Proper to Animals: Negotiating Cross-Species Entanglements in Contemporary German Literature

by

John M. Evjen

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Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures
University of Toronto

Abstract

The central claim in philosophy and popular thought invoked to differentiate humans from animals is that animals live in a state of privation. Thinkers who subscribe to this notion postulate the existence of traits proper to humans that other Earthly species not only cannot possess but are 'lacking'. This line of thought is termed human exceptionalism. Human exceptionalism posits the existence of a seemingly insurmountable divide between humans and all life on Earth. In response, my dissertation explores an emergent sensibility in German and English-language literature that appears to dispute the exclusivity of traits otherwise attributed to humans. Breaking with the anthropocentric philosophical tradition, I draw upon Matthew Calarco's indistinction approach to animal studies, allowing animals to possess traits such as language, futurity, and death. To avow the possibility of non-human language, my research marries two distinct definitions of 'zoopoetics,' the latter offering a theoretical lens currently emerging in literary animal studies. I do so as a means to first examine qualities of attentiveness displayed by the human protagonist in Norbert Scheuer's novel *Die Sprache der Vögel*. I then utilize Donna Haraway's material-semiotic framework to interpret his ensuing novel *Winterbienen* to support my argument that honeybees possess futurity, as evidenced by their capacity to engage in worldmaking. Building on research in deconstructionism and posthumanism, my ensuing analyses of the collaborative short story "Wolfsjäger" authored by Christoph Ransmayr and of Martin Pollack and Julia Leigh's novel *The Hunter* aim to concretize the absences left by animal deaths to suggest that nonhuman life bears equivocal meaning and significance as human life. My dissertation further tabulates the transformations that emerge within literary narratives when human characters embrace the possibility that animals possess traits otherwise attributed solely to humans. The most crucial change to emerge is the shedding of human exceptionalism and the forging of kinships with other animals to reintegrate ourselves among our newfound compatriots. With Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt,* Karen Joy Fowler's *We're Completely Beside Ourselves*, and Bettina Suleiman's *Auswilderung,* I sketch three possible forms that human relationships with other animals can take when we acknowledge shared traits across species lines.

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Introduction

> *'...is there really anything more extraordinary than this superiority to animals which humans arrogate to themselves?'*
>
> Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*

While walking my dog near the Royal Ontario Museum, I noticed a small interactive art installation that advertised a popular American exhibit, *T-Rex: Ultimate Predator*. The activation was entitled *T-Rex Baby Monitor,* consisting of a small screen, speakers, a microphone, and a button to speak into the microphone. On the screen, the viewer saw a crib containing a baby T-Rex, who slept in the crib accompanied by a quiet music box soundtrack. Upon speaking to the baby T-Rex, the puppet would awake to interact with the speaker. I thought it would be fun to tell the infant that she would grow up to be a great predator, so I spoke to her, and she got up and grabbed a toy to show me. The next day I returned to wish the T-Rex a good afternoon nap, and she awoke to practice her roar on me. These interactions filled me with such an unbridled joy I could not explain in any other way apart from saying that I formed a relationship with an animal that has been extinct for millions of years. It seemed all temporal and biological distance between us was erased.

Figure 1: Baby T-Rex holding her toy.

Baby T-Rex Monitor reveals, in a small way, both the complexities of animals in art in the 21st century and art's further potentialities. The art installation offered the participant an opportunity to talk to and interact with a baby T-Rex since the installation was a free advertisement for the larger ticketed exhibit within the museum. The baby T-Rex was represented by a puppet that sleeps in a crib, with mannerisms that resembled those of a dog. The audience is nevertheless drawn into a relationship with this animal despite its non-scientific and domesticated depiction. If a small interactive advertisement can bridge two species across multiple extinction events and geological periods, what else can art, and in particular literature, do to establish relationships between humans and other Earthly animals in the 21st century? How deeply can readers be moved by art that seeks to draw similarities between us and nonhuman animals? How must human perception of animals change before such relationships of kinship can be facilitated?

Figure 2: Baby T-Rex looking into the baby monitor.

These questions are critical in a time when all Earthly animals live in a paradox. Some animals enjoy the best treatment afforded to them, yet many other species suffer the worst treatment (Wolfe, *Before the Law* 11). We live in a time when some apes have individual human rights, and in Spain, nonhuman greater apes have been accorded basic human rights. We live in a time when people can pay to watch baby monkeys be tortured and killed. Contemporary biogenetic research firms seek to rectify human mistakes of anthropogenic extinctions, yet human industries continue the mass exploitation of natural resources. Some new species are named after the highest bidder in some auctions (Chomphuphuang et al. 111) when there are possibly hundreds of extinctions every year. Large film studios develop multi-part nature documentaries that gross millions of dollars and see reception worldwide, yet many animal species are exterminated to maintain cities exclusively for human habitation. Even the visibility of animals is precarious: zoos are where most people see wild animals (Berger 4). Otherwise, there are few wild animals visible in most human lives. Another factor that makes animals invisible is how the meat industry hides

animal death (Davis 75).[1] Billions of animals die each year in slaughterhouses around the world for meat production, but it has become increasingly difficult to recognize these neatly packaged cuts of meat as dead animal parts (Huggan & Tiffin 178). The lives and deaths of animals transform into "lifeless" products, and in this way, the consumer cannot see individualized animals but rather biomaterial for consumption. Some animals, such as companion animals, however, are seen as individuals and thus not killed so wantonly.

Companion animals illustrate humanity's paradoxical relationships with animals. Companion animals, while sometimes considered to be surrogates for love and affection, are animals who live alongside humans. We also live in a time when veterinarian spending is very high (DeMello xvii); there is a companion animal death industry, including counseling that specializes in helping people deal with the death of their companion animals. These industries would have not existed 50 years ago and now exist all over the world (Demello xvii; Desmond 101). These new industries may be contrasted with the knowledge that laboratories still participate in experiments on animals and contrasted further by ongoing wildlife culls. The British Columbian provincial government, for example, has culled wolves over the past 50 years (Marvin, *Wolf* 103). These culls are done in the name of balancing nature, which, without irony, provides human hunters with a surplus of deer and moose, a part of which otherwise would have been hunted and eaten by wolves (Robisch 83). All animals live in a dichotomous moment, and humans are also not exempt from the measures of misery poured out by human exploitation and social structures that seek to cement relations of power. The process that allows the exploitation and killing of

[1] The most popular work in this field and an ideal starting place is Carol J Adams' seminal book *Sexual Poetics of Meat.*

animals mirrors the process that allows for the exploitation and killing of other human beings. This paradox is symptomatic of underlying Western philosophical beliefs that devalue animal life.

My dissertation posits that there is an emergent literary trend about animals in fiction. This trend presupposes that animals possess traits that could otherwise be considered exclusive to human beings. In my dissertation, I select a number of texts that suppose animals possess language, futurity, and death in a way analogous to human beings. The texts I examine foreground shared abilities between humans and other animals; these shared traits bear the potential to alter the reader's views towards the species barrier. Such an alteration in human perceptions of the species barrier allows the reader to see that birds speak, bees form futures, and wolves die. My dissertation examines three qualities that have been exclusively claimed by humans, yet in these texts, those traits become attributable to animals as well. In the final chapter, I coalesce all three of these traits into a discussion of ways that we can learn to live with other animals. In particular, the texts I examine in this chapter depict different hominid species joining human society. Something that only becomes possible through a tacit acknowledgment that other animals possess traits otherwise thought to be exclusive to humans. Cross-species relationships may in some instances, as in relationships with insects or bacteria, seem undesirable when compared to relationships with charismatic megafauna, but human relationships with animals are crucial regardless of how the species is otherwise perceived. My research posits that these authors have generated texts that treat these human traits as also animal traits, against popular expectation.

Some Distinctions

The relationships between humans and all other animal species on Earth have been characterized in Western philosophy as the Great Divide between humans and animals.[2] Many philosophers and thinkers from Aristotle onwards have posited that humans are ontologically different from all Earthly animals on account of humankind's purportedly exceptional abilities. The Great Divide maintains that humans possess abilities far exceeding those of animals;[3] those philosophers with a stake in the Great Divide term these abilities 'the anthropological difference,' the difference that sets humans apart from animals. Throughout history, the list of specific traits has grown and shrunk, but language, futurity, and death have remained the characteristics consistently deemed "proper to man" (Derrida & Roudinesco 63). That which is "proper to man" is complicit in the creation of divides between humans and animals to render untenable any attempt to bridge the two (66). My dissertation argues that contemporary literature about other animals endows various species with traits considered "proper to man." I fully appreciate that the phrase "proper to man" is exclusionary and hegemonic; this terminology is the inheritance from humanist philosophy where the only true humans were heterosexual white men. Throughout the dissertation, I write the phrase proper to humankind or proper to humans to reconsider the similarities between other animals and humans, not just a small exclusive subset of humanity. In this framework, one can term my dissertation's argument to be merely anthropomorphic and then dismiss the argument

[2] Other cultural epistemologies or cosmologies, specifically those of Indigenous North American cultures, conceptualize animals and animality in antithetical ways to Western philosophy (Adamson & Galeano 224; Bignall & Rigney 165; Watts, "Indigenous place-thought" 24). There is, indeed, no singular Indigenous understanding of animals and animality, but Indigenous scholars have written about ways that Indigenous peoples acknowledge that animals possess the same faculties as humans (Deckha 84; Robinson 673; Watts, "Indigenous place-thought" 21).

[3] There exists an opposite school of thought that terms humans *Mängelwesen* in comparison to animals. Particularly in the German tradition, there is a long history of scientific writing about the concept of *Mängelwesen* (Richter, *Literature After Darwin* 106*)*, and how humans are perhaps inferior to other animals. While the term *Mängelwesen* challenges anthropocentric thought, it can inadvertently lead to misanthropic opinions, which I do not wish to endorse. In my research, I do not utilize the term *Mängelwesen* to describe humans, but some authors in my corpus utilize the idea to sketch out the space between humans and other animals.

on that basis. Research in biology and ethology demonstrates that humans are not distinct from other animals (Calarco, *Beyond* 1; Cavalieri 49; Nayar). Human perception and sublimation of the sentient status of other animals have created the divide, rather than any inherent, ontological divide (Tyler 71; Weil 6). While one could argue that my terminology erases all differences between humans and other animals, Western philosophy and cultural theory have traditionally utilized terms such as "the animal" to erase similarities between humans and other animals (Derrida, *The Animal* 31). By accepting such a view of other animals can one begin to undermine the perception that animals are "lesser" beings.

My research contends with the definition of the human and the definition of animal in Western thought, proceeding under the assumption that all animals coevolved and thus possess similar traits and abilities. This assumption enables my research to consider animals in 21st century literature seriously and aspires to potentially change how my readership treats other life on Earth. Inherited perceptions have resulted in the poor treatment of animals as tools, fodder, cannon fodder, and maybe even canon fodder (McHugh, *Animal Stories* 7). The comparisons drawn between humans and other animals offer new avenues of thought for animals in their disenfranchisement in human society, their exploitation in the name of humanity's purported progress, and their disavowal by those who instrumentalize them. Such offerings are unique instances of thought and compassion, which can help change prevailing preconceptions of the value of human life. There exists little escape from other fauna on a planet predicated upon complex systems of ecological interdependency, and as a result, we would do well and fare better to live harmoniously with them. A way forward to create harmonious lifestyles with other animals is to depict how these relationships can take place through literature that focuses on characters' experiences with nonhuman others.

The texts I analyze in this dissertation assume first-person perspectives, except for one novel narrated in the limited third person about one character. These perspectives invite the reader to empathize with the human narrators and their relationships with other animals. Reader identification with the narrator is crucial to my research: the reader, through the narrator's eyes, bears witness to the shared abilities between humans and other animals. For example, in my second chapter, the reader builds a strong connection with the bees in Norbert Scheuer's *Winterbienen* because the narrator experiences the bees' love for him. Insects are generally considered more difficult to empathize with than other animals (Arnds, "Wolves, Bees, and Roaches" 81), yet the narrator's connection with the bees catalyzes the reader's identification therewith. While the findings of my dissertation could hypothetically be drawn with the third-person narrative voice, these first-person perspectives bring into focus the human experience of closeness and relation to other animals. The authors I discuss make no forays into the unknowability of animal consciousness and thereby express a deep respect for other animals and their experiences.[4] One could surmise that this signals the limits of the author's imagination, but I would suggest maintaining a human perspective that enables animals on the page to speak for themselves metaphorically. Given the inescapability of being human, my research foregrounds human points of view that erase the boundaries between humans and animals, allowing the reader to adopt new perspectives on animals that acknowledge their similarities to humans (Herman 51). The similarity in the choice of narration style between all these texts compels me to conclude that human views about animals are susceptible to transformation with the emergence of new representational approaches.

[4] This move does not insinuate that animals have no experience worth retelling or captured in literature. In congruence with Thomas Nagel's seminal essay "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?", I find these narratives acknowledge that animals experience the world and comport themselves in it. They are not machines to control but rather lifeforms to live with.

Much work in Posthumanism, Animal Studies, Ecocriticism, Indigenous Studies, Queer Studies, and Disability Studies has problematized what it means to be human and what terminology is appropriate to apply to humans and other animals. Possibly the most famous intervention is Jacques Derrida's neologism "animot," a wordplay on the phonetically identical French word "animaux" (the French plural of animal) containing both the French prefix for animal, derived from "le animal," and the French term for word, "le mot." Derrida's term gained much currency in the early 2000s following the translation of his lectures at the 1997 Crisy Conference into English. The plural-sounding singular, "animot," reveals two crucial components of philosophical thought about animals: Western philosophy attempts to convert the plurality of animal species into one essence. The term, "the animal," is problematic for its erasure of differences between species, which coalesces the millions of species, gena, and so forth, into one animal essence (Derrida, *The Animal* 31). This supposed animal essence is a heuristic used in philosophy to enable the separation of humans from animals. The term "the animal" reflects the belief that there exists an essence of the animal that is defined against the essence of the human. Here we encounter a linguistic separation between humans and other animals.

Despite the privileged place that Derrida's term occupies in the Animal Studies literature, other terminology sketches out further elements of human understanding of animals. These include "nonhuman," "more-than-human," "unhuman," or "ahuman." Some scholars utilize the term "humanimal" or "anihuman" to show the interconnection between humans and animals. Similarly, Animal Studies bears many names: for instance, humanimal studies, human-animal studies, or posthumanities, among others. While I appreciate the impetus to pinpoint the gaps of research on other Earthly animals accurately, I retain the term Animal Studies, specifically Literary Animal Studies, since my dissertation examines literary animals and focuses on animals through human

perspectives. I resist the terminology nonhumans or nonhuman animals in my research. The terminology human versus nonhuman presupposes a hierarchy between the two since the prefix "non" connotes that nonhumans lack because they are not human (Boddice 10). Any self-definition that relies on the differential potential of nonhuman versus human results inevitably in dualisms. The word animal has been troubled as a result of its negative connotations with voiceless, futureless, and worthless, but to mobilize research on literary animals under the term human appears to be more erroneous, hence why I insist on the word animal.

Throughout my dissertation, I will utilize the phrase "other animals" to refer to literary animals in my corpus. All animal species on Earth are other unto us. For better or worse, I am human, and I cannot be anything other than human. To use a personal example, my dog, while she lives with us, makes use of human tools, and responds to much human language, yet she is *Canis familiaris* and will remain so. She and I have two perspectives on the world and its inhabitants; I cannot access her perspective, but I know she has one just as I do. In more philosophical language, she will be othered unto me and I unto her because we are members of different species. This othering, however, does not preclude relations between our species. Instead, I impress upon my research that one must accept that all animal species, inclusive of *Homo sapiens,* are unique.

The reason for the plural "animals" is to uphold the plurality of fauna on Planet Earth; there may be upwards of 10 million other species on Earth. The term "the animal" reduces the plurality of those fauna to an essence placed in an antagonistic dualism against "the human." The reduction of animal species into a single concept renders them a grave disservice by creating a false image of what animals are. Returning to the first reason, there is much scholarly work that explicates the wonderful qualities of animals or documentaries that showcase the unique corporeality and movement of each species. I place slightly more importance on the individual animals in the texts

to highlight them, but I cannot allow all other animals on the planet to be conflated in my dissertation under the term "the animal."

The third reason for my choice of terminology is that humans too are animals. The word "other" reminds the reader that humans are part of the world. Humanity cannot simply disassociate from animals just as other animals cannot disassociate from humans. Our entanglements with animals come foremost in my analysis of animals in literature because if I were to conceive of animals as ontologically distinct from humans, then my research would ultimately fail in understanding literary animals. Humans are related to other animals through evolution and live in the same ecosystems, thus neither can be regarded as separate ontological categories. Using the term other animals reminds the reader that humans are part of the natural world and are yet another species on Earth. While humans are indeed an Earthly species, I utilize Animal Studies methodologies to analyze the literary texts in my corpus.

Animal Studies can be defined along three axioms: difference, identity, and indistinction (Calarco, *Beyond* 1-3).[5] One cannot think of oneself and other species as disparate because of the common ground—Earth—that we share with other animals and in which we continue to evolve. To think of animals as an essentialized other is to discredit the plurality of species and the individuality of animal lives. While the difference and identity approaches in Animal Studies have their merit, the focus on difference hinges on the dualisms I seek to avoid. The indistinction approach finds its basis in the coevolution of all Earthly life. In contrast, the emphasis on differences and identities stresses the singularity and fixity of each lifeform as distinct. My corpus seeks to equate humans to other animals based on ability; hence I situate my research clearly in

[5] While I only list these three avenues in animal studies, I uphold the complexity of Literary Animal Studies and interpretations of literary animals. Volumes have investigated theories and methodologies adopted to study animals in literature. Cf. Lorella Bosco and Micaela Latini's *Animals and Humans in German Literature, 1800-2000: Exploring the Great Divide.*

the indistinction approach. The indistinction approach is characterized by acknowledging all animal species as equally animals so that there is no Great Divide between any species: "Such perspectives on and experiences of indistinction refer not so much to common *powers* over which we have control but to shared *conditions* into which we fall, into which we are thrown, side by side with animals and the more-than-human world" (Calarco, *Beyond* 32, italics in original). The indistinction approach leads me to consider the material world and humanity's place in it as the basis of human relationships with other animals. The indistinction approach does not necessitate the erasure of difference; Calarco does not maintain that humans can consider themselves to be caterpillars, caterpillars to be donkeys, donkeys to be eagles, and so on. The indistinction approach does not see differences between species as an abyss but rather as a continuum of biological life. Calarco draws on the work of Indigenous scholars to place the indistinction approach among other approaches. In specific, he draws on Mi'kmaq scholar Margaret Robinson's descriptions of life growing up and alongside other animals. Her attentiveness to other animals and their lifecycles suggests, for the indistinction approach, that we are cut from the same evolutionary cloth. It comes as no surprise then that animals possess "human" traits for they abide on the same planet, having coevolved with us. To think about the human as exceptional in these circumstances cannot find support. Moreover, Calarco's inclusion of Indigenous thought in the indistinction method decenters Western philosophy's hold on the topic of animality. By embracing and theorizing along diverse lines, the indistinction method boasts a robust framework to see the connections between all life on Earth (Adamson & Galeano 224; J. Baker 387; Chang 176).

While popular in the Literary Animal Studies discourse, I do not utilize biopolitics and biopower in my literary analyses. To consolidate my arguments, I cited numerous scholarly texts that adopt Michel Foucault's concept of biopower and Giorgio Agamben's extrapolation on

biopolitics. Much scholarship has accomplished tremendous work pinpointing how biopower crosses the species boundary (Boggs 7; Chen 89; Wolfe, *Before the Law* 5), but 21st century developments in science, technology, and culture warrant an expanded look into what biopower means for other animals at this juncture in history. The control exercised over wildlife in German-speaking countries suggests a control over animal life much akin to that of Foucauldian biopower with notable exceptions to how numbers are controlled. Biopower is, by and large, an anthropocentric political paradigm that seeks to control life.

At this intersection, I define what anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism are in relation to other animals. Anthropocentrism is a paradigm that places humans in the center of interest or of the world to form the foundation that justifies human exceptionalism and dominion over the rest of nature. Anthropocentric thought values human life over the life of another animal and is furthermore contingent on a definition of the human in Western philosophy that has been utilized to reduce other humans to animals. Beyond that, anthropocentrism enables the conceptualization of anthropological difference, despite the lack of factual grounding for such a divide between *Homo sapiens* and other species (Calarco, *Beyond* 14). The logic appears cyclic in that human exceptionalism allows for humans to be viewed as exceptional to the rest of life on the planet, which in turn enables anthropocentric ways of thinking that perpetuate humankind's exceptional status. This circuit, however, fails when confronted if one abides by my justification for the term "other animals" rather than "the animal." By accounting for the plurality of Earthly fauna, one can reconceptualize how other animals might possess traits previously thought to be the exclusive property of *Homo sapiens*.

Literary Animals in 21st Century Literature

Animals in literature are not real animals per se but rather representations informed by real animals, whether through first-hand observation or second-hand information. Put differently, any given author does not create literary animals out of the void but rather is influenced by external sources. The author crafts the text to animate the lifeforms, regardless of their species. The author poses the intermediary between the real and the literary animal, influenced by what she sees or knows about animals in the real world. In this way, the reader witnesses the agency of other animals in representational forms that may influence the reader's preconceptions. Literature, both fiction and nonfiction, harbors a wholly different relationship to life through representation.[6]

Literary animals are not "Gegebenes," they are "Gemachtes" (Borgards, "Tiere in der Literatur" 104) shaped by human hands. More succinctly: "Literaturtiere sind Wortgestalten" (Borgards, "Tiere und Literatur" 225). Literary animals are signifiers for real animals in the world and thus have a different effect on the reader than they would in the real world: "Wortwölfe können uns Lesende nicht beißen; und umgekehrt können wir als Lesende sie nicht töten" (Borgards, "Tiere und Literatur" 225). I rely on Roland Borgards' work to define literary animals because his scholarship is primarily concerned with how animals are represented in German literature. Other scholars have attempted to classify literary animals according to various characteristics (Ortiz-Robles 18), but Borgards' framework highlights popular characteristics of literary animals considered with regard to narrative theory and diegesis. These characteristics allow my research to make a precise intervention in the scholarship since the literary animals in my corpus occupy a specific place in a constellation among other types of literary animals.

[6] The medium of film has a different relationship with animals. If one takes a video of an animal, there is a real animal in its movements and body on screen, subject to editing, sound, mise-en-scene, et cetera.

Borgards differentiates between diegetic animals and semiotic animals.[7] Diegetic animals, as the name suggests, appear in the diegesis and operate within that space: "Diegetische Tiere hingegen sind solche Tiere, die *auch als Lebewesen,* als fassbare Elemente der erzählten Welt auftauchen" ("Tiere in der Literatur" 89, italics in original). An example of a diegetic animal is Prinz in Günter Grass' *Hundejahre,* a living German shepherd, who behaves as would a German shepherd. This type of literary animal appears in opposition to semiotic "animals, "semiotische Tiere," which appear "*ausschließlich als Zeichen*" (Borgards, "Tiere in der Literatur" 89, italics in original). Semiotic animals[8] are literary animals that are not "Tiergestalt[e] der erzählten Welt." Animals, in literary representations, can function as semiotic animals that symbolize or signal human traits, and they are thus disavowed for the said trait. For example, the wolf in the fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood is little more than a symbol of sexual predation and insatiability.

Both semiotic and diegetic animals can orient one's interpretation of any given animal text. The literary animals in my corpus are diegetic animals that cannot be reduced to symbols and are instead read as living animals in the diegesis in addition to serving as symbols. Such literary animals allow for multiple interpretations to evince the richness of the texts. There is a certain paradox present in the definition of diegetic animals. To this paradox, Borgards writes: "...auch die diegetischen Tiere lediglich ein Textleben führen; auch sie sind nichts weiter als Zeichen; auch sie sind nur Träger von Bedeutungen; auch sie kann man nur interpretieren und nicht streicheln oder schlagen" (Borgards, "Tiere in der Literatur" 93). Diegetic animals are animals insofar as they function as animals living in the text, but their significance may seem paradoxical in this meaning is open to the reader's interpretation. Diegetic animals enable readers to interact with

[7] For ease of declination, I have chosen to use my translations of Borgards' terminology unless I quote from his work.
[8] Borgards had used the term "non-diegetisch" in some cases instead of "semiotisch." While "semiotisch" may seem ambiguous, "non-diegetisch" is misleading because semiotic animals exist in the diegesis even if they only represent a specific symbol or sign.

literary animals in a more fulsome way since they can be read as both animals in the diegesis and as literary tropes.

Such literary animals force the reader not to conflate the real animal on Earth for literary reality in the world of the text. Diegetic animals exist anywhere that literary animals find themselves in "diegetische Universen" (Borgards, "Tiere und Literatur" 226). Borgards defines diegesis as: "...der Begriff für die Welt, von der erzählt wird. Dabei umfasst die Diegese mehr als die 'histoire' mehr als den 'plot,' sie ist 'nicht die Geschichte, sondern das Universum, in dem sie spielt' (Genette 201 as qtd.)" (Borgards, "Tiere in der Literatur" 91). Diegesis in this dissertation will refer to the universe that the textual characters live in, and in which events transpire. While this may seem an obvious point, one must remember that the animals exist only in these texts. By the same virtue, humans in literary texts are not real humans, but rather characters. One of the texts in my corpus, Karen Joy Fowler's novel *We are all Completely Beside Ourselves*, blends the real world and the diegesis, which compels my reading to demarcate which circumstances are particular to the novel and which exist in the world. By staying anchored in the real world, the text can tell the story of a woman and her chimpanzee sister while calling for concrete action to be taken for other apes. I uphold the distinctions between that which exists in the diegesis and that which exists outside of it because literary animals impact animals' representation and reception.

I must also mark the distinction between "realistische" and "phantastische Tiere" (104). This distinction becomes slightly easier to parse because realistic animals are represented true to their Earthly forms whereas fantastic animals can act in ways that species on Earth cannot; fantastic animals can be imagined species or hybrids between realistic and fantastic animals. An example of a realistic animal in literature could be captured by the titular character in Virginia Woolf's novel *Flush*: Flush acts and appears to be a normal dog throughout the novel. The events of the

novel are fiction, yet this dog is written about realistically. It might strike the attentive reader that diegetic animals are always realistic animals, and while this is often the case, not all diegetic animals need be realistic. Take for instance Jeff VanderMeer's novel *Borne*: Some Earthly lifeforms described in the text feature as diegetic animals, but none are species that exist today. This leads me to Borgards' notion of fantastic animals, an apt example of which would be Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's "Verwandlung" since he is a human-turned-giant beetle. Another example could be the monkey in Haruki Murakami's short story "Confessions of a Shinagawa Monkey" because the monkey speaks Japanese despite being a completely normal Japanese macaque. Since my corpus consists of historical or literary fiction, the texts contain realistic animals or, put differently, animals portrayed in a realist mode.

Specifically, my interests lie in depictions of animals based on popular understandings of science. For example, Norbert Scheuer's *Winterbienen* cites blogs, scientific commentary, and scientific texts to depict honeybees accurately. Other forms of literature, such as speculative fiction, envision the possibilities for future human kinships with other animals in the fluidity of life and biology. And while I accept the value of such literature alongside the value of its interpretation, many writers pen stories that contain lifelike, nearly mimetic animals, when portraying present human-animal relationships. There is much valuable science fiction and speculative fiction written about animals,[9] but my research interest lies primarily in animals that exist today and how humans can interact with them differently.

[9] There is scholarship in speculative fiction and science fiction studies that interrogates the role of animals in the two genres. Cf. Joan Gordon's "Responsibilities of Kinship: The Amborg Gaze in Speculative Fictions about Apes." or Ursula Heise's "From Extinction to Electronics: Dead Frogs, Live Dinosaurs, and Electric Sheep." Recommendations for speculative or science fiction could include James Bradley's *Ghost Species,* Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* Trilogy, or Bradley Somer's *Extinction.*

Animals in fiction may bear little resemblance to actual animals (Chen 101), hence I have selected texts with diegetic animals written in a realist mode. This focus on realistic animals ties the audience to the potential relationships the audience can form with other animals. Fictional representations inform thinking about human-animal relationships, evincing the power of literature over the reader and the reader's perception of literary themes. Humans share space and world with others and are in relation and communion with others (Crist 59). Communion with certain species facilitates stronger emotional ties, which is why there are so many dogs and apes in literature (Borgards, "Tiere und Literatur" 228). These relationships between humans and various species influence how one conceives and depicts other animals in literature. There exists a wealth of analyses of dogs and cats in literature in light of humankind's long-standing relationship with them, but animals that humans have no direct relationship with are seldom included in literature. For instance, I would be hard-pressed to think of a human story about Chinese pangolins since there exists little interaction between the two species apart from poaching. Human relationships with other animals need not be wholly positive for stories to be written about animals; for example, wolves and other predatory animals have featured extensively in literature because of human anxiety surrounding these creatures.

The study of literature in such a uniquely incongruent historical moment may seem frivolous and without substance, and yet literature has affected human feelings toward animals for millennia. Feelings and emotions are crucial to how literature sways audiences and why we even read in the first place (Zunshine 11). Fictional texts encourage empathy for the characters and setting present in the text (Breithaupt 166; Keen 37). Indeed, literature can produce a physical and psychological reaction in the reader in the form of mirror neurons, the neurons responsible for empathy. While an individual's chemical reaction to a story may appear at first glance detached

from policies and industries that cause environmental degradation, fiction can influence law and policy (Keen 38). The fictitious nature of these texts "does not mean that fictional narratives are not part of the world and of reality; their impact upon the world may well be all too strong for comfort" (De Man, *Resistance to Theory* 11). It is not as if fiction has no sway over popular imaginations about animals in the world. For instance, Steven Spielberg's film *Jaws* instilled the fear of sharks in audiences, worsening the reputation of an already endangered species (Gregersdotter et al., Introduction 7). In my third chapter, I utilize a similar example to illustrate how contemporary political debate in Germany relies on fairy tales to define what wolves are and how they act. German parliamentarians advocate for the extirpation of lupine populations in Saxony based on fairy tale depictions of wolves and their perceived, not actual, danger to human children (Heintz 143). How readers perceive animals today matters and their presentation in literature impacts their treatment around the world. Thinking about other animals differently in literature and beyond becomes even more imperative when we consider the contradictory situation of contemporary animals, in which 19,000 animals are killed a minute (Salter 6) or over 3000 a second (White & Springer 167), and animals in the wild suffer habitat loss despite having more rights than ever before in history (Still 44). These texts can steer audiences to act for other animals in these paradoxical times.

The power of literature lies in the shared space in the world, as mediated through text. At the level of the text, humans and other animals are manifest in language. Put differently, they are weighed equally in the materiality of the text. But these animals are diegetic, they are real animals that stand for themselves. I do not discredit any reading of animals that takes the symbolic, allegorical, or metaphorical value of animals into consideration alongside their presence in the diegesis. The richness of the texts I examine allows for various interpretations that can help enrich

our understanding of other animals rather than enforcing a single "true" way to perceive animals in literature. My dissertation explores authorial attempts at a renewed connection with other animals by sketching possible forms of kinship and relationships with other animals and acknowledging "human" qualities as extending beyond *Homo sapiens*. Such a renewal of cross-species kinship is necessarily based on evolution and similarity; animals communicate, live, and die just as humans do. The shared traits between all Earthly animals, inclusive of humans, form the foundation of renewed relationships in the Anthropocene.

My focus on specifically German-language literature can be traced to two reasons. Firstly, German literature has long included eco-friendly perspectives.[10] While recent scholarship has also foregrounded the politically problematic facets of past National Socialist ideology, which idealized forests and their inhabitants, contemporary German literature is especially rife with complex literary animals. My dissertation examines an incipient angle in German ecocriticism that includes animals more fulsomely in literary and cultural discourse. Journals such as *Tierstudien* have blazed trails in German literary criticism to reconsider the value of animals. Secondly, the inheritance of the Second World War is ever present in German texts about animals. Most texts analyzed in my dissertation reference the Second World War and the Third Reich, not least because the Nazi regime animalized specific people groups so as to justify exterminating them without moral consequence (Sax, *Animals in the Third Reich* 22-23). For example, "Wolfsjäger" compares the extirpation of wolves with the genocide against Jewish peoples in the Second World War to evince how processes such as animalization allow for the reduction of humans to lifeforms that can be either eliminated or utilized to fulfill a superior, "human," goal. The process of animalization was

[10] Cf. Axel Goodbody's edited volume *Nature, Technology and Cultural Change in Twentieth-Century German Literature: The Challenge of Ecocriticism,* Sabine Wilke's *German Culture and the Modern Environmental Imagination: Narrating and Depicting Nature*, or *Literatur und Ökologie: Neue literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven* edited by Claudia Schmitt and Christiane Solte-Gresser.

not unique to the Third Reich; it surfaces among all forms of hegemonic power over life such as that exercised by, but not limited to, settler colonialism. The animalization of humans reveals the urgency to change our perception of other animals and also their status in human society.

