature than originally thought. T.S. Eliot's use of a dog in place of a wolf unveiled the horrors of war and repression that can be unearthed by our closest friends. The engine of the Anthropocene that is always chugging forward, cannot be slowed down by those that society deems as cowards that cannot repress their emotions. Therefore, if our friendly dog digs up the bones of the past, humanity is at risk of its own creation, war. The engine will eat up those that cannot keep up with the changing times, like Septimus Smith.

While the use of dogs in *Mrs. Dalloway* is not as much of a betrayal as seen in *The Waste Land*, it is a well-used trope for the male patriarchy that dominates culture. The lovable canine is a reminder that not all animals exist on the same plane in the hierarchy of the animal kingdom. Dogs are creatures of the upper-class and they fight very hard to keep their elevated standing. Dogs will not suffer the plights of other animals in the kingdom that fall beneath their plane. In fact, dogs have been accused of widening the gap between themselves and other species by helping humans enslave those beneath them. This upper-class cannot be burdened by the plights of the lower animals. Those plights, being represented through Septimus' war trauma had to be snuffed out of society. The hawk and little hen stand no chance against human nature. They cannot keep up with the Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine that requires society to move forward and repress their past traumas.

## Performing Animals

### The Inescapability of Patriarchal Heteronormative Culture

When children see animals in a circus, they learn that animals exist for our amusement. Quite apart from the cruelty involved in training and confining these animals, the whole idea that we should enjoy the humiliating spectacle of an elephant or lion made to perform circus tricks shows a lack of respect for the animals as individuals. –Peter Singer

Humanity is predictable. It is predictable because it will always force the fringe of society to stay on the outskirts of acceptable culture. The only time humanity allows Others to enter the cultural norm is when they are forced into some kind of spectacle. Instead of trying to learn from the people and animals that make this world unique, human culture forces them into a tight quarter, strips them of power, and allows the “culturally acceptable” members of society to gawk at them. Humanity is clear in its message to outsiders; if you cannot conform to our social norms, you must hide your individuality or be exploited for our entertainment.

Djuna Barnes’ *Nightwood* explores the lives of four individuals who do not fit into the status quo of society. These characters live on the fringes of society due to their unconventional lifestyles and personalities. Barnes gives attention to the strange members of society that do exist and yet the status-quo society tries their best to ignore. Some of Barnes’ main characters do their best to adapt to their culture while hiding what makes them outcasts. Felix’s Judaism and Matthew O’Connell’s cross-dressing are suppressed while in the public eye. Nora’s lesbian sexuality is not hidden, but her punishment comes at the hands of her inexplicit love for Robin Vote. Robin’s character is one of the most

complex in Western literature. She wears many masks throughout the novel (wife, lover, mistress, mother, gold digger) and yet she cannot be defined by any of these titles.

Robin's struggle is on full display throughout the novel, because Robin cannot identify with the patriarchal heteronormative societal structure prevalent in all her relationships.

The crux of Robin's nonidentity is because no matter what relationship she enters into, it is still the result of patriarchal influence. Her relationships with Nora and Jenny only differ from a typical heteronormative relationship due to the sexes of her partners. Nora wants to control Robin like an overbearing male husband and Jenny's patronizing relationship with Robin mirrors that of a husband that devalues the thoughts, opinions, and freedoms of their wife. It is human culture that has its fingerprints all over the relationships Robin forms throughout the novel. Even her brief relationships with nature and animals have human influence imprinted on them. There is no escape from the Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine, as Stacy Alaimo details in her essay "Violet-black" that explores the deepest parts of the ocean that appear to be devoid of human influence when in fact "at this point everything in the ocean has already been touched by human particles, if not human hands" (Alaimo 241-2). No matter what actions Robin takes throughout the novel, she cannot escape from the heteronormative patriarchy that controls human culture.

The reader never sees into the mind of Robin, which makes her such an enigma. It is important for this novel that the readers will never fully understand Robin and we must do our best to interpret her motivations through the cultural lenses we all look through, for that is how every character in the novel tries to understand her. Readers will never understand Robin no matter how much they delve into her psyche, because Robin will

never tell us what she is thinking and why she acts the way she acts. Robin is perhaps the closest human character in literature to embodying the gap humans have with animals.

No matter how much time a human spends with an animal, they will never understand their thoughts, motivations, plights, etc. It is only human hubris to proclaim that any of us know why animals act certain ways. The prominent reason humans will never fully understand animals is because the animals cannot express their reasonings; humans must gather as much context as possible through the animal's actions. Much of human history has separated human from animal on the basis that humans can reason and animals cannot. This is a lazy separation based on the fact that it is impossible to fully understand animals, and yet it has been the dominating idea of why humans believe that animals are less-than humans. Mario Ortiz-Robles looks at the history of human philosophy and its relationship with animals to help explain how most of written human history has reinforced the idea that animals are less than humans on the basis of human ideals that animals will never be able to refute:

The strict division Western Culture establishes between humans and animals may itself be the product of a certain form of us-and-them literalism whose origins are in fact literary in nature. This division can be traced back through the history of Western thought in the different iterations of the definition of the human as a privileged species of animal that has or had something extra or supplementary appended to its animal nature: the human is a political animal (Aristotle); a promising animal (Nietzsche); an animal with soul (Descartes); a time-keeping animal (Heidegger); etc. In all these cases, humans are distinguished from their

non-human cousins on the basis of cognitive, spiritual, intellectual, and linguistic considerations. (Ortiz-Robles 2)

It is unfair that humans judge animal intelligence based on how closely the animal can resemble human thoughts and actions to problem solve. An animal's cognition, spirituality, intellect, and linguistics cannot be accurately judged by human beings, and yet these are the factors we cling to in order to lessen the value of animals.