The texts in my corpus revolve around contemporary popular scientific understandings of animals and integrate new scientific findings in biology and ethology in order to sharpen literary depictions of other animals. The authors included in my corpus are writers first and foremost and have no advanced education in biology or zoology. Popular scientific understandings form the authors' knowledge about animals but also contemporary research on animals.[11] These books are marketed for general readership, meaning they advocate for these literary animals widely. In all my chapters, I will examine literary depictions of animals and species alongside the history of these representations to trace how they have changed over time and how they combat anthropocentric representations by depicting animals as possessing faculties long considered to be proper to humans. Traditionally, any attribution of such traits to other animals is labeled anthropomorphism. My intervention in the discourse is that contemporary German literary texts suggest that animals possess traits thought to be "proper to humans." Following the Western philosophical tradition, one could deride my findings as mere anthropomorphisms. Although I resist the label of anthropomorphism in my research, I analyze the concept to explicate its current utilization and my reasoning to avoid using the term in my research.

Animal Anthropomorphism in the 21st Century

Anthropomorphism[12] has a long and complicated history of use. Coined by Xenophanes in his critique of Homer's poetry, which bestowed human bodies on the gods and to other species'

[11] In some texts, there are references to the sources from which the authors have drawn: Cf. Norbert Scheuer's *Die Sprache der Vögel* and *Winterbienen*, and Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt.*

[12] There is myriad terminology relating to anthropomorphism. Some scholars will use anthropomorphization and anthropomorphism or anthropomorphism and anthropomorphosis interchangeably. Anthropomorphism in my

forms, anthropomorphism has been contentious since its inception. For Xenophanes, Homer's poetry betrays his conceitedness by depicting the gods as humans; Xenophanes further ridicules Homer by pointing out that if horses could write, then they would surely depict the gods to be hippomorphic (de Waal, *Are We Smart Enough* 22). Since then, anthropomorphism has become "the word used to describe the belief that animals are similar to humans, and it is usually applied as a term of reproach, both intellectual and moral" (Daston and Mitman 2); or one can define anthropomorphism as "the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman entities" (Gerbasi et al. 198). Between these two definitions, problems with anthropomorphism start to reveal themselves. At first glance, it may seem self-evident that any attribution of "human traits" to "nonhuman entities" is apparent and readily identifiable, but with recent scientific knowledge about animals, it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate other animals from humans (Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble* 14 & 60).[13] These developments point to the concept's ubiquity in culture and science, and while my intervention is in literary studies, critics and readers utilize the term anthropomorphism without regard for its complicated lineage. Despite deceptively simple appearances, the definition of anthropomorphism remains ambiguous at best. Since anthropomorphism is "the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman entities" (Gerbasi et al. 198), nonhuman and human are reduced into two opposing essences. Anthropomorphism functions at the species level and erases differences between individuals. In this sense, we blind ourselves to the shared characteristics between us and other animals to their detriment (Weil 45). Prosaic language surrounding concepts of action and mind is attributed to anthropomorphism

dissertation will stand for the result of the verb "anthropomorphize." The verb can be declined into various forms such as anthropomorphization. I refrain from the word "anthropomorphosis," which is more frequently appears in British English.

[13] In another vein, artificial intelligence has become increasingly "anthropomorphized," which is increasingly discussed in business studies (Blut et al.; Crolic et al.).

(Crist 2). Opponents of anthropomorphism criticize the lack of doubt about the inner life of an animal instead of reconsidering the differences between humans and other animals. For instance, attributions of nonhuman agency bring accusations of anthropomorphism (Armstrong 3). The refusal to attribute agency to animals restricts their ability to shape the world (Langston 3). The slippery nature of anthropomorphism complicates the projection of human traits onto other animals in my dissertation.

The lack of a stable definition for anthropomorphism is compounded by the number of scholars who have attempted to resuscitate the concept in the 21st century. Frans de Waal argues that one can distinguish between positive and negative anthropomorphisms (*Are We Smart Enough* 24). Positive anthropomorphism can be defined as similarities drawn between two species when the species are similar enough for the observer to witness the similarities, whereas negative anthropomorphism happens when the difference between *Homo sapiens* and the comparator species appears too substantial. The substantiality of this difference is left undefined by de Waal. Another camp has argued for a form of critical anthropomorphism that utilizes anthropomorphisms to produce scientific knowledge. Critical anthropomorphism is a methodology supported in ethology that "encourages the use of data from many (prior experiences, anecdotes, publications, one's thoughts and feelings…)" (Burghardt 917). From this definition, the term anthropomorphism remains unchallenged and ambiguous so that the intervention that critical anthropomorphism makes in comparison to the other forms of anthropomorphism is lost. Sciences such as biology and ethology generally avoid anthropomorphism in favor of more "neutral language" (de Waal, "Anthropomorphism" 266). The call for "neutral language" in the sciences peripherally affects my research, but in literary studies, there is no inquiry into what anthropomorphism means and what its ramifications are. Anthropomorphism's characteristics make it difficult to fully grapple with,

and this lack of definition is complicated since scientific and cultural contexts utilize the word without sufficient detail.

Anthropomorphism is largely considered to be a "sin" in science (Burns 4). Scientists in the 19th century started to push away from anthropomorphism and one sees in scientific research the growing resistance to it (Despret, *What Would Animals* Say 39). Anthropomorphism was utilized in scientific research prior to the Enlightenment whereafter, anthropomorphism was perceived as clashing with scientific discoveries about humans and animals because it seemed to conflate human language with objective truth (Weil 45). Anthropomorphism has become so divisive in the sciences that many are largely unwilling to use the word despite how much value it adds to people's animal observations and animal stories. Some have gone as far as to say that scientific thinkers should wage "war" against anthropomorphism (Dawkins 23). The language of war against anthropomorphism is striking because it insinuates that the concept possesses power over people that it should not possess. Remembering the definitions of anthropomorphism above, anthropomorphism seems distasteful to many when it compares humans and other animals because it implies that the divide between humans and animals is inconsequential. The second reason I find the terminology invoked in the campaign against anthropomorphism so fascinating is because of the term's naturalization in cultural discourse. Anthropomorphization can be understood as natural to human language, as conceded in much scholarship, including critiques of the practice (Guyer 31; Karlsson, "Anthropomorphism" 110). So long as anthropomorphism is natural to human language, a war against anthropomorphism would entail undoing human language. Such diction contravenes its own goal. These overly emphatic words, "sin" and "war," reveal the richness of the debate surrounding anthropomorphism because, despite popular vehemence against the term, there remains little consensus on its effects and its inherently erroneous nature.

The concept of anthropomorphism and the process of anthropomorphization have been demonized, causing scholars to skirt the term where they can. Jane Bennett, in her seminal book *Vibrant Matter*, argues in the fourth chapter that worms shape human politics in an agential way, but hedges ine her usage of the word "anthropomorphism." She writes: "A touch of anthropomorphism, then, can catalyze a sensibility that finds a world filled not with ontologically distinct categories of beings (subjects and objects) but with variously composed materiality that form confederations" (Bennett 99). It occurs to me that she worries that an accusation of anthropomorphism could debase her entire claim. Her hedging seems unnecessary since her chapter argues that worms have willful political agency in human society, which appears to be more contentious than the alleged presence of anthropomorphism in her research. She alludes to the fact that willful political agency could be deemed an anthropomorphism, but despite relying on the potential similarities between humans and worms, only "a touch of" the concept seems necessary for the argument to follow.

The primary issue that many take with anthropomorphism is that it appears to be a logical fallacy. It is said to be a fallacy because it conflates two otherwise distinct spheres, but "[a]nthropomorphism is only a 'fallacy' when one ignores the innumerable, compelling continuities between 'human' and 'animal' spheres" (Moe, *Zoopoetics* 30-1). Anthropomorphism has a uniquely bifurcating appeal; animals and humans are very similar, but not the same; the indistinction facilitates readings of texts that focus on human and animal similarities without fully erasing difference. Anthropomorphism can reveal the similarity of humans and animals, against the "centrality of human concepts and abilities to classify behaviors across ontological categories" (Mitchell 102). Perhaps then humans live in "anthropodenial" (Frans de Waal 25), which can be defined as the a priori denial of shared traits between humans and other animals.

Anthropomorphism should be critiqued because anthropocentric thought entails that animals are radically different from animals, yet anthropomorphism compares humans and other animals based on their similarities.

Since anthropomorphism compares humans and other animals, this process requires there be familiar features between the species. To explicate familiarity in anthropomorphism, I present an example in film scholarship: Angelica Fenner argues that the octopus in the South African documentary *My Octopus Teacher* can be understood to possess a face despite its dissimilarity from humans. She writes:

> To contemplate faciality with the octopus thus invites us to think anew about what constitutes a face. In the spherical human skull: two frontal-facing eyes, a centred nose bone and nostrils, and a mouth, all bookended by laterally facing ears. The cephalopod, by contrast, consists, as its name implies, of a combined torso-head directly attached to limbs. Yet there is still a frontal orientation; indeed, the flesh sac that contains the brain, the digestive tract and three hearts variously floats underneath or in front of its fleshy 'head' or mantle, the two slit-like eyes located not exactly frontally but protruding from either side of the mantle (sic). (155)

Fenner details the face of the octopus as fulfilling the criteria of sensorial exchange with its external environment and other beings. But is this anthropomorphization? Some would argue that because the octopus is so dissimilar from humans Fenner's description is negative anthropomorphism (de Waal, *Are We Smart Enough* 24). Regardless of one's answer, it behooves me to think further about how one defines anthropomorphism. Rarely does anthropomorphism project "human" traits onto animal others for this would presuppose definitive human traits that no other species possesses or can possess. In the event that such a trait were to exist, human knowledge of the other

species would have to be total, which is impossible given the inability to assume the perspective of another human fully; that of another animal would be a further stretch. For example, I would struggle to say that the octopus in *My Octopus Teacher* has "hands" because of its dissimilarity from us on the level of usage of appendage and anatomy. Calling the tentacles hands is not indicative of anthropomorphism so much as it is of ignorance of the cephalopod species. The octopus has a face, and her face does not resemble a human but rather it resembles an individual. The texts in my corpus compel the reader to recognize animals and not "the animal" (Derrida, *The Animal* 31). Acknowledging the individual—too easily conflated with the human—in an animal allows it to be kin. The problem with human perceptions of animals is not anthropomorphism, but rather anthropocentrism (Huggan & Tiffin 195). Anthropomorphism stems from anthropocentrism (Sax, "When Adam" 277) in that it reaffirms anthropocentric thought patterns.

Anthropomorphism's definition may then seem self-evident in literary studies, but we must uncover the associations attributed to the term. When anthropomorphism is discredited, this can hinder literature from being given serious consideration or study (Baratay, *Animal Biographies* 3). The refusal to acknowledge similarities between humans and others is attributable to the anthropocentric paradigm present in the Western world. But "humanizing" other animals can also lead us to grow more interested in them and foster empathetic feelings for them. Numerous literary devices or tropes equivocate or compare humans with other animals. One might claim that it is anthropomorphization in literature that is manifest in this literary trend that lets animals have so-called human traits. However, encyclopedias of literary terms and poetic devices contain no definitions for anthropomorphism despite its prolific use in literature, which may further the ambiguity around the term in literary circles. To complicate matters, there are conflations between

the following dyads in literary studies: personification and anthropomorphization; apostrophe and anthropomorphism; metaphor and anthropomorphism. In my dissertation, I will only explicate the dyad of metaphor and anthropomorphism. By elucidating this dyad, I challenge the definition of human and animal, by first claiming that there is no divide between the two, thus we must reconsider the boundaries of *Homo sapiens*.

Metaphor sets dissimilar objects or lifeforms in new relations and entails the "torqu[ing] into a new set of relations by the interplay of similarity and difference" (Farrier 91). It would then follow that the comparison and connection built by anthropomorphism could be understood as metaphor. In one of the most influential texts on anthropomorphism, Paul de Man argues that "[a]nthropomorphism freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations and propositions into one single assertion or essence which, as such, excludes all others" (De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism* 241). For de Man, anthropomorphism freezes meaning in favor of relying on one single essence which is the human. Anthropomorphism cannot add to meaning since it "seems to be the illusionary resuscitation of the natural breath of language, frozen into stone by the semantic power of the trope" (247). Whereas de Man argues that anthropomorphism cannot be a metaphor because anthropomorphism limits possible meanings to the point that it no longer allows for association between two concepts. He restricts humanness to a very singular set of meanings, resemblant to how humanism defined the human vis-à-vis lines of race and gender. I am inclined to disbelieve de Man's interpretation because it would appear to claim that there is only one form of being human.

Some would argue that anthropomorphism cannot be metaphor because a metaphor does not possess the capacity to capture the totality of a lifeform, for any lifeform is too complex for a metaphor to assimilate (McHugh, *Animal Stories* 7; Spada 41). Others would argue

anthropomorphism cannot be synonymous with metaphor resulting from the ways that metaphorical and literal meanings collide when the literal meaning is repressed in metaphor. Since metaphor compares two dissimilar objects the comparators "expand via metaphor" (Donoghue 6). This question of whether anthropomorphism counts as metaphor muddles the debate further due to de Man's accusation that anthropomorphism freezes meaning, which would preclude anthropomorphism from being metaphor (de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* 247). Metaphor represents but one function of anthropomorphism in that metaphor is limited by its ability to contain any Earthly animal agency (McHugh, *Animal Stories* 7; Spada 41).

Although anthropomorphism holds much appeal, it does not enable us to adopt the perspective of another but instead to torque human perspectives onto other Earthly life. In this way, anthropomorphism lets us see the similarities among species. If animals can respond, can live for the future, and die as humans do, then even more do we need to connect with them. Anthropomorphism harnesses self-reflexive knowledge in order to apply it to nonhuman others—similar to empathy—which can help animals flourish in the world. If anything is to be accomplished in Literary Animal Studies, accusations of anthropomorphization must be understood as an impossibility so that those accusations lose the capacity to halt provocative research. Since I am not a researcher in the life or physical sciences, I cannot verify with certainty of fact that anthropomorphism is a fatal move for scientific inquiry, but as I have shown above, the antagonism towards anthropomorphism appears to uphold human exceptionalism.

If the current paradigm around anthropomorphization continues, then scholars have license to argue that humans and animals are so dissimilar that bridging this gap proves impossible. Such thoughts can be damaging in such a confusing historical moment. There exists a tumultuous

relationship between science and fiction.[14] As scientific knowledge continues to evolve and recalibrate, animal depictions in literature generally increase in their accuracy. For example, natural philosophers considered honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) to be asexual until the 18th century; prior literature about bees portrayed bees as asexual. The relationship between science and literature can be strengthened through literary narrative (Newman, "Narrative" 277). Its implementation as a means to equalize the playing field between humans and other animals allows for a clearer connection between arts and sciences (278).

From this summary, it is evident there exists a profound ambuigity surrounding not only anthropomorphism's definition but also its entanglements in literature. For me, there are two ways forward to utilize the term "anthropomorphism" in literary studies. The first approach would be to have scholars familiarize themselves with the myriad definitions and uses of anthropomorphism in the sciences and persuasive writing, as a means to complicate the concept. The second way forward is to avoid its usage because anthropomorphism necessarily centers the human, therewith also further centering the human in literary studies. I choose this second avenue to decenter the human in my work because my research argues that other animals possess traits long considered to be proper only to humans. I do not consider the possession of "human" traits by other animals not to be anthropomorphic. It seems to be that anthropomorphism as such has become impossible if there is no tenable gap between humans and animals. Without a true distinction between humans and animals apart from a transmogrified "anthropological difference," we cannot separate ourselves from animals on the basis of such a difference. The anthropomorphism's slippery nature has created a space where the term is so laden with negative connotations that even esteemed

[14] Unless, of course, that literature is uninformed about the species it claims to represent. In such cases, this is a case of misrepresentation as opposed to anthropomorphization.

philosophers, scientists, and writers fear it. I thus bypass the term and instead proceed under the assumption that the animals in these texts have access to language, futurity, and death. I resist framing their possession of "human traits" as anthropomorphic and instead regard this as dethroning anthropocentrism.

Chapter Breakdown

My first chapter, "And Say the Human Responded? Bird Language on the Horizon of Meaning," establishes the methodological framework for the ensuing chapters. Paul Arimond, the protagonist of *Die Sprache der Vögel,* manifests an attentiveness towards birds that allows him to take in the world as the birds speak about it. "Fabulous and chimerical" thinking emerges when one fails to see animals as dwelling in a state of lack or of anthropogenic privation (Derrida, *The Animal* 48). I explore this by thinking through the marriage of two definitions of zoopoetics so as to posit that the only way to reach the other side of meaning or engage in conversations with other species is through a return to the body. Anthropocentric thought has sought to separate the mind and body. Paul Arimond learns to listen to birds and thereby edges towards formulating a communicative response to them. While none of the other characters attempt to communicate in the same way that Paul tries to with birds, the attentiveness that I lay out in this chapter is present in all the novels I analyze.

My first chapter sets the stage with this attentive mode of comportment towards other animals. Attentiveness towards nonhuman others is how human characters approach other animals and, in the process, discover traits they possess that philosophy has often denied them. "And Say the Human Responded?" explains what form attentiveness can take and outlines how the human characters act in the ensuing texts in my corpus. In my second chapter, Egidius Arimond in *Winterbienen,* for example, would never have realized that bees can world-form if he did not pay

close attention to them. In chapter three, Christoph Ransmayr's and Martin Pollack's careful description of the Polish countryside draws attention to the striking absence of wolves. M in *The Hunter,* while a despicable character, gains insight into the value of animal life through his attentiveness towards the thylacine.

Chapter two, "The Capaciousness and Futurity of *Bienenvolk*," examines Scheuer's novel *Winterbienen*. While it may seem odd to argue that animals have futurity, continental philosophy has largely sought to demarcate animals from humans by arguing animals live in the present. Through the idea of world-forming, Western philosophers argue that humans are the sole lifeforms that can change the world. Because humans are the creatures that can change the world, they hold exclusive access to the future. Such thought manifests a dangerous trend that allows for the devaluation of all other species and those humans who are animalized. In *Winterbienen*, the protagonist, Egidius Arimond, keeps bees, and they sustain him until the war's end through their honey and wax production. Egidius views himself as part of the cycle of the beehive and observes how bees work toward the future. Egidius witnesses the bees' sense of futurity through his observation that bees have a sense of the world around them and have the capacity to shape that world. In the first and second chapters, I argue that Scheuer seeks to enrich the German discourse on animals in a way that concretizes their similarity to humans.

In chapter three, "The End: The Death of Wolves," I explore animal death and how it can be compared to human death. Many Western philosophers posit that animals do not die the same way humans do because human lives are more meaningful and because humans have access to the future. The central problem at stake in philosophical speculation around death is how humans can justify utilizing animals. Derrida's concept of carnophallogocentrism allows me to explore what animal death means in relation to human death. To problematize this, this chapter explores two

texts: Christoph Ransmayr's and Martin Pollack's collaborative short story "Wolfsjäger: Fährtensuche in den polnischen Karpaten" and Julia Leigh's novel *The Hunter*. Ransmayr's and Pollack's short story follows the authors on their journey through Poland to search for traces of their Polish ancestry. They make no discovery of their ancestry, and the locales they seek on their map prove to have vanished altogether; instead, they discover in the local population a hatred of wolves. Despite the text's title, there are no wolves to be found in the text. This lack suggests that wolves have already been extirpated in Poland yet continue to be scapegoats for agricultural failure and human violence. I explore the absences that animal death causes, in particular, in the form of species extinction associated with a creature very similar to a wolf in *The Hunter*. Both texts equalize animal death by emphasizing how the absence created by animal death can be equally impactful to that created by human death. These literary depictions explore in crucial ways how humans view animals, and in this instance, how the demonization of wolves in literature has led to their political persecution and eventual extirpation from many places on Earth.

The last chapter of my dissertation, "The Ends: Growing Up and Old with Apes," examines new ways in which apes and humans can live with each other via three different novels: Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge von der Rand der Welt,* Karen Joy Fowler's *We are Completely Beside Ourselves,* and Bettina Suleiman's *Auswilderung.* Draesner's novel explores how humans and apes can support mutual needs, the second novel integrates apes into human family structures, and the last novel advocates for humans to live alongside other apes in close friendships but not without inhabiting the same space. This final chapter may seem to take the path of least resistance by choosing to analyze animals that resemble and behave as humans do, yet living and thinking with apes can facilitate human understanding of how to renounce human exceptionalism and the possibility of living with others who do not resemble us.

Chapter 1

And Say the Human Responded? Bird Language on the Horizon of Meaning

> *Poetry takes language to its limit of expressing the intensity of feelings and their bond to place. It is best at revealing the immediacy and necessity of bird sounds.*
>
> David Rothenberg, *Why Birds Sing*

To the question "and say the animal responded?" Richard Wagner's 1876 opera *Siegfried* offers a particularly noteworthy answer. In the second act, while the titular character rests in a forest, he hears a bird, voiced by a soprano, sing. Siegfried then fashions a flute to communicate with the bird after listening to the bird's call. Their conversation suggests that humans can communicate with other animals in their tongue instead of expecting the animal other to respond with human language. The caveat, however, is that humans must be willing to listen to other animals. The question and this answer retort the so-called Great Divide between humans and other animals; philosophy differentiates humans and other animals vis-à-vis language (Derrida, *The Animal* 32). Philosophers have cordoned other animals from language, doubting their ability to communicate, which renders animals of lesser worth than humans. This belief suggests that other animals lack the ability to respond and can only react to the world around them (Still 19; Wolfe, *Animal Rites* 32). If one reverses these roles, that humans cannot respond and merely react to the world, the outcome cannot overturn the assertation that animals lack language. Instead, I place the onus on humans, who refuse to listen to animals other than themselves. Norbert Scheuer's 2015 novel *Die Sprache der Vögel* interrogates the human reluctance to listen with a protagonist, Paul Arimond, who manifests attentiveness towards birds and their language to forge kinships with

them. By listening, Paul leaves his humanity behind for new forms of communication that bring him to the horizon of meaning. Scheuer posits that humans can draw nearer to other animals and their poesis through attentiveness and language's corporeality.

Western philosophy and cultural thought have denied animals language for millennia; Aristotle terms humans *zoon logikon*,[15] an animal with *logos*, which effectively bifurcates humans from other animals who lack *logos* (Calarco, *Thinking* 8; Steiner 35). *Logos* translates to speech, meaning, or logic, and belongs to a long philosophical tradition, which posits "the animal" cannot possess language. Another component of logos is rationality, reason, or logic. In this chapter, I focus on the definition of logos as language and discourse, but the presence of logical structures in language is important to highlight. In particular, when claiming animals lack logos, it is implied that animals lack access to logic, even though other animals communicate and communicate in diverse ways. While many have argued that Aristotle's use of the word logos in this place refers more to language than reason, the myriad definitions for logos' remind the attentive reader of the ever changing criteria for other animals and their difference from humans is. In this chapter, I focus primarily on logos as language rather than reason, but the complexity of the term must remain salient in any discussion of logos. The exclusive claim to language affords humans much over other species on Earth; it is the basis of human domination over other animals. Posthumanism and Animal Studies alike demonstrate that humanist philosophy is built upon the assumption that animals are without *logos* and thereby create no meaning (Lippit 42; Wolfe, *Animal Rites* 67), have no face (Kuzniar, "Where is the Animal" 19), and possess no morality (Derrida, *The Animal* 129), among other qualities. Since such arguments suppose human superiority based on the possession

[15] Aristotle's terminology translates to animal with *logos*, which could be reinterpreted to reinforce the animality of humans (Moe, "Holding on to Proteus" 42; Steiner 35). We humans are not separate from animals, but humans demarcate humanity with *logos* instead of acknowledging our inherent animality. Due to the general trend to ignore any similarities between humans and other animals, I do not follow the optimistic reading of *zoon logikon*.

of *logos*, they do not reflect reality insofar as they exhibit the anthropocentric desire to withhold language from other animals, rather than allowing them to become interlocutors. If we allow other animals to become interlocutors, this also compels us to deconstruct the barriers Western philosophers have erected to separate humans from other animals. If *logos* represents the criterion by which to determine other animals' lack, then the anthropocentrism present in this notion becomes even more apparent. Other animals do not lack *logos* for any self-inflicted or evolutionary reason; any philosophical or cultural argument that animals lack *logos* is thus a masturbatory act.

To rethink the intersection of animality and *logos,* I follow the assertation that, "[i]t would not be a matter of 'giving speech back' to animals but of acceding to a thinking, however fabulous and chimerical it might be, that thinks the absence of the name and the word otherwise, and as something other than a privation" (Derrida, *The Animal* 48). Derrida's statement acknowledges that we struggle with the notion that animals can have *logos*, but if we are to uncover any relationships between *logos* and life on Earth, we must release our—perceived—exclusive hold on *logos* and consider that other animals have access to speech, meaning, or logic. Releasing our hold on *logos* entails a redefinition of the boundaries of meaning and meaning-making, which I term the horizon of meaning. The horizon of meaning rests in the distance, and it becomes difficult to ascertain what lies there. Despite the endless distance to reach the horizon, we acknowledge there is something beyond it. I make no claim to any hidden, esoteric knowledge about *logos* or new paradigms of meaning-making, but I employ this metaphor to drive my understanding of *logos*-possessing animals as a refusal to limit them. Reaching this horizon marks the attempt to think the "fabulous and chimerical" (Derrida, *The Animal* 48) resulting from reconsidering other animals' relationship to speech or *logos*. Moving to this horizon is anything but comfortable. Such

uncomfortableness is present in David Abram's *Becoming Animal,* in which he asserts humans should respond to other animals to hold any meaningful communication with them.

Becoming Animal recounts stories about communication between other animals and humans. While his anecdotes are productive on their own,[16] Abram supposedly witnessing a raven-to-human metamorphosis spurs my investigation into the arrival at the horizon of meaning. In a chapter about magic, Abram recalls meeting a mystic in Nepal named Sonam, who is "an especially close ally, and apprentice, of Raven" (237) who had learned to mimic "a whole lingo of conversational croaks and gutturals" employed by ravens. Sonam mimics ravens so convincingly that on a hike in the mountains with Sonam, Abram turns a corner to see the bird, "I caught sight of the raven, which cawed at me twice before, well, transforming into Sonam" (238). The transformation begins with a response to another animal and Sonam's communication with ravens. Abram cannot believe the chimera he sees before him is another human being "until I realized that it was Sonam standing there… It had taken some time for my senses to recalibrate themselves. The shock of the encounter, my first wholly conscious witnessing of a full-bodied metamorphosis, was extreme" (240). In this passage, the reader must either suspend disbelief that the shaman has indeed turned into a bird or that a human can mimic a bird in such a convincing way to resemble one physically, but in any case, this story seems completely improbable. Even while first reading Abram's book, this scene pivoted me against his claims considering that they seemed far-fetched, rendering them intangible and unrepeatable. But I realized that it is towards the horizon of meaning

[16] Vinciane Despret argues that scientific literature on animals from the 19th century has separated itself from "amateur" investigation or common knowledge (*What Would Animals Say* 39 & 75). Scientific literature resists any anecdotes or personal stories about animals and their behaviors because it does not conform to the high standards that a "true" experiment would have. The result is the devaluation of lived knowledge about other animals in favor of scientific knowledge.

that this stride or leap must be made. Abram's story calls into question how humans can communicate with other animals in their own tongue.

The leap towards the horizon of meaning is difficult to fathom. Abram's wording contains particular diction that precludes him from claiming outright that the raven's body reverts to Sonam's body. Sonam mimics a raven's caws and body language so perfectly that Abram could write that he saw a raven, who then turned into Sonam. Physical action forms the basis of communication between animals, which suggests that recreating other animals' vocalizations, specifically birds, is the expansion of being human. For starters, humans can mimic other animals by projecting that animal's postures onto our bodies, acknowledging the crucial role imitation plays in communication (GoGwilt 213; GoGwilt & Holm 4; Moe, *Zoopoetics* 16). Mimicry, perhaps even metamorphosis, requires attentiveness and willingness to listen before it can be accomplished, which Abram sums up: "I believe it was his thorough immersion in the experience (of being a bird) that so completely compelled my own participation in the metamorphosis" (*Becoming Animal* 241). The metamorphosis suggested by Abram takes place in the mind rather than the body. Humans are born mammals, and thus becoming animal[17] involves no physical transformation but rather involves relinquishing human exceptionalism. In this chapter, the relinquishment of human exceptionalism can be initiated by considering that nonhuman animals can possess *logos*. To discover animal *logos,* one must practice attentiveness towards other animals.

I begin this chapter with a discussion about how attentiveness and responding to other animals mark the trailhead of the path to reject the traditional privation of *logos* from animals.

[17] I do not interrogate the claims by Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's concept of becoming-animal. There is much criticism in Animal Studies about their theory as it is premised on ageist and sexist views (Despret*, Living as a Bird* 90; Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble* 29) and is directed at escaping capitalism as opposed to being an animal (Gerhardt 166; Moe, *Zoopoetics* 25).

Then, I introduce a way literature manifests attentiveness and responding through zoopoetics, which I employ to interpret Scheuer's *Die Sprache der Vögel*. Scheuer's novel takes place during the NATO mission to Afghanistan, which complicates any interpretation of the novel. Through engaging with the secondary literature and the text's inspirations, I clarify the goal my reading leads to in the constellation of interpretations that already exist. My interpretation of *Die Sprache der Vögel* follows the protagonist Paul Arimond and is divided into three parts, each focusing on a specific narrator. I first discuss Paul's diary, where he writes about how he listens to birds and how he desires to become close to them. His attentiveness towards birds leads him to believe his ancestor Ambrosius', the second narrator, writings about birds that incite Paul's desire to become closer to them through flying. Ambrosius' writings influence Paul's reflection on birds and how they guide him to move beyond the horizon of meaning. The novel's frame narrator considers Paul to be "insane" because of his love for birds and where his love takes him. I read the frame narrator as a counterpoint to Paul's diaries; the frame narrator fails to account for Paul's actions and thereby delimits our attempts at conceptualization beyond language. The final narrator manifests the antithesis to Paul's narration, but Scheuer does not discredit Paul's voice with the frame narrator. Instead, Scheuer explores how one would react to such leaps in forging cross-species kinship.

Attentiveness and Response

Derived from the verb to attend to, attentiveness marks directing one's attention by applying one's mind or self towards the other. Attentiveness has been defined as "trac[ing] flight without arresting it, that listens and looks with patience and receptivity, and that is open to the dynamism of a more-than-human form of life" (Deer 11) and can also be defined vis-à-vis distance but also the desire to be close to the object of observation (Marchesini 178; Mason 147). Such listening or attentiveness can result in productive literary creation (Mason 137). Attentiveness is a

mode of comportment towards that which is external to the self, which, for me, can be directed towards other animals, including humans. My reading of *Die Sprache der Vögel* focuses on Paul's attentiveness towards birds.

Attentiveness moves beyond simply understanding biological facts that represent most of our ornithological knowledge. While scientific details aid literature to prevent misleading avian representations (Baratay, "Geschichtsschreibung" 36; Despret, *Living as a Bird*; Gannon 45; Middelhoff, "Wenn Tiere" 65), there is more to birds than ornithology: they are living creatures with lives and stories. It would prove irresponsible to substitute time spent with animals for scientific knowledge considering that attentiveness' value is found in storytelling, particularly in anecdotes (Despret, *What Would Animals Say* 40). In *Die Sprache der Vögel,* Paul's attentiveness given to birds originates from the wish to foster closer relationships with birds. His attentiveness to birds marks a constructive avenue to analyze *Die Sprache der Vögel* both in terms of how he applies himself to birds and how the text impacts the reader's perception of and relationships with animals. Before one can pay attention to birds, one must foster a willingness to listen to them.

The willingness to listen is the prerequisite to listening that alters our ability to determine our position among other animals. Willingness to listen allows one to critique any notion that discredits other animals' languages or even animals' responses as rote reactions, which effectively bars discourse (*logos*) from other animals. The consensus is that such thinkers who bar *logos* from other animals avoid listening to animals let alone responding to them (Derrida, *The Animal* 129*;* Haraway, *Staying* 127; Hearne; Wolfe, *Before the Law* 37). When we are disposed to listen, whomever we listen to gains value as an interlocutor. Willingness to listen constitutes a crucial benchmark one must reach if literary animals are to represent real animals (McHugh, *Animal Stories* 172). To foster relationships with animals, willingness to listen must lead to a response.

Responding to other animals constitutes the final breakdown of the human-animal "divide." Although it may seem idealistic to open dialogue with other animals, humans communicate all the time; humans receive input and listen, but generally only to other humans (Kohn 13). The preconditions of response are somewhat obscured by popular imaginings about animals since "[t]his darkness of muteness of the animal other is shown to be more a problem for *us* than for the animal" (Wolfe, *Animal Rites* 45, italics in original). We humans may be the ones in the dark in some regards because we so often dismiss communication from animal others by not listening. Philosophical and cultural thought consider other animals to be deficient without reflecting on our inability to use other species-specific communication methods. Since Literary Animal Studies specifies no definitive relationship between language and other animals, my interpretation of *Die Sprache der Vögel* assumes that animals already possess language, albeit in their own way.[18] One avenue that literature enables us to listen to other animals is found in zoopoetics.

Zoopoetics is a recent line of inquiry in Animal Studies that seeks to find new spaces of representation for animals in literature, whether these animals are characters or narrators. While there is no unitary definition, many have defined zoopoetics vis-à-vis particular authors, literary movements, or theoretical lenses: in broad strokes, zoopoetics can be defined as "'listening otherwise' to the animal to recover something that has been forgotten or repressed" (Driscoll & Hoffmann 3); or "[z]oopoetics is the process of discovering innovative breakthroughs in form through an attentiveness to another species' bodily *poiesis*" (Moe, *Zoopoetics* 10, italics in original); or "[i]f zoopoetics is anything, it is a way of looking at, and thinking about, how

[18] Any attribution of "language" to other animals usually results in accusations of anthropomorphization. Philosophy and Western cultural thought attribute *logos*–in all its meanings–to be the exclusive property of human beings. In this case, other animals' communication is not considered analogous to human language, but rather animals have their own modes of communication, which can be interpreted to be similar to language.

animality functions *within* language, especially within poetic or metaphorical language" (Driscoll "Sticky Temptation" 219, italics in original). Literary diegetic animals should be read as characters with as much significance imbued into them as into human characters, since literary animals are cut from the same textual cloth as their *Homo sapiens* counterparts. In other words, both animal and human characters in literature are words on a page and should be read as their respective lifeforms. While writing about animals is not necessarily anti-anthropocentric, zoopoetics maintains a commitment to decentering the human from literature (Driscoll & Hoffmann 3; Middelhoff & Schönbeck 27). For this paper, I utilize Kári Driscoll's and Aaron Moe's definitions of zoopoetics because of their connection to German literature but also because each definition lacks what the other proffers. These definitions argue that modern animal literature rebels against prior literature on animals in that literary animals can mean more than literary tropes such as symbols, metaphors, or allegories.

In "The Sticky Temptation of Poetry," Driscoll analyzes Oskar Walzel's claim that at the turn of the 20th century in German-speaking countries, literary animals changed. No longer were they the stand-ins for human characters or moral archetypes; rather, they began to be animals (214). Driscoll argues that this marks a rebellion against older literary paradigms, where nonhuman animals were a "sort of symbolic shorthand" (213-4) that necessitates animals are static entities that lack agency. In opposition to such sentiments, Walzel argues that German authors Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka, and Franz Werfel, among others, create a literature, in which literary animals represent actual animals. The impetus for such literary animals finds its origins in the work of thinkers such as Charles Darwin. On a basic level, Darwin's work asserts that humans evolved from common ancestors with other animals, coevolved with other animals present on the Earth, and that animality is an intrinsic part of human nature. While this impetus is not exclusively tied

to the aftermath of Darwin's work, the consensus is that the *fin de siècle* inspired authors to write from their animality (Despret, *What Would Animals Say* 39; Norris; Schell 89). Any attempt to separate oneself from nonhuman others results in a paradox; such humans are animals that ignore their animality (Challenger 1; Driscoll, "Sticky Temptation" 220). Disobedient literary animals lead to forms of representation beyond human language. To arrive beyond human language, Driscoll writes about a leap into the unknown:

> 'to describe a landscape tied to these conditions [sc. of immanent animality] is only nonsense, *or a poetic leap*' ([Bataille 21], Driscoll's italics). But this is not to say that poetry is sheer nonsense. For Bataille, only poetry is properly equipped to describe the world without humans, because 'poetry describes nothing that does not slip toward the unknowable' (ibid.). In this respect, poetry and animality are intimately linked, since animality, understood as nonhuman subjectivity or non-linguistic consciousness, is that which eternally eludes our attempts to capture it in language. In absolute terms, this poetic leap is doomed to fail — we will never reach the other side — but this is precisely what constitutes its value. It becomes the site of a productive tension that allows us to push the boundaries of the intelligible. (216)

The poetic leap constitutes the movement that leads to new forms of representation. Driscoll defines this leap to be descriptions fettered to animality, which for Driscoll's interlocutor, are meaningless under the assumption that literature based on animality is somehow deficient. Literature and animality interface since they both sit on the "boundaries of the intelligible," beyond which one arrives at the unintelligible. I term this zoopoetics of the leap: yearning for the unintelligible does not constitute the search for the lack of intelligence or rationality, but rather their respective negative spaces or modes of representation. This negative space, however, can

never be reached as Driscoll asserts, and I must concur since such a task would imply complete self-denial or annihilation;[19] despite this, the poetic leap does not imply the escape from the human condition, even though literature is the avenue towards depicting a world without humans or beyond human perception (216). The poetic leap contests the separation of humans from other animals through language's negative space found in the poetic leap. This poetic leap represents language's next step. This next step is not found in animals' creation of texts;[20] this is not the direction in which Driscoll steers his research, rather he places the onus on humans with the literary authors who write as animals. Animality qua poetics and poetics qua animality manifest a new paradigm of representation that rests on the horizon of meaning, which is unattainable if one relies on the human's elevated position above other animals to represent them. Such a poetic leap embodies the chimerical, fabulous, and magical thinking that one must cultivate to reconceptualize who or what possesses *logos*.

This definition of zoopoetics may seem to fail since humans can already make the poetic leap –after all, they are already animals insofar as every human is a member of *Homo sapiens*. While such criticism may follow in abstract thought, this criticism ultimately fails because while humans are indeed animals, one cannot simply accept this fact without changes to the way humans conceptualize themselves. Put differently, the definition of human must change to take the poetic leap. Anthropocentrism places humans above other animals based on the notion of a Great Divide through the possession of *logos*, and to reconceptualize the human, we must relinquish our

[19] While this may seem a feasible goal, I tend to side with Derrida on the impossibility of self-annihilation (*Beast*, 2: 164). In brief, annihilation is the complete removal of someone or something from the world, which would then mean there would be no referents or references to them as anything annihilated does not exist (168). With such a definition of annihilation (non-existence), it becomes very hard to think about self-annihilation, which would mean removing oneself from existence entirely.

[20] For examples, Cf. the chapters, "A for Artists" or "O for Oeuvres" in Despret's *What Would Animals Say if we Asked the Right Questions.*

exclusive claim to *logos*. Despite these profound implications for literature, this poetics emerges defeated. Driscoll writes twice that this leap can never come to fruition. He attests that even a failed attempt bears value for literary criticism, but by marrying his definition to another definition of zoopoetics, it becomes possible to venture the leap towards the horizon of meaning.

While the previous definition of zoopoetics focuses on the meaning-making's future, Moe asserts that the language's physicality connects humans with other animals. Other animals and humans share bodily capacities for communication as Moe writes: "…zoopoetics demands a recognition that the jaw, lips, tongue, and teeth are not detached from the body; rather, they are a specific, concentrated, and intensified constellation of highly evolved parts embedded within the communicative zone of a countenance" (*Zoopoetics* 3). Biology ties humans and other animals together in ways that no one can disavow. Moe further explains other animals' roles in zoopoetics, as opposed to just human roles:

> First, zoopoetics focuses on the process by which animals are makers. They make texts. They gesture. They vocalize. The sounds and vocalizations emerge from a rhetorical body, a poetic body, or rather a body that is able *to make*… the second focus of zoopoetics emerges out of the first. It exposes how the gestures of animals — and the vocalization embedded in those gestures — have shaped the making of human poetry. (*Zoopoetics* 11, italics in original)

The body occupies the center of such poiesis, whether the body is human, animal, textual, or theoretical. While the listed bodies vacillate between abstract and concrete, the word "body" calls forth physicality. For instance, a poem is a body in light of its physical form, and by its physicality, literature in any form is also viewed as material whether in digital or printed forms. Texts' materiality is manifest in their bodily production, most prominently through oral recitation but also

through writing. No words in a Microsoft Word document, on a piece of paper, or on a wall are written without bodily action. And like a body, a text has discursive parts that function as a system to produce a coherent entity. Furthermore, Moe's zoopoetics foregrounds humans' shared capacity for oral production with other animals; particularly in speaking, there exist corporeal connections between humans and other animals. To qualify this, Moe argues "just because other animals' emblem gestures have not fully migrated to their mouths ought not diminish the exquisite *poiesis* they craft as makers" (17, italics in original). I understand poiesis to mean the creation of meaning through any form of communication. Although this definition is incongruent with the claim that human language, primarily written language, embodies poiesis, such corporeal zoopoetics considers that any communication enables poiesis. While Moe's research analyzes poetry, his later research acknowledges that written language finds its basis in the spoken word.[21] Any form of poiesis highlights the ways other animals and humans connect through poiesis. Poiesis begins with the body and physical action since all creators, humans included, use their bodies to create meaning through language. More specifically, bodies initiate all action and represent the origin of all poiesis whether spoken, written, mimed, or otherwise. I term Moe's definition corporeal zoopoetics because of his attention to physical bodies. Corporeal zoopoetics offers a unique connection to animals inside and outside of literature. This connection already exists, and we practice it every day in spoken, written, and body language; it forms the foundation to forge kinships with other animals.

Both definitions boast auspicious results by their own merit, yet my interpretation of *Die Sprache der Vögel* marries the two definitions to provide a more robust zoopoetics. Corporeal zoopoetics leads to similar results as Driscoll's definition, but Moe's zoopoetics, in my opinion,

[21] Cf. Moe's "Holding on to Proteus; or, Toward a Poetics of Gaia."

lacks a target. Corporeal zoopoetics originates in Moe's analyses of poetry; Moe states no particular impetus as to the reasons these authors write the way they do, rather he asserts that their language's materiality is pivotal for zoopoetics to establish the similarities between various animal species. And while his intervention offers compelling answers to the question of *logos* and other animals, corporeal zoopoetics lacks historicization, obscuring its applicability in 21st century literary criticism. Zoopoetics of the leap offers the site for which one should reach but suggests no path to arrive there, whereas Moe's zoopoetics offers a path to attempt the poetic leap. A marriage of these two zoopoetics supports my reading to enable a conceptual poetic leap to critique anthropocentrism.

Zoopoetics of the leap combined with corporeal zoopoetics proffers a unique lens through which to analyze animal texts. We cannot simply make use of both simultaneously; rather they must be melted and crafted into one methodological lens. My reading particularly focuses on the human characters' and birds' corporeality. Such a lens places importance on the materiality of both their actions and the text. In *Die Sprache der Vögel*, avian and human movement and action represent more than gestures; rather they signal poiesis. I detail this process as the interpretation proceeds. The poiesis of bodily action in the text leads us to extend what poiesis means: in watching and aping birds, Paul reaches beyond the horizon of meaning. While this goal may seem overly vague, I qualify it with the counterexample of the frame narrator at the end of the chapter. With this marriage of zoopoetics, I interpret *Die Sprache der Vögel* as a text that hints beyond language's borders through an attentiveness to the body.[22]

[22] While I only analyze one text in this chapter, there are other texts that one could read to trace language's borders in relation to other animals, Cf. Ulrike Draesner's *Subsong,* Michael Longley's *The Slain Birds*, Angela Rawlings' *Wide Slumber for Lepidopterists,* or Bettina Suleiman's *Auswilderung,* which I interpret in chapter four.

Listening to Birds

Nobert Scheuer is a German writer who has published prose and poetry since the mid-nineties. He works as an IT system programmer for Deutsche Telekom and has a master's degree in philosophy, with a focus on German Idealism. His earlier work has been studied in depth,[23] yet his newer novels from *Die Sprache der Vögel* (henceforth *Sprache*) onward signal a change in his writing style and content. *Sprache* is Scheuer's first novel to be translated into English. The novel balances three narrators: Paul Arimond, his "Urahn," Ambrosius Arimond, and the frame narrator, which I engage with in this order. Paul Arimond is obsessed with birds. Endlessly drawn towards birds, he wishes only to think about them and what they do. He writes a diary during his deployment as a medic with the Bundeswehr to Afghanistan. Paul shares the family's affliction and affection for birds (Scheuer, *Sprache* 23); both his father and Ambrosius are smitten with birds. Paul's fascination with birds and bird language begins as a child and leads him to meet his best friend Jan. In his diary, Paul writes about birds and records their physicality with his drawings, which most birders practice in a similar fashion. There are over 100 species mentioned in Paul's diary (Breuer 74), which contains 22 drawings of various bird species that he sights. One could even term his love for birds unhealthy; he avoids investing himself in the camp he lives in or his circumstances in Afghanistan. At most, he accomplishes his work and is a "guter Soldat" (Scheuer, *Sprache* 171), but without fail, he searches for birds in the landscape instead of the dangers present in the warzone where he lives (50). His life in Afghanistan revolves around birds, which seems strange to his comrades who describe Paul's interest in birds "'…als gäbe es dort etwas Besonderes zu entdecken'" (34).

[23] Cf. Andreas Erb's edited volume *Norbert Scheuer Kant, Die Provinz und der Roman*.

Here we find a notable break between Scheuer's novel and other German-language novels about the NATO mission to Afghanistan.[24] The NATO mission to Afghanistan took place between 2001 and 2014, with smaller forces remaining in the country until 2020 when the Taliban formed a government and gained control of the country. The main contention in the media was that NATO touted bringing peace, democracy, and freedom to Afghanistan, but this was quickly criticized with how many innocent civilians numbered among the casualties.[25] While most novels about the war in Afghanistan focus on the war activities and combat situations, Paul's narration leads his interests elsewhere. Paul pays close attention to the birds during a rather inopportune time and place, in a contested warzone of Afghanistan. Birds and birding represent forms of escapism for soldiers, who can discover newfound comfort in nature around them. Particularly since birds can fly away from any situation, soldiers often envy birds. "Fest steht, dass auch in der extraliterarischen Welt Soldaten gelegentlich über ihre Vogelbeobachtungen in Gefechtspausen schreiben…. Die Beobachtung von Vögeln sei ein 'zivilisatorischer Akt' inmitten von Kriegsgräueln" (Hennigfeld 201).

In nearly all literary traditions, bird species have appeared in poetry and mythology since antiquity (Förderer et al. 1-3; Mason xv). Throughout history, humans have been drawn to birds in two major ways, among others: their voices and their wings. Avian voices appear in literature, most often poetry, to represent specific emotions such as sadness with the nightingale's voice (Lutwack 2; Schumacher 105). Avian voices are enviable because birds possess syrinxes instead

[24] This much has already been depicted in other German novels and memoirs about the Bundeswehr's presence in Afghanistan, Cf. Dirk Kurbjuweit's *Kriegsbraut,* Achim Wohlgethan's *Endstation Kabul: Als deutscher Soldat in Afghanistan: ein Insiderbericht* and Heike Groos's *Ein schöner Tag zum Sterben: Als Bundeswehrärztin in Afghanistan*.

[25] Paul maintains a critical attitude towards the NATO mission in Afghanistan. After an attempt to leave the camp, Paul is questioned as to why they are in Afghanistan, and he responds that "[w]ir verteidigen die Freiheit dieses Landes und die Freiheit der westlichen Welt" (Scheuer, *Sprache* 171). While one could accept his statement at face value, it has most often read as a farce (Plowman 535).

of larynxes, which allows birds to vocalize multiple sounds simultaneously (Rothenberg 6). Numerous bird species, because of their songs, have been turned into literary symbols, of which some have been criticized for pigeonholing various avian species into a specific literary role (Mason xvi; Major 25). While birds create—compose—and sing their unique songs, mimicry is prevalent among fowl. Mockingbirds and parrots, to list two of many, replicate the sounds they hear for various reasons. Some consider avian mimicry to be devoid of comprehension, yet contemporary research evinces that birds understand the meanings of the sounds they replicate (Bees & Sleigh 27; Despret, *Living like a Bird*; Meijer; Rothenberg 5), which yet again calls into question whether humans can maintain their exclusive hold on *logos.*

Along with their voices, birds' wings have awed humans since antiquity. Flight, long a dream for humanity, has only recently become commonplace (Szczepaniak 45). Before the 20th century, flight was out of reach because "[w]e are quite simply too heavy to fly; our sternum and pectoral muscles too underdeveloped" (Mason 64). Human bodies, simply said, are Earthbound, while birds can soar between the Earth and the sky because of our physical limitations that birds surpass. Their freedom to leave the ground positioned them in religious contexts to be messengers between heaven and earth (Förder et al. 2; Gannon 7; Hollingsworth 17), particularly evident with the augury (Deer 15; Lutwack 118; Zeller 205). The notion that birds are messengers evolved into the image of an angel in various religions (Abram, *Becoming Animal* 198). Birds have long occupied human thoughts and human words, not only in positive and hopeful times but also in times of despair. But Scheuer's novel breaks from this tradition; he depicts not only the realistic elements of military deployment through Paul's narrative but also the interface between birds and people in wartime.

War has been defined in philosophy as the outer limit of meaning and humanity (Derrida, *Beast*, 2: 20), which in turn has been termed or seen as the ineffability of war (Plowman 525). Insofar as war is the outer limit of humanity, war affects not only humans (Kleinhans 76). Animals have long featured in warfare, and some argue that war could not happen on the scale it does without animals (Salter 19). While there are no animals made to serve the *Bundeswehr* in the novel or recent military conflicts, it is a myth that animals have been replaced by technology in war (30). Even if they are not on the battlefield, they are used in support roles or for food. War often destroys natural habitats and kills animals in the area, both those used in warfare and those animals that happen to be present in the conflict area. In recent history, the war in Afghanistan is a notable example in that the war silenced the birds in the countryside (12), especially since Afghanistan is considered to be the land of birds (Hennigfeld 215).

The birds in these interpretations merely function as metaphors for freedom or flight from the conflict in Afghanistan (Hennigfeld 215). The war in *Sprache* forms the impetus of the novel, but the war does not encompass the entirety of the novel. While Scheuer's writing enables such a reading, my commitment to think about the birds in *Sprache* as if they are real animals, real characters, which renders anthropocentric interpretations void. If one reads the birds in the book as real birds and their vocalizations as communication, then the reader focuses on more than the setting, thereby revealing the other animals present in the diegesis. Most interpretations mistake the birds for part of the setting rather than the characters that Paul interacts with, which leads to reviews deeming *Sprache* to be a war novel because of the overreliance on the setting.

The overreliance on the setting can be attributed to Scheuer citing *Birding Babylon*[26] as the inspiration for the novel. Jonathan Trouern-Trend, an American soldier, shared his birding experiences on a blog entitled *Birding Babylon* beginning with his first deployment in Iraq as a medic in early 2004 until 2005 and his second tour between 2009 and 2010. Later, the blog continued listing the birds the author sighted. In this way, *Sprache* draws inspiration from *Birding Babylon* in its formal aspects, Paul's diary records mostly bird sightings in addition to mundane details of military service. Trouern-Trend's blog gained popularity during his first deployment and sections of the blog were published as a short book in 2006.[27] The publication is described as an "illustrated diary [that] has been read as both an environmentalist text advocating the preservation of nature in conflict zones and the document of a military environmentalism that promotes natural sustainability to further military ends" (Plowman 534). *Babylon Birding* is a soldier's birding journal, yet the text's content must be considered in equal weight with its author.

I read Trouend-Trend's blog turned book two ways: Trouend-Trend's text is a piece of war literature in that a soldier penned it while on tour, but the text is also a birding journal. It is then surprising that a soldier who should be watching out for the enemy is caught up looking for "birds and many other creatures that shared the base with us" (9). Trouern-Trend writes that his birdwatching is perceived as security work since he looks around the camp perimeter with binoculars at strange hours (22). The birds reshape the reader's perception of the text, seeing that one cannot ignore the bird species sighted through the text. For example, he records "a surreal scene: I'm lying on the ground with my eye on some guy racing around in a pickup truck,

[26] Scheuer cites the print book version of *Birding Babylon* in *Sprache*'s bibliography. For my research, I follow suit and utilize the book instead of the blog.

[27] Beyond the publication dates, there are differences between the book and the blog. For one, the blog is much longer, and secondly, the book focuses exclusively on the birds rather than Trouern-Trend's other environmentalist comments present in the blog.

wondering if he's going to take a potshot at us (which would have been suicidal), while a pair of crested larks were not even 10 feet from me, the male displaying and dancing around" (17). In the same sentence that a potential hostile appears, he details which birds are in frame. Scheuer adapts this birding diary and extrapolates on soldiers' relationships with birds to extend this relationship to the fantastic in that *Sprache* contains Paul's story of surmounting human language. The fantastic substrates reveal the possibility of reaching the horizon of meaning. Such magical thinking can begin to diminish our anthropocentrism and human exclusivity through the admission that other animals can be interlocutors. With this brief exposé into the inspiration for *Sprache,* the novel and *Birding Babylon* possess a focus on birds, but because of their setting or circumstances during writing, critics disavow the actual birds in favor of metaphors for war and its consequences.

The reception of *Sprache* has often focused on the realism that Scheuer's novel brings to the discourse about the NATO mission. The source material and birds throughout the text depicting the depravity of war impressed many. In the case of *Sprache,* to call the presence of birds simply a metaphor or analogy misleads the reader. One reviewer manifests this error by noting that the birds: "sie niemals stören, sondern eher einen feinen Klang ergeben, der die Geschichte im Hintergrund konsequent begleitet" (Dell'Agnese, "Das Lied der Vögel"). Her inattentiveness mars her reading of the novel because she discounts the birds and their omnipresence in the text. Since the novel's publication in 2015, the novel has been analyzed in thematically comparative studies (Hennigfeld; Plowman) and one single-text article (Zeller). A recent compendium on birds in recent German literature did not list *Sprache* among the plethora of German literary texts on birds published in the last 15 years despite the growing interest in narratives about birds (Förderer et al. 4-5). *Sprache* has gone unnoticed in Animal Studies literature despite its attentiveness to myriad bird species and focus on avian language.

Other readings have investigated the novel's treatment of Bundeswehr soldiers and their experience during the NATO mission. Andrew Plowman compares two novels that both take place in Afghanistan: Scheuer's *Sprache* and Dirk Kurbjuweit's *Kriegsbraut*.[28] He argues that Scheuer's novel gives "fresh impetus to the literary representation of German soldiers and their experiences too" (540). He arrives at compelling conclusions about the language of the novel, noting how Paul details his surroundings, which Plowman calls "topographic" (535), or a bird's eye view of the camp and its surroundings. Considering his study's comparative nature, his arguments brush over much of the novel's content and instead overfocus on the novel's bibliography. Given the novel's bibliography, the reader is well aware of Scheuer's inspirations, but this is not indicative of the novel's veracity.[29] Plowman asserts that Scheuer's research on soldiers' memoirs and the fauna in Afghanistan "impart[s] realism to the entries of Paul Arimond's diary…" (533). Plowman argues that Scheuer privileges the text's realism to mirror the experiences of Bundeswehr soldiers in Afghanistan.

On balance, Scheuer's novels depict very realistic content.[30] For instance, in his attention to detail in his earlier novels about the Eifel region, his writing is nearly mimetic in its depictions of the region (Jung 167). Many read Scheuer's novels as wholly realistic, and they allow for the illusion that his novels reflect reality (Erb, "der ich mich für immer" 88). For instance, Paul's diary entries record his interactions with birds in a very relatable style, which he records in two ways in his diary with his descriptions of birds and his interactions with them and his drawings of them; there are 137 bird species that Paul sights on his tour in Afghanistan (Breuer 74). Despite his

[28] *Kriegsbraut* marks a noteworthy turning point in German literature on the Bundeswehr because the NATO mission to Afghanistan was the first war that women could fight as soldiers.
[29] This would be a conflation since a novel's bibliography need not share the identical function with an academic text's bibliography.
[30] Cf. Andreas Erb's edited volume *Norbert Scheuer.*

argument's reliance on the novel's bibliography and *Danksagung*, Plowman ignores the final section of the novel's after matter, where Scheuer admits that some bird species present in the novel are not found in Afghanistan. The reader sees how this fiction breaks with the realism that people often ascribe to Scheuer (Erb, "der ich mich für immer" 88). Any interpretation that relies on realism necessarily lacks a basis for its assertions. The author admits that there are details that are not factual, which implies that any reading of the text cannot rely on its perceived realism. This fabrication then must contribute to the meaning of the birds as opposed to the novel's realism.

The novel's scholarship and reception find themselves at an impasse with the novel in terms of its subject matter and its setting. On the one hand, the novel's title is the language of birds and tells the story of an avian-loving medic, but on the other hand, it takes place during the NATO mission to Afghanistan. One should not—cannot—ignore either context in favor of a simpler interpretation, but the novel's setting should not dominate any reading of the text because the plot takes place during a war. Birds have lived with *Homo sapiens* since our evolution and have shaped human consciousnesses and desires to unimaginable ends. To ignore these literary birds necessitates valuing human discourse over any other species' meaning production. Beyond that, my analysis of *Sprache* foregrounds the contemporary moment. Scheuer's novel asserts that humans can grow closer to birds in the present and that such relationships are not ancient legends in faraway lands. My reading of the novel suggests communication with other animals is possible and not exclusively through "utopian" (Plowman 537) means of communication. Paul mentions avian language immediately in the text, and the communication between birds inspires Paul to view birds as interlocutors, who possess *logos*, instead of minstrels in the backdrop. This immediacy in Scheuer's novel begs for an explanation that much of the secondary literature has avoided.

Listening to Bird Talk

The first sentence of the novel reads: "Mein Urahn Ambrosius Arimond glaubte, alle Vögel unserer Erde besäßen eine gemeinsame Sprache" (9). Ambrosius Arimond's theory about a universal language of birds is the first information given to the reader. There is no avoiding that the novel centers around the question of avian communication, and as the story proceeds, the language of birds becomes more real for Paul (161). Ambrosius' theory considers avian language to be universal, which dispels any belief that bird language can only happen in a land of mythology and legend. Birds speak everywhere, including Germany, rather than only in faraway places. Remembering that birds have been considered divine messengers, it is not far-fetched to consider that poiesis takes place with these message bearers. Poiesis transpires between all animals; each species, inclusive of *Homo sapiens*, has various capacities to express that meaning (Moe, *Zoopoetics* 3). Paul records moments where he listens to the birds vocalize around him. Paul listens to the birds and forms a new layer of communication with fowl based on his attentiveness to them. Apart from its presence, there are no depictions of the language of birds in the text. Maybe Paul cannot accurately pen what he hears the birds say, but he listens to the birds outside with the intention to listen and learn. His attentiveness to birds eventually leads him to desert the Bundeswehr to find solace in the birds in rural Afghanistan.

Paul avows bird language throughout his diary through his diction. For instance, Paul writes, throughout his diary entries about the *Vogelstimmen* he hears outside of his room and in his dreams. *Vogelstimme* is the word used to describe birdsong in standard German. In the *Duden*, *Vogelstimme* utilizes the second definition of *Stimme*, which is a characteristic sound or tone. Despite its idiomatic usage, my chapter seeks to accept *Vogelstimme* as a voice, similar to a human's, rather than a characteristic sound. He describes moments when birds speak to each other

as opposed to calling or singing. Without denying their vocalizations' musicality, Paul's diction affirms the value of what the birds say when describing bird vocalizations: "Täglich lausche ich Vogelstimmen, die ich nie zuvor gehört habe" (56). *Lauschen* means to silently listen to someone with the intent not to miss a single word; another translation could be to eavesdrop, not negatively connoted like *belauschen*, and carries the denotation to listen, perhaps to that which one is not privy. The birds speak among each other, and Paul seeks to understand their vocalizations, but he may only be capable of comprehending certain fowl words. There is no avian speech or words that Paul records from his listening, yet Paul listens to birds repeatedly. Although I mention a few examples of Paul listening to birds, the novel teems with scenes where Paul listens to birds which encourage him to believe that bird language might be real. Paul's word choice may strike the reader as the normative way to refer to avian vocalizations, yet Scheuer challenges standard definitions to create new space for nonhuman others within language—which I extrapolate on in my interpretation of *Winterbienen* in my second chapter. By renegotiating language used for other animals, there emerge new opportunities to negotiate new inclusive meanings and thereby decenter the human in German language.

There are three exceptions to the trend in Paul's diary entries: the first is in the introduction to the novel. Paul says "[j]ede Vogelart und ihr individueller Gesang waren für Ambrosius Buchstaben eines kryptischen Alphabets" (9). The second exception comments on how he perceives the "Vogelzwitschern, als würden Stimmen und Gesänge einander antworten" (188).[31] There seem to be songs and speech in bird language, an observation that does not necessarily

[31] *Zwitschern* is used in German to describe birds' twittering. While one could say this word precludes or disavows bird language, I remind the reader that one of the most popular social media platforms, particularly in academia, is Twitter, where one "tweets" and logo is a bird vocalizing. This association is not intentional on Scheuer's part, but I find it impossible to ignore that Twitter (now known as X), the tweet, and twittering originate in the bird's beak or mouth.

disavow the possibility of bird language, given that speech and melody appear to be the same for Paul (66). The third occurs when he hears the unfamiliar birdsongs outside his room (207), which similarly does not preclude that these unknown birds speak bird language, but rather that they are singing outside his room. These exceptions in Paul's diction highlight the limitations of language to describe that which is nonhuman. Acknowledging animal language "becomes the site of a productive tension that allows us to push the boundaries of the intelligible" (Driscoll, "Sticky Temptation" 216). Paul mentions no particular impetus for his diction, yet Paul's diary entries preclude a divide between humans and birds based on the presence of language. Avowing avian language happens through his attentiveness towards birds.

The most prominent example of Paul's attentiveness to birds is when he partakes in a mission with a unit near a palace recently captured by the Bundeswehr. Throughout the novel, Paul continually distances himself from the Bundeswehr (Plowman 537). In this diary entry, Paul leaves his troop to search for the fauna around the palace. He walks through a garden, and there "[i]ch sehe keinen einzigen Vogel in diesem Garten, aber ich kann sie hören" (Scheuer, *Sprache* 217). The reader is not given any details of the birds' vocalizations, but their voices lead Paul into the garden to hear what they are saying. Paul is drawn towards avian conversations as opposed to human ones, despite explicit orders to stay near the group. Paul does not seek to capture, contain, or control birds or bird language. His relationship with birds is that of listening or receiving, almost passively. Paul's attentiveness is a silent, contemplative act that seeks to listen and watch, not to capture.

Paul's diction reframes the question of animal language, which positions birds as interlocutors in discourse as opposed to simply minstrels in the setting. The presence of such language in the frame narrative highlights the attentiveness to the descriptions of other animals

that Paul's diary contains and the inattention the frame narrator manifests. The frame narrator refers to birds' vocalization as songs, which represents a standard way to talk about avian communication, thereby diminishing its importance (34). In contrast, Paul posits that avian communication stands alongside human language and the interspecies interactions it enables.

Paul does not claim to have unlocked some form of communication common between all bird species. In after matter, Scheuer does not comment on the veracity of bird language. Language in the novel represents communication between species rather than speculation about the nature of sharing a common tongue across the species barrier. If that were the case, acquiring the language of birds may have been possible in a distant place or time. But Scheuer highlights possible changes in human relationships with animals in the present, not only in the distant past or future. Since the novel relies on bird language for its thrust, I acknowledge that the theme of language forms the crux of any interpretation of the novel. Language is but one mode of communication formed between human beings; hence language does not constitute the ultimate form of communication. Language just so happens to be what humans communicate with most often. I focus on the attentiveness that Paul manifests towards birds; his attentiveness towards birds positions them as interlocutors and thereby reaches a new paradigm of meaning-making that cannot be written about. He learns to listen, which could be termed the negative space of human language. The negative space of language found in listening compels my reading of the novel to focus on animal language as opposed to the NATO mission to Afghanistan. Even if animal language fulfills the role of producing meaning where human language fails, such a reading heeds Paul's attentiveness towards birds.

Paul feels as if he cannot talk about birds with anyone else (Scheuer, *Sprache* 186). None of the other characters feel similar connections to the birds around them because his desire to draw

closer to birds is asymmetrical with other characters' attitudes towards fowl. For instance, Julian, who seeks promotions in the Bundeswehr, compares himself to a falcon (81). Paul's internal dialogue mocks Julian's comparison because it would be impossible to see "wie ein Falke, der Dinge sieht, die wir niemals wahrnehmen können." One might argue that Julian's self-comparison with a falcon highlights his animality, but that would necessarily imply that Julian's comment is not a boast. Anthropocentrism mars his remark since Julian manifests no desire to foster relationships with birds or become attentive towards them. His remark would have to connect him to birds instead of claiming equal status with a falcon's eyesight, an animal with more advanced ocular anatomy and ability than that of a human. Paul wishes to become closer to birds and forge kin with animals other than human beings. Julian seeks promotion in the Bundeswehr because he possesses "falcon" eyesight. Such human hubris signals the major difference between how Paul forges kinships and how others connect with birds. Paul shares a kinship with birds that sets him apart from other human beings. Similarly, the frame narrator does not even notice birds outside despite all the locations other characters visit.

When Paul arrives in Afghanistan, the reader learns that he has recently broken up with his long-time partner, Theresa. His best friend, Jan, who is unable to speak as a result of a car accident, still occupies much of his emotional life.[32] His mother lives in Germany but seems distant and distracted in her interactions with Paul. His sister, with whom he no longer has contact, is at risk of homelessness and struggles with substance abuse. There is truly little that binds Paul to Germany, and throughout the novel, Paul loses his relationships with his mother (205) and with Theresa (177), and later his best friend Jan dies suddenly (223). Even his relationships with his

[32] Paul can only contact people back in Germany via telephone, which is tragic since the only person he truly wishes to speak with cannot speak.

camp roommates, Julian and Sergi, deteriorate. Julian becomes increasingly distressed, and Sergi's family in Germany collapses. Paul loses all connection to other humans in his life; the only people he feels connected to are absent from his life, namely Jan, his late father, Ambrosius, and a local Afghan named Nassim. These people, in turn, are connected to birds in some way: Jan shared Paul's enthusiasm, and his father shared his love for birdwatching with Paul. On the other hand, Ambrosius and Nassim inspire Paul's birding in Afghanistan. Considering this, one might argue that through birding, Paul wishes to reconnect with these distanced individuals, as if birding could replace a séance (Zeller 209). Paul starts to skirt the edge of human sociality, yet the reader does not see Paul's rejection of humanity or a desire to become nonhuman.