These intangible characteristics are not the only factors that have separated humans from the rest of the animal kingdom. John Berger's "Why Look at Animals" (1977) has distinguished itself as one of the most important modern essays on humanity's relationship with the animal kingdom. In his essay, he attacks humanity's separation from animals caused by our migration to cities and reliance on technology. Humans no longer live with the animals they consume, and therefore they have lost their connection to the animals that inhabit this world: "A peasant becomes fond of his pig and is glad to salt away its pork. What is significant, and is so difficult for the urban stranger to understand, is that the two statements in that sentence are connected by an *and* and not by a *but*" (Berger 7). This distance brought on by urbanization replaced animal familiarity with anthropomorphism: "In the last two centuries, animals have gradually disappeared. Today we live without them. And in this new solitude, anthropomorphism makes us doubly uneasy" (Berger 11). The importance of Berger's observations is that humanity lost what little understanding they did have with animals<sup>66</sup> as we became less dependent on the living animal. Once the Industrial Revolution replaced animals with machines, animals

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<sup>66</sup> Berger also condemns pet-keeping, which I do not fully agree with. He believed that the keeping of pets did not bring us closer to the animals, but instead brought those privileged few closer to humans. This disregards the adaptability certain species (dogs in particular) showcased throughout human history that allowed them to thrive in human culture. Additionally, anyone that has lived with a domestic cat knows that they do not adapt to humans; humans have to adapt to their wants and needs.

began to only be valued by their “meat or leather or horn” (Berger 4). Instead of humans learning how to live with and take care of these animals that they depended on, they only learned about these animals from a distance or separated by bars.

The final argument of Berger’s essay criticizes humanity’s fascination with caged animals in zoos. This argument leads back to *Nightwood*, and the marginalization humanity has enforced on these captured animals;

Public zoos came into existence at the beginning of the period which was to see the disappearance of animals from daily life. The zoo to which people go to meet animals, to observe them, to see them, is, in fact, a monument to the impossibility of such encounters. Modern zoos are an epitaph to a relationship which was as old as man... However, you look at these animals, even if the animal is up against the bars, less than a foot from you, looking outward in the public direction, you are looking at something that *has been rendered absolutely marginal*; and all the concentration you can muster will never be enough to centralize it. (Berger 21-4)

Animals kept in forced enclosures such as zoos and circuses utterly marginalize the animal on display. They become nothing more than a façade of their wild kin and the animal’s value is reduced to what the gawking humans place on the creature. In a zoo or circus animals are propped up to provide entertainment for the humans that visit.

Zoos hide under the misconception that they are involved in conservation by the few success stories they present through zoological publications. The predominant problem with zoological claims to conservation is that they have controlled the narrative

for two centuries. One example of the control conservation societies had over the public perception of zoological societies, as detailed by Jan-Erik Steinkrüger, is the achievement of saving the horse species known as Przewalski's horse. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Przewalski horse was hunted down and captured in Mongolia for European and American collectors, by a zoo co-founder named, Carl Hagenback. After the horse population in Mongolia was decimated by this trade, conservationists decided to breed these horses and reintroduce them to their natural environment. The conservation effort was a success, however, the publications surrounding this conservation effort neglected to mention that the populations were originally decimated by human trading for zoos. In fact, these early publications went as far as to justify the initial hunting and capture of these horses. The conservationists claimed that the Przewalski horses were better-off being taken to zoos rather than living in Mongolia (Steinkrüger 111-12). Steinkrüger explains that "The history in this and similar descriptions of Hagenbeck's influence on Przewalski's horse population justifies the hunt, trade and collection retrospectively: 'Though today we disapprove of these practices, they were after all for the better good.'" (Steinkrüger 112).

Zoos have always tried to justify the imprisonment and exploitation of animals under the guise of "conservation." What zoos actually achieve is marginalizing entire species to the scope of human accomplishments and power. The animals' value is reduced to what the visiting public places on it. As Berger explains, no matter how much the people stare at these animals behind bars they will never be able to centralize the species. Looking at an animal in captivity is not a true depiction of the species and its impact on the natural world. These animals are just prisoners caught or bred by human



intervention. What the public sees are the marginalized versions of a species that are being represented by these animals trapped in cages.

### **Guido's "Inferiority"**

In Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* the main characters are marginalized by a society that does not accept what makes them unique. Felix, Matthew, and Nora all suffer greatly from the marginalization society enforces on their otherness. Felix wants to be part of some great society of elites, and yet he will never truly be part of the dukes and barons that he idolizes. The reason Felix will never be part of this society is due to his Jewish heritage:

What had formed Felix from the date of his birth to his coming to thirty was unknown to the world, for the step of the wandering Jew is in every son. No matter where and when you meet him you feel that he has come from some place—no matter from what place he has come—some country that he has devoured rather than resided in, some secret land that he has been nourished on but cannot inherit, for the Jew seems to be everywhere from nowhere. (Barnes 8)

Felix's obsession with history makes the first line of this quote even more sad. Felix was unknown to the world, because the world wanted to ignore the plights of the Jews. Due to his Judaism, Felix is never an accepted member of one country, nor is he looked at as a productive citizen by those countries he has visited. He is always devouring the country, but he is never given credit for enhancing a country. In essence, Felix can never win the affection of a country, no matter how much he can contribute to the society or the gentry. Felix wants to be a productive member of high society, and father a child that appreciates

history and can follow in his footsteps by adding to history. Yet, Felix and his son, Guido<sup>67</sup>, will never be accepted by society and the historians, because of something they cannot change or control: their heritage.

Felix and Guido's marginalization is due to their ancestors' nomadic history and stereotypes of consuming a society rather than bolstering it. Felix, just wants to join the society that ignores him, and yet they will never recognize him as a productive member of society. He is unfairly seen as a representative of all the negative stereotypes of Jewish people. In Felix's example, he is characterized by his ancestry, as a human example of Berger's observation that the animals on display are used as representatives of an entire species. Felix's identity is stripped from him by a misconception of his birthright that he will consume a culture and when his appetite is satisfied, he will move on to the next country. Outside of Matthew, no one recognizes Felix's identity which drives his actions: "Felix experiences non-identity as a gaping void in his subjectivity which drives him to act out his desire to 'bow down' to some proper cultural authority" (Rohman 136). Through Felix's marginalization from his surrounding society, he never truly solidifies his identity. He is stripped of subjectivity and is viewed from a distance by social norms that want to keep him separated from society. Society wants Felix to continue his ancestors' nomadic ways and keep him from planting roots. His ten-year-old son, Guido, is the physical embodiment of Felix's rejection from common culture: "Mentally deficient, and emotionally excessive, an addict to death; at ten, barely as tall as a child of six, wearing spectacles, stumbling when he tried to run, with cold hands and anxious face, he followed his father, trembling with an excitement that was a precocious

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<sup>67</sup> Guido is caught between religious traditions, as his mother and father are of different faiths (Jewish and Cristian).

ecstasy” (Barnes 114). Born within a marginalized space, Guido cannot grow or thrive in his environment. He is confined to the stereotypes of society and his father’s lack of identity. Guido, raised without a mother, must depend on Felix for physical and mental nourishment. Guido is born in captivity and in addition to society never accepting him because he is Jewish, they will never accept him for his physical and mental limitations. His only chance at survival is within these confines that have damned him. Without Felix, Guido will surely perish, and yet it is also due to Felix’s obsession with a history that will never accept them, that Guido will always feel inferior.