Throughout the novel, Paul's drawings are inserted between diary entries. When reading Paul's diary entries, the rich descriptions of the birds' movement and vocalizations are written, alongside depictions of fowl painted with coffee grounds on paper. These drawings are not detail-oriented; they are only one color on a sheet. Paul does not believe in photographing birds, since he thinks photographs fade memories (19). His attentiveness to avian bodies is evident since Paul clearly remembers how the birds look because of the drawings present in his diary. He desires to hold the memory of the bird close and for it to be incorporated into his mind, not relegated to a photo. These images are crucial since they give the fowl physical space in his diary, underscoring how crucial they are to Paul and regarding Scheuer's intentions with the novel (Newman, "Flaubertian Aesthetics" 509). This physical space reminds the reader of the corporeal zoopoetics at play in my reading of *Sprache*. Scheuer represents Paul in a way that situates his love for birds at the core of his character and thereby reveals the central theme in the novel. Paul's fascination with bird language permeates not only his social interactions and relationships but also his writing. The reader encounters not only auditory attentiveness but also visual, albeit from a distance. This

distance is closed by the novel's denouement through Paul's kinship with birds formed through his listening and looking at birds. Closing the distance between humans and other species is the goal of such attentiveness.

Leaving Humans Behind

The novel begins with Paul's introduction to his "Urahn" (9), Ambrosius. Ambrosius theorized there was a "gemeinsame Sprache" between birds, and to prove this, he traveled to Afghanistan, the then Durrani Empire. Ambrosius is reckoned to have deciphered the Rosetta Stone (42) after which he enlists with Napoleon's army on its way to conquer Russia. After Napoleon's defeat, Ambrosius journeys back to Germany from Russia to then build his flying machine, clearly inspired by Leonardo Da Vinci (Zeller 199); his escapades are endless. If anything, Ambrosius is many people combined into one character; the birds in the novel are more believable than the human characters. Paul learns about Ambrosius from stories his father told him as a child. Paul's father told him that Ambrosius left all his writings in the body of a horse whose innards kept him warm one night during his flight on foot back to Germany from Russia (Scheuer, *Sprache* 43). Paul magically discovers these writings in a chest in their family home in Germany (220).

In Ambrosius' writings, he spends his sojourn traveling around the country to speak with learned people about birds and their language. There is neither war present in Ambrosius' letters, nor any cathartic events. Ambrosius draws closer to birds, and by listening, starts to produce ideas that lead to his flight away from life in Germany. Each Arimond character comes closer to birds and thereby becomes transformed, which may seem reminiscent of stories such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* among others where characters turn into birds. But the key difference in *Sprache* is that the transformation that these characters undergo requires no physical changes; one could

term this to be transformation without metamorphosis or physical alteration. While on his journey through Afghanistan, Ambrosius theorizes that all humans descended from bird-human chimeras (159). Birds and humans were one species but eventually, *Homo sapiens* bifurcated: "[D]er Mensch sei ein Vogel, der nicht mehr fliegen könne, denn ein Vogel ohne Federn hätte eine Gestalt, die einem nackten, nach vorne gebeugten Menschen gleiche, unsere Haare bestünden ebenso wie Vogelfedern aus Keratin und unsere Sprache hätte nur das Singen verlernt" (183). Ambrosius' theory is fantastic, and surely, this is not how human evolution came to pass, but there is no mention of apes in this novel, which is peculiar since Paul presents Ambrosius' alternative theories of human evolution, which allow the reader to reconceptualize their relationship to fowl (Hayer, "Die Rückkehr des Dodos" 123). But if humans are descendants of ancient bird-human chimeras, then what have they lost in becoming human? In Ambrosius' mind, humans are the ones who lost language, feathers, and flight.

To account for his lack, Ambrosius constructs a flying machine, an "Ornithopeter"[33] (Scheuer, *Sprache* 185). Because the reader learns nothing more about Ambrosius after he flies away, apart from villagers who claim they see him near Himmelsberg[34] he is presumed to be deceased. But one should not look solely at this story as a legend or myth as much as the enablement for Paul to desert the Bundeswehr. Ambrosius' "Ornithopeter" is a prosthetic[35] to draw closer in proximity to birds, which Paul similarly achieves through his attentiveness to birds. His prosthetic to become closer to birds is Ambrosius' attempt to approach kinships with other animals,

[33] In the novel, the machine is named "Ornithopter" (Scheuer, *Sprache* 184) in German. Christoph Zeller translates this to "Ornithopeter" in English.

[34] This choice of name for a mountain is particularly noteworthy because human attempts to fly have an attachment to the divine (Deer 10; Lutwack 81; Zeller 204). Also, in the Eifel region, where the Arimond family originates in Scheuer's novels, there are no mountains called Himmelsberg. The closest mountain to the Eifel region which is called Himmelsberg is in Hesse, some 170 kilometers away.

[35] Derrida and others have written much to the idea that language is a prosthetic for humans that has allowed production and such. This is also another reason people hinge their entire humanity (human exceptionalism) on *logos*, language, meaning, and reason. If animals have access to *logos*, human exceptionalism is stripped of its last bastion.

whereas Paul abandons his prosthetics and seeks to connect with birds and learn their language. Paul's body does not change after deserting the Bundeswehr and living among the birds. He moves beyond exclusive discourse with humans and accepts birds as interlocutors by abandoning his human exceptionalism.

A major symbol in the novel is clothing, in particular his bulletproof vest (Splitterschutzweste). Upon his arrival in Afghanistan, Paul dons a bulletproof vest (11), which appears at first to be a minute detail that contributes to the realistic depictions in the novel. Instead, donning his vest symbolizes his integration into the Bundeswehr. Whenever he doffs his vest, he rebels against the Bundeswehr. He neither dons his bulletproof vest when he leaves the camp to bird nor when he reads and writes about birds. If he were concerned with his duties as a soldier, Paul would read about military tactics or brush up on his medical knowledge. The absence of his garments manifests his disdain for his military duty and his attentiveness towards birds. These culminate in Paul leaving the camp on multiple occasions, which eventually leads to his flight from the Bundeswehr.

His departure from Bundeswehr signals his frustration with humanity but also with human language. Birds seem to be the only source of solace for Paul, and his desire to be close to birds leads him to leave the NATO camp and draw nearer to the birds. To escape, he climbs over the camp wall, digs a hole under the perimeter fence, and runs to a lake near the base: "Ich renne weiter auf das Ufer zu, ziehe meine Splitterschutzweste aus, streife mein Hemd ab. Jetzt stehe ich am Ufer und breite die Arme aus" (226).[36] He removes the symbol of his commitment to the

[36] Surely, one could consider the "Arme ausbreiten" in different contexts such as the crucifixion, but such a misreading fails on two accounts. There is no Christian or Catholic imagery throughout the novel. The only religion mentioned is Islam, in which the crucifixion plays a relatively minor role in the Qur'an and has no place in Islamic iconography. Additionally, the words "Arme ausbreiten" often depict other German texts when human characters morph into birds (Szczepaniak 43).

Bundeswehr, and then he removes his connection to humanity, his shirt. Stripping clothing layers, or layers of meaning, is a physical metaphor for him shedding his humanity. This narration happens as he runs to the pier; the use of the present tense in Paul's last words accentuates the impossibility of his writing these words. He runs towards the lake while stripping; his hands are busy and unable to write. This impossible narration creates suspense and, while fabulous and magical, exemplifies how his actions take him beyond human language and its limitations. The last action recorded is spreading out his arms as if they were wings, which mimics the shape of a bird in flight; he loses his human fetters to gain metaphorical feathers. From this point onwards, Paul no longer narrates; Paul begins to live in the desert, receiving food from farmers, wandering the deserts, and avoiding other humans until his capture by the American army, who then returns him to the Bundeswehr,[37] which eventually sends him back to Germany.

The central way literature, and by extension language, can accurately depict animals is to bring language's corporeality into focus. Moreover, if the reader retains an attentiveness to language's corporeality, then the reader perhaps can begin to avow the possibility of avian language. Paul's stripping away the human and embodying a bird's posture facilitates his avowal of bird language beyond simply writing such a language exists. Through these actions, Paul's narration gestures towards the human language's negative space. This suggests, by conforming to avian bodily actions and assuming a bird's posture, Paul reaches a new level of expression yet ineffable. Paul's escape from the Bundeswehr, and by extension the war, signals his attempt to reach such a level of expression. Still, the limitations of language confound any representations of what bird language could be. There is no feasible way to represent actual bird language without a focus on the body.

[37] Paul describes the camp as a "Käfig" (110).

An Inattentive Frame Narrator

The novel's frame narrator is a limited third-person narrator who primarily follows a school teacher named Helena through her recovery from surgery and her reconstruction of Paul's journal from a manuscript given to her. After her recovery, she is driven home by Julian, Paul's former comrade in Afghanistan. While on the way home, he gives her Paul Arimond's diaries. The loose-leaf manuscript falls into her hands in great disrepair, and she starts to piece together Paul's diaries about his life and his deployment in Afghanistan. Paul's diaries fascinate Helena (72), but while Paul does record some moments of tense combat situations in his medical occupation in a few entries, the diary consists mostly of birding and Paul's writings about birds seen during his deployment. Paul's manuscript enthralls her, depicted most forcefully where the pages of Paul's diary occupy the entire floor of her living room, "als würde sie ein Mosaik aus Worten zusammenfügen" (48). Paul's body of text fills up her life and compels her to rationalize what happened to him in Afghanistan. The frame narrator remains rational at all times, ascribing the terms one would to the information that someone learned fowl language and lived in the deserts of Afghanistan as a bird simply to escape humanity. The frame narrator resists all attempts to cultivate "fabulous and chimerical" (Derrida, *The Animal* 48) thinking about the relationship between other animals and *logos* in addition to ignoring Paul's attempt to break free of his humanity.

Throughout the novel, the reader becomes captivated by Paul's diaries. When the frame narrator speaks again after these long passages of Paul's narration, the novel's tone changes dramatically. The diary form varies greatly from the third-person narrator, but the experience when this narrator reappears contrasts with Paul's diary. Christoph Zeller argues that the novel seems to "float" (197), which suggests that there is a strong demarcation between being grounded in the

frame narrative and the heights reached in Paul's diary. Other reviewers found that the frame narrator did not accomplish what they desire from a frame narrator, that is to clarify the story, whereas Plowman asserts the frame narrator "constructs the position for an unstable but open reading of the diary in which its meanings are recreated for Helena and the novel's readers" (539). This contention with the frame narrator marks a productive space for interpretation since the frame narrative has relatively little in common with the novel's material, not only in distance from the setting in Paul's diaries—the frame narrator only narrates events in Germany—but also in closeness to the protagonist. Helena had not taught Paul in school (Scheuer, *Sprache* 30),[38] nor does she recognize his last name.[39] Helena and Paul are also separated by time; there is no mention of how much time has passed between Paul's last diary entry and Helena's recovery. One can ascertain by the dates listed in Paul's diary entries (2003-2004), whereas the frame narrative contains no mention of a specific year or month. The pauses in the diary feel similar to landing, the audience arrives from the fascination of Paul's diaries, shared with Helena, at a summary of the text, which fails to account for the material. But these moments when the frame narrator lands the narrative, so to speak, remind the reader how a standard, "rational," interpretation of the events would appear. The frame narrator misses that the diary begins, continues, and ends with Paul's prolific writings about birds. While this may seem to be a harsh critique of the frame narrator, the frame narrator's value to the text is found in their inattentiveness to Paul's actions.

Following Paul's last diary entry, the frame narrator misses what Paul achieves with his birding and his desertion. "Es gab nur spärliche Textfetzen aus dieser Zeit. Paul war scheinbar ziellos durch Afghanistan geirrt, über Bergpässe und einsame Steppenlandschaften. Afghanische

[38] In *Mutabor,* Scheuer's 2022 novel, there is a small discrepancy that Helena did teach Paul in school (121).
[39] This seems odd for a teacher, in a small community of roughly 11,000 people, to not remember a legendary figure, Ambrosius, who vanishes into thin air in Germany and would be reputed to be the first person to fly as well as Paul's father a professional athlete who died by suicide.

Bauern hatten ihm zu essen gegeben. Helena musste sich das wie ein Puzzle zusammensetzen" (227). The puzzle metaphor for Paul's diary compels my interpretation since the frame narrator privileges a logical view of the manuscript rather than the reader's interactions with the novel, but the attentive reader will notice the frame narrator's diction: Paul has "geirrt" through Afghanistan as a "harmlosen Verrückten" (227). The frame narrator mentions one could eventually speak with Paul again, but it was noticeably different than before his desertion.

In my interpretation of the novel, Paul surpasses the horizon of meaning at the end of his diary, and he becomes an interlocutor for the birds and considers birds interlocutors. But the frame narrator tells a different story: "Einige Tage vor dem Abflug in die Heimat verbesserte sich sein geistiger Zustand. Man konnte wieder normal mit ihm reden" (228). The frame narrator believes that Paul had suffered a mental breakdown that prevented "normal" conversation with him, which suggests that he either lost human language or acquired bird language. However, there is no textual evidence that he ever could speak to birds, rather he views birds from a distance. His diaries never portray him as very near to animals, which dispels comparisons with certain popular literary characters, for instance, Snow White, with sparrows perched on her body. Paul never gets close to the birds, but he perpetually seeks after that which he can never get close to. It may seem that Paul abandons his dream to become closer to the birds (Zeller 204), but this claim lacks textual evidence since Paul no longer narrates after he deserts the Bundeswehr.

Paul harbors fears that his deployment will forever scar him, which is well founded seeing that his comrades' mental health deteriorates during their deployment to Afghanistan. Paul's fears are reasonable since his comrades start to manifest the effects of trauma during their deployment to Afghanistan. During the novel, the reader meets other characters who suffer mental breakdowns from the war. Personal stories from Paul and other soldiers recount the tragedies and horrors of

combat. Paul notices Levier, a drone engineer, early in the novel and comments that he seems enthralled or distracted by his work (Scheuer, *Sprache* 109 & 128), but as time proceeds, Levier's mental health deteriorates. Untied shoelaces and dropped dinner plates (190) initiate Levier's tailspin until his nighttime winter walk in the nude (207-8). After this incident, the Bundeswehr removes him from the camp in secret. Similarly, Julian, after a special assignment, starts to shake and mumble while remembering the assignment. Julian's anxiety degenerates into extreme emotional outbursts and threats against Paul (195). While the trauma resulting from war remains present in the novel, one cannot use it to obscure the unique kinship that Paul has with birds and the fruit of that relationship. It is not exceptional that the war affects people greatly and undoubtedly Paul as well.

The frame narrator, however, latches on to these sparse details throughout the diary to arrive at conclusions concerning Paul's sanity. In Paul's diary, there is an entry, in which he writes: "Nachts höre ich Vogelstimmen und schwirrende Laute. Ich will nicht verrückt werden. Es tröstet mich, die Vögel zu beobachten, ihnen beim Fliegen zuzusehen" (155). While a few diary entries contain grisly details from the conflict, the majority of his diary entries revolve around birds. Even in this short diary entry, birds precede and follow his fears of "insanity," which contradicts what the frame narrator espouses at the end of the novel. The birds comfort him in his times of need, which calls into question whether latching on to the few remarks about Paul's mental health can truly account for the novel's content.

One could interpret Paul's escape from the Bundeswehr to be his descent into "madness" resulting from his wartime experiences, but such an interpretation willfully avoids the major theme in Paul's diaries. His diary's thrust is not to recount the war but rather the birds he sees. The frame narrator's focus on Paul's "insanity" or "irren" is inattentive towards the novel's major themes, if

not also its content. If we evaluate Paul's actions based on their rationality, the reader immediately assumes Paul has "lost" his mind or humanity, but Paul concedes these concepts to consider birds interlocutors. Living as a bird seems improbable, if not impossible, considering its perceived irrationality and illogicality, but this is exactly where chimerical thinking takes us.

Corporeal zoopoetics stands on the foundation that we share communicative capacities with other animals. Most assuredly, such a position does not imply that all other animal species have identical organs and communicative capacities that humans, among others, have, nor does he advocate for all animals to know any human language, but rather that all animals have a shared capacity for communication. In its fantastic or magical way, the shared communication between birds and humans is already present in the text, but the reader must learn to listen. The premise established with Ambrosius' fictional evolutionary theory is that humans are related to birds and thereby other animals through bodily action. It is an attempt to reconnect to his avian ancestors and with nature. While the frame narrator considers Paul's desertion to be evidence of his "insanity," this border of rationality seems to be unable to be breached by the frame narrator and by the form of the novel. Paul's attentiveness in the text strengthens his kinship with birds and stresses the humans' and other animals' corporeality. His stripping, running away, and mimicking a bird at the end of the novel reveal a return to the body and an ancient appreciation of birds and their lifestyle. Paul's desertion can be read simply as an allegory for one's loss of reason resulting from the war, but I read this positively to exhibit how much Paul gains.

Let us return to Abram's story about his walk with Sonam; Abram witnesses a raven on a path turn into Sonam because he mimics a raven's voice and body. Through Sonam's attentiveness to ravens, he responds to them, which "transforms" him into a raven for Abram. Responding to other animals fundamentally changes one's outlook on what it means to be human and whom one

should consider to be interlocutors. Such ventures expand human worlds and nonhuman worlds (Meijer 101-2). While it would be wrong to ascribe to Scheuer a wish for his reader to venture into the deserts of Afghanistan, strip down, and attempt to live an avian lifestyle, Scheuer advocates that readers should draw closer to Earth's avian population. Therefore, attentiveness to the novel's negative space is crucial to complete an interpretation of the text. Literature cannot depict bird language just as one cannot conceptualize the new modes of representation because both undertakings are ineffable and unable to be produced. Paul's attentiveness to birds leads him to the horizon of meaning to catch a glimpse beyond human language.

There is another way to view Paul's gain in losing his humanity: Animal Studies operates on the assumption humans consider themselves to be superior to other animals, and this superiority complex results in the desire to maintain their humanity even in the face of adversity. Nonetheless, the definition of human has limitations, which may be why other fields of critical inquiry such as queer theory, critical race theory, and decolonial theory all tangentially, and in some instances directly, relate to Animal Studies. Paul's choice to leave the Bundeswehr presents him with the opportunity to gain a perspective formerly unbeknownst to him. It is in living as a bird Paul makes the poetic leap and arrives at the horizon of meaning.

This chapter has demonstrated that attentiveness to birds and a resulting change in bodily action allow for a poetic leap to the horizon of meaning in *Sprache.* The marriage of Driscoll and Moe's zoopoetics proves necessary to interpret this leap for neither definition can fully capture what transpires in the novel. Paul's avowal of bird language with his diction gives space for avian communication to exist alongside human language. Birds then become interlocutors for Paul, which then leads him to abandon humans. Drawing inspiration from Ambrosius' attempts to fly, Paul escapes to rural Afghanistan to become closer to birds after stripping layers of his humanity

and mimicking a bird's shape. In addition, I have shown how Scheuer tampers with the frame narrator to reiterate the point that language cannot bring the reader beyond itself. The frame narrator interprets Paul's actions to be irrational and illogical, which necessarily ignores the novel's content to arrive at such a conclusion. In sum, my reading of *Sprache* highlights how one can begin to think about new modes of representation that we cannot otherwise access because of our belief that only humans possess *logos*. Birds possess language in the text, and this avian discourse leads Paul beyond the horizon of meaning. While the language of birds as such remains ineffable, fostering new modes of "chimerical and fabulous" (Derrida, *The Animal* 48) thinking may enable the reader to avow its existence in the novel.

The novel pushes the reader towards Paul's experience and how he forges kinship with other animals. Usually, we humans do not listen to other animals, but if we forge kinships with other animals, we begin to regard other animals as interlocutors and thereby challenge anthropocentric norms of who can be an interlocutor. Listening changes our interactions with other animals as I have demonstrated with the examples employed in this chapter. Siegfried listens to a bird and responds; Sonam mimics the postures and sounds of ravens; Trouern-Trend pays all his attention to birds in a warzone; and Paul chances the poetic leap to be closer to birds. Such stories offer us an avenue to become closer to birds and other animals (Stevenson 166). Some of these stories are fiction and others anecdotes, nonetheless, they influence what it means to respond to other animals and how our responses redefine our demarcations of *logos*. Employing chimerical thinking leads to where the question can no longer only be, 'say the animal responded.' This question must be posted in tandem with the query, 'say the human responded,' considering that humans must respond to other animals to foster change in our treatment of and relationships with

other animals. Or as Trouern-Trend writes: “No matter how long it takes to get to that future, I know the birds will be waiting” (12).

Chapter 2

The Capaciousness and Futurity of *Bienenvolk*

> *I might better have spent my day in other ways than leaning against a pine tree in the pale sunshine sipping rapidly cooling coffee. I am not helping the bees now. They do not need me. But I need them.*
>
> Sue Hubbell, *A Book of Bees*

The decline of bee populations and its potential consequences for human civilization mark the 21st century with anxiety. In the early 2000s, a disease known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) started to empty beehives across the world. CCD causes worker bees to start to abandon their hives suddenly, leaving the brood and sometimes the queen alone in the hive to perish. Between 2006 and 2007, a reported 30 to 60% of bee colonies perished around the world[40] with some reports that claim beekeepers sustained colony losses of up to 90%. In the United States in 2007, there were a reported 2.4 million bee colonies in agricultural use (U.S. Department of Agriculture); if, say, 50% of these colonies were to perish from CCD, a total of 1.2 million bee colonies would be lost. If on average a beehive houses 50,000 bees, then with a 50% mortality rate, roughly 60 billion bees would have died in 2007 from CCD in North America alone. Whether or not we accept my brief calculation, such losses are unsustainable for agriculture and beekeepers, even more so for the bees themselves. The scale of bee die-off bodes the potential collapse or at the very least radical restructuring of civilization since both agriculture and plant reproduction rely on bee pollination. The gradual disappearance of bees forms a central anxiety.

[40] For more specific information, Cf. Engelsdorp et al.; United States Department of Agriculture; United States Environmental Protection Agency. For relevant news articles Cf. Benjamin, "Fears for crops"; Mola, "La mort des abeilles"; Shore, "Why are Europe's bees dying."

Cultural media from the silliness of Jerry Seinfeld's *Bee Movie* to the desperate future portrayed in Norwegian writer Maja Lunde's novel *The History of Bees* evince the responses to this anxiety. The underlying message from among this range of cultural artifacts posits that bees are necessary for human life to continue. While apian pollination remains a necessity for the survival of all flora and fauna on Earth, only the fate of humanity seems to matter in such media. Seeing that human society requires bees more than the opposite, the one-sidedness of the relationship between bees and humans begs an explanation. It is a problem of futures where humankind's future weighs more heavily than the bees' present, which in turn endangers not only human life but also that of bees and plants, and by extension, animals on Earth.

In the face of such a problem, how can we change the way we conceptualize the future? Literature about animals fosters empathy towards other animals, which opens new possibilities for literature to become a critical vector in conceptualizing futures that include both bees and humans. Empathy for other living beings encourages readers to reconceptualize a future that includes bees. Norbert Scheuer's most recent novel, *Winterbienen,* interrogates the anxiety life without bees induces as well as the bees' value through our relationship with them; our dependence on bees becomes the means to resistance and survival of most life on the planet through their influence and action in the world around them. This chapter argues that human kinships with bees proffer a vision of bee futurity and its entanglement with human futurities, through the novel's depiction of bees as intentional actors in the world around them. Kinship with bees enables human characters to witness the bees' futurities through the bees' ability to shape the world around them.

To begin this chapter, I recount a particular impetus within cultural thought and philosophy that closes off futurity from animals, thereby creating the impression that humans are the sole Earthly lifeforms with a sense of the future. From there, I briefly summarize key moments in bee

literature and then analyze Thomas Seeley's *Honeybee Democracy*. *Honeybee Democracy* portrays bees to be sentient lifeforms who structure their future according to complex political behaviors. These behaviors, in turn, influence much literary research and literary texts about bees, inclusive of Scheuer's 2019 novel *Winterbienen. Winterbienen* depicts bees as a *Volk*, a people; *Winterbienen* exemplifies how bees can be understood as a *Volk* with futurity, one establishing an economy and exerting resistance against the Nazi regime, thereby shaping the world around them. Apart from naming people groups, the word *Volk* can refer to bee colonies but gained negative connotations during the Second World War in light of Nazi vocabulary that termed *Volk* to refer to a biologically superior population. Lastly, the bees contribute to human history through a lifecycle that continually shapes a world encompassing both the human characters' survival and the space created by their relationship with bees. My interpretation of *Winterbienen* seeks an attentiveness toward bees, begging the question: what if we remove ourselves from the forefront of history and the future? What if we were to conceptualize new ecologically sustainable futures that do not center on human survival but that of bees or even both?

Animal Futures

The study of animal futures originates in ethology and moved into ecocriticism, whose thinkers maintain other animals do have access to the future and do indeed structure the world according to their desires. Popular scientific works such as Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us* and *A Dog's World* by Jessica Pierce and Marc Bekoff explore how certain animals and plants would change and act if there were no more humans on Earth. Such work decenters the human from the forefront of the future, but such a future is little more than a *Gedankenexperiment* that

seeks to comprehend animal futures in the abstract (Saavedra 45).[41] Such abstract thought, while offering fruitful basic research, denies the fundamental premise that humans and other animals co-evolved with each other, thus their pasts and futures, in an evolutionary sense, remain intertwined. Most work on animal futures analyzes what futures come to be in relationships between other animals and humans. Two special journal issues published on animal futurities indicate that the general trend in Animal Studies links current affairs and media on animals to analyze the portrayals of animals and their futures.[42] At its core, such research seeks to abandon anthropocentrism at the intersection of human and animal futurity.

But what does futurity mean at the intersection of Animal Studies and German literary criticism? I define futurity to be the capacity to refer to future events or renewed existence. The word's complexity begs investigation because it insinuates that there is a desire or capacity for such futures. In the two aforementioned special issues on Animal Futurity and "Tierliche Zukünfte," there is no proper definition of futurity, not even of the word "future." This marks a blindspot in the critical literature because there is no proper measure of what futurity means and what it could accomplish in Literary Animal Studies.

The futurity of animals is crucial in this dissertation mainly because claims of futurity made by humans often express anthropocentric desires that refuse to accommodate others into world-making. In regards to the past and present of animals, Winterbienen comments on the apian past in the Eifel region at the beginning of the novel, noting that bees had lived in the Eifel before humans had. The bees' past consists primarily of evolutionary and ecological history, which acknowledges the honeybees' presence and action yet refrains from attributing potential causation

[41] Although texts that report how such change already happens where humans have stopped living can aid understanding how the lack of anthropogenic actions can heal ecosystems, Cf. *Islands of Abandonment* by Cal Flyn.
[42] Cf. *Green Letters* issue on Animal Futurity; *Tierstudien* special issue on Tierliche Zukünfte

to the bees. Importantly, the bees in the Eifel region live there before humans. Regarding the present lives of bees, there is no comment on whether the bees lives in the present like he does, but if anything, the present for Egidius is a bleak prospect, similar to winter for honeybees.

Even in critical thought, the notion that we live in the so-called Anthropocene, the age of man, implies there can be no animal futurities that are not already tainted by anthropogenic effects such as climate change and species modification.[43] Donna Haraway contends that the only way forward to a future free of anthropocentrism—if this is even possible—is to forge kinships with nonhuman others (*Staying with the Trouble*, 50). Kinship is the primary avenue to unblind ourselves towards other animals. Along similar lines of thought in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Animal Studies cannot give futurity back to animals since humans never took futurity away from them in the first place; rather, definitions of what it means to be respectively a human and an animal have created the illusion that other animals cannot conceptualize the future. To counter such destructive sentiments, animal futurity should factor into our conceptions of the future to envision the possible futures in which other animals are meaningful interlocutors.

A subset in Animal Studies argues that futurity, the capacity to have a future, has been denied to animals in cultural thought and philosophy, both of which assert animals exist solely in the present. While this last sentence may seem to be an overstatement about how other animals perceive time, much philosophical debate has argued that animals lack the capacity to anticipate the future (Lippit 40; Steiner 36).[44] Gary Steiner argues philosophy denies futurity to animals

[43] Many animal species have been modified by human actions. The earliest of such activities is breeding, by which animal owners limit or force breeding on certain species to create an animal that fulfills a specific role in human society. Rosi Braidotti argues that beginning with breeding, humans have started to effectively bioengineer various animal species (*The Posthuman*, 69).

[44] Jacques Derrida in his last seminar has a note that Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* posits that animals do not have a past or a future (*Beast*, 1: 31). This remark is brief, with only a passing reference to the text, so I will not follow his line of thought.

because their lives and deaths are worth less than those of humans, thereby rendering nonhuman futures unimportant. For Steiner, nonhuman futures are devalued to the extent that these futures are absent from human thought. While this argument follows, animal futures' devaluation is merely the symptom. Akira Lippit argues a more compelling and nuanced point in *Electric Animal* that continental philosophy posits that animals do not have full access to the world thus they are without a future. Lippit's argument takes aim at Martin Heidegger's infamous statement that the animal is *weltarm,*[45] in contrast to humans who are *weltbildend*. In Heidegger's thought, humans have complete access to the world. In other words, humans can shape the world, whereas the animal is deficient in the world because the animal can only live in it without altering it, which insinuates they are static entities who think only about the present and are without regard for the future. Heidegger gestures, albeit indirectly, that the animal has access to the world marked by its dissimilarity to human worlds (Calarco, *Zoographies* 22). Heidegger refuses to block the animal from the world which separates them from inanimate objects (24) but rather the difference between humans and other animals, for Heidegger, is found in how both comport with the world. Moreover, the difference between the human and the animal resembles an abyss (48), untraversable and infinite. This abyss between animal and human access to the world is the presence of a future. Put differently, other humans can meaningfully have and shape the world, while the animal only exists in it but has no effect on it. Heidegger's claim has been interrogated and attacked by scholars and thinkers who believe animals can create and cohabitate in a world with humans,[46] which highlights

[45] When referring to Heidegger's comments on animals, I employ the term "the animal" to better demarcate my own position that relies on the myriad of other animals on the planet Earth apart from humans.

[46] Apart from Lippit and Calarco, to cite the list of people who have critiqued Heidegger's remark would be endless, so I give a summary of the major critiques. The major contenders in the ring are Georgio Agamben in *The Open,* Derrida in *The Animal That Therefore I am,* "Eating Well," and both volumes of *the Beast and the Sovereign,* Haraway in *Staying with the Trouble,* Kelly Oliver in *Animal Lessons,* Cary Wolfe in *What is Posthumanism* and *Animal Rites.* This represents the major literature that solely critiques his claim that animals are *weltarm*. Other remarks such as apes not having hands or animals' inability to be bored, to name just a few, are critiqued in other works often by the same authors.

his anthropocentric position (Tonner 205-206) and his argument for human exceptionalism from other animals. Lippit adds to the discourse, writing:

> In Heidegger's articulation of humanity's venture into the world, the latter stands before humanity as a world to come. The fullest manifestation of Heidegger's world is none other than the future: to have a world is to have a future. Thus standing before the world, over against the world, humanity stands in the world. The world is essentially a world to come, and humanity stands in it even while being denied the Open. Plants and beasts, however, who stand in the world, remain nonetheless outside the world's presence (as the future) as well as outside and behind the present. Plant and beast remain secure in the world while possessing neither hope nor desire… (65)

Lippit summarizes Heidegger's argument that humans view the world as a carte blanche that can be edited, changed, manipulated, and tailored because the world, for humans, resembles clay, moldable. If a world for *Homo sapiens* is "a world to come," then only those *weltbildende* actors in the world can shape it, while the *weltarm* animal (alongside *weltlosen* plants) can only inhabit the world in its current form as it exists. But full access to the world is the criterion Heidegger supposes for an entity to have a future. Lippit traces this thread back to the discourse on animals' lesser value in light of their lack of full access to the world.[47] If animals are deficient in the world, Lippit argues they cannot have a future because they cannot change the world (66) or imagine how to change the world (40). Without a future, other animals cannot create a world to inhabit; animals,

[47] Derrida (*The Animal* 156) and Calarco (*Zoographies* 28-30) argue that Heidegger does not claim that animals have lesser value or even imply it. Kelly Oliver even argues that Heidegger uses other animals to teach us about ourselves (196). Instead, Heidegger's argument supposes animals have a world in the mode of not-having, a paradox that leaves other animals disempowered, whereas humans have full unadulterated access to the world (Derrida, "Eating Well" 278; Oliver 196-7). Despite this, it becomes exceedingly difficult to claim that animals are of equal (or maybe different) value when one assigns animals impoverished access to the world rather than humans' enriched access to the world.

furthermore, have no past for lack of a world in which to have a past, which forms the destructive belief about animals subscribed to by philosophers such as Heidegger. The argument that animals lack a future highlights other animals' purported anchor in the present, only capable of reaching for and inhabiting the world around them.

Animals affect the world, and this much cannot be denied. Ants get into gardens, wasps eat through planks, bears break into dumpsters, deer eat off fruit trees, et cetera, but humans label these actions problematic because they hamper or destroy human progress. Animal actions compel further consideration into how animal agency, realized in the world, should equate the significance that human actions carry. Such an equation flies in the face of considering other animals' physical actions as barriers that humanity must ward off. Lippit argues animals are denied futurity in Heidegger's argument because the *weltarm* animal can never interact with the world in the way that humans can, hence if animals are to have a future, then they must also have access to the world or perhaps their world. World "is thus both singular and plural: there is only one, and there is an infinite variety, each tied to a different mode of being-in-the-world, which is also simultaneously a form of being-with" (Driscoll, "'Il n'y a pas de chats'" 172). To spell this out, the world is Earth, but there are multiple perceptions of Earth, which we can call worlds, of which there exist human worlds.[48] Each species experiences Earth differently; the Earth is a multiplicity, a central paradox in Animal Studies, especially if having access to the world is the basis of futurity.

This paradox cannot be reconciled as we have no true access to the other's subjectivity let alone that of another human or another animal (Driscoll, "Sticky Temptation of Poetry" 216). But

[48] Driscoll's remarks are reminiscent of Jakob von Uexküll's notion of *Umwelt. Umwelt* is the term used by Uexküll to describe how a particular species views the world with weight on the visual. In Uexküll's work, he often utilizes illustrations of how the world could look from the eyes of other animals. Although he never features illustrations of the world through a bee's eyes, he does have illustrations from a fly's perspective (Bailly 26). Cf.: Jakob von Uexküll, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen. Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten.*

what one can depict are the commonalities between human and other animal worlds. Kári Driscoll notes that a critical part of literature about other animals is the representation of how other species interact with the world and how they world-form. To illustrate this, Driscoll cites Rainer Maria Rilke's introduction to *Mitsou,* which posits that the central difference between cats (*Felis catus*) and dogs is the way they comport themselves with human worlds ("'Il n'y a pas de chats'" 160). Dogs, for Rilke, exist on the verge of leaving their canine world for that of the human, but cats represent the opposite phenomenon to the extent that Rilke writes that essentially cats do not exist for humans because they are similarly on the periphery of human worlds. Cats refuse to incorporate themselves into human worlds, rather they reside in their own world. If the ability to manipulate the world around oneself is the basis of having a future, what does it mean to change or shape the world?

And if animals can shape the world, potentially also the human world with its power structures, politics, and wars, then one quality that we have in common is futurity. Futurity is not only the capacity to have a future but also the ability to change the world, or as Driscoll terms it, world-forming. Driscoll appropriates Heidegger's language, which differentiates between other animals and humans based on their poverty or plenitude in the face of the world, which manipulates *weltbilden* into a joint venture as opposed to a human venture. "World-forming," as per Driscoll, is "... an obligation, a joint venture, which necessarily involves both humans and nonhumans in the shared co-creation of the world" ("'Il n'y a pas de chats'" 13). Driscoll posits that the world does not exist a priori; rather, all worlds are made in the interactions between species including *Homo sapiens*, but these worlds "will never be purely and simply identical" (Derrida, *Beast,* 2: 8). If these worlds have unique identities, then each animal world, if each species and perhaps each individual animal is to have their own, is a world unto itself that other animals can world-

form. Such an interpretation undermines Heidegger's definition, in that the world is not something that simply exists that humans have access to; rather, interactions between species create the world. The world is Earth, yes, but the world is also constituted by actions and the emergent meanings that take place in it. What must transpire is for humans to acknowledge futurity in other animals, which necessarily redefines the future as an animal trait rather than an exclusively human trait. Through the stripping of the definition of human, human futurity must become plural. The world in *Winterbienen* is the physical surroundings, entities, and places in and around Kall, whether that be buildings, hills, trees, human beings, or other animals. In other terminology, I focus on the materiality of the diegetic world and require a materialist inclination to account for the process of world-forming. Materialism posits that objects, inclusive of lifeforms, exist in themselves, not contingent on human cognition to be extant. Such thought rejects Idealist thought that supposes that objects do not appear outside of human cognition. Idealism, in general terms, supposes a higher ontological position for humans because of their particular form of cognition, thereby diminishing the importance of other animals.

Material-semiotic knots offer a framework to break down and analyze the interactions that shape the relationships between human characters and bees in *Winterbienen*. Haraway employs material-semiotic knots to aid her exploration of what it means to touch others and how human and other animal lives touch. Moments, when species touch, are not the end "but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings co-shape one another" (*When Species Meet* 4). The knot finds its foundation in the relationship of multiple actors, often of diverse species and origins, which is not limited to characters or objects of literary analysis. The hyphenated adjective "material-semiotic" is defined as "trope and flesh always cohabiting, always co-constituting" (383). The presence of physical form and meaning constitute the entanglements

of the material-semiotic knots. Haraway's material-semiotic knots require the juxtaposition of the meaning of these materials as semiotics and the materiality of the signs that produce meaning simultaneously through the contact of physical bodies (Borgards, "The Mighty Louse" 53) and linguistic planes (Moe, *Zoopoetics* 12), creating tension between meaning and material. This tension, although abstract in its wording, visualizes lifeforms such as humans and other animals as co-constitutive of each other and of the contexts they abide in.

Touch becomes of the utmost importance since physical action creates meaning and future directions for either species. Haraway terms the space created through interactions between species a contact zone. To define these zones, she asks the question: "When species meet, the question of how to inherit histories is pressing, and how to get on together is at stake. Because I become with dogs, I am drawn into the multispecies knots that they are tied into and that they retie by their reciprocal action" (*When Species Meet* 35). Haraway's thrust seeks to tabulate the causes and effects born of different lifeforms interacting, particularly the world that they create when they meet and touch. Although the word "zone" might render these interactions ambiguous, it is imperative to note that Haraway centers her analysis on the senses of sight and touch. In these contact zones produced in literature, the material-semiotic knots represent relationality born of meaning and matter, which necessitates that both have values that weigh equally in relationships between members of different species. My use of the material-semiotic knot and contact zone examines the interstices between human characters and bees, to break down these interactions into the diegetic physical activity in the text alongside the significance of the actions.[49]

[49] Haraway's work has drawn criticism for its apparent insufficient critical thought (Calarco, *The Boundaries* 136). For instance, Zipporah Weisberg claims Haraway lacks critical thought with her philosophical comments on dog agility competitions and dog training. Weisberg criticizes Haraway because she does not analyze her actions as potentially trapped in the humanist discourse of dog training, that is humans training dogs, as opposed to symbiosis or more revolutionary practice (28). While her criticism has some validity, Weisberg fails to acknowledge what type of society Haraway and companion animals live in. Most people train their dogs to better adapt to the anthropocentric

Bees in Literature and Science

To have one bee is to have no bees (Preston 7); the singular bee is no match for its plural. Honeybees live in hives that function around what resembles a monarchy: a queen bee lays eggs, and a multitude of female worker bees maintains every other part of the hive, from foraging to guarding. A small number of male bees, drones, abide in the hive and serve little purpose apart from potentially mating with virginal queens on their nuptial flight.[50] In autumn, the queen lays fewer and fewer eggs, of which the last generation is the winter bees. Winter bees are the longest-living bees, who ball together to maintain a comfortable temperature in the hive for the queen to survive. After overwintering and finding renewed food sources, the winter bees perish as the queen resumes her egg-laying in the spring. Any reference to "bee," "bees," or "honeybees" refers to the species of bee known as the Western honeybee, or in Latin, *Apis mellifera*. While there are hundreds of bee species, the Western tradition places the honeybee, *Apis mellifera,* as the bee par excellence.

Humans have long lived with bees to the extent that wherever humans moved in their evolution, bees were there beforehand (Seeley, *The Lives of Bees* 58). Apiologists confirm that honeybees lived in Africa, Asia, and Europe before *Homo sapiens* evolved. The earliest records of beekeeping from antiquity are found in Egypt and among the Hittites (Preston 32). Since then, people in Europe and the Middle East have utilized the beehives as a staple in agriculture. Early humans hunted beehives for honey and then eventually took to domesticating bees. Early honey

world we live in; for instance, walking on leashes in a city becomes a necessity to prevent canine injury or death resulting from automobiles. Haraway, in my reading, shows concrete actions that one can take and thoughts one has about the animals that are not abstract. Truly, this marks a limitation to Haraway's work in that Haraway may not take the implications of her thought to the extreme, but the first step towards any actual form of multispecies justice, thought, or philosophy that can be practiced is likely not found in the abstract; rather, it will begin in prosaic relationships between humans and other animals.

[50] Although the drones' capacity to work has been questioned. In a recent article in *Animal Behaviour,* the authors argue that the relative their inactivity and positioning in the hive are important factors to maximize the worker bees' efficiency (Neubauer et al.).

farmers killed their bees for the honey, but eventually, agrarian civilizations devised methods to keep honeybee colonies alive during harvest. The bee was not only of economic importance in antiquity; honeybees played an important role in religion and religious iconography, including but not limited to, Egyptian mythology, Greco-Roman religion, and Christianity (Rigby, "'Piping in their honey dreams'" 284-5). Despite their agricultural efficacy and religious uptake, Eric Brown posits that humans harbor a primordial fear of insects (ix) since their uncontrollability and tight-knit social structures challenge Western conceptions of individuality and intentionality (Brown; Hollingsworth). The word "swarm" marks the apex of human fear of insects, their social behaviors, and uncontrollability (Brown ix).

Not only has the honeybee long been part of human histories but also of human stories. Literature on bees often concentrates on their value as a metaphor for a strong work ethic (McHugh, "Cross-Pollinating" 298; Preston 11; Rigby, "'Piping in their honey dreams'" 289; Stipanovic). Virgil's *Georgics* initiated a long tradition of writing and thinking about bees as fanciful creatures who are asexual, practice monarchy, manifest the divine, and love hard work for the benefit of the hive (Stipanovic 13). Since human understandings of bees have changed with increasingly precise apiological research, literary depictions of bees have changed accordingly to represent bees more scientifically, but many cultural valuations of bees have remained such as their work ethic and relative noble status among other animals. Recent literature about bees focuses primarily on the anxiety of losing prolific pollinators, for instance, Maja Lunde's *History of Bees* and Douglas Coupland's *Generation A,* which take place in a world without bees as pollinators.[51]

[51] While its intentions may seem positive, the cultural response to CCD has its failings. Maja Lunde's novel positions the bee in a noble position that, in some ways, disadvantages other pollinators (Alsen & Tabak 119). Lunde's novel mistakenly implies that the future without bees is a future without pollinators and that cultural media consider the honeybee to be the only fruitful pollinator (Alsen & Tabak 116-7). Such reasoning invites us to consider only honeybees as important pollinators among thousands if not millions of other pollinators Earth has. Katharina Alsen and Eline D. Tabak argue that humans dislike insects such as wasps or other solitary bees because they are not the

These narratives foreground human perspectives, especially the anxiety that appears in these novels as among the legion of other cultural artifacts. In a similar line, Kate Rigby argues literature would not exist were it not for bees ("'Piping in their honey dreams'" 286), which suggests bees are an indirect contributor to literature since bees pollinate the food we eat. Surely, Rigby's assertion could be considered some form of the butterfly effect, but her point remains that bees shape literature because of their omnipresence in material culture, particularly food. Bees are a key part of agriculture and the sustained future of humans (Rigby, "'Piping in their honey dreams'" 289); without bees, there would not be enough food to sustain the number of humans and other animals on the planet. With the advent of CCD, agriculture, travel, and pesticides[52] are suspect for the mass destruction of bees and colonies (Halter 69; Schacker 138). The strains of modern human life and technology have taken their toll on bees, thereby rendering aspects of human society vulnerable. To account for this vulnerability, there is increasing pressure to form more holistic relationships with bees.

Kinship is crucial in *Winterbienen* because of Egidius' work with and thoughts about bees. He does not operate an elaborate wild bee operation akin to Thomas Seeley's Darwinian beekeeping (*The Lives of Bees*) or naturalist beekeeping (Knight), nor does Egidius try to form a utopic relationship with bees. Egidius is a beekeeper who uses standard beekeeping methods to survive the Second World War. In its simplicity, the reader already possesses the relationship that Egidius and Ambrosius have with bees along with all the enrichment that this relationship brings

honeybee that offers so much plenitude for humankind. Perhaps, this fetishization of the honeybee occurs because of their close relationship to humans; honeybees are known for their docility and productivity whereas wasps, for instance, do not have a great standing with humans despite accomplishing much pollination. It is not pollination then that is a consideration of an animal's value for humanity as much as the bonus productivity harvestable from beehives. This bonus productivity factors into human preferences for other animals, which leads people to consider bees an irreplaceable aid as opposed to pests. Their argument does not posit that one should not pay attention to bees and their wellbeing; indeed, CCD and mass bee die-off are concerning on a global scale, but one must remember that bees are not the only pollinators on the planet, and for that, we should resist their fetishization.

[52] The pesticides in question are neonicotinoids, which are a subset of pesticides used in modern agriculture.

forth. While I hope for the readers to move closer towards animal others and include multispecies voices, Scheuer's text maintains little interest in abstract critical thought that simply leads to the proliferation of theory. If anything, *Winterbienen* advocates for concrete action that the readers can readily take for bees. Contact zones and material-semiotic knots mark the points in space and time where the human characters of *Winterbienen* and the bees meet and intermingle. Through the analysis of one relationship, between the novel's primary protagonist and bees, I examine the impact that the actions stemming from one relationship have on the world and what these actions imply. Scheuer depicts how one might reconceive animal futures and act accordingly.

Winterbienen switches between three different first-person narrators, consisting mostly of Egidius Arimond's diary and sketches of planes. Egidius tells of his struggles to survive in Germany during the Second World War, and his attempts to do so which include beekeeping and transporting refugees to the border for cash. The second narrator, Ambrosius, has eight chapters interspersed throughout the novel. Each of Ambrosius' chapters recounts his journey across the Alps. The last narrator is an anonymous voice who informs the reader about Egidius' last days and how he dies in a minefield. The bees are not narrators in the text, however; rather they are an ever-present force in the novel, connected to the entire narrative. *Winterbienen*'s three narrators create a complex story that guides the reader across multiple centuries, written from the first-person point of view. I understand the consistent use of first-person narrative enables a speculative and subjective stance towards other animals. Since third-person narration can be considered observational and distanced from the characters and action, third-person narration appears more objective whereas first-person narratives rely on the involvement of the narrator in the plot to some degree, which signals a more relatable narrator.

After the novel ends, Scheuer appends a bibliography and a *Danksagung*. Scheuer was provided a journal of a resident who lived in Kall during the Second World War. From this material, Scheuer then wrote the novel with inspiration.[53] Such a process is typical for Scheuer; he mentions in public lectures that his stories derive from conversations with people in Kall (Erb, "Brot und Seele" 11 & "der ich mich für immer" 80). Scheuer's writing has been characterized since his first poems and early novels as *Heimatliteratur,* and in a basic sense, stories from the *Provinz* create *Heimatliteratur.* Such stories focus on a fixed location but also the people from that area and their knowledge, but his novels after his *Die Sprache der Vögel* break the pattern of his earlier novels set solely in the Eifel region and the contemporary timeframe of the novel. In addition, *Winterbienen* takes place entirely in the past. The setting marks a distinctive break from his earlier writings, which focused primarily on the diegetic present. The term *Heimatliteratur* does not contribute to my interpretation of *Winterbienen* because of the expansion of narrative time. Scheuer's novels since *Die Sprache der Vögel* vary their setting between narrators and comment on the contiguity and continuity of humankind, which suggests a new focus has emerged in his writing.

Scheuer's inclusion of such a detailed bibliography and filmography marks a reversal of his attitude toward the scholarly analysis of his work (Beughold 136-7). The bibliography reveals his commitment to an accurate representation of the Second World War and German civilians' experience through historical accounts,[54] critical literature, literary texts, and popular scientific

[53] The journal is listed with the fictional character's name in the bibliography, which precludes finding the actual source text or any other works related to the original diary. In the *Danksagung,* there is no specific name mentioned that could clarify who gave Scheuer the journal.

[54] For instance, the second diary entry begins with the news that an Allied plane has crashed nearby. Later, Egidius finds an Allied pilot and takes care of the injured pilot despite the danger this could incur. These events bear a close resemblance to Dutch author Jan Terlouw's *Winter in Wartime*, which begins with an Allied plane crash near the protagonist's village in the occupied Netherlands.

web literature. The bibliography signals his desire for his novel to be read in concert with other texts from among the contemporary literature of bees that has become popularized in the last 20 years (Berenbaum 3; Preston 161). Scheuer's interactions and intertexts within popular bee literature inform my analysis of *Winterbienen* because his novel parallels plot points of other literary intertexts. An intertext included in the bibliography is Lunde's *The History of Bees*. Lunde's novel has a similar narrative structure constituted by diaries from three narrators that bridge multiple centuries in the past, present, and future. Through the similarities between novels, Scheuer enters a tradition of literature about bees and draws inspiration from contemporary fiction on bees as intertexts for his novel.

There has been relatively little written critically about *Winterbienen* despite the novel's success. The book won the *Wilhelm Raabe-Literaturpreis* in 2019 and was on the shortlist for the *Deutscher Buchpreis* of the same year. These are the highest accolades Scheuer has ever received in his literary career. I turn to book reviews in a German medical journal called *Zeitschrift für Epileptologie*, one short chapter in Theo Breuer's book *Winterbienen in Urftland,* and the *feuilleton* to map out the landscape of the novel's interpretation and reception. *Zeitschrift für Epileptologie* features two short reviews of a fictional text, which praise the novel not only for its accurate depiction of the relevant medical condition and its treatment but also for its cultural relevance due to the novel's references of "Stille Helden" during the Third Reich (Thorbecke 89). For Günter Krämer, the novel has garnered overall positive reviews for its realistic depictions of epilepsy and its treatment. Krämer believes that there are three layers to the text: Egidius's action throughout the novel, the connection between "Leben und Überleben der Bienenvölker und die Flugzeuge am Himmel" (353), and Ambrosius' texts scattered interspersed between Egidius' diary entries. Rupprecht Thorbecke, on the other hand, focuses on the anti-Nazi sentiments and plot

points in the novel. In his text on Scheuer's entire oeuvre, Breuer's comments adulate Scheuer's novel for his ability to enchant the reader. German-language *feuilleton* reviews of the novel praise Scheuer's writing for his concrete storytelling and succinct style, which create a worthwhile read that intertwines complex themes (Clauer; Winkels). Instead of a story with a flawless hero, reviewers note how Egidius transports Jews across the border to secure enough money to buy medication (Bahners; Clauer; Winkels). In line with the *Zeitschrift für Epileptologie* reviews, most reviewers of the novel cite the setting and depiction of the end of the Second World War as highly engaging. The theme of war often appears concerning other animals in literature, to which the novel's epigraph sets the stage.

Winterbienen's epigraph, from the Russian author Isaak Babel's *Red Cavalry,* reads "ich trauere um die Bienen, sie wurden von kämpfenden Armeen vernichtet." Before Scheuer's novel begins, the reader is presented with the context that bees are dying as a result of anthropogenic forces. While not a war party, the bees are as much a part of the war as the human contenders in that they are "vernichtet" by armies fighting. Although the epigraph comes to the reader in translation, the word "vernichtet" weighs heavily in the text since "Vernichtung" calls to the forefront contemporary fears of losing bees, but the verb choice also necessitates an actor; in war, people kill bees, whether indirectly or directly; the word "vernichtet" calls to mind the anthropogenic causes of CCD, which may result from pesticides and agricultural overuse (Schacker 96). Such loss calls for mourning; Babel realizes the bees are collateral damage in a war that does not involve them. Mourning for the loss of bees, just before the novel begins, ties the novel to the present moment of precarity for bees and their future. While *Winterbienen* does not comment on the current anxiety around bees and the bee population, one must consider the novel in relation to current global events.

Bee Folk and Their Political Power

Of particular interest in recent literature on bees is renowned apiologist Thomas Seeley's book *Honeybee Democracy.* The thrust of the book implies that honeybees organize themselves similarly to the direct democracy of municipal governments of the United States (73). Bees and beehives have long been utilized as symbols in philosophical and political thought, beginning with philosophers such as Aristotle, who uses beehives as an analogy for how human society could function if humans were to mirror the beehive. Plato's *Republic* places bees and beehives as an exemplar of what an ideal society could resemble (Calarco, *The Boundaries* 11; Preston 62-3). The idealization of the honeybee and the beehive has continued into more modern thought, both literary (Goodbody 138) and political (Halter 23; Hollingsworth 152 & 188). Seeley depicts scenes of municipal government town halls or council meetings and then compares these scenes to the political practices of bees, particularly when bees swarm. Swarming happens when a group of bees depart from the hive with the old queen to create a new hive. The swarm leaves the hive and then attaches itself to a branch for instance. Over the next couple of days, scouts search for suitable hive locations. Upon discovering a suitable location, they return to the swarm and advocate for the new hive location with the waggle dance (*Honeybee Democracy,* 11). Based on the enthusiasm and details of the new hive location, more scout bees return to explore that location further and report back to the swarm. If the location garners more attention, an increasing number of scout bees advocate for that location against other ones. Once a critical mass of scout bees advocates for a location for the new hive location, the swarm moves to that location (169). The stakes of the decision are dire as an unsuitable location could result in death for the entire colony (84).

Since the publication of *Honeybee Democracy*, Animal Studies scholars have become interested in bees because of the possibility that bees have more than a complex social

organization; they have social structures that closely resemble modern human political organization.[55] These politics imply that bees are more than just hivemind insects that cannot think beyond the immediate present. While the swarm's success is determined by direct democracy, the success of the hive is determined by the amount of work that bees accomplish during the spring, summer, and fall. Bees work throughout the spring, summer, and fall to collect enough nectar that they refine into honey for the colony's nourishment throughout the winter. While one could dismiss this behavior to be instinctual, the bees work nonetheless towards the future of the hive although not all these bees live to see that future fulfilled. To dismiss these observations to be mere instinctual code exemplifies current paradigms of anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism that blind us towards other animals and thus bind cultural thought to consider other animals lesser than humans. *Honeybee Democracy* presents a vision of bees that forces the reader to acknowledge the bees' futurity as deriving from complex decision-making and political behaviors.

To define political behaviors, I borrow Bennett's exploration of political ecologies. In Vibrant Matter, Bennett explores the actions of worms following Charles Darwin's observations that worms, during their lives, create vegetable mold, which enables plants Expanding John Dewey's political theorizations, Bennett argues "that a political action need not originate in human bodies at all" (102). If not the human body, political action thus becomes any action by any being that affects the organization of the self and others. The organization of self and others, or perhaps negotiation, lead Bennett to suggest that ecological action and political action become intertwined (95). This, in turn, complicates every single animal action. Broadening her definition, Bennett notes: "in that consists their political action, which, fortunately or unfortunately, will also become

[55] The implications of Seeley's *Honeybee Democracy* could be compared to Jane Bennett's chapter on the political agency of worms in *Vibrant Matters.*

conjoint action with a chain of indirect, unpredictable consequences" (101). And while it may seem, if all animal action can be political, it would be meaningless, this confirms what so many critical thinkers have thought: the personal is political and turning to the natural world then, the ecological is also political.

It would be possible then to think, recalling Seeley's example from Honeybee Democracy. Bees organize them when swarming in ways analogous to direct democracy and organize themselves around the waggle dance, a bee language, and the pheromones released by the queen bee. In this light, we can understand the bees' organization to resemble a political organization because of their communication and negotiation of new places to move the hive to. If one can accept that bees operate a political system analogous to direct democracy because of their communication, then the possibilities for multispecies political collaboration open up.

Honeybee Democracy, to say the least, has made waves in academic discourse on bees and how humanities scholars read literary texts about bees (McHugh, "Cross-Pollinating" 198; Rigby, "'Piping in their honey dreams'" 281; Werber 279). If we accept that bees have their own political and social systems that center on futurity, then human politics are not as unique to Earth as they seem. The term democracy warrants clarification considering that the etymology of the term traces back to the Greek words *demos* and *kratos,* people and rule respectively. Human language remains inscribed with the human (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* 174; Derrida, *The Animal* 120-121). The term democracy potentially cannot serve as an accurate description of what Seeley depicts in *Honeybee Democracy*, for bees are not often considered *demos.* I expand my interpretation of Winterbienen to accept the implications of *Honeybee Democracy*; my analysis of Winterbienen

therefore attempts to consider the bees as *demos.*[56] Seeley's research on honeybee democracy reveals that bees structure the world around them according to their desire for the future. If we expand the definition of *demos* to include bees as well as humans then democracy, the rule of the people, or *Volk*, becomes a multispecies form of governing. The wealth of bee literature and political theory establishes the premise that bees are archetypes for certain political structures. Recalling Seeley's comparison of the bee swarm to the direct democratic process, swarming can be read as a political phenomenon that ought to challenge Western conceptions of individuality as much as it compels the audience to take seriously the bees' ability to world-form.

Early in the novel, Egidius writes about his kinship with bees, starting with his family's legacy of beekeeping and his initiation, through bee stings, into the profession. In the story arc of the novel, these formative moments preempt Egidius' kinship with bees, to the extent that he considers himself a member of the bees' *Volk*. These threads of his kinship with bees are continued throughout the novel. For instance, he writes "[i]ch sei ein Teil ihres Volkes" (46) after he reflects on how the bees treat him when he tends to their hives. As per *Duden*, the word *Volk* usually refers to people, masses of people, or nations, but its fifth definition refers to hive insects, particularly bees and ants. The word is predisposed to refer to human society, but the word's denotations do not terminate with people. In Scheuer's novel, however, the way Egidius writes about bees and the context of the Second World War, bees as *Volk* presupposes more than the standard fifth definition.

Volk was a keyword in Nazi vocabulary to unite the population but also to claim the land around them. Its integration in political settings continued in the Nazi regime with examples such as the prominent Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*. As the Nazi leadership grew desperate,

[56] Other texts that could be said to accomplish similar work would be Amanda Moore's *Requeening* or Karla Reimert's *Picknick mit schwarzen Bienen.*

partisan military troops were established under the name of *Volkssturm*. In the Third Reich, various political initiatives and speeches deployed the word to distinguish the German people from other peoples (Bassin 206). Even before the Third Reich, various right-wing political party names contained the word *Volk* to express similar sentiments, for example, *Deutsche Volkspartei* and *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (Harvey 159; Steinbach 9 & 17). These political entities upheld racist beliefs, claiming that German people were superior to others based on the fact of their Germanness (Harvey 158). The National Socialists defined the nationalist limits of *Volk* membership and those who fell outside the word's definition were genetic enemies (Closmann 27-8; Imort 55). But beyond other people, the term *Volk* also tied the German people to the land around them. For instance, natural wonders and forests in Germany were considered *Volkstum* or *Volksgut* (Closmann 24; Imort 51). Germany and the lands captured constituted parts of a *Volk* in as much as they were destined to come into possession of the *Volk.* If one were to recast Heidegger's argument that humans are *weltbildend* and those who are not human are not *weltarm* or *weltlos,* then it becomes easy to assume that only the *Volk* could properly change the world.

To accept *Honeybee Democracy* fully behooves us to consider the bees as *demos*, already organized and vested with power. *Volk,* the German translation of *demos,* is repeatedly employed to describe the bees as a state or army, and the word *Bienenvolk* refers to a bee colony. But in the Second World War, the word *Volk* and the adjective *völkisch* became tied to the sovereignty and biological makeup of the German people. Sovereignty acts as leverage to wage war for the *Volk'*s *Lebensraum* or *Reich,* which then infers that if the *Volk* deserves such land, then they also inherit the exclusive right to change that land. In other words, if the German people are a *Volk* whose human status preconditions their status as an entity that can world-form. Scheuer's novel challenges Nazi connotations with the term *Volk*, thereby forcing the reader to renegotiate *Volk*'s

political possibilities to other animals. In Scheuer's reclamation of Nazi vocabulary, there is a more significant intervention made on the level of the word with the departure point of the lexeme. As shown with the example of *Vogelstimme* in the previous chapter and *Volk* here, the standard diction to refer to animals is reconfigured to take animals seriously. The *Stimmen* in *Die Sprache der Vögel* are real voices, and the *Volk* in *Winterbienen* are bees that constitute more than just bee colonies; they are also entities that can world-form through their interactions with and for other species (Driscoll, "'Il n'y a pas de chats'" 172; Haraway, *When Species Meet* 20). Between the two novels, Scheuer's writing can be interpreted to show subtle redefinitions of standard German language surrounding other animals to become more inclusive of nonhuman others.

Egidius occasionally refers to a single hive as a *Volk*, but the majority are to the plural. The plural interrogates the word *Volk* which unsettles its historical associations. These feelings can be further extrapolated if the reader considers bees *Völker*, which suggests the honeybees organize themselves into social units whose structure resists human domestication (McHugh, "Cross-Pollinating" 298; Scheuer 144 & 172). Bees, the most undomesticated domesticated animals, have a unique form of agency in their relationship with humans (McHugh, "Cross-Pollinating" 298; Preston 34; Schumacher 121). This seemingly paradoxical observation is congruent with apiologists' assertations: for example, controlled breeding has long been a tell-tale sign of complete domestication, but it is only in the last 50 years that people have been able to control, to an extent, how queen bees breed (Seeley, *Honeybee Ecology* 16). While one could say the insects' size and collective nature preclude their submission to human control that other domesticated animals endure, there remains a unique subversive nature to the bee, despite their cohabitating with humans so well. *Volk* status suggests that bees have futurity, that they are not completely stuck in

the present and can world-form. The bees accomplish this through encouraging Egidius to subvert the Nazi regime.

The bees' economic power is a primary instance of the bees' world-forming. Egidius writes that he sells bee products to survive in a time when resources are scarce, and the German army, on the brink of collapse, terrorizes its civilians (Beevor 311; Kershaw 181). Beekeeping becomes the sole path available to Egidius to survive the war, and hence Egidius' prioritization of the apian economy. His sole dependence on bees creates anxiety about the honey harvest and the bees' health, for there is no other avenue to survive; his worries about the honey harvest are not unfounded, seeing that he eats nothing other than bee products (Scheuer, *Winterbienen* 121 & 130). The bees' labor subverts these economic conditions, which enable both their survival through the actual winter and the figurative winter of the Third Reich. Egidius' writing features the bees' economic power as a central theme, which informs my interpretation that the bees world-form since they keep Egidius alive.

Egidius recognizes that the bees operate an economy, and their economy also makes use of his work as a beekeeper (162). Egidius explains to someone in his village that "…ich schriebe über meine Bienen, so wie ein Kaufmann müsste auch ich täglich Buch führen, die Bienen wären meine Angestellten, sie würden den Honig produzieren und ich würde ihn verkaufen und für sie sorgen" (24). Egidius' admission comes at the cost of his claim to power over the bees. The subjunctive tense suggests that the bees are under his protection or ownership regardless of his harvesting and selling the product. He considers his care for the bees by constructing hives and providing overwintering nourishment an expected part of his relationship with his bees. His relinquishment of control over the bees does not, however, contradict or preclude his status as a beekeeper since the latter is an intrinsic part of his identity. The bees' recognition of Egidius positions the reader

to understand how the bees affect his life. The bees' honey and beeswax, enabling Egidius to survive, offer a glimpse into how bee futurity manifests itself in the novel. The interactions between Egidius and his bees create symbiotic spaces of resistance through the bees' economy. Another such space of Egidius' resistance through world-forming is found in smuggling refugees to the Belgian border.

Egidius' helping refugees across the border marks a productive site in the text, one that unravels the means to interrogate the bees' defense of the refugees as world-forming. While this section of the novel portrays Egidius as a member of the *Stille Helden* in the Second World War (Thorbecke 89), Egidius brings refugees to the Belgian border a handful of times to generate extra income to buy medication. He is not portrayed as a hero, which, for me, changes the focus from Egidius saving people to how Egidius and his bees save people. To prepare the refugees, Egidius puts queen bees in hair curlers and affixes these curlers to the refugees' clothing; the curlers grant the refugees access to the hive without the bees stinging them. Egidius hides the refugees beside the matriarch of the beehive; bees will swarm out to protect the queen in the event of opening an apiary. On the way to the Belgian border, guards stop Egidius' carriage on the road to inspect the hives before he continues. Egidius recounts that most guards fear bees enough to avoid inspections, but on this night, the soldiers demand he open the hives. In response to their demands, he warns them "vor den Stichen der in ihrer Ruhe gestörten Bienen" (29). The guards disregard his warning to witness "[a]bertausende Bienen strömten heraus und formierten sich zu einem großen dunklen Schwarm." This incident causes guards to refuse to inspect the apiaries in the future. Bees storm out of the hive as one cohesive unit; the defensive swarm reminds the reader that the bees' social nature does not cease with foraging flowers and producing honey and beeswax; the collective nature entails the defense of the hive and its queen with "den Stichen der in ihrer Ruhe gestörten

Bienen." The "großen dunklen Schwarm" becomes a symbol of the power to world-form that the bees wield in the novel. Particularly since this scene happens at night, the bee swarm remains visible even in the dark. While Egidius positions the bees to guard the refugees, the bees' swarm is a natural defensive reaction when the guards open the apiary. The symbolic function and proximity of the queen bees to the refugees, protected by "[a]bertausende Bienen," places them under quasi-military protection, attached, physically, to bee royalty. The bees' capacity to world-form emerges in the contact zone between the queen bees on the refugees' clothing but also at the intersection of human fears. The bees' labor sustains Egidius who, in turn, positions the bees to bring people across the Belgian border.