In a small scene, but important in an animal studies reading, one of Guido’s inferiorities is emphasized by the way he feels about animals;

She began talking about the Baronin almost at once, though she mentioned no name at first, and I did not connect the story with my wife until the end. She said, “She is really quite extraordinary. I don’t understand her at all, though I must say I understand her better than other people.” She added this with a sort of false eagerness. She went on: “She always lets her pets die. She is so fond of them, and then she neglects them, the way that animals neglect themselves.” ‘I did not like her to talk about this subject, as Guido is very sensitive to animals, and I could fancy what was going on in his mind; he is not like other children, not cruel, or savage. For this very reason he is called “strange”. A child who is mature, in the sense that the heart is mature, is always, I have observed, called deficient.’ (Barnes 122)

The woman talking about the Baronin is Jenny Petherbridge, Robin’s last human companion in the novel, who in making small talk with Felix (not realizing he’s Robin’s

estranged husband), mentions a quality in Robin that is upsetting. Her penchant to let her pets die from neglect upsets Guido and should upset the readers. Felix knows that Guido will not know that Jenny is talking about his mother, because Guido does not know Robin, but the mention of pets dying from neglect will upset him.

Felix explains to Matthew that Guido's sensitivity to animals is due to his maturity and his lack of cruelty and savagery that is common in children. For Felix, it is worth noting that he believes the "normal" children are savage and cruel, in an example of just how out-of-touch Felix is with the status-quo society. While Guido's lack of these two features are commendable (see below), it says just as much about Felix that this is the way he sees the other children. Barnes showcases the weird/fringe relationships in her novel, and Felix is the example of the male patriarch that does not fit in with the rest of the male patriarchy that controls social norms. Felix is strange to the common man (and woman) as he is nomadic, he all but worships old traditional values, and he sees the common traits of children as cruel and savage. Much like the other main characters of the novel, Felix does not fully participate in the social norms of his time, and his timidity is outwardly projected in this quote through his view of children. Yes, children can be cruel as they learn to adapt to cultural rules set in place by adults, but to label them as cruel reveals Felix's inability to adapt. He can praise Guido's kindness and still recognize that children are not inherently savage and cruel for being less sensitive toward animals. Guido's sensitivity is not just a rare trait for a child, but as a human in general.

This sensitive quality in Guido should be commended by society, just as Felix commends his son for being sensitive to animals; however, it is seen as a "strange" quality and only pushes Guido even further into the fringes of society. Sentimentality has

been discussed throughout this dissertation<sup>68</sup> but that has always been a discussion surrounding adults (usually men) and how sentimentality is a childish or feminine trait. Guido is a child, and yet he is still viewed as strange and deficient for being sentimental toward animals. Thus, it can be concluded through the works examined throughout *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* that society never accepts sentimentality toward animals. If a woman is sentimental, she is criticized as being hysterical; if a man is sentimental, he is seen as effeminate, if a child is sentimental, he/she/they are considered strange. Humanity finds a way to always view sentimentality toward animals as an undesirable trait.

As mentioned above, readers should be upset by Robin's tendency to let her pets die. In many ways, Robin is a sympathetic character, which will be explored below; however, it is important to recognize Robin's disregard for other lives. It is one thing to abandon other self-sufficient human adults (Felix, Nora, Jenny), but Robin also abandons her infant son, Guido, and her pets. To some, the abandonment of Guido is seen as irredeemable<sup>69</sup> despite the fact that Robin never wanted to be a mother. What needs to be explored in terms of animal studies is how nonchalantly the character trait of Robin's neglect toward pets is brought up and quickly forgotten. As seen in previous chapter, sentimentality comes into question in a modernist text once again, but in this example, I want to focus more on the quick dismissal of this monstrous trait. Most readers will read this line and feel a brief sense of sympathy for the animals, and then move on with their lives. In a novel that challenges its readers to rethink their ingrained notions of LGBTQ+

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<sup>68</sup> Most prominently in Chapter 3

<sup>69</sup> As a personal anecdote, my opinion of Robin did significantly change after reading *Nightwood* once I became a father. Before having my own child, it was harder to visualize the damage Robin's abandonment of Guido would have on the child.

and acceptable culture, Barnes presents the readers with an awful aspect of Robin Vote's lifestyle toward innocent animals.

Many of Robin's flaws can be explained through her struggles with non-identity. Robin does not want to be in a monogamous relationship, she does not want to be a mother, she does not want to be tied to any one place, person, or history. Although she abandons Guido, she does leave him with Felix who she knows will raise the child. Robin's treatment of Nora can be described as cruel and unusual punishment for the love-sick woman. Robin takes advantage of Nora's love as a safe place for her to lodge while she galivants around the city at night. Carolyn Allen makes an important distinction in the dynamics of Nora and Robin's relationship:

But more frequently it scripts them as players in a dramatic struggle between mother and child. Relations of power in these seemingly conventional binaries is unstable rather than fixed; power circulates by being exchanged both within these pairings (Nora agonizes over Robin's philanderings, but in the end she draws Robin back to her) and among them (Nora has maternal control, but she defers to Robin's masculine freedom). (Allen 178)

While Robin creates a considerable amount of suffering in Nora's life, once again, this is a person that will survive without Robin's aid. In the short line of Robin neglecting her pets to death is the single example of Robin's life choices causing irreconcilable damage to a vulnerable and innocent individual.<sup>70</sup> Robin causing the death of an animal due to neglect is not a merciful death. A death caused by neglect is slow and painful, usually as

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<sup>70</sup> Jenny Petherbridge should not be given a pass on this neglect either. She just stands idly by while these animals die.

a result of dehydration, starvation, or an untreated illness. And Jenny's comment that animals "neglect themselves" is woefully inaccurate and irresponsible. These are comments humans make about animals to assuage their own conscience for allowing these awful deaths to take place. In fact, humans have to recognize that we are the ones that neglect ourselves, while animals are dutifully committed to caring for themselves. Erica Fudge's pivotal animal studies text, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England*, makes a point to note that

Animals have virtue naturally, while humans are dangerously vicious; whereas animals fulfill their domestic duties without deliberation, humans must be schooled to complete theirs. The fact that being human must be taught, while being animal is natural, is taken not as evidence of the power of the human potential to reason but as evidence of human frailty. (Fudge 122)