To the attentive reader, to consider the bees' action as resistance to the Nazis is based on faulty logic. Indeed, if I were talking about bees on Earth, my interpretation of the bees' action would be the projection of human morality onto the insects. If Scheuer wrote historical memoirs about how bees opposed the Nazi regime, the projection of his values onto the bees would be evident because the bees would be positioned by humans to accomplish certain goals. Bees could just as well be used for purposes many would consider insidious, but we must remember the bees in *Winterbienen* are not real bees, but rather literary bees. Scheuer's novel frames the bees to defend the refugees. Precisely here, the extreme value of literary fiction is found in helping us reconsider how other animals world-form. Surely, Scheuer creates a particular moment with Egidius smuggling refugees in beehives, but this fictional encounter compels the reader to feel and think about bees. In this case, I consider the bees enable Egidius to resist the Nazi regime because they are literary bees with the capacity to act in ways that we may not readily ascribe to real bees in the world.

The bee sting has made bees fearsome creatures. An effective but self-sacrificial instrument of pain, the bee stinger strikes fear in humans and other larger animals (Seeley, *Honeybee Ecology* 128). While the honeybee is not an aggressive animal, hive defenses are often misconstrued to be a sign of their aggression towards those nearing the bees' hive. The resultant fear response works in the bees' favor, in many regards, but Egidius exploits the guards' fear as a means to resist Nazi power. The metaphor, "Armee von Wächterinnen" (Scheuer, *Winterbienen* 152), infers that the bees are a *Volk* that can world-form. Egidius relies on bees for their labor and their protection, but they also represent the hope for life beyond the war. The bee's sting poses an inherent potential to influence the world around them, but their power is exemplified through their flight.

A major factor in the Allied victory over the Nazi army was the continuous bombing runs over Germany. Allied planes overhead feature early in the novel, and Egidius listens for the sound of approaching enemy bombers. His awareness of the airspace above Kall is more than another detail of the war and should be compared with the way bees also occupy airspace (Krämer 353). Interspersed throughout the novel are illustrations of various planes flown during the Second World War that Egidius draws in his journal with the aid of ink made from coffee grinds.[57] Egidius draws a connection between the planes buzzing overhead and the bees flying around Kall, whose economic and political structure aids Egidius in resisting against the Nazi regime. Egidius describes the Allied planes as if they were airborne insects in the sky and writes quasi-taxonomies of the aircraft that he sees, which parallels how one would record and study found insect species (250). Beyond my comparison of the planes and bees, verbs are shared between bees and planes such as "dröhnen," and "pfeifen" (Scheuer, *Winterbienen* 195 & 273), thereby attributing more

[57] Erasmus Scheuer, Norbert Scheuer's son, drew the illustrations in the novel. The drawings in *Winterbienen* are similar to those in *Die Sprache der Vögel* and Scheuer's most recent novel *Mutabor.*

power to bees. Military power in flight is no longer the exclusive purview of human technology; it is the property of both species and defines both. Although the planes in the novel are often harbingers of destruction of both people and bees (260 & 263), there is a connection between the two forces if the bees form an "Armee of Wächterinnen" in flight (152). When understood as an army, bees become more than mere animals in the German landscape; they become a force in the war, which the reader cannot ignore. I have shown how the bees organize themselves as a *Volk* with an economy and army; their economy and army, in turn, redefine the reader's perception of the bees' ability to world-form.

The text provides the reader with extraordinarily little detail about the Allied Occupation or other contemporaneous political events. Egidius never mentions the fall of the Third Reich or even Hitler's death; Hitler's name never appears in the novel, only referred to as Jupp[58] twice in the entirety of the text, one of which is an assassination attempt (49 & 198). The attentive reader would recognize these dates and their historical events, but Scheuer reveals a quality of the bees that defamiliarizes the reader's assumed knowledge of World War II history. The defamiliarization does not trivialize the Second World War or the atrocities the Nazi regime committed. *Winterbienen,* however, does not recast bees as independent from the Earth and all the life thereon. Instead, Scheuer accomplishes a balancing act between the apian and human actions.

Apian Bodily Connection

On a biological level, Egidius identifies with bees and feels a connection to them. He shares complex economic and political relationships with the bees but also defines himself as someone connected to bees beyond his work with them. Egidius has a brother, Alfons, who is deathly

[58] Even the name Jupp is ambiguous since Jupp can be a nickname for Joseph in various German dialects. If this were the case, it could reference Joseph Goebbels. This ambiguity as to Jupp's identity is compounded with the fact that Egidius cares about the bees' and his survival through the war.

allergic to bees, while Egidius has no allergy to the bees' venom. Further, most people do not describe a bee sting as a pleasant experience,[59] but his description implies a form of solidarity, at least on the biological level, that Egidius has for bees. He recollects his first bee sting: "Ich vertrug das Gift jedoch gut, das leichte Brennen, das sich um die Stichstelle herum ausbreitete, war mir sogar in gewisser Weise angenehm" (46). The venomous bee sting becomes a way for the bees to warm him with their "betörendes Gift." "Betörend" presents a nearly erotic sensibility to how Egidius feels about the bee stings. The motif of pleasant bee stings incorporates itself into the text later; yet others fear the bee and her sting, while Egidius remarks that "die Bienen können ruhig auf meinem Hals, meiner Stirn, ja sogar auf meinen Lippen herumkrabbeln" (46). In his darkest moments, Egidius dreams that his bees warm him up (198), which reminds the reader of both the warmth caused by bees' venom and winter bees. The intimacy shared between the bees and Egidius evinces the kinship forged with bees. Scheuer's description of bees in these passages conveys Egidius' desire to be closer to the bees even to the point of imagining himself part of their family (238): "Ich träume von Bienen, rede mit ihnen; manchmal habe ich das Gefühl, selbst eine Biene zu sein, schmiege mich an meine Schwestern, damit mir warm wird" (238). Egidius shares an intimacy with the bees which surpasses a honey farmer's familiarity with his colonies because of Egidius' self-described biological connection with the bees. Their relationship is a crucial premise to my argument that the implications of Scheuer's use of the word *Volk* evince a form of animal futurity. With the kinship between Egidius and bees, there exists the possibility to avow futurity in bees through their status as a *Volk*, even in moments of rejection from the hive.

[59] Bee venom is an ingredient in homeopathic medicine (Halter 64), which is not mentioned in the novel apart from how Egidius describes bee stings.

Bees often bar sick bees from the hive to prevent contagions in the hive (Schacker 8).[60] With Egidius' worsening epilepsy, his diary entries change significantly in accord with his changing relationship with the bees. "Heute bei der Arbeit an den Beuten mindestens zehn Bienenstiche, an den Armen, am Kehlkopf, der Wange, eine hat mich ins Ohr gestochen, eine andere in die Kopfhaut. Ich weiß nicht, warum die Bienen mich plötzlich attackieren — vielleicht riechen sie meine Krankheit. So etwas ist mir schon lange nicht mehr passiert" (209). Egidius realizes that they defend their colony from illness, hence his patient tone in this passage. Despite the bees' rejection of Egidius from the *Volk*, the passage's negative space suggests that he was already part of the bee colony and that the bees acknowledge more than his mere presence around the hives. With the detection of Egidius' sickness, Scheuer sketches Egidius' place in the hive that sustains his life and others through his beekeeping and the bees' labor. The images conjured are painful since Egidius suffers from a lack of epilepsy medication, but he appreciates the bees for their "brennende Stiche" and "betörendes Gift," (238) warming him in his time of need.

Egidius' relationship with bees gives him hope in his darkest moments. Throughout the novel, Egidius has various dreams in which he interacts with the bees in fantastical ways. The fantastic imagery represents the realization of the bees' kinship with Egidius in a way that becomes more readily understood, albeit through the adaptation of the bees' actions in different circumstances:

> In der Nacht träume ich, meine Bienen hätten mich gewärmt, hätten mich ganz umhüllt, und ich wäre ein Teil von ihnen geworden. Sie schwärmen mit mir aus und wir schweben am blauen Himmel, Myriaden tanzender, glitzernder Goldteilchen.

[60] Bees can detect diseases in human beings such as lung and skin cancer (Halter 64). With the same senses, bees have been trained to detect landmines, explosives, and various chemicals (Preston 165).

> Später liege ich auf der Wiese, sehe zu ihnen hinauf, körperlos, nur noch Geist, wie sie alle, jede Einzele von ihnen, ein Stückchen von mir mit in den Himmel genommen haben. Ich bin gerettet. (198-9)

Egidius, after flying into heaven upon the wings of bees, is transported to a meadow as a spirit. The loss of Egidius' body is shocking because the beginning of the dream mentions the bees warm him up. The bees care for his body in his dream, but he is not "gerettet" until after he loses his body, and the bees reassemble his body in the sky. These dreams are fantasies, but the fact that Egidius has such dreams reveals how meaningful bees are to Egidius beyond the biological, economic, and political. He desires closeness to the bees; he loves bees to the extent that he wishes to sacrifice his human body to be closer to the bees. The swarm that confronts the guards is the same swarm of bees that buzzes on Egidius' body to keep him warm. They then take him into the "Himmel" in a dancing procession fit for an esteemed member of their community.

His desire to relinquish his body becomes the focus of the novel both in terms of the novel's plot and in terms of his style. With the dwindling of his access to Luminal with the duration of the war, Egidius' body deteriorates (239). His epileptic attacks worsen daily such that he eventually writes "[v]iele meiner Gehirnzellen werden dabei abgestorben sein, ich brauche eine Ewigkeit, um auch nur einen Satz zu formulieren" (270). Egidius gazes into the mirror and writes that he almost does not recognize himself from the damage that his seizures have done to him (274). The diary entries in which he has not taken Luminal are short, laconic, and undated. The undated journal entries call into question the verity of the material in these entries because the reader knows that if Egidius cannot remember what day it is, a piece of information that could be readily accessible through newspapers mentioned throughout the book, how can the reader begin to trust his writings? The diary entries between January 6th and March 28th, 1945, are unreliable at best from the lack of

written date, vague style, and Egidius' admissions of his recent confusion between diary entries. His entire character, from his outward appearance to his brain cells, decays from life during the war. A place in bee society, warmth from beestings, and freedom from life become increasingly attractive in the face of the horrors of his life in the Second World War. His final escape from the tribulations of his life is found in his death, being blown into the sky in pieces, but also in the dream of his ascent to heaven on the wings of bees.

The dream I analyze above foreshadows the way he dies during a beehive inspection. While his death may seem bleak, his dreams give him hope in the present, which allows for a positive interpretation of an otherwise tragic and painful death. In the last section of the book, an unnamed narrator recounts how Egidius helps people and how he lives after the war. The narrator tells the reader that on May 26th, 1945, Egidius travels to the Belgian border to inspect beehives there. After completing his work, Egidius realizes he is in a minefield, only moments before what could be an explosion: "Erstarrt blieb er stehen" (303). Breuer argues that these last four words of the novel break stylistically from the rest of the novel (98) whose style he describes as "präzise Beschreibung der jeweiligen Situation" (96). Breuer argues that Egidius' death marks a stylistic break in the text because of the event's open-endedness; the ambivalent ending leaves room for the interpretation of his death, but I read "[e]rstarrt blieb er stehen" as his acquiescence to his fate. The dream sequence, in which his bees take his body's pieces into the sky and reassemble him there, provides him with hope even in the moments before his death. Moreover, the timing of his death, immediately after the war and his work with refugees, reinforces the image of Egidius as a winter bee, since winter bees die very quickly after the arrival of spring. The title of the novel foreshadows

the plot as a characterization of both Egidius and the bees that survive the war.[61] Winter serves as a central metaphor for how Egidius suffers under Nazi rule, with access to neither work nor medication. His sudden death in spring ties his character closer to bees since Egidius and winter bees share a similar lifepath: surviving a tumultuous period with the help of others. Catharsis is not exclusive to humans following conflicts and tribulations; bees undergo such catharsis, as do perhaps all other animals that live on the Earth.

Cyclic Lives

Returning to *Winterbienen'*s second narrator, Scheuer's text presents a history in which bees and humans are bound together. Ambrosius and his bees play an ever-waxing role as the text unravels. Above, I assert that bees and humans have long been companions in the world, with the novel setting bees beside humans as historical actors. As Egidius goes through the motions of everyday life, he occasionally visits the library to translate the texts from his ancestor Ambrosius. Egidius translates eight of Ambrosius' diary entries from the 16th century, which Egidius inserts between diary entries. Ambrosius and Egidius are two remarkably similar characters who share family ties and the continuation of a line of bees. Both characters do not build their futures through children, biological or adopted, nor in their literary work, but through their work with bees. The bees' labor perpetuates Egidius' existence, while bees allow Ambrosius to live apart from the dominant cultural institutions of the 16th century. Expelled from the cloister, Ambrosius keeps bees to provide for himself and his family. In both cases, the bees' productivity sustains other animals, inclusive of humans. For example, the bees that Egidius cares for are resistant to a certain disease

[61] Another reading of Egidius' place in the beehive could be that of a drone (Arnds, "Wolves, Bees, and Roaches" 83).

that Ambrosius mentions in his diary, which leads Egidius to believe his bees could be related to the bees Ambrosius kept (88).

The similarities between Egidius and Ambrosius nudge the reader to conceptualize bees to be necessary actors in Egidius' and Ambrosius' lives. Ambrosius criticizes the hypocrisy of the Catholic church after he is ousted from the cloister for his sexual relations with a woman in the nearby village. While expulsion from monastic orders for sexual relations is a trope, Ambrosius' actions are not dissimilar from those of his superiors. During the trek across the Alps, they often stop at various inns, and at one of these inns, Ambrosius witnesses a "hochwürdigen Kirchenmann" demand that a maid strip for him and get into bed with him (132). The hypocrisy witnessed by Ambrosius contributes to his growing distrust of the very church that later exiles him from the order (301); Ambrosius' exile resembles, in a distant way, Egidius' disempowerment at the hands of the Nazi regime. Beekeeping provides Ambrosius with a way to survive outside of the Catholic church, which resembles the primary plot of the novel. The similarities between Ambrosius' and Egidius' life do not conclude at the level of the plot.

The most apparent connection between the two characters resides in their shared love of bees, but they both also write diaries to convey this love. Egidius' and Ambrosius' work as beekeepers contributes to the material-semiotic knot between human characters and bees in the novel. These diaries imply a personal connection that offers more speculative than demonstrative evidence of the effects that their relationships with bees have on them and the world around them. The parallel narratives reinforce the notion that relationships with bees and beekeeping can create novel spaces for Egidius' resistance and survival in difficult circumstances. Both narratives refrain from the heroization of the characters instead focusing on how the human characters need bees to

survive. Bees form the foundation upon which both characters can transcend their lives and survive outside of the hold of dominant powers.

My interpretation of *Winterbienen* reaffirms that bees manifest something beyond a colony that cycles through queens, workers, and drones; they form a continuous world-forming presence on the planet. The name Ambrosius originates from the ancient Greek word for divine or immortal. Bees have long featured in religion, but the secondary meaning, immortal, compels me to investigate further. Given the realistic depiction of bees in the novel, Scheuer does not posit that bees possess immortality; instead, I interpret the significance of Ambrosius' name alongside Egidius' first comments about the land on which he resides and how bees were there before humans: "denn [die Bienen] leben bereits seit Millionen von Jahren hier, lange bevor Menschen im Urftland zu siedeln begannen" (9). Bees have been a constant presence in the Urftland for millions of generations or lifecycles. With the word lifecycle, I turn to Egidius' use of the word "Zeitlupe," in English slow motion or time loop, to depict the lives of bees. Describing the clump of winter bees in the hive, he writes "[s]ie krabbeln dann wie in Zeitlupe auf den Waben herum und verständigen sich durch Gerüche und Berühren" (237). This passage contains the sole appearance of the word in the text, yet its particularity can be found in the space between the novel's parallel narratives. Egidius refers to the history of bees in the region before humans settled there; through Ambrosius' story and the novel's ending, one can interpret the novel to suggest humans and bees can continue in their relationship if humans properly care for bees.

Without the bees that Ambrosius' tended, Egidius would never have survived the Second World War, and the bees would have never positioned themselves to defend the refugees that Egidius helped. The novel's characters are responsible for the bees' presence in the first place, but the beekeepers' labor pales in comparison with that of bees. Thus, the word "Zeitlupe" cannot

apply to the beehive alone, nor just to human life but to the kinship between humans and bees and its repetition throughout history. At a fundamental level, Egidius' and Ambrosius' diaries create the material-semiotic knots between humans and bees since they record the significance of their relationships with bees. Scheuer writes parallel narratives to engrain into the text the bees' meaningfulness to these characters, which in turn underscores for the reader the bees' importance not just to the individual but to all humans through the history presented in the novel. Scheuer's authorial decision to cast two characters separated by centuries yet bound by bees from the same genetic lineage suggests that one ought to read the relationship between humans and bees as an ancient "Zeitlupe" of cross-species relationships. Furthermore, the radical space afforded by the characters' relationships with bees also sustains them both. Scheuer represents bees' continuous presence in human society in an authorial effort to foster equal relationships with bees as a means to planetary survival. Human futures are inextricably tied up in bees, but human futures must not take precedence over those of bees.

This chapter has argued that human kinships with bees in *Winterbienen* avows bee futurity by marking the bees' ability to world-form through the novel's invocation of the word *Volk,* its description of their resistance, and the use of parallel narratives. Kinship with bees enables human characters to expand their understanding of bees and their lives, one that thereby undermines the traditional human-animal divide. Associating the word *Volk* with bees ascribes futurity to bees by implying their ability to world-form. The bees in *Winterbienen* become more than just *Bienen* or one *Bienenvolk*, they become *Bienenvölker*. In the context of the Third Reich, Egidius' adoption of the word *Volk* subverts the idea of a Nazi *Volk* that seeks dominion over all things. Rather, the *Völker* in Egidius' diary represents shared futures between all through his appropriation of the word *Volk*. My analysis highlights the way that Scheuer not only decenters the human in

Winterbienen but also challenges the reader to rethink German history and politics by portraying the bees as engaging in world-forming throughout the novel. Through the bees' labor, Egidius survives the war and can smuggle refugees out of the country. These two instances of subversion suggest that bees alter the world around them. Scheuer represents such intertwined futures by writing about bees in a way that defamiliarizes the reader and positions bees as a central character in the story instead of a metaphor or analogy for Egidius' characteristics or narrative function. The bees change Egidius' life by giving him hope for survival as his epilepsy worsens and eventually comforting him just before he dies. Egidius' story mirrors Ambrosius', who also survives in exile because of his beekeeping. Since these narratives are congruent with each other, I read them as a loop that suggests that humans have a unique and long-lasting relationship with bees that we should not abandon.

If bees constitute an ancient part of the world and indeed a major part of human society, what would it mean to live without bees? Pollination in the 21st century facilitates the continuation of humankind through industrial farming, but despite human reliance on pollinators, businesses have already begun considering robotic pollination (Nimmo 426). Although CCD does not play a role in *Winterbienen*, the publication date of Scheuer's novel about a species currently threatened with extinction alerts the reader. The novel invites the reader to redefine humanity to allow bees access to a world. Egidius and his bees create material-semiotic knots that point to their shared futurity, through which we can rethink apian representations and valuations. There is potentially truly little difference between writing about the destruction of bees in wartime and the current situation where bees die from CCD. As stated before, the futurities here are plural, co-dependent, or better yet intertwined with each other; these intertwined futures require a newfound idea of what it means to forge kinship with bees. There is no search for futurity in bees as much as the reader sees the

futurity of bees through their ability to shape the world just as humans do. Bees are rich in the world on their own, and their capaciousness enriches us and our world.

The bees' power to world-form in the novel must be read in tandem with contemporary global circumstances. Scheuer's bee novel interrogates our contemporary anxiety about how life would continue without bees but also focuses on the intrinsic value of bees and our relationship with them; our dependence on bees displayed in the microcosm of *Winterbienen* depicts the potential means of political resistance and survival, which can be read as attentiveness to the current state of the world. Bee futurity à la *Winterbienen* suggests that bees should not be instrumentalized in our futures. Instead, we should acknowledge the futures of bees themselves considering their ability to shape the world around them. Despite human hindrances to bee futurity through habitat destruction and environmental degradation, bees have their continued existence and a future. To move forward, our human futures ought to become plural to accommodate the multitude of other animals on the planet. These futures have always been plural, but such plural futures come to the forefront in a time of climate change and mass extinction.

Chapter 3

The End: Death of Wolves and Their Kin

> *'The Wolf is a savage, powerful killer. It is one of the most feared and hated animals known to man, and with excellent reason.' The reason was not given, but it would have been superfluous….*
>
> Farley Mowat, *Never Cry Wolf*

In 1995, 14 wolves were released into Yellowstone National Park. Originally from Jasper National Park in Canada, the wolves were relocated to an ecosystem where the species had been extirpated since 1926. While controversial due to their carnivorous diet, the wolves thrived in their new home. The wolves started to hunt the rampant elk population in the park, resulting in changes in the park's flora. The renewed predation on elks allowed for new forest growth, especially that of willow trees. The increase in willows allowed for another species, the North American beaver, to expand its population from one colony to nine between the years 2001 and 2011. The increase in beaver colonies resulted in new dams and ponds, which recharged the water table (Farquhar, "Wolf Reintroduction") and marsh habitats for moose, fish, and more (Chadwick, "Keystone Species"). These beavers have also dramatically reduced the riverbanks' erosion in the park by decelerating the water. Moreover, the wolves have balanced the other carnivorous populations in the park's ecosystem, with a reduction in coyote and fox populations and an increase in bear populations since elk did not consume all the berries. The wolves' renewed predation sustains other scavenger species including but not limited to ravens, magpies, various eagles, and jays (Chadwick, "Keystone Species"). The impacts of the wolf's reintroduction to Yellowstone

National Park are seemingly limitless, and they singlehandedly rebalanced the park's ecosystems, created a more sustainable environment, and promoted biodiversity.

To think that a predator's return could result in such an explosion of life is a development that raises the question as to why the species was extirpated from the park in the first place. Wolves were originally exterminated from the park due to perceptions that wolves threaten the region's fauna and domesticated animals in and around the ecosystem (Wise xviii). Despite the termination of Yellowstone predator control in 1933 and listing the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) as endangered, the Yellowstone Wolf Project's first annual report noted that three wolves were poached between 1995 and 1996. Many consider the wolf, in its various species and forms, to be the outward manifestation of wickedness and evil because of the animal's supposed violence, greed, and deceit (Marvin, *Wolf* 7; Robisch xiv). While these perceptions of wolves originate in stories, people hate wolves because of their diet and their perceived irreverence for human beings. Wolves are more than capable to kill and consume humans, which challenges any claim to human physical superiority (Wilbert 38). In Europe, many countries eradicated their lupine populations in the 18th century, and in Germany specifically, wolves were exterminated in the 1850s. There were no wolves in Germany until the 1990s when there were sightings of a few wolves from Poland that entered the eastern constituent states.

Despite the recent return of wolves to Germany, Germany still has a "wolf problem." Kathrin Heintz argues that the same fairy tale lupine depictions, as evil incarnate, still influence recent German politics (143 & 148). The presence of wolves spurned nearly all political parties to advocate for their destruction: Heintz reports that parliamentary debates about wolves in Germany referred to the fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood. Oliver Grundmann's from the conservative CDU/CSU commented that wolves did not know how the story ended. Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

naturally advocated that there was "'keine real existierende Gefahr für dreijährige Kinder im deutschen Wald'" (as qtd. in Heintz 150). Members of parliament from the alt-right party Alternative für Deutschland advocated that children on their way to school were potential victims of wolf predation. Another CDU/CSU member Klaus-Peter Schulze stated, "[d]a muss man auch nicht drum herumreden, dass das eine letale Entnahme ist. Man muss klar sagen: Diese Tiere müssen geschossen werden" (as qtd. in Heintz 151). Sadly, because the wolves that reside in Germany originate from Poland, they are often compared to refugees and immigrants by right-wing political parties (Heintz 150). The political legacy, as Heintz argues, has no basis in reality: in November 2022, there were 161 packs,[62] 43 pairs, and 21 lone wolves spread through the republic,[63] most concentrated in Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Lower Saxony; there are no reports of wolves stalking children at bus stops to steal them, rather this is a borrow from fairy tales (Heintz 144-145). Despite the ecological benefits they bring, most German politicians considered the extirpation of wolves to be the best solution. This story's ending is the re-extirpation of wolves in Germany based on their role in fairy tales since their deaths are necessary for humanity to move forward unhampered. I contend there is no reason for the persecution of wolves apart from their past literary reception.

It may seem odd to consider an animal's literary reception, especially since wolves are not texts nor literary characters. Humans judge wolves based on fairy tales rather than scientific evidence, despite their importance in the 21st century. I have highlighted the negative effects the literary reception of an animal can produce, and I now turn to a positive example in Farley Mowat's text, *Never Cry Wolf,* which sent shockwaves throughout Canadian and American audiences

[62] The Naturschutzbund Deutschland uses the word *Rudel* to describe a pack, which they define as two adult wolves with their offspring.
[63] While Heintz's article was published in 2019, I update the 2019 figures to their 2022 status. For more information relating to this, Cf. nabu.de.

(Berry 8; Marvin, *Wolf* 146). Published in 1963 about a research expedition to the Northwest Territories 15 years earlier, Mowat depicts wolves as very peaceful beings that are not interested in human affairs apart from when humans encroach on their territory or break certain lupine social norms. Many zoologists and ecologists have disparaged Mowat's "autobiography" as pure fiction.[64] Mowat admittedly fabricates details about the research expedition and certain aspects of the wolves' lives (Jones 3), which Mowat implements to render the wolves more accessible for human audiences, rather than acknowledging the wolves as animals with subjectivities and experiences inaccessible to humans (Massumi 269). Despite artistic liberties, the book inspired its readership to write to North American park services and advocate for them to reconsider the wolf's role as a keystone species in North American ecosystems. Such attitudes perhaps contributed to wolves' reintroduction to various areas in North America. Mowat's book was able to inspire its readership to reconsider how the wolf figures in Western culture, thereby effectively challenging centuries of literary depictions and redefining the wolf from a symbol of violence to also a living being. Lupine lives in the Northwest Territories became valuable and their deaths unimaginable. But despite such positive attitudes towards wolves, there remain many who detest wolves and kill them worldwide.

Wolves play a crucial role in the environment as the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park illustrates. Wolves have completely rebalanced the ecology of the park, and their work presents the results from species reintroduction. The reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone signals the reclamation of the earth from destructive anthropogenic forces. The

[64] Critics often target the anthropomorphisms throughout the text (Marvin, *Wolf* 145; Robisch 29), which are implemented to foster empathy for the wolves. Mowat also changes key details about the research expedition greatly; he did not embark on the trip alone. In this case, the self-described autobiography has little veracity. As well, it could be said that Mowat writes about wolves as if they were dogs. While the text may largely be fictitious, there is no reason that such criticism should preclude the text from being considered, especially since it created such a public outcry about the Canadian government's views of wolves internationally (Marvin, *Wolf* 146).

wolves' reintroduction to Yellowstone is indeed anthropogenic, so it cannot be absolute that anthropogenic action on Earth is destructive, even if human action is often so. But literature's power to shape human consciousness and perception is evident in the reception of wolves. The myths about wolves and wolfish[65] behavior have been perpetuated in literature into the present day, evinced by the example of German parliamentary debate. To combat such damaging sentiments, one must write about wolves through a more holistic lens that, while acknowledging their intelligence and carnivorous diet, highlights their importance to ecosystems. But at the core, the valuation of animal death rests at the center of how or why humans eliminate certain species.

I explore concepts of animal death with the texts "Wolfsjäger" and *The Hunter*. The short story "Wolfsjäger" tracks the authors, Christoph Ransmayr and Martin Pollack, on their search for small villages in Poland to explore their Polish heritage. With intentions to discover their Polish heritage, their travels uncover a deep-seated hatred for an animal that is never present in the text. Their critical tone throughout the novel scrutinizes the popular hatred of wolves and the reason there are no diegetic wolves present. Julia Leigh's novel *The Hunter* tracks an unnamed man on his search to kill the last thylacine, a now-extinct species. My interpretation of her novel highlights the disavowal of animal death and the conversion of other animals into capital. Before I embark on the analyses of these texts, I offer a summary of the speculative discourse on animal death and Animal Studies' response that shows animal deaths leave absences that cannot be ignored.

Responding to Philosophy on Animal Death

Animal death is considered to be less grievable than human death in philosophical speculation. Such sentiments can be traced across almost all human civilizations that allow for the

[65] Even the adjective "wolfish" is often tied to words such as "ravenous" or "appetite" as opposed to other characteristics that wolves embody.

consumption of meat, the extermination of "pests," and the destruction of animal habitats. Some philosophers would argue the extreme position that animals do not die. This statement may strike the reader as self-contradictory: everyone has lost a companion animal or a prized animal and mourned their death or knows someone who has. All have seen a dead animal in a ditch, a park, a museum, or a grocery store. It is with certainty that animals die, but many philosophers differentiate between animal and human death so greatly as to argue that animals cannot die. Towards this end, it is not possible to prove that animal deaths are equivalent to human deaths since death's ethical or moral weight cannot be divvied out so easily. I argue in this chapter that animal deaths leave absences. These absences are not marked but creep into all facets of life akin to the absences left by a human's death. The effects of such absences are exhibited through the removal of entire populations by the purposeful killing of wild animals. The absences are not created by any other force in nature other than humans.

Western philosophy has often denied animals' death in order to set a boundary between humans and other animals. That boundary is exemplified in Martin Heidegger's infamous remark that animals do not die: "Die Sterblichen sind die Menschen. Sie heißen die Sterblichen, weil sie sterben können. Sterben heißt: den Tod als Tod vermögen. Nur der Mensch stirbt. Das Tier verendet" (as qtd. in Stetter 129). Heidegger's language compares humans and animals vis-à-vis the axiom of death, but the animal lacks mortality and dies differently from humans who are mortals. Human life, for Heidegger, is defined by the possibility of dying (Derrida, *Beast,* 2: 114). Such language at first glance exhibits seemingly contradictory conclusions, which Heidegger asserted in other places that "'[d]as Tier verendet. Es hat den Tod als Tod weder vor sich noch hinter sich'" (as qtd. in Sternad 55). The animal just "ends" as opposed to the mortals, who die. As well, animals neither do not "have" death before nor after it. The implication is that animals

have no past or future, thus they cannot experience death as humans do, who have "exclusive" access to the past and future. The denial of futurity to other animals enables their liquidation because they are perceived to lack the perception of death.[66] Most problematically, however, Heidegger asserts that animals do not die: "Human beings die more, it seems" (Karlsson, "Critical Anthropomorphism" 715).

Heidegger argues, repeatedly, that animals end, that they are put down. For him, there is an animal essence, and he concludes that since the animal cannot see the future, the animal cannot pre-empt its death in the same way humans can. Heidegger questions whether "der Tod des Tieres ein Sterben oder ein Verenden [ist]" (as qtd. in Derrida, *Beast,* 2: 115). *Verenden* is not *sterben*;[67] the different words show that animals cannot die as humans; animals simply meet their end. Heidegger ascribes different words to how animals die, which further demarcates the abyss between humans and animals vis-à-vis death. Heidegger draws on no zoological or ethological facts to conclude that animal death is radically different from human death, rather it is his assumptions that lead to the disavowal of animal death. Heidegger's view is not representative of philosophy in general, but Heidegger is not the only philosopher to claim that animals cannot die.

Emmanuel Levinas, a philosopher diametrically opposed to Heidegger, arrives at similar conclusions about animal life and death in his conceptualization of the face (Derrida, "Eating Well" 268; Wolfe, *Before the Law* 21). Levinas, in an interview, suggested that "the human face is completely different and only afterwards do we discover the face of an animal. I don't know if a snake has a face" (Wright et al. "The Paradox of Morality" 172). For many in animal studies, Levinas' reluctance to attribute faciality to animal runs contrary to other ideas that he has posited,

[66] Cf. my second chapter on animal futurity.
[67] For another discussion of German vocabulary around death for humans, animals, and plants, Cf. Axel Goodbody's "Anxieties, Visions and Realities: Environmentalism in Germany."

in particular, "the last Kantian in Nazi Germany" ("The Name of a Dog" 153). Bobby, a wandering dog, comforts him and the other prisoners in the concentration camp and is the only lifeform who acknowledges the prisoners as human beings. Nobly compared to the dog who recognizes Ulysses before anyone else, there is a stark contrast here between what role animals play in human life and whether they have a face. Levinas' reluctance is subject to interpretation, but from the secondary literature and my own interpretation, his denial of faciality to animals erases individuality from animals.[68] The animal, for Levinas, is without face and is not individual in the same way that a human is granted individuality because she is perceived to be a subject. Without a face, the subject rests outside of ethics and cannot complete any meaningful action (Calarco, *Zoographies* 55). More directly put, humans "desingularize" animals, which is to say people refuse to see animals as individuals (Despret, *What Would Animals* 82). Any animal, then, is simply a "clone" of the former, which could be considered "eternal." On the surface, Levinas' position appears to be a relatively wholesome outlook on animals: they are eternal and distinct from humans with their supposed lack of individuality, but to consider animals eternal reaffirms the same exploitative logic that there are endless resources on Earth and that no matter how many animals one kills, there will be more animals to exploit. It is a paradox: one has killed an eternal essence, and in its eternal nature, an animal dies, but "the animal" lives on. An individual animal is not important in such a framework since any animal lives on and can be seen in other animals of the same species, which then cannot be separated from their collective essence. The notion of a collective essence has been problematized in my dissertation with Derrida's argument against the terminology of "the animal." Such thought has led to various justifications to kill other animals without consequences since their deaths are viewed to be of lesser worth than human deaths (Sternad 57). The devaluation of animal

[68] Cf. Llewelyn "Am I Obsessed by Bobby?"

death has been most exposed in the slaughterhouse and meat industry where billions of animals are killed every year (Wolfe, *Before the Law* 11). The devaluation of animal death leads to other consequences for all life on Earth. The devaluation of animal life and death originates in the process of animalization.