In this example, the Anthropocene Engine devours pets for no other use than as entertainment for humans. Once the pet's novelty wears off, Robin's care ceases and society pays as little attention to this cruelty as possible. If more attention is given to the suffering of these pets (such as Guido), one is considered strange and mentally deficient. Using animals and/or fringe humans as entertainment is irredeemable and irresponsible. Human culture treats LGBTQ+ characters the same way Robin treats her pets, once they lose their novelty, they are neglected and left to die. In fact, Felix, Nora, and Robin can all be viewed as animals that neglect themselves. Nora's inability to let Robin go first physically and then emotionally, shows neglect of self-worth. Felix is self-neglected in how he lacks the ability to adapt to modern culture and would rather fixate on a past he

looks at through gilded lenses. Lastly, Robin neglects herself in a myriad of ways, most commonly her lack of self-sufficiency which requires her to live with people that she knows can take care of her.

### **Circus Lions**

One of the many reasons *Nightwood* is such a powerful novel is the way Barnes places these marginalized people without explicitly stating how they are victimized. Matthew is embarrassed when Nora discovers his cross-dressing and he certainly goes through a lengthy explanation of why he feels ostracized, but the readers do not overtly see society mistreating him for being a transvestite. Robin shows signs of mental abuse through her drinking and self-destructive actions throughout the novel, but once again there is no clear blame placed on heteronormative society. What readers do see is that they all have to put on an act when in the public eye. These non-heteronormative characters must obey the rules of a society that does not want their individuality. They must put on a show to avoid being punished. Thus, the most powerful moment of the novel is when Robin meets Nora at the circus outside of the lion cage, which is where we see the most emotion from Robin.

A girl sitting beside Nora took out a cigarette and lit it; her hands shook and Nora turned to look at her; she looked at her suddenly because the animals, going around and around the ring, all but climbed over at that point. They did not seem to see the girl, but as their dusty eyes moved past, the orbit of their light seemed to turn on her. At that moment Nora turned.



The great cage for the lions had been set up, and the lions were walking up and out of their small strong boxes into the arena. Ponderous and furred they came, their tails laid down across the floor, dragging and heavy, making the air seem full of withheld strength. Then as one powerful lioness came to the turn of the bars, exactly opposite the girl, she turned her furious great head with its yellow eyes afire and went down, her paws thrust through the bars and, as she regarded the girl, as if a river were falling behind impassable heat, her eyes flowed in tears that never reached the surface. At that the girl rose straight up. Nora took her hand. 'Let's get out of here!' the girl said, and still holding her hand Nora took her out.

(Barnes 57-8)

The more this passage is dissected, the more depressing it becomes. These two paragraphs summarize the pain and agony humans and animals feel when they are forced to perform for someone's else's acceptance.

These lions are in pain, and they have been beaten (both literally and figuratively) into submission by lion tamers so that they can entertain crowds of humans. The passage begins by describing the animals in general as having "dusty eyes" which indicates poor health. Then the passage explicitly describes the lions and their conditions. The lions are kept in small boxes and walk with heavy footsteps and tails dragging across the floor. Cats only drag their tails along the floor when they are depressed or frightened. A proud cat will walk with their tail high in the air. They will swing their tail when they are interested in something. These lions are dragging their tails in a sign that they are withholding their strength, in a show that their individuality is being deprived. These

lions cannot be the proud, ferocious animals they are meant to be: instead, they are actors on a stage they do not wish to be on.

The study of animal performativity is growing exponentially as the animal studies movement continues to reach more people, and a positive sign that this growth is affecting entertainment is the recent development that the famous Barnum and Bailey circus is no longer including animals in their acts. Much of *The Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine* has detailed the exploitation of animals in human cultures, but there is a difference in the way we look at animals when considering the performance humans expect from animals. In fact, the public spectacle of performing animals has become a cultural norm and another way in which humans have become accustomed to seeing animals as opposed to their natural habitats and behaviors. Karen Raber and Monica Mattfeld detail how animal performance is something that science largely overlooks,<sup>71</sup> while the public has become engaged in the spectacle of animal entertainment: “Public acceptance and embrace of the idea that animals who provide spectacles or performances are genuine ‘actors,’ feeling and projecting emotion, aware of an audience and appealing to it, might be branded naïve sentimentalism by a ‘scientific’ elite—but that has not eliminated or reduced the cultural influence of such positions” (Raber and Mattfeld 2). The public enjoys the spectacle of animals performing roles that mean something to the humans watching, but not very much to the animals performing. However, humans will still project their own sentiments onto the animal performances and anthropomorphize their actions. The human public will see an animal performing a role like a lion balancing on a ball and infer that the lion is projecting whimsy for the

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<sup>71</sup> This is not a condemnation of science, but just a plain statement that most scientists see very little value in studying the performances of animals.

applause of the audience, when in reality, the lion is just performing a trick that it was taught by a human instructor so it can be rewarded with a treat. The lion does not realize or care that it is getting a laugh out of the crowd, it is only performing at the whim of a human trainer. They are performing in public so that they can survive another day under the harsh eye of the trainer. The public may find the performance to be fun and entertaining, but the experience is much different for the animal performing for them. That is why Barnes should be lauded for her honest observation of these performing animals. Thus, her description of one lioness in particular strikes such a powerful chord with Robin.

This description of the lioness is what makes this passage so powerful. It is also worth noting Barnes' impressive ability to individualize a non-human in her novel, which is typically missing from canonical literature. Barnes does not anthropomorphize the lioness, she simply uses what the lioness gives us in terms of physical cues, to decipher the pain and agony of this creature. Barnes does not invent ways to explain the lioness' suffering to make it fit into humanist examples. Much the same way Barnes explains the struggles of her human characters, she gives this lioness the same dignity. The lioness regards Robin "as if a river were falling behind impassible heat, her eyes flowed in tears that never reached the surface." Rohman describes this particular line that the description "links the animal's and Robin's stultification by humanist power structures that repress animality, it also suggests that an animal's experience, though technically 'untranslatable' into human language, is nonetheless powerful and clear" (Rohman 144). I agree with all of what Rohman states here, but she limits the impact of this shared glance between Robin and the lioness by stating humanist power structures are repressing animality. This

does not give enough credence to the impact the circus has inflicted on the lioness, and how much impact society's heteronormative culture has repressed Robin.

The humanist power structures are repressing both Robin and the lioness, but to use the word "animality" is oversimplifying the repression. Once again, this is an example of an animal studies approach that forgets the individuality of the animal. Repressing animality means something different for a lioness than it does for other animals. To keep the example to circus animals, a bear's animality being repressed is different from an elephant's animality, which is different from a lion's. Even more specifically in this example, a lioness' animality even differs from her male counterpart. Lionesses are the primary hunters in the pack and have deep familial structures in place within their female group. There is typically only one male adult lion in a pride until he either dies or is overthrown by a more powerful male adversary. Lionesses are responsible for providing food for the pride, and hunt as a team to be more efficient killers than most of their fellow big cat species (tigers, cheetahs, pumas, and leopards are primarily solitary hunters). Lastly, a pride's territory can range from 15 to 400 square miles, ([renderloyalty.com](http://renderloyalty.com)) which explains why Barnes choosing to focus on the cage is very important for the lioness. A lioness naturally prowls a territory of at least 15 square miles, and lions kept in captivity are caged in absurdly small quarters. One example taken from "Zoo guidelines for Keeping Large Felids in Captivity" (1997) recommends: "Lions and tigers are easily maintained in traditional barred or heavily wired cages as well as in large outdoor exhibits employing moats to separate animals and public. A cage for a single animal should measure at least 20 ft (6.1 m) wide x 15 ft (4.6 m) deep (300 sq.ft/27.9 sq.m); cages should be 50% larger per additional animal" (Shoemaker). 300

square feet is almost incomparable to the actual territory that a lion inhabits in Africa<sup>72</sup> and yet this is the recommended guideline from a zoological society to keep the lion caged. The cage dimensions are not described in the novel, but it is presumably even smaller considering that circuses travel and will more than likely need to use more efficient enclosures to make travel easier.

Most people will analyze the bars, but that is only half of the tragedy of zoos and circuses; the lack of space is the other half. The suffocating quarters that these animals must live in, and then be expected to perform without lashing out at the spectators, is cruel. But these lions know what will await them if they disobey the lion tamers. So, they put on a happy face for the crowds and slink back into their tiny living spaces in order to survive another day without being beaten or deprived of food. Robin recognizes all of this pain in the lioness' face, and they share a brief moment of understanding that they are both prisoners. The lioness wants to be free in her land, and yet she will never be granted that simple mercy. Barnes criticizes humanity for not recognizing pain when it is looking us in the eye. Because the lioness cannot actually cry tears, humans miss all the cues that she is unhappy because her pain does not resemble human pain. A reason why this moment of understanding with the lioness affects Robin so thoroughly is because her pain will never be recognized by society. Even the LGBTQ+ society would never recognize Robin's pain, because as we see with her relationship with Jenny, she never understands Robin. Instead of trying to empathize with her pain, Jenny tries to control her life so that she cannot escape their tight living spaces. Robin, like a lion, needs free range to roam and express her individuality, yet she keeps transitioning from one circus cage to another. That is the crux of Robin's non-identity, she is never actually allowed to be an

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<sup>72</sup> 15 square miles equals 418,176,000 square feet.

individual. Throughout the novel, societal structures (both hetero and non-hetero normative structures) keep trying to cage Robin with female roles (wife, mother, daughter, mistress). Even the settings of the novel consisting of cramped living spaces and the tight streets of European cities that feel smaller and smaller as we learn more about the characters. As Rohman stated about the lioness' experience being "untranslatable" but also "powerful and clear" this too is Robin's experience.

### **The "Undomesticatable" Robin**

Robin is seen to be an elusive and un-tamable person from the three relationships she has in the novel. Robin is never granted the empathy she shows the lioness, from the people in her life that observe her. Instead of trying to better understand Robin, they blame her for being "undomesticatable." Beginning with the first images the reader has of Robin, a mythic beastliness is used to describe her form:

She closed her eyes and Felix, who had been looking into them intently because of their mysterious and shocking blue, found himself seeing them still faintly clear and timeless behind the lids—the long unqualified range in the iris of wild beasts who have not tamed the focus down to meet the human eye...Sometimes one meets a woman who is beast turning human. Such a person's every movement will reduce to an image of a forgotten experience; a mirage of an eternal wedding cast on the racial memory; as insupportable a joy as would be the vision of an eland coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil, a hoof raised in the economy of fear, stepping in the trepidation of flesh that will

become myth; as the unicorn is neither man nor beast deprived, but human hunger pressing its breast to its prey. (Barnes 40)

Immediately, both cultural and heteronormative social structures are trying to categorize Robin. The narrator is portraying Robin as some woman who fits perfectly into a wife/mother; “a mirage of an eternal wedding” and “eland coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil.” Felix is immediately drawn to Robin because of qualities in her resembling an ideal woman to marry and a wild beast that needs to be tamed. This dueling view makes Felix both afraid of and attracted to Robin.

Instead of wanting to know what Robin wants and needs, Felix is drawn to her by imagining her as a wild animal walking down the aisle with a bridal veil. Juliana Schiesari describes Felix’s initial reaction to Robin as misguided by his traditions:

Felix’s error is to try ineffectually to tame her, to domesticate her within the bounds of the home and according to the traditions of his old aristocratic heritage and pedigree. But Robin as a principle is precisely what resists domestication of any kind, as undomesticatable as the wild eland or mythical unicorn. Though Felix’s first sight of her raises visions of a creature walking down the aisle in bridal finery, and though she does indeed become his wife, she irrepressibly returns to that long-lost home that is our animal ancestry. (Schiesari 30)

I will return to the dangers of flippantly conjoining a real animal with a mythical animal, and how that hurts animal studies; but, in terms of Schiesari’s analysis, Felix is guided throughout the entire novel by his suffocating attachments to tradition. Felix’s error is not exclusive to himself, as Nora and Jenny also try to tame and cage Robin in their preferred

roles; however, Felix tries to domesticate Robin in the quintessential female roles (wife/mother). Felix feels the pressure of society and tradition to take on that masculine role of a husband that tames (marries) a woman and domesticates her in the role of a mother. Felix is not a quintessential male, and he goes against his own wants and needs through his relationship with Robin, because he wants to fulfill the traditional duties of a husband/father. Felix is a victim of his own attachment to tradition, and dives into a relationship with Robin without proper self-examination of what he really wants out of a marital bond. Felix feels the pressure to get married and further his line, and therefore he attempts a relationship with Robin, who is undomesticated.