Early Animal Studies literature revolves around animalization, its meaning, and its formation. Animalization and the word "animal" form the discourse around how other animals are treated and how humans can be dehumanized—animalized. Numerous people groups have been labeled animals—animalized—resulting in their torture and extermination. All animalized individuals can be put to death without ethical consideration (Barnett, *Mourning* xxiii; Derrida, "Eating Well" 278; Sam & Hughes 1), often as a sacrifice for the betterment of human society. With respect to animalized individuals, Derrida coined the term carnophallogocentrism to represent the general trends of Western thought and culture (Derrida, *Beast,* 1: 15). "Carno" stands for sacrifice and the symbolic meanings of the animal corpse, which allows for their lives to become devalued as mere animals (Calarco, *Zoographies* 131; Derrida, "Eating Well" 278).[69] The infix "phallo" refers to masculinity and "logo" to *logos,* language, discourse, and meaning (Calarco, *Zoographies* 131). Carnophallogocentrism is a critical notion around which Western culture and philosophy rally. In this chapter, I focus primarily on the "carno" prefix of carnophallogocentrism because the sacrifice of animal flesh forms the basis of modern society (Wolfe, *Before the Law* 101). The carnophallogocentric paradigm is enabled through the process of animalization; without processes of animalization, war, capital, and humankind would not be such a successful species (Derrida, "Eating Well" 269; Salter 19; Wolfe, *Before the Law* 5).

[69] The Latin *carno* means meat or flesh, but Derrida's term relies on the cultural values of animal carcasses rendered into meat and other products. In this case, *carno* can be translated as sacrificial in this philosophical framework.

Humankind has profited from the exploitation of other animals throughout history, but such exploitation does not go without cost to humans, whose habitat disappears because of climate change.

The devaluation of animalized life warrants an investigation into perceptions of animal death in literature since stories shape cultural perceptions of other animals. Death bears radical alterity that often precludes us from being willing to understand death's value (Huth 59; Wolfe, "In the Shadow" 25). To conceptualize animal death as meaningful, in broad strokes, I follow Derrida to define death:

> Even if one gives me death to the extent that it means killing me, that death will still have been mine and as long as it is irreducibly mine. I will not have received it from anyone else. Thus, dying can never be taken, borrowed, transferred, delivered, promised, or transmitted. And just as it can't be given to me, so it can't be taken away from me. Death would be this possibility of *giving and taking* that actually exempts itself from the same realm of possibility that it institutes, namely, from *giving and taking*. (Derrida, *The Gift of Death* 45, italics in original)

Death is individual if not idiosyncratic, despite its common nature. Each death is unique to each lifeform; just as I cannot take death away from any lifeform, I cannot pass my death on to any other. If one accepts Derrida's definition, it becomes clear that each death is individual because of the absence it leaves behind (Huth 60). The individuality of death pushes us to believe that all absences are meaningful. I illustrate with two literary texts that readers see the absences produced in the wake of animal deaths because of the readers' empathy towards the deceased animals in the text.

Despite the hopelessness that seems to be ever-present in the debate about animal death, we can find comfort in the notion that death links all Earthly fauna and flora (Wolfe, "In the Shadow" 32). Humans are much closer to animals than one is wont to admit (Bodenburg 11). In response to this debate that animals do not die, or even in popular sentiments about what animal death means, I assert that animal deaths produce absence. The death of a loved one produces a rupture, an absence, in our lives. Death can be thought to be marked by absence, but I disagree with such an interpretation of death. To mark something implies implicit knowledge of that which is marked; one marks days, places, people, and things, but one cannot mark any object that one does not understand apart from the fact that it is not understood. For instance, a thousand-piece Jigsaw puzzle with one missing piece contains an absence, but that absence is delimited by the form of a piece and by the image that the puzzle creates. I cannot write the same for death because the absence produced in its wake is so amorphous that its limits cannot be found. In short, death is a text untold and requires concretization before it can begin to be understood. Literature about these absences becomes pivotal in the 21st century because writing about these absences actualizes them, rendering them tangible to other humans. The role of literature regarding animal death is to make visible the absences through the kinship that constitutes the foundation to make these absences visible (Barnett, *Mourning* 111). If the choice to forge kinships across the species barrier enables authentic connections, then these cross-species kinships rest on the acknowledgment of the absences left by animals' deaths. It is crucial to maintain such a melancholic analysis of animal death because in killing other animals, humans create absences in the world's ecosystems. We cannot ignore these absences by allowing animal death to be devoid of significance. Literature offers a way to see how these absences are intertwined with everything around us. The individual animal becomes meaningful, not just as a member of their species, but as an individual who, when

killed, leaves an absence, a hole that cannot be filled. If one is to write about animal death in the 21st century, one must also confront the specter of extinction that haunts the world.

99.9% of species that have lived on planet Earth are extinct (Wolfe, "Foreword" vii). Extinction is a natural phenomenon (Heise, *Imagining Extinction* 19); animal species go extinct over time with changes in climate, gene pools, newly introduced species, or other calamitous events, but certain causes of extinction that currently transpire cannot be simply accepted as natural background extinction (Rose et al. 6).[70] The term extinction was coined in the late 18th century and gained significant currency in popular thought in the 20th century (Schwerdt 115). The coinage of extinction could be said to be the first moment of self-realization of the effects of humanity on Earth's fauna and flora. Likely initiated with the woolly mammoth but confirmed with the dodo bird, human action enacts dramatic changes to the world. The number of anthropogenic extinctions is so vast that the Earth may be in the Sixth World Extinction Event (McHugh, *Love* 2; Rose et al. 1; Wolfe "Foreword" vii). With the loss of each species, a world of experience and knowledge is lost (Despret, "Afterword" 219), but also the ecosystems they abide in change. In response, we must establish a balance between absences in literature and ecology. Literature has the power to concretize absences caused by animal death and reveal the singularity of each animal in addition to scientific illuminations of such absences' ecological impact. In my mind, the role of literature in animal death is to elucidate the absences and express them so that readers can conceptualize the significance of the absence of an animal.

Although extinction is indeed a natural phenomenon, thinking about contemporary extinctions must acknowledge the acceleration and destructiveness of the Sixth World Extinction

[70] Background extinction is the term to describe extinctions caused by nonanthropogenic forces (Heise, *Imagining Extinction* 21)

Event. It could be argued that anthropogenic extinctions are natural and thus do not need to be challenged any more than any other extinction. Since humans are part of nature, these extinctions are also natural. While such an argument would follow, the reasons for these extinctions are continual human economic growth. It may seem advantageous to dismiss extinction because nature abhors a vacuum, and any absences will be filled, marking another strategy of other animals' erasure from the fabric of history. In desingularizing animals, as individuals and even as species, one forgets the integral roles that each individual plays in their animal societies and their ecosystems. The eradication of a species changes the related ecosystem in its entirety, and while other animals and lifeforms will fill the space, the specific role of that animal has been removed and forgotten, which can result in gaps in ecosystems. The world changes, and with it so do fauna and flora species, but to dismiss extinction simply as a natural phenomenon is to brush over contemporary extinctions. Rather we must cultivate awareness of the many anthropogenic extinctions that have happened, continue to happen, and will happen at an accelerated rate in the 21st century.

The concept of an endangered species in law was invented in the 20th century. The first instance of a species listed as endangered was the passenger pigeon in the USA in 1900, and the Endangered Species Act was passed into law in 1973. Canada followed suit with the Species at Risk Act in 2002. In Europe, most central European countries started to acknowledge that there were endangered animal species in the mid-nineties. Apart from endangered species laws, there are some lists sponsored by NGOs that serve as markers of the status of various animal species. The most popular of these is the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species. One must remember endangered species are not self-defined, rather political bodies and NGOs term various animal species as endangered or extinct, and not necessarily in

unison or for any reason. For instance, the thylacine was listed as endangered for 59 days before Benjamin, the last specimen of the species, otherwise known as an endling (Barnett, "Naming" 293), died in the Beaumaris Zoo in Hobart, Tasmania. To complicate the situation, different dates are given when the species was declared extinct: the International Union for the Conservation of Nature declared the thylacine extinct in 1982, and the Tasmanian government acknowledged the species' absence in 1986. "Endangered" is a human designation for certain animal species, but one must already know about the species in question and their numbers before it can be granted such status.

The phrase "invention of endangered species" could suggest that the animal species in question were not endangered until laws labeled them as such; many animal species were extinct and in decline by the point that countries started to enact laws around protecting them. Nevertheless, endangered animals fit into the legal, or biopolitical, category. The invention of endangered species marks a curious cultural moment because the label manifests a certain level of human knowledge of an animal species and its environment, and that knowledge is utilized to mandate that humans cease activities that could further endanger the species. The notion of endangered species represents a juxtaposition that reveals the consequence of our species' actions but resists any meaningful change, particularly since endangered species laws often accomplish very little proactive work to defend such species. The power of such laws or lists works in retrospect to punish those caught harming or killing endangered animals (Heise, *Imagining Extinction* 68). Almost all countries have passed into law an endangered species act or legislation to a similar effect. Such legislation is, on the whole, positive yet does not necessarily do very much for other animals. And animals, who do not respect national borders, can be killed across some borders with little to no consequence (Robisch 78). To label a species endangered is a human

designation and must be perceived as such. Such designations can be inverted to justify killing other species termed invasive (Barnett, *Mourning* 3), which signals how human knowledge about other animals is the crux of decision-making.

Illustrated by the example of the German parliamentary debate, there are no facts that these politicians draw on to justify the re-extirpation of wolves. The literary reception of wolves has created a space where their extirpation is possible because they can be killed without repercussions. However, literature can foster positive feelings and empathy towards the natural world. The power of literature, fiction in particular, to produce empathetic responses is astonishing, which we saw with the example of *Never Cry Wolf*. If one turns to literary texts that focus on animals instead of the archetypes that certain animals supposedly manifest, new opportunities arise to see other animals with new eyes and to go on to forge kinships with these animals. In the next section, I embark on an analysis of Ransmayr's and Pollack's short story "Wolfsjäger," specifically how the wolves' absence frames the narrative and why these wolves and wolf-like creatures were extirpated in the first place. Before I move on to my interpretations of the text, I summarize the literary reception of wolves and how their cultural perception has created the space for humans to deem their destruction necessary.

Poland without Wolves

Wolves possess the most complex reception in Western culture of all animals that I have examined so far in my dissertation. They have often been the scapegoat for agricultural failures and human deaths in Western culture. Since antiquity, wolves have evoked fear in literary texts, as exemplified by the tyrant in Plato's *Republic* and antagonists in Greco-Roman fables to name only a few, but human fear of wolves comes with human awe for wolves. In Roman mythology, a she-wolf breastfed Remus and Romulus, who went on to found Rome. The perceived viciousness

of wolves is a standard sought after by warriors throughout time. In addition, wolves represent archetypes of sovereignty and power, aspired to since antiquity (Derrida, *Beast,* 1: 20). They occupy a unique place in Western culture because of their ubiquity and their social structure, which are perhaps uncannily similar to human social structures (Still 67-8).

There are many species and subspecies of wolves, but in this chapter, I refer to the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) in North America and the Eurasian wolf (*Canis lupus lupus*) in Europe. The grey wolf is a member of the *Canidae* family*,* a family defined by its teeth (Marvin, "'Man is a Wolf to Man'" 37). The canine teeth are prototypical symbols of meat-eating as they enable the tearing of muscle mass and sinew with relative ease. While this taxonomy was invented in the last three centuries, the *Canidae* family designates the primary way of reading wolves, as defined by their teeth and carnivorous diet. There are numerous carnivorous species on Earth, but wolves have a particular place in Western thought because of their meat-based diet, setting them in competition with *Homo sapiens*.[71]

European cultural thought has cultivated a long-standing dislike for wolves. The detestation for wolves can be seen since antiquity in stories that construe wolves as amoral characters such as in Aesop's fables. Hatred against wolves led to their extirpation in the British Isles and their endangerment in most European countries. Most European subspecies of *Canis lupus* have been extirpated in the last 500 years resulting from anthropogenic extermination (Marvin, *Wolf* 83). In various European colonies, wolves were made the scapegoat for the disappearance of the bison and other agricultural failures. The wolf embodies the brutality of the

[71] Human competition with other meat eaters is particularly visible as meat production rises to unprecedented levels in the 21st century (Potts 1).

wilderness (George & Hughes 2; Robisch 382) in literature[72] and film,[73] particularly in depictions of epic struggles against wolves. Such conceptualizations of wolves are not limited to the past, with 21st century texts typifying wolves as evil: for example, Schmidt cites a recent fairy tale adaptation, Grégoire Mabire and Thierry Robberecht's *Der Wolf, der aus dem Buch fiel*, in which the wolf is portrayed unironically as evil. Another English language publication, *The Wolf* by Joseph Smith describes wolves as "…the taker of life: the predator… the shadow that brings the light of death…" (6). Such depictions of wolves, while they may hold literary merit, perpetuate the vilification of the wolf. Smith's depiction of a wolf harbors the human fear that wolves exist solely to kill. While the liberty to depict animals freely should remain, such wolf representations have continued into the present day and go unquestioned. Other literary texts depict the ongoing poaching of wolves in Europe and North America despite legislation that protects wolves.[74] The justification for killing wolves bears little resemblance to any form of evidence that wolves pose a real and immediate danger to human beings. Human depictions of wolves have designated them a danger to humans and a hamper to human progress, which reduces the value that other animals possess for humans.[75]

The wolf is considered to be an enemy of humans (Marvin, "'Man is a Wolf to Man'" 37), yet it is not solely for their expert hunting that people dislike them but also the method, with which wolves bring down larger prey: a bite to the neck, which wolves and other similar predators often employ to down larger prey. The jugular bite is an impressively gory and frightening image. People

[72] The most quintessential representations here would be Jack London's adventure novels *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild,* nevertheless, depictions of epic fights against wolves in literature are legion.
[73] Andrew Marton's 1952 film *The Wild North* is an exemplar in Westerns or Joe Carnahan's 2012 film *The Grey* in contemporary cinema.
[74] For instance, in Sarah Hall's novel *The Wolf Border*, illegal hunting is proliferous on both continents despite wolves' protected status.
[75] It is also true that the meat animals produce becomes disassociated from the living beings (Despret, *What Would Animals Say* 84). Additionally, animal lives become numbers, and often cuts of meat and their weights (White and Springer 167).

considered wolves to be remorseless killers, and they were portrayed as obeying a vampiric and insatiable bloodlust (Marvin, *Wolf;* Philip 78).[76] Literary and historical lupine depictions bemoan the fact that wolves will sometimes kill more animals than they can eat in one sitting.[77] Such surplus killing by wolves is perceived as wanton and wasteful, which is especially ironic when human beings slaughter billions of land animals per year in slaughterhouses alone, much of which goes to waste, which reveals human complacency in the death of wolves and other animals. If any species is the harbinger of death on the planet, it is *Homo sapiens*.

The reason that human livestock comes into the purview of wolves' hunting is the depletion of wild fauna and the restructuring of land to suit human needs exclusively. The anthropogenic manipulation of the Earth has created new contact zones between *Homo sapiens* and other animals. Wolves do not extinguish all the lives they can; rather these contact zones emerge from the new situations and environments that put wolves in competition with humans. Field research on wolves notes that packs take time to relax and after a successful hunt, do not hunt again in the near future. Wolf packs are not enormous armies as they are depicted to be in cultural thought and literature, but rather consist of several individuals. There is some evidence for larger packs and some smaller, and some lone wolves exist in the wild (Bees & Sleigh 39; Heintz 149), from which the metaphor of the lone wolf originates. Wolves' sociality is also an ambivalent element in cultural thought because while they are seen as noble and organized, they are also seen as a bloodthirsty pack that wreaks havoc on any lifeform they can.

Similar to any other powerful animal, human soldiers desire to embody wolfish traits. As explored briefly in my first chapter on Norbert Scheuer's *Die Sprache der Vögel,* soldiers often

[76] The wolves' comparison with vampires has been made often (Arnds, *Lycanthropy*; Marvin, *Wolf;* Robisch) and is transferred onto any animal that resembles a wolf (Narraway & Stark 16; Philip 78; Waterhouse & Mitchell 15).
[77] It has been argued that wolves would not often prey on livestock animals if it were not for their habitats' and hunting grounds' destruction (Marvin, "'Man is Wolf to Man'" 38).

claim to have animal attributes to boast of their exceptional abilities. The desire to become a wolf produces paradoxical results because in becoming a wolf, the soldier becomes the enemy of humanity (Arnds, *Lycanthropy* 6), which I will examine with the main character of *The Hunter*. This desire is further paradoxical because wolves are denied the honor that soldiers receive for honing their skills. The soldier who embodies the wolf in totality can achieve superhuman ability, but the wolf is often made to play the antagonist of humanity. Becoming a wolf often means standing apart from human society as if the wolf were separate from humans, which has dire consequences for both the wolf and the human who wishes to become a wolf (Arnds, *Lycanthropy* 129; Goodbody, "Wolves and Wolf Men" 309).

The wolf, in Western culture, is a dichotomous animal, most often analyzed in a cultural context that usually bifurcates into lupophobia and lupophilia.[78] While the birds and the bees are positively connoted, wolves have a paradoxical status. Their paradoxical status is exemplified in the real world through the example of Yellowstone National Park: there were numerous impassioned responses to the wolf's reintroduction to Yellowstone with many detesting their renewed presence, prophesying the end of local agriculture while others wanted them reintroduced to the park (Marvin, *Wolf* 177-8; Robisch 77). In Literary Animal Studies, the tendency has been to term the two poles as respectively diegetic and semiotic animals (Borgards, "Tiere in der Literatur" & "Tiere und Literatur"). In the case of wolves, one can divide wolves into two categories: the "actual wolf" and the "world wolf." The "actual wolf" is the wolf that lopes around, hunts, breeds, nurtures, sleeps, and eventually dies in the world (Robisch 15). Whereas the "world wolf" is a symbol that has been created in the image of a wolf, most often to its detriment (16). The conflation between the actual wolf and the world wolf affects other species not even related

[78] Alternatively, one could use the terms lycophobia and lycophilia (Arnds, *Wolves at the Door* 10).

to the wolf, such as the example of thylacines. Many species of wolves have been extirpated for being wolves (Harley; McHugh, *Love* 24), among them the Hokkaido wolf, the Honshu wolf, the Mississippi Valley wolf, and the Sicilian wolf, to name just a few. The wholesale extermination of wolves is not exclusive to Europe and North America.

Beyond Western culture, wolves are regarded as complex cultural figures, more revered than hated. One prominent counterexample is found in Indigenous cultures around the world which disprove any universal moralistic or ethical judgment of wolves. In many North American Indigenous cultures, people have respected and honored wolves (Berry 6; Langston; Navet 212). Among these Indigenous cultures, traditional stories illustrate how wolves and humans can foster mutual respect (Hines 192; Marvin, *Wolf* 119). Indigenous kinship with wolves continues into the present with activism against wolf culls in the northern USA (Carroll & Lawson). Such Indigenous viewpoints were often suppressed or silenced by colonialism,[79] but their existence reveals that there are ways for humans to live with lupine kin apart from domesticating or extirpating them. Beyond the North American context, the traditional people of the Mongolian Steppe honor the wolf for balancing the grasslands (Rong). The Chinese novel *Wolf Totem* by Jiang Rong explores the extirpation of wolves in Mongolia and the resultant ecological consequences, in particular, the degradation of agricultural land from an unbalanced ecosystem.[80] If there were no wolves, there

[79] Indigenous people in North America were often compared to wolves, animalizing them to term Indigenous people enemies of the colony, comparable to wild animals (Arnds, *Wolves at the Door* 54). Such strategies made it admissible to kill Indigenous peoples and wolves.

[80] *Wolf Totem* is compelling because it shows that human progress, regardless of political leaning, causes the environment's degradation. There was a film adaptation in 2015 under the same name but the film critiqued the Great Leap Forward less than the book. Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* narrates wolf hunting in Mongolia and how the countryside there has been decimated by various herbivores for lack of predators to cull them and maintain their movement, which similar to in Yellowstone, allowed for the Steppe's flora to regenerate. There are other Chinese novels about wolves published around the same time: Cf. Chengzhou He. "Poetic wolves and environmental imagination: representations of wolves in recent Chinese literature." Wolves were extirpated from the Mongolian Steppe by China's Great Leap Forward which sought to create a more equal footing for people living in China. Wolves, unfortunately, were not the only species targeted by such sentiments of human progress, Cf. Kim Todd's *Sparrow.*

would be an overabundance of ungulates, which would then eat all the grass that the domesticated animals also graze on. Despite the ecological benefits wolves bring, there exists a long history of hating wolves in Western culture. To explore hatred, I turn to Ransmayr and Pollack's collaborative book entitled *Wolfsjäger*.

Published in 2011, *Wolfsjäger* consists of three chapters and begins with the titular story "Wolfsjäger: Fährtensuche in den polnischen Karpaten" (henceforth, "Wolfsjäger"). The book *Wolfsjäger*, however, is a relatively complex text. The authors call their short stories *Duette* to depict their work to require two narrators to perform correctly. I understand the book and its chapters to be a compilation of interrelated short stories. There is no concrete way to tell who wrote which part or when the *Duette* were written. To write a duet, both authors write manuscripts that they compare and edit together. But it becomes difficult to discover what the duet form means when one turns to the other two short stories in the text "Der Heilige" and "Der Nachkomme." Christoph Ransmayr is an accomplished Austrian author, who has published steadily since the 1980s, receiving many literary awards. Concerning other animals, Ransmayr has long sought to disengage the literary reception of wolves from real wolves (I. Wilke 20). Martin Pollack is an Austrian journalist who has published multiple nonfiction books on Galicia, a region currently shared by Poland and Ukraine. While Ransmayr writes fiction, Pollack is a journalist, thus I presume that Ransmayr embellishes the events that Pollack reports or that Pollack foregrounds journalistic aspects of the story that Ransmayr writes. The other two short stories focus exclusively on the aftermath of the Second World War in Poland, which further suggests that "Wolfsjäger" was written in the 1980s. Ransmayr, in particular, often interrogates the trauma and violence of the Third Reich in his writings (Osborne 159). They compiled the book *Wolfsjäger* "[u]m das *Duett* als erzählerisches Verfahren auch in einer entstehungsgeschichtlichen Dimension

vorzuführen," which they claim is comprised of "überarbeitete Versionen zweier gemeinsam verfaßten, zuerst in der legendären Zeitschrift *Trans Atlantik* veröffentlichten, Geschichten an die Seite gestellt" (n.p., italics in original). *Trans Atlantik* was a serial magazine[81] that ran from 1980 to 1991, raising the question of when the authors penned "Wolfs jäger." In any case, the short stories assume a plural first-person perspective that depicts these two writers' journey in Poland to discover how their search for their absent ancestors cannot be disentangled from wolves. The sole academic text on the collective of short stories interrogates the concept of *Mitteleuropa* in the titular story (Piontek 43). Such research broadens my reading of the text since it contextualizes the political moment in which Ransmayr and Pollack write (46).

The short story opens with an anti-pastoral scene of dead sheep in a farmer's field: "Wie blutig die Herde war" (Ransmayr and Pollack 9). The sheep in the pen have been barbarously killed, their necks torn open. The farmer informs the authors that wolves are responsible for these dead animals. The dramatic opening scene primes the reader to be at odds with wolves. The assailants even killed the dog whose barking awoke the farmer. The sole reason the wolves stopped was that the farmer went outside to make some noise, but he did not see or hear any wolves. The authors describe how the wolf is demonized by the people of the Bieszczady Mountains.[82] Their vilification leads many to conjure up stories about how they were threatened by wolves and saved moments before disaster struck (14, 17 & 32).

To their surprise, their "Fährtensuche" to discover their past is caught up in the wolfpack. After the first scene of the farmers' lament of their loss, Ransmayr and Pollack write: "Wölfe! Wir waren nicht hinter Raubtieren her, sondern suchten nach den Spuren von Menschen" (10). The

[81] *Trans Atlantik* was conceptualized by Gaston Salvatore and Hans Magnus Enzensberger and edited Marianne Schmidt.
[82] The Bieszczady mountains are part of the Carpathians, which extends into Slovakia and Ukraine. In Poland, there is the Bieszczady National Park.

villages that the authors search for in the Polish region of the Bieszczady Mountains are gone, the maps they possess are outdated, and every landmark they search for is missing (11). Along the search for these villages and spoors of their heritage, they meet a variety of people who claim to be wolf hunters. The short story records their conversations with these wolf hunters and other people's reactions to them to uncover a tragic irony present in the story. The limits of the story's fictionality become increasingly difficult to ascertain. Ransmayr and Pollack traveled together to Poland and had these conversations, but these short stories are not *Reportagen* as Pollack titles his books; the stories are duets, a form that has no set fictionality parameters.

There remains a hint of distrust in the narrators' voice, manifested through critical tone laced through the text. The authors' interrogation of their conversations situates the short story among ecocritical texts that question the underlying motive for people's hatred of wolves. The first example is the number of wolves that are in Poland: "Ob die Wölfe in den Bieszczady je gezählt worden wären? Wer sollte diese Bestien denn zählen? …Aber es mußten Hunderte sein, Aberhunderte" (14).[83] The authors' critical tone suggests that the people they interact with offer no evidence for this claim since the stories are eventually disproven. The authors cannot begin to believe that the wolves torture these communities in Poland. "Vielleicht wurden die blutigen Phantasien ja auch von den Entschädigungen beflügelt, die der Staat für Wolfsrisse zahlte" (17). Ransmayr and Pollack are not duped into believing that wolves are evil creatures that roam the landscape killing as they please.

The authors do not write quotation marks throughout the text; the lack of direct quotes fictionalizes the interpretation of their journey, a strategy often used in Ransmayr writing (I. Wilke

[83] The notion that there are infinite wolves infects most cultural thought. Particularly in a North American context, there were thought to be upwards of ten different species of wolves because there were so many populating the landscape. There are only two species in Canada, but such thought imagines the wolves and wolf species to be legion, which allowed governments to justify their extermination from the Canadian wilderness (Rutherford 6).

54). Their adaptation of the conversations positions the reader to be critical of the characters' opinions on wolves. They write: "Daß dem Wolf immer wieder Massaker an Schafherden untergeschoben wurden, hatte doch wohl mehr mit den über ihn kursierenden Schauergeschichten zu tun als mit dem wirklichen Leben eines menschenscheuen Raubtieres" (17). Wolves generally avoid people and interact with humans when they are forced to by habitat destruction (Marvin, "'Man is a Wolf to Man'" 38). The remark about the "menschenscheu" wolves pushes the text to consider the farmers' and hunters' perspectives critically because they are based on emotional language.

There are two "wolf hunters" that the reader meets throughout the short story. These hunters represent the sentiments that the authors listened to during their journey in Poland. The first is named Radek Szymczuk and immediately described as "de[r] *sogenannt[e]* Wolfsjäger" (17, italics in original) with a gold chain and tattoos on his upper arm. He calls himself the "Wolfsjäger" or "Wolfstöter" (15), which the region's inhabitants come to know him as. The descriptions Ransmayr and Pollack attribute Radek suggest that he may not be all that he claims to be, and they quickly learn that he is incapable of hunting, let alone hunting a wolf. The farmers from the first scene ask the authors to let Radek know there is work for him to do near their farm. After their brief meeting, the reader learns that Radek drives around the Bieszczady National Park and organizes "Triebjagden" against the wolves.[84] The swift debasement of Radek's claims, however, is imparted to the authors by the second wolf hunter. Radek, while briefly described is crucial to how the second hunter is depicted.

[84] *Triebjagd* is a form of hunt that seeks to drive animals away from a certain area without killing them.

After the first wolf hunter's dismissal, the second hunter appears after the authors' car breaks down. Wasyl Borsuk greets the authors with the words: "Slawa Isusu Christu"[85] (19) and offers his home phone to the author. They follow him to his house to discover that the house is filled with wolf skulls and pelts. Wolf pelts constitute his bedding and the wall décor (21). "Wolfsfelle lagen um einen massiven Tisch auf dem Bretterboden, Wolfsfelle an der Wand, Wolfsfelle über einer Truhe, einem Lehnstuhl. Auf einem über das gebereiteten Fell lagen zwei schlafende Katzen" (22). Wasyl keeps wolf pelts and bones around his home to sate his detestation of wolves. He mentions that no wolf has ever ventured near his hovel because of the wolf paraphernalia he keeps (23). One of his cats was killed earlier in the year, but he claims a fox was the culprit. Wasyl also believes that the world draws ever closer to perfection with every dead wolf. Their conversation is marked by mocking remarks and questions about how the "war" against wolves should be fought. The authors list dangerous and banned implements to kill wolves, and Wasyl does not flinch at the notion that wolves should be hunted and killed since they are evil (24). His hate for wolves, however, finds no end.

Wolves, for Wasyl, are the epitome of evil, and they have no positive qualities. The reason why humans can be evil is because wolves exist: "[d]er Wolf war die Ausgeburt des Bösen, gnadenlos, gierig, grausam, und hatte das Antlitz der Erde verfinstert. Und der Mensch hatte sich an ihm ein Beispiel genommen und war auch böse geworden" (22). Wasyl's attitude towards wolves is reminiscent of the timeless Latin phrase: *Lupus Homini Homo Est*, man is a wolf to man. This Latin phrase has gained currency in philosophy and political theory to describe how humans treat each other maliciously as if they were wolves, preying on each other. The maliciousness of the wolf is expounded upon without end by Wasyl who cannot even begin to see a positive aspect

[85] Polish for Praised be Jesus Christ.

of the wolf's presence in Poland or anywhere else. Despite Wasyl's religious convictions, he also remarks that he "wäre dem Allmächtigen bis zu seinem letzen Atemzug dankbar gewesen, wenn er den Wolf nie erschaffen hätte" (22). Wolves for him resemble a divine power that God has no control over. But when the authors begin to describe Wasyl's past, it becomes evident that he has conflated wolves with humans.

Wasyl was born before the Second World War and lived in hiding during the Nazi occupation. He describes how he was hunted by Nazi soldiers and was forced to live off the land to survive (27). While the wolf metaphor present in Wasyl's anecdotes is convincing and must be in any interpretation, not all the wolves in "Wolfsjäger" can be considered Nazis. As the text progresses, the authors go to a bed and breakfast nearby. The owner knows Wasyl, and he tells them that Wasyl is a smuggler of wolf-wares and that he has never killed a wolf; he does not even own a gun. The owner then notes that Wasyl is on "seine Jagd auf Geisterwölfe" (32) and "in den schlimmsten Jahren seines Lebens unter den Wölfen vielleicht seine einzigen Freunde gefunden hätte" (33). Wasyl placed the blame for the atrocities of the Third Reich on wolves. Evil in the world has been conflated with wolves, and in his anger, he has shunned nature.

Wasyl's stories do not contain wolves, but his defining characteristic is his detestation for wolves since wolves obey no human law. He asks the authors: "Hielt sich der Wolf denn an ein Gesetz, wenn er im Blutrausch in eine Schafherde fuhr? Wer sich im Kampf gegen das Böse an Gesetze hielt, mußte verlieren - hier in den Bergen wie in den Gründen der Seele. Der Kampf mußte mit allen Mitteln geführt werden" (24). Similar to the political sentiments that I outlined earlier that still exist in Germany today, people wage war against wolves for no other reason than fairy tales. The lack of wolves in the text interrogates the same critical thought the authors utilize

throughout. Surely, today, there are wolves in Poland,[86] but in the text, there are no diegetic wolves. The only possibility to see wolves in the short story, "Wolfswanderungen" led by a local Pole, allows people the possibility to find lupine spoor (16). They simply do not exist in Poland in "Wolfjäger;" the wolves are absent, and if wolves did exist, the text would not.

Throughout all the conversations the authors have, they never once see a wolf, and their interrogative tone doubts the veracity of any stories about wolves. The wolves are completely absent from the diegesis. They perform their hatred and hunting to exhibit their strength to the world, but this fails because there are no wolves. Wolf hunting is a sham to hide the absence that hatred of wolves has caused in the world. In psychoanalytical terms, this sham is a projection, a denial of their culpability in the extirpation of wolves. The wolf hunters in the novel paper over the voids left behind by extirpating wolves in the region. The lack of diegetic wolves calls into question why the text revolves around wolves even though they are not present. One could criticize my argument by claiming that wolves live in hiding, but there is no evidence to support such claims. Despite the title of the book and short story, there are no "Wolfsjäger." The wolf hunters can only define themselves as such by the absences present in the land around them, and by defining themselves as wolf hunters, they cover up the absence left behind by dead wolves. As suggested by the dismissals of both hunters, even if there were wolves, neither of them would be able to hunt and kill a wolf. The absence of wolves in "Wolfsjäger" is particularly compelling for my analysis because a species' absence inspires the short story and establishes its structure. This absence is compared with another missing population in the text that must be examined fully to understand what absence signifies in the text.

[86] There are roughly 2000 wolves in Poland today, up from around 60 individuals in the 1970s (Story "The Return of the Polish Wolf").