Therefore, the image of Robin as an eland is significant because an eland is another African animal<sup>73</sup> that is described as being undomesticated, but that is not entirely true when describing an eland. Elands are large antelopes that primarily live in central Africa. There have been a number of attempts to farm elands as an alternative to cows for both their milk and their meat. While they are consumed by Africans, their popularity in Western cultures has not taken root (despite some organizations' best efforts) (Lambrecht 22). The USA equivalent for an eland would be a white-tailed deer. They can be domesticated as a farm animal, but their products are not popular enough for widespread domestication.

The use of an eland through the imagination of Felix is typically sourced to two important facts regarding Barnes' life: she lived in North Africa for a short period of time while writing *Nightwood*, and her partner during these years was Thelma Wood who was an artist that drew African wildlife and has a published drawing of an eland (Martins 108). The image of the eland in Felix's fantasy when he first sees Robin is not a good

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<sup>73</sup> This animal reference comes before the lioness scene



analogy for “undomesticatable,” since elands can be domesticated. It is the western public preference to not consume eland products that keeps them from being fully domesticated like a cow<sup>74</sup>. Most scholars that take the time to even acknowledge that an eland is mentioned in this important scene<sup>75</sup> choose to focus on the domestication aspect in the similar vein as Schiesari. Why does Felix think of an eland? Could this just be a projection from Barnes, based on Thelma Wood’s art? It is an interesting animal for a Jewish European man to conjure up when looking at a passed-out woman draped on a chair in a hotel. What should be surmised is that Felix is not looking at Robin as someone who is “undomesticatable,” but rather as a woman that is currently undomesticated but can be harvested<sup>76</sup> for the hetero-normative goals of society. If Felix can succeed in subjecting Robin to the laws of civilization, then he would be the mythic hero that captured a beast considered to be untamable.

Felix does not know that Robin’s sexuality is ambiguous, his motivations are much simpler. Felix wants to conform the wildness of Robin into a productive female member of the hetero-normative society whose history he obsesses over. Felix wants Robin to be his wife and the mother of his child. While he accomplishes both of those dreams, he does not know what Robin’s wants or desires are, he only cares about some cultural pressures for a man his age to make a family. Felix pays for his heterosexual hubris in his assumption that Robin wants what history/society declares that all women must want: to be mothers and wives. Felix ignores the history of non-heteronormative people much like the majority of science. Stacy Alaimo writes about the history of non-

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<sup>74</sup> In fact, by the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was no land animal that humans could not domesticate if they so chose to do so. The reason some animals are farmed, and others are not, is due to public demand.

<sup>75</sup> In most articles and books that reference this passage of the first time Felix sees Robin, they do not even bother to explain what an eland is, or even why it is the animal of choice in this passage.

<sup>76</sup> The word choice here is deliberate.

heteronormative behaviors throughout the animal kingdom which debunks the myth that queer animals are unnatural. Alaimo points to the silencing of the larger scientific community as the culprit for not allowing this information to become widely known;

Most obviously, scientific accounts of queer animals insist that heteronormativity has damaged and diminished scientific knowledge in biology, anthropology, and other fields. Roughgarden charges that “the scientific silence on homosexuality in animals amounts to a cover-up, deliberate or not,” thus scientists “are professionally responsible for refuting claims that homosexuality is unnatural” (2004, 128). Bruce Bagemihl (1999) and Myra J. Hird (2004b) document how the majority of scientists have ignored, refused to acknowledge, closeted, or explained away their observations of same-sex behavior in animals, for fear of risking their reputations, scholarly credibility, academic positions, or heterosexual identity. (Alaimo 54)

The cover-up of homosexuality has a wide-spread effect on all of human and non-human history. Felix would have never considered that Robin was not interested in a heteronormative role, because all of the histories that Felix obsessed over would have ignored the queer characters. The non-heteronormative people in those histories would be written as either oddities or be no more than footnotes in the history of a heterosexual culture.

The disregard of non-heterosexual sexualities in modern science can be traced to Charles Darwin’s theory of “sexual selection.” “Sexual selection” is the theory that civilizations are built on the grounds of reproduction. In order for “survival of the fittest”

to truly impact evolution, the fittest animals would have to reproduce (Gandhi 929).

Leela Gandhi examines the impact Darwin's theory fostered against the homosexual<sup>77</sup> communities and observes that

The principles of sexual selection...were thus instrumental in producing the nonheterosexual or homosexual as a "civilizational" aberration. But in doing so they also conferred upon this figure a potentially symmetrical relation to all those other savage, colonized peoples concurrently relegated to the jealous margins of western civility. Clearly not every nineteenth-century homosexual was alert to symmetry, but for those who were, the critique of colonialism was at least available as an affective or political response to the constraints of their own condition. (Gandhi 929)

Gandhi argues that Darwin's theory is a main driver for the nonheterosexual communities to be relegated to the fringes of "civilized" society, much the same way that foreigners were kept on the fringes by society.<sup>78</sup> Darwin's massive influence on the scientific community only helped to enforce a silencing of non-heteronormative behaviors in humans and animals. Darwin's belief that civilized society can only function through the reproduction of the fittest, reinforced the idea that sex for pleasure (particularly amongst same sex partners) was unnatural and had no place in nature. Darwin's studies blatantly ignored the same sex activities of animals in the wild in order to maintain the strength of his main hypothesis that the animal kingdom evolved through the survival of the fittest (see Bell, David). Therefore "queer animals" did not exist in Darwin's theories and science/anthropology had no place for them in their continued studies.

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<sup>77</sup> Leela Gandhi's word choice.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 2 "Exotic Animals" for more on the treatment of non-western people by the imperialists.

The cover-up in anthropology and biology of “queer animals” leads to one explanation of Robin’s pain throughout her life. Robin never feels that she fits in one place and alternately does not desire to stay in one place for very long, as evidenced by her nomadic lifestyle. Robin acts out when she begins to feel caged in one spot. The history of women that have resisted these traditional roles have been washed over with one word: “hysterical.” As shown throughout this dissertation, any time a woman acts outside the norms of society, she is deemed hysterical in an attempt for society to ignore her without actually learning about her plights, wants, or needs. Some scientists/anthropologists have physical proof from nature of that these actions originally thought to be unnatural are in-fact natural in both human and nonhuman species. But due to societal pressures, these findings are either hidden by the researcher to avoid being ostracized or they publish it and become labelled as radical and lose their credibility in the larger scientific community.

Not only are queer animals (human and non) natural, but the homophobia conducted in human culture is an unnatural act. In David Bell’s chapter “Queernaturecultures” he details the hypocrisy of human culture deeming homosexuality as unnatural by referencing studies of the “queer animal” which has proven that heterosexual and non-heterosexual sex for pleasure is existent and common in non-human animals; “Nonhuman animal homosexuality is thus naturalized through the figure of the “queer animal,” while homophobia is denaturalized as a culturally specific human response since animals do not exhibit hostility toward same-sex acts in their presence” (Bell 137). Despite the fact that society is acting against nature when it shuns non-

heteronormative people, this homophobia is more common in society<sup>79</sup> than an acceptance of LGBTQ+ cultures. The actions of Robin's life does not pin her into one sexuality category, but instead more closely resembles the queernaturecultures that Bell is writing about, in terms of sex for pleasure regardless of the partner's gender or sexuality.

Barnes, who is already making bold choices with lesbian characters in her novel, dives into a topic that is still less explored nearly a hundred years later. Robin's ambiguous sexuality that is difficult to define, makes the pain she experiences a challenge to understand which is what leads her to be compared to a mythic creature (unicorn) by Felix. Robin and Barnes' personal lives share a similarity in their sexual non-identity. Barnes famously stated that she is not a lesbian when discussing her relationship with Thelma Wood; "I'm not a lesbian, I just loved Thelma" (Martins 108). Barnes was well known for being a "troublemaker" who railed against the patriarchy throughout much of her adult life, both in action and through her writing (Martins 108). Robin's actions throughout the novel are rebellious and troublesome to the established patriarchy that defined the hetero-normative society she was forced to live in. Felix's initial reaction to Robin's appearance was accurate from his perspective: "a hoof raised in the economy of fear, stepping in the trepidation of flesh that will become myth; as the unicorn is neither man nor beast deprived, but human hunger pressing its breast to its prey." Felix did not only live within the confines of the patriarchy, but he admired and revered it as Matthew recalls "Look at Felix now; what kind of Jew is that? Screaming up against tradition like a bat against a window-pane, high-up over the town, his child a boy weeping 'o'er graves of hope and pleasure gone" (Barnes 161). Despite how all the traditions of their society have wronged Felix as a Jew, husband, and father, he still tries to live within its confines

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<sup>79</sup> Even more common in the 1920-30s when Barnes was writing *Nightwood* than in 2022

like a bat confused about a window-pane. Felix keeps flying against an invisible barrier confused as to why he cannot reach the other side. His fascination with history has even damned his son. This is the man that tries to domesticate the undomesticatable, Robin. To Felix, Robin is a unicorn because she does not live in the same world as Felix.

Returning to John Berger, humanity has always used animals artistically in order to better understand the world around them: “The first subject matter for painting was animal. Probably the first paint was animal blood. Prior to that, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the first metaphor was animal” (Berger 7). Robin is not a mythical creature. Robin can be defined within the confines of the natural world. The issue is that society views her life through a narrow lens that has been defined by heteronormative patriarchy. The reason Berger condemns humanity’s relationship with animals is because we lost that connection to the natural world by distancing ourselves from nature. Until the Industrial Revolution and the urbanization of humanity, we have lived in close proximity to the animals we used as art and metaphor. But human separation from nature led humanity to allow the hetero-normative society to cover-up the actions of “queer animals” and silence any who would try to prove that non-heteronormative relationships are natural. Therefore, the use of a unicorn to define Robin, is merely proof that Felix was incapable of understanding her desires because they did not fit into the categories of patriarchal society.

### **The Dog Scene**

Robin’s journey throughout majority of the novel is told through the perspectives of the people who were involved in intimate relationships with her. The last chapter “The Possessed” is the only chapter in the novel that focuses on Robin almost exclusively and

her story is not told through another character's perspective. Robin is misunderstood by every character in the novel, therefore the stories they tell about her portray the messy parts of her life (drinking into a stupor, emotionally distant, selfish, and a bad partner), but there is virtually no sympathy from the other characters. Robin does not identify with any of the human cultures existent in her life. She cannot identify as a heterosexual wife; she does not identify as a lesbian like Nora and Jenny; lastly, she cannot identify as a mother<sup>80</sup>. In this final chapter, Robin wants to give up trying to "perform" for other people's expectations of how she should live, and she retreats to nature. Robin is attempting to escape culture by trekking farther and farther away from urban developments. Robin even spent a few nights sleeping in the woods as she travelled closer to "Nora's part of the country" (Barnes 176).

As the chapter progresses, Robin begins to realize what anthropologists have stated about the nature/culture divide: "As anthropologists have long argued, the nature/culture divide takes place within culture. One could even say, following this kind of logic, that there exists no animal 'outside' culture" (Schiesari 4). Robin abandons Jenny and the urban lifestyle to live in nature away from human cultural influences. Robin quickly realizes that there is no escape from the Unstoppable Anthropocene Engine. Robin herself is now participating in the Anthropocene as she is affecting the individual lives of the animals around her: "Robin walked the open country in the same manner, pulling at the flowers, speaking in a low voice to the animals. Those that came

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<sup>80</sup> Robin even shows issues with dolls that resemble children, as Nora details in her story to Matthew. While Robin's motherhood (or lack thereof) has been mentioned throughout the chapter; there is more to discuss about that part of Robin's life that she thoroughly rejected and the possible guilt she felt about it. There are animal rights activists that discuss how animals do not need to be taught how to care for their young, they naturally take on that role; this angle in regard to Robin was not very robust, but I wanted to note it briefly here.

near, she grasped, straining their fur back until their eyes were narrowed and their teeth bare, her own teeth showing as if her hand were upon her own neck” (Barnes 175). Robin quickly realizes that she is inflicting pain on the animals and sees the reflection of her treatment. Robin pets the animals too aggressively and causes them to threaten her: “eyes were narrowed and their teeth bare” and she sees that she is causing them pain by her human expectations that animals like to be pet by humans. While the animals brave her presence by approaching her within arm’s length, they are punished for their trust by being handled too aggressively. Robin returns the animals’ warning signs by baring her own teeth as if she is the one being strangled. In the midst of Robin causing the animals pain, she empathizes with them. There is no sign of regret for her actions, but Robin’s reaction tells us that she feels the pains of human interference in the middle of nature. The humanist cultural expectation that animals should just accept the petting without complaint no matter how hard the human strokes, is the pain Robin has felt her entire life.

Robin is expected to participate in the cultural roles dictated to her by society. Robin had a hand upon her own neck throughout all of her life by the expectations placed on her as a woman. Felix was the epitome of the patriarchal culture that expects Robin to become a wife and mother; Nora was the guardian/lover that provided Robin a soft place to land in the lesbian community after she left Felix. When Robin began acting out against Nora’s wants, she was seen as ungrateful because she did not fall in-line with the cultural norms of a lesbian relationship. Just as Robin’s actions do not respect the boundaries of the animals she grabs in the wild, so too are Robin’s boundaries not respected by human culture. Robin does not want to participate in the cultures being



forced upon her first by a patriarchal society, then by a lesbian society that was cultivated inside of patriarchal heteronormative societies.

Robin's story showcases that there is no escape from culture. Robin knows that the animals hate the way she is treating them, yet she continues to treat them aggressively, just the same as she neglected multiple pets to death. There is no escape from human culture, no matter how far into nature one travels. Robin's retreat into nature shows her that she is the intruder now: "One night she woke up to the barking, far off, of Nora's dog. As she had frightened the woods into silence by her breathing, the barking of the dog brought her up rigid and still" (Barnes 176). Robin notices that she frightens the woods into silence with her breathing, which is the final escape attempt from human culture that fails her. Her presence in nature becomes seclusion, as she is the haunting creature that all of the living beasts want to avoid. Nature rejects Robin, and she is forced to abandon the woods and retreat to a church where the final moments of the novel unfold.

The ending of *Nightwood* has many different interpretations, most of which involve beastliness as either sexual or a lowering of oneself to a beast's level. The interpretations that see this scene as bestiality have some merit, but there is just not enough evidence in the scene to convince me that Robin fornicates with Nora's dog. It is also a lazy interpretation that ruins the end of the novel and the actual interpretation that is being presented to us. Using the theory this dissertation has been repeatedly enforcing—we must look at every animal (human and non) on an individual level to fully realize the damage of the Anthropocene—we can see this scene as an acceptance of

kinship with nonhumans through the lens of a person that has neglected and abused them throughout the novel.

As an animal studies perspective, we must stop viewing people that see common ground with a nonhuman animal as “lowering” themselves. Two essays that are widely cited and seen as important for the scholarly history of *Nightwood* take this approach that Robin’s interaction with the dog is a submission to humanity. Kenneth Burke claims that this final scene shows Robin’s “tragic dignification” and “transcendence downward” through a perversion of God by communing with a dog on an altar (Burke). The second essay, written by Jane Marcus, sees the final scene as the epitome of Barnes’ message about submission or bowing down to the patriarchal/fascist society which begs the question “When the woman acts the beast and the beast turns human in the last scene, do we laugh or weep?” (Marcus 185). Marcus argues that Barnes wants us to laugh, as she is writing a parody against the patriarchy and its views of female hysteria. The reading of this scene as Robin “lowering herself” to the level of the dog certainly works for the arguments that Burke and Marcus make. In fact, most analyses of this scene view Robin as lowering or degrading herself in some form or fashion. I will argue that this scene should have another interpretation based on equality that Robin realizes in the final moments.

Instead of looking at this scene as Robin turning beast, we should see this scene as an admission that there is no separation between beast and human, and that is the final rebellion against the patriarchy. It was the heteronormative patriarchal perspective that viewed Robin in the bar as a “beast turning human.” In this final scene, Robin attempts to reverse that view by acting like the dog, but instead she finally sees the lack of separation

between human and animal and that beast is just another word used to degrade those that do not fit into the heteronormative patriarchy.

Then she began to bark also, crawling after him—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. The dog began to cry then, running with her, head-on with her head, as if slowly and surely to circumvent her; soft and slow his feet went padding. He ran this way and that, low down in his throat crying, and she grinning and crying with him; crying in shorter and shorter spaces, moving head to head, until she gave up, lying out, her hands beside her, her face turned and weeping; and the dog too gave up then, and lay down, his eyes bloodshot, his head flat along her knees.

(Barnes 178)

Readers need to be reminded that Robin only once in her documented life showed empathy with an animal, which was the lioness at the circus. This scene is a departure from the neglectful and abusive actions Robin took against animals throughout the novel. Robin is not turning into a beast, degrading herself, or submitting to the patriarchy; she is empathizing with nature and its equally long and tragic history of victimization at the hands of humanity for which women and Others have suffered. The novel ends with the dog laying his head against Robin's knees in a symbol of companionship.

Instead of continuing her patterns of human abuse and exploitation<sup>81</sup> against animals, Robin puts herself into the dog's shoes (metaphorically) and empathizes with him. Earlier in the novel, when Robin empathizes with the lioness it was because the lioness represented her own pains and suffocation within society. In this final scene, Robin searches for common empathy with the dog by placing herself in the dog's

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<sup>81</sup> Whether ignorantly or purposefully does not matter when the result and frequency is the same.

situation by mimicking his actions. At first, she is laughing as the moment seems absurd to her, until the dog reacts and Robin's jubilation descends into sadness and she matches his emotions. Robin does not scold or force the dog to match her emotional state, rather she submits to the dog's emotions and allows herself to bond with an animal she can touch. They are both victims of human society and they experience their pain differently, but in the end, they can empathize with each other's pain. Robin finally allows herself to act selflessly as the novel ends with her giving up and allowing another to see her vulnerability as she recognizes that human and animals are equal victims in this humanistic world at its inescapable culture.

*Nightwood* should be one of the canonical texts in animal studies due to Barnes' incredible ability to detail the struggles the animals in the novel face are parallel to the characters. This chapter did not even detail Matthew's anecdotes of farm animals, or how there are more animals mentioned throughout the novel than humans. By strictly looking at Robin's interactions with animals, readers see the victimization of animals in modern human culture. The animals kept as pets are neglected and garner virtually no empathy from society-lest the empathizer be criticized as "strange," like Guido. The animals that humans no longer interact with, due to our separation from nature (Berger), are propped up for entertainment and we must infer how an entire species acts, based on a few individuals locked up to perform for us. Human expectations of animals have created a fallacy in animal studies that the word "animality" can be used flippantly without proper context. As animal studies grows in prominence, scholars must take a note from Barnes and remember that each animal experiences and suffers differently, and that is why humanity fails to truly understand animals. In the same vein that Robin never fit into a

predetermined category defined by the heteronormative patriarchy, so too do different species of animals not fit into one category of animality. We must always remember to look at each person and animal as individuals; otherwise, there will never be true empathy for the plights of those that cannot be defined by common societal structures.

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