The other two stories in *Wolfsjäger* revolve around the Second World War's aftereffects on Poland and its people. In particular, the absence of Jewish families is noted throughout the book, as well as the silence surrounding these people's absence. The wolf, as mentioned earlier, is the exemplar of an outstanding soldier, and in the Nazi regime, the wolf was considered to be a powerful symbol (Arnds, *Lycanthropy* 123; Goodbody, "Wolves and Wolf Men" 309; Sedgwick 27; Stetter 29); Hitler's hideaway was called the "Wolfsschanze;" many Nazi soldiers considered themselves to be wolves to convey how adroit they were (Goodbody, "Wolves and Wolf Men" 309).[87] Texts such as Hermann Löns' *Wehrwolf* and Ernst Wiechert's *Der Totenwolf* feature such soldiers and are often connected to right-wing political movements. The Nazi as wolf interpretation is overtly referred to in the short story, especially when the second hunter mentions how the wolves found his mother. In Wasyl's story, he imagines that wolves found and took his mother away. He does not mention that his mother was killed by wolves, nor does he find her corpse or any wolf sign, rather she is gone when he returns to their hiding spot from the Nazis. Wasyl's story about his mother, for me, is the sole use of the word "wolf" in the text, where the "wolf" is a human and not a wolf. The semiotic animal (Borgards, "Tiere in der Literatur" 89) marks Wasyl's conflation; he has replaced the real wolf in the world with the "wolf" that took his mother. The disappearance of his mother convinces him that he must hate wolves despite the lack of evidence to suggest the wolves' culpability.

Ransmayr and Pollack note how many villages are missing and that their maps are antiquated, but they also allude to absent populations from the Polish countryside. In "Wolfsjäger," most of the absent people are presumed to be Jewish people killed during the Holocaust. Here, one

[87] Despite the Third Reich's glorification of wolves, they often compared their enemies to wolves (Arnds, *Wolves at the Door*), particularly in their depictions of Jewish people's "insatiable greed." The Allies used similar iconography in their depiction of Nazis.

can recall the comparison often drawn in Animal Studies that the slaughter of animals and hatred towards animals is identical to the logic of antisemitism (Bodenburg 345; Wolfe, *Before the Law* 21). In particular, some scholars argue that the scale of animal slaughter on the planet enabled the conditions of the Holocaust (Stetter 219; Still 26). In the text, both are absent, and their respective absences define the text's structure. European hatred for wolves can be read as a stand-in for antisemitism, but I acknowledge the comparison between the status of animals and the Holocaust is a contentious issue. J. M. Coetzee's lecture-novel *The Lives of Animals* highlights the difficulty of accepting the comparison in that it remains difficult to compare genocide with mass animal death. Isaac Bashevis Singer, a Yiddish writer, first compared the killing of and hatred against animals and the same social structures that enabled the Holocaust (Still 26). The comparison's use in Animal Studies does not seek, in any way, to detract from the horrors of the Holocaust and the trauma of Holocaust survivors. In line with Singer's reasoning, Animal Studies isolates the social structures, such as animalization, that enable such wanton killing.

These absences are not a metaphor or an analogy, perhaps not even an allegory, but rather metonymy. "Wolfsjäger" provides evidence that the loss of these Jewish and wolfish populations is individual, especially since the authors note the lost villages and refer often to the Second World War. Animalization allows for the lives and deaths of those animalized to be rendered worthless, regardless of species. There is a unique intervention in regards to endangered animals and how the wolf was exterminated from Europe simply for its perception in literature. Moreover, the wolves are not a facsimile of the missing groups. There are specifics to wolves and Jewish populations that keep the two distinct and prevent the reader from homogenizing them and erasing all the important details that must be considered with genocide. These losses are not explicitly compared in the text, rather these two killings are placed side-by-side because they figure in major ways in

contemporary literature. These Jewish people no longer exist because they were exterminated, mirroring the situation of wolves. The process of animalization and devaluation of animal death lead to gaps that cannot be filled.

Absent animals and humans define the short story. The characters in the story have not seen wolves, and there are no wolves in the text, yet people wish to exterminate them as if they were humanity's enemies. Wolves' deaths are meaningless, and killing a wolf is a commendable act. The wolves shape the way the short story is written and how one reads it despite their absence from the text's diegesis. These wolf hunters are nothing but phonies who wish to manifest masculinity through "hunting" a wolf. The mourning that should take place in "Wolfsjäger" is replaced by the ersatz papering over the void left behind. This highlights a rich interface between literature and ecology that balances the absences in the landscape, both cultural and natural. Such literary examples reveal that humans are no longer in the company of wolves. Their lives and experiences are no longer with us, never to be recovered. Fortunately, we have not extirpated wolves, but these texts exemplify the absences produced by killing other animals. Due to the individual complexity of any given ecosystem, it becomes difficult to measure the exact effects that absences produce in the present and the potentially cascading effects in the future or to perceive the benefit that these animals had in retrospect until they are absent.

The Wolf That Wasn't

The thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus)*, better known as the Tasmanian wolf or Tasmanian tiger,[88] endemic to Tasmania, has been extinct since 1936. Thylacines were smaller

[88] The thylacine, a marsupial genetically distinct from wolves and tigers, has often been conflated with both. Strangely, in German, the thylacine is known as *der Beutelwolf*; in French, *loup marsupial* or *loup de Tasmanie*; or in Latin *Thylacinus cynocephalus*: dog-headed pouched-dog. Kylie Crane in her work has asserted that the thylacine was killed off because it was also the Tasmanian tiger, which I wholeheartedly concur with, however, cultural perceptions of wolves contributed to the treatment of thylacines.

marsupial predators that were solitary and hunted infrequently. Indigenous cave drawings show that the thylacine used to roam all over the Australian mainland (Crane, *Myths of Wilderness* 143; Philip 76). However, as a result of the introduction of dingoes to mainland Australia (Turner 63), the thylacine's range became limited to the island of Tasmania. The thylacine is no wolf, being related to wolves only by the class *Mammalia*. The sole taxonomic similarity between wolves and thylacines is that they are mammals, which is the same taxonomical connection *Homo sapiens* shares with both species. The biological and taxonomic similarities compel us to consider why thylacines were treated as if they were wolves. Thylacines were reputed to kill women and children (Crane, "Tracking" 106), and prey on livestock for no reason other than pure pleasure (Philip 78). In 1888, the Tasmanian government placed a bounty on thylacines, and Tasmanians hunted and killed thylacines in the wild because of their perceived danger to society. Thylacines were probably not a culprit in any attacks against human beings (Chare 129) as they were shy animals that needed to kill to feed every two to three days (Paddle 83 & 100). Thylacines preyed on introduced domesticated species such as chickens, but stories about their exploits were often exaggerated to justify their extermination (Paddle 85). A completely different animal both in genus and species was treated identically to wolves and exterminated from its only habitat for its perceived similarities to wolves. There exists a causal relationship between the European perception of wolves' preventing human progress (Wise 24). Such mentalities led to the extirpation of wolves in the United States and the destruction of other indigenous species throughout the world.

Colonialism created new ways of thinking about animals that privileged animals' negative literary reception, which formed the blueprint for attitudes towards new and exotic animals present in English colonies (Marvin, *Wolf* 93-4). Colonists would have never seen a wolf before and their experience with such animals would have originated from fictional and cultural accounts. This

rings particularly true in the case of Australia and Tasmania; both were first encountered by Dutch explorers and colonized by English colonists, and wolves had been extinct for centuries in Britain and the Netherlands. When people moved to the colonies, the colonists would have been met by the competition of other predators for the first time in their lives. This rediscovered competition resulted in a new reconfigured attitude towards wolves as a nuisance and pest that needed eradication. While thylacines were not lupine descendants or feline relatives, colonists perceived them to be Tasmanian tigers—for their stripes—or Tasmanian wolves—for their appearance. Thylacines resemble wolves to some extent and are thereby treated as such[89] due to this colonial logic.[90] Thylacines' extinction cannot be disentangled from colonialism, and Tasmania's ecosystem is forever changed. While there is little research that can show what the Tasmanian tiger's absence left behind in its wake, the island changed with its extermination since humans exterminated the ecosystem's apex predator (Rose, *Wild Dog Dreaming* 67). The wolves' reintroduction to Yellowstone returns to haunt us because Yellowstone's apex predator was not extinct, it could be brought back, whereas Tasmania's apex predator has been lost for all time.

To analyze thylacine extinction and how we can see its absence in contemporary culture today, I turn to Julia Leigh's debut novel *The Hunter. The Hunter* breaks from my dissertation's corpus in a few ways: Her novel is the only text in my corpus published in the 20th century, admittedly at the tail-end of the century in 1999 in Australia and internationally in 2000; secondly, it is written in English and set in Tasmania. Despite these differences from the rest of my corpus, I include Leigh's novel because thylacines have become a touchstone for extinction, particularly

[89] This treatment is not exclusive to thylacines. In mainland Australia, dingoes are hunted relentlessly for being perceived as wolves (Rose, *Wild Dog Dreaming* 64). In North America, coyotes are killed for the same reason (Flores 16).

[90] Following this logic, indigenous plant species or ecosystems in North America are considered to be without value for people. Such mentality has led to much environmental destruction and endangerment of plant species (J. Baker).

because it was extirpated for seemingly no reason apart from the fact that they resembled a species to whom they bore no relations. While these two reasons alone do mark dissimilarity from the rest of my corpus, the animal in question in the novel has garnered much attention in the last 25 years. Julia Leigh's 1999 novel marks the first event that directed attention to thylacines in the 21st century, followed by the novel's filmic adaptation in 2011.[91] Since then, Leigh has published two other texts, one novella entitled *Disquiet* and an autobiography about her attempts to become pregnant through IVF treatments called *Avalanche*. Despite her relatively rare publications, her fictional publications have garnered her many literary awards. In addition, her sole directorial credit, *Sleeping Beauty,* garnered multiple international film festival awards in addition to its selection for the Cannes Film Festival. *The Hunter* is her only novel and sole text about animals, and the novel has earned much academic attention. One interpretation underlines the juxtaposition of an ideal wilderness with the anthropogenic changes that have created Tasmania (Crane, *Myths of Wilderness* 133 & 138), particularly since the novel actively takes ecological positions (Brewer 1). Others have focused on reading *The Hunter* as an exemplar of Australian gothic (Philip 76). Beyond that, a wildlife camera in Tasmania caught a glimpse of a thylacine in 2013, although this sighting was disproven later in the year (Waterhouse & Mitchell 14-5). More recently, the biotech company Colossal slated the thylacine for de-extinction,[92] and in late 2022, the genome of the thylacine was encoded (Colossal Biosciences, "Thylacine"). The recent developments surrounding thylacines mark a productive moment for Literary Animal Studies that must be investigated.

[91] Other texts focus on the thylacine, for instance, Tim Winton's novella *In the Winter Dark,* and nonfiction texts such as Margaret Mittelbach and Michael Crewdson's *Carnivorous Nights: On the Trail of the Tasmanian Tiger*. In addition, there are a plethora of children's books about the thylacine for instance Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks's *Dream of the Thylacine* or Warren Walker's *Have you seen a Thylacine?*, and young adult novels such as Sonya Hartnett's *Stripes of the Sidestep Wolf* and Sarah Kanake's *Sing Fox to Me.*

[92] The notion of de-extinction has been criticized, most notably by Julia Leigh ("Back from the Dead"). For more on critiques of de-extinction Cf. Carolyn Mason's "The Unnaturalness Objection to De-Extinction: A Critical Evaluation."

The Hunter tracks a hunter who searches for the last thylacine. The novel starts with Martin David, who is otherwise called M,[93] and his arrival in Tasmania on an assignment from a biotech corporation that has received reports that someone spotted a thylacine in the Central Plateau Conservation Area.[94] M's employers provide him with a place to stay, with the Armstrong family, near the plateau. M's priority is to find the last extant thylacine: during his hunt, he ventures out for two-week intervals to find the extinct animal. The phrase "find the extinct animal" illuminates the irony that the novel portrays in its fabric; M searches for that which does not exist. There exists no confirmation of thylacines in Tasmania, despite alleged sightings (Philip 80; Turner 63; Waterhouse & Mitchell 15). After months in the field, he eventually finds definitive evidence that a thylacine still roams the island. At the novel's end, he finds the thylacine, kills her, extracts her organs, and cremates the body to avoid detection by game authorities. Some readers have also found that M acts as a surrogate father for the Armstrong children (Turner 71), but such an interpretation is flawed. He actively misleads the children into believing he will search for their father and lies to them on multiple occasions that he has found traces of their father. His characterization very much precludes caring for anybody apart from himself.

M is a problematic character in many ways. First off, he sets off to kill an extinct animal simply because his employer tells him to, but more problematically, he is deeply misogynistic. Immediately after the outset of his search, he immediately genders the thylacine, labeling the animal "she," despite the reputed sighting with no information as to the animal's sex. M manifests

[93] I cannot disassociate his name from Fritz Lang's film *M*, which is a shortening for the German word *Mörder* which has a connection to M's role in the novel killing an extinct animal. In Crane's book, she lists a number of possibilities of what M could mean in the novel: "M, of course, could stand for anything: Man, Master, Metaphor, Metonym, Masculinity, Mercenary, Man-on-a-Mission, Murderer, and perhaps even Marsupial." (134) with which I concur, but the name is reminiscent of the iconic film *M*.

[94] In the book, they call the area "the plateau" but also refer to it as a national park. In the center of Tasmania, the Central Plateau Conservation Area and Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park are side-by-side, so I assume this is the area where the novel takes place.

chauvinistic and sexist attitudes towards women and female animals, and he does so consistently throughout the novel. The first characteristic he pins on the children's mother, Lucy Armstrong, is that she is "fuckable" (18) and that he could seduce her if he wanted, but he resists. M learns that the Armstong family lost their father, Jarrah, in the wilderness, who spotted the thylacine in the first place. Jarrah Armstrong was a biologist who was interested in the preservation of the Central Plateau. He published a scientific text, entitled *Bioethics for Another Millenium*, that Lucy asks if M has read. Jarrah's book becomes a major symbol concerning bioethics in the 21st century, which becomes particularly poignant considering the novel's publication on the cusp of the third millennium.

While M claims to be without the need for friends or family, he requires a base camp to continue his impossible task. The base camp is managed by Sass, the Armstrong daughter, who is the sole member of the family aware of their responsibilities. To maintain the peace at his base camp, he attempts to appease his base camp manager, Sass, while withholding his actual intention on the plateau (8). Sass tasks him with locating her father (22), and he responds by lying about having found her father's water bottle while claiming he had no room to return it. The girl realizes it to be a lie, which Leigh depicts as: "[Sass] stares at him, stares into his bones" as if he does not have a soul to stare at (62). Later, he returns with a bandana from the plateau to ask Sass if it is her father's, which does evince a degree of care towards Sass. But I read this act to be his attempt at reconciliation with his base camp's manager rather than his attempt to atone for his lie to a young girl about her lost father.

The novel is divided into two parts: the first part forms the majority comprised of his first expeditions into the wilderness that ultimately result in failure. His traps ensnare wallabies, Tasmanian devils, and other critters. He never gets closer to any clues of the thylacine apart from

one footprint (92 & 115). M's failure to find the thylacine is juxtaposed, ironically, with his failure to remain a decent human being. He stays with the Armstrong family and when he is at the Armstrong house, he is often asked about his trips and what he finds on the plateau. Lying about his intent on the plateau, he pretends to conduct a study on Tasmanian devils. The hunter's lies often lead to awkward situations with the family where he must pretend that their father's so-called sighting is not why he is in Tasmania. His deception and self-deception drive the first part of the novel and how he tries to define himself (*Myths of Wilderness,* 134). M's self-description perpetuates his actions throughout the novel's first act. He manifests the desire to become the greatest predator, to affirm the human's status among other animals. Man's superior status is accomplished in the name of biotech and weapons, "…this was now the stuff that dreams—and wars—were made of" (50). M describes himself ad nauseam as a professional hunter whose work promises great profits for the company.

Nothing narrated in the text is free from his point of view. Written in a limited third-person style and focalized around M, the reader reads M's repetitive internal dialogue that he is patient, professional, and prepared. The plot details M stalking the Tasmanian bush to find the thylacine and he concludes that he must conform to her movements and thought patterns to find her. M adopts the tiger's postures and thoughts. The reader knows M through his self-definition, which to him is "to appear as a more than natural man, M is a supernatural man; he comes as close as he can to the tiger" (Crane, "Tracking" 112). The novel's enigmatic style balances between anthropocentric and zoomorphic. "Now M is the natural man, the man who can see and hear and smell what other men cannot; the man of delicate touch and sinuous movement; the man who can find his way through the bush by day and night and sit motionless through the long hours with his finger married to the trigger" (Leigh, *The Hunter* 58). Throughout the first act, M defines himself

as “the natural man” and strives to maintain his apex predator status among all beasts of the Earth (Heise, *Imagining Extinction* 46). M embodies the desire to become the apex predator in Tasmania, but his wish to become the ultimate predator—read man—results in an unlikely kinship.

His actions become more zoomorphic throughout the hunt, which contributes to his desire to become a “supernatural man.” At night, he often envisions the experience of being a thylacine. “[H]e changes shape, swallows the beast. The eyes in his head are no longer his own, short thick fur runs along the back of his neck, and his spine grows thick and strong, right out of his back, out into a stiff tail” (91). He meditates on the thylacine to conceive of how it would be to live as his quarry and how to find her, but his meditations lead to an intimate knowledge of her. In his dream physical transformation, he reflects on her movements and feelings. In other words, he empathizes with the thylacine because he has entered her skin. His imagined embodiment marks a crucial moment in M’s development; he has acknowledged himself as no longer completely human but also animal.

As the novel’s title suggests, M is not a human as much as he is a hunter or a predator. The reader does not witness any other animals, humans included, kill other creatures, whereas M ventures through the Central Plateau Conservation Area, dispatching as many other animals as he pleases. His actions embody the thylacine’s reputation of being a bloodthirsty killer with a voracious and insatiable appetite for all lifeforms inclusive of human women and children when the real predator present among the pages of the novel is the man named M. His self-definition though, for me, is to forego humanity. After months of his search for the thylacine, M receives a call that he needs to return to mainland Australia to complete another more urgent assignment, which closes the first part of the novel.

In the novel's second part, the reader is brought back to Tasmania. Shortly after M's return, he drives back to the Armstrong family home to find that the house has been heavily damaged by fire. The children have entered foster care, and the mother committed to an institution. Distraught by the loss of his base camp, he returns to the plateau to search for the thylacine. His journey becomes more onerous since he can no longer return to base camp. Thinking himself alone, M ventures on longer expeditions, but he discovers there are other humans there with him. National Park wardens are also on the search for the thylacine, but he is wary of them and avoids them entirely. In his typical predatory style, he stalks the national park wardens for a few days to prove to himself that he is the superior hunter. The reader witnesses the internalization of his self-definition while he stalks them and steals their supplies; M even weighs out the possibility of their murder. In other words, M sees all life in Tasmania, inclusive of *Homo sapiens*, as prey.

After searching for months, M considers the possibility that he has failed his assignment or that there was no thylacine sighting to begin with. He laments his failure, but he continues his seemingly endless search for the thylacine until one day: "he knows what he has seen… the thylacine is sunning herself on a slab of rock, shoveling her pointed wolf-like face into the bloody remains of a wallaby" (162). He then readies himself to kill her and holds her in his gunsights. She catches a whiff of his scent and jumps away, but it is too late for "the first bullet catches her mid-air" followed by a second and third, which bring her to the ground:

> And that is it.
>
> Now the whole world has exploded; startled birds sound the death knell. He leaves his cover and lets the gun hang down by his side. The thylacine is lying with her back toward him, curled like a sleeping dog. She's not dead yet. If I didn't know better, thinks M, I'd say she was giving suck to her young. He approaches cautiously, as if by

> some miracle she might have another life to call upon. Drawing close he can hear her wheezing, see her shudder intermittently. And just as he had been compelled to watch before, he finds himself unable to do the right thing now and finish her off. (163)

Leigh foregrounds the emotional consequence of destroying a species. An irreplaceable member of "the whole world" has been lost, never to be recovered. With every extinction, the world writhes with loss (Despret, "Afterword" 219). For a brief moment, the thylacine lives on again in a few pages in the novel only to be killed again, and to the reader's surprise, M realizes whom he has shot and perhaps even regrets his action. His hesitancy to end the thylacine's pain reveals their relationship's fruition since he is faced with one last chance to keep her from dying. In some way, he has forged a close kinship with the thylacine and sees her as an individual with a life that should not have been destroyed. Their relationship, however, is disavowed for capitalist gain.

After he kills the thylacine, he extracts blood, eviscerates her, and stores away the harvested samples for the biotech company. Afterward, he burns the thylacine's body and disperses the ashen remains to ensure that no one else can ever recover what he has harvested. And whether the reader wishes to believe that killing animals for human progress bears no ethical consequences, M commits an atrocity (Brewer 9). He searches for the endling to kill her, extract her organs, and destroy the evidence; the reader witnesses the murder of an extinct animal; not only is he a killer, but he is also a murderer as his initial suggests (Crane, *Myths of Wilderness* 134). After snuffing out the last flames of her life with a shot to her head, he reflects:

> She is more than an animal to him, more than a wallaby or pademelon, and he observes her body as he would the body of a friend laid out in the morgue. It galls him that he can press a finger against her wet nose, that he can close her eyes: it feels so wrong. She looks nothing like the creature he knew before. There is an impassable,

> unimaginable gulf between life and death, so that even life at its lowest ebb, lying ill or morose, barely moving, such life is utterly vibrant when compared to death. Now, her stillness is obscene. (164)

Tragically, standing over his quarry is the closest to another lifeform M ever becomes. Relationships with other animals lead us to foster empathy and compassion for them, which is particularly salient with human's common ancestry with apes and co-evolution with other animals. M has fostered a relationship with the animal by crafting a biography for her (Cf. 47) and inhabiting her body (91) and den (160). He worms his way into her body to assume her perspective to understand her. In any other sense, he has achieved the fullest kinship that he possibly could. M's attitudes towards the thylacine acknowledge the earlier mischaracterization of thylacines as the Tassie Tiger. M, in this regard, is enlightened; he knows the thylacine was blamed for the destruction it could not have caused; he acknowledges that most stories about thylacines' predation on women and children were fabricated; he even recognizes the individual in "the animal." Throughout the novel, he notes that trappers and biologists had long mislabeled the thylacine and ignored her individuality. By all accounts, The goal of my research is that one person would see another animal as an individual and accept this animal's individuality as equivocal to one's own. Nevertheless, M kills her for the biotech company he works for, and despite his "enlightenment," he cannot unsee the wolf in the thylacine's face. But M disregards their intimacy all to kill her and with her the species, yet again. This heart-wrenching scene places M's relationship with the thylacine at the forefront, but the reader is aware from his self-characterization that he will go to any length to bag the thylacine. After dispatching her, all he values is the "motherlode" (166), her ovaries and her uterus. And the reader has witnessed the transmogrification of the last thylacine

into animal capital, an individual into her parts. For M, killing the thylacine endling is nothing personal, rather it is a matter of business and human progress.

The last thylacine is killed—sacrificed—for human progress and human self-destruction, while the thylacines' absence grows exponentially. Even in her burial, the reader witnesses M forget his relationship to her: "(when it became a carcass he isn't sure, but the bloody gutted thing is no longer a body to him)" (167). The parentheses signal a slight change in his reflection on what he has done: the thylacine's body, which he looked upon like "the body of a friend laid out in the morgue" (164) became a carcass. The term "carcass" is striking because one does not attribute the term carcass to dead human bodies (Despret, *What Would Animals Say* 83); such language would be deeply disrespectful. As the thylacine's organs become animal capital, the corpse becomes a carcass. It moves from the remnant of a loved one's organic matter to lifeless and disposable biomass. With the rejection of her kinship, he isolates himself from the world, with full knowledge that the samples he carries will inevitably facilitate the development of a new paradigm of weapons (50). Leigh resurrects the thylacine only for its death to usher in the end of the world.

M's murder of the last thylacine embodies an ultimate carnophallogocentric move in human culture: an animal sacrificed by a male for *logos*. The removal of the female parts is furthermore crucial because animals and women have often been pushed together due to their perceived passivity or naturalness that men have sought to exploit (Bodenburg 224; Meijer 6; Still 51). While the reader is primed to dislike M despite the focalization around him, "the bad guys," if there are any, are not even present in the story (Crane, "Tracking" 118). The biotech corporation that opened the final Tasmanian tiger bounty is distant and never seen or heard about in the novel apart from sparse mentions of a company. Leigh offers no recourse to this mode of life that is present in the world, which is still powerful at the cusp of the new millennium.

The Hunter looks back to Jarrah Armstrong's book on bioethics, in particular the book's title. *Bioethics for Another Millennium* carries with it hope. Nevertheless, all hope for "another millennium" is dashed by M's mission to hunt and kill the last extant thylacine, which attests to the fact that we are not in this other millennium; the audience is stuck in the third millennium where every year, billions of animals are slaughtered for food globally (Wadiwel 6) and it is presumed thousands of species become extinct every year (Rose et al. 1). This ideal millennium is far away, never to come in our, our children's, and their descendants' lifetimes and beyond. We still have over 970 years left in the current millennium of death and accelerated extinction.

As demonstrated in this chapter, literature invites us to see the absences that animals' death results in. Put differently, these texts reveal that animals can die just as humans do. As I have explicated in my interrogation of Heidegger's and Levinas' speculations about animal death, animal deaths in philosophy do not mean the same as humans. Animal Studies responds to this with the idea that animal death has to be seen as meaningful for there to be any progress in the 21st century in regard to ecology and our relationship with animals. In "Wolfsjäger," my analysis evinces that the absence produced by the dead wolves shapes the text. The text's resultant shape from the wolves' absence compels my reading because the absences dramatically alter people's lives and the world around them. The deaths of wolves are made significant but regrettably in absentia. Lastly, in my interpretation of Leigh's *The Hunter,* the last thylacine's death creates a visceral response in the world. The response mirrors what many have maintained previously about death in Animal Studies, but Leigh's text signals that the absence of the animal needs to be considered if we are ever to enter new relationships with other animals.

The texts that I have analyzed in this chapter explicate the familiar and new carnophallogocentric realities. While we often do not view ourselves as predatory, humans are the

sole predators in these texts, both of whose titles reference the hunters present in their pages. In the face of such violence, these texts depict the absences caused by animal death and extinction. And while these texts may cause us to mourn, there is more than even the mourning that has become so well-rehearsed with the extinction of countless other species and endangered animals. The many literary works that revolve around mourning the thylacine evince the dearth we experience with anthropogenic extinction; in Alexandra Kleeman's novel *Something New Under the Sun*, a new extinct species is announced each day to a crowd of mourners; contemporary nature films mourn the effects of climate change around the world. The millennium of accelerated death stands before us, and all we can do is mourn.[95] But if this chapter pushes for anything, we must remember that "mourning is a bleak future for the dead. It is just as much so for the living" (Despret, *What Would Animals Say* 173). While the work of mourning is important, if we cease our actions with mourning, then the absences left behind by animal death and extinction will only continue. This would only serve to extend the list of species lost to anthropogenic causes.

This may seem overly emotive and without substance, especially at a time when a few social media campaigns advocate the preservation of wolves and wolf-like animals in the wild. Celebrities such as Miley Cyrus, among others, take issue with Canadian programs to cull wolves to this very day, raising awareness of such programs and fostering positive associations with wolves (P. Baker "Miley Cyrus"). Even though some attitudes turn away from the hatred of wolves, I turn to a recent news story near Toronto, where I write my dissertation. On March 7th, 2023, one coyote—known in the 18th century as the prairie wolf (Flores 54)—was spotted near a school in Brampton, Ontario (Hassan "Coyote sighting"). This prompted the school board and staff

[95] Ursula Heise argues in *Imagining Extinction* that we should not focus on elegiac forms of depicting vanishing animal life on Earth. Other narrative forms can bring hope in the 21st century, particularly rewilding novels (212). In regards to wolf rewilding novels, there are a number I can recommend: Sarah Hall's *The Wolf Border,* Lee Mandelo's *Feed Them Silence,* and Charlotte McConaghy's *Once There Were Wolves*.

to be “vigilant” in the coming weeks to protect the children. A concerned parent responded to the news by asking “‘[i]t is not a danger until it is a danger. Is it going to take a child being mauled for something to happen?’” (Fox, “Is it going to take”). I find this language strangely compelling because this parent’s concern perpetuates Western cultural detestation of wolves and wolf-like animals. Brampton Animal Services posited that there was no abnormal behavior exhibited by the coyotes (Jackson, “Students”). There are very few facts that fuel the desire for “something to happen” to Ontario’s coyotes to protect Ontario’s children. Yet this “something,” so vaguely yet tacitly expressed, can only be understood as extermination; another sign that we live in the millennium of accelerated death.

Thylacinus cynocephalus	Thylacine
Dusicyon australis	Falkland Islands wolf
Canis rufus gregoryi	Mississippi Valley wolf
Canis lupus hodophilax	Honshu wolf
Canis lupus hattai	Hokkaido wolf
Canis lupus cristaldii	Sicilian wolf
Canis lupus occidentalis	Kenai Peninsula wolf
Canis lupus arctos	Banks Island wolf
Canis rufus floridanus	Florida black wolf
Canis lupus nubilus	Cascade Mountains, Southern Rocky Mountain, Newfoundland, or Texas wolf

Chapter 4

The Ends: Growing Up and Old with Apes

Human I insist I am, but not that human.

Philip Roth, *The Breast*

If contemporary literary animals have elucidated anything, it is that human exceptionalism is unstable at best; we cordon faculties from animals to endow ourselves with special status to resolve this instability. David Cronenberg's 2022 film *Crimes of the Future*[96] destabilizes what it means to be human by presenting bodily adaptations to the changing environment—otherwise known as evolution. These bodily changes allow humans to survive in a world filled with plastic waste. In the film, consuming food becomes difficult for humans, and global corporations invent various technologies to help people eat, but for naught; human bodies have begun to adapt to consume and digest plastic with no adverse health effects. Among political outliers, some opt for surgery to eat plastic, but human children and a few adults can naturally eat plastic because of the mutations in their bodies. While not explicitly stated in the film, the vast amount of plastic waste present on Earth causes these human bodies to adapt to their new environment. *Crimes of the Future* focuses on changes internal to the human body—new organs, surgeries to remove them, and surgery performance art—as a reaction to the global environmental catastrophe. While the body's exteriority has yet to change in the film's diegesis, the interiority has radically adapted to the new environment human life has created.

My description presents the film as an almost positive and hopeful view of human futures on Earth. But despite the seemingly hopeful futures in the film, *Crimes of the Future* was marketed

[96] This film is not to be confused with his 1970 film also titled *Crimes of the Future.* The 1970 film tells the story of a world where women become extinct as a result of a lethal cosmetic product.

as a horror movie to theater audiences. Apart from some unsettling images in line with Cronenberg's signature body horror style, the movie centers around the conversation about new organs in the human body, not the fear of evolutionary change. The film distribution company, Sphere Films, marketed *Crimes of the Future* as a horror movie in Canada because it unsettles the human body's interiority. These human bodies grow new organs and cannot eat organic material; these changes should terrify the audience, but there is no end point in evolution to what *Homo sapiens* will become in the future. While other animals play no part in the film, Cronenberg's implicit comment is that humans must atone for anthropogenic environmental degradation because other animals in the diegesis seemingly have not adapted to sustain themselves on consumer plastics and have no interest in surgical procedures.

The fear of changes to the human body can be termed anthropologic anxiety (Richter, *Literature After Darwin* 10) or species panic (Huebert 244). Species panic originates from the debasement of human exceptionalism, which is maintained by current cultural and philosophical paradigms to mark humans as separate from all other species on the planet Earth. Without the affordances of being human, *Homo sapiens* revert to animals or mere lifeforms. Species panic results from human exceptionalism's artificiality and its precarious construction. Any definition of human exceptionalism based on biology—whether dependent on the human genome or the human brain—may appear relatively stable, but all species change over time. If humans were to say, slowly lose the ability to stand upright, human exceptionalism based on biology would change to accommodate the new "human" forms. Such physical changes have been explored in other media, which reveals the species boundary's porosity (Höglund 224). In film, *The Planet of the Apes* movies, both the 1970s film cycle and the 2010s reboot, challenge what it means to inherit the Earth and how bodily changes facilitate apes' inheriting the Earth. While *The Planet of the*

Apes films foreground catastrophic events that diminish the abilities of *Homo sapiens,* our shared origin with apes reconfigures our expectations of what the future for humans may hold. Bearing in mind that species change in response to the environment, our actions should better reflect the precariousness and vulnerability of human futures. While this future may appear to be distant, a future that will take thousands of generations to reach, contemporary literature on apes questions our shared origins with other apes. The similarities between humans and other apes may seem to be the by-products of lives lived together, yet these similarities still bear witness to human evolutionary origins and the fear that the word "human" is fragile and without basis.

The future shown above may seem unendingly bleak for humans, yet if we consider human relationships with other animals on the planet, in particular, with apes, we can envision ways forward for life on Earth. Through my analysis of Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt,* Karen Joy Fowler's *We are Completely Beside Ourselves,* and Bettina Suleiman's *Auswilderung*, I illuminate what three different forms kinship with our closest genetic relatives can take in literature. Through growing up and old with other apes, the characters in these texts learn what it means to live alongside and with other species. *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt* depicts new relations through the acceptance of the commonality between humans and other primates to live together. The second path forward is represented in *We are Completely Beside Ourselves*, which seeks to change human social structures so that apes can join human families, thereby unsettling human exceptionalism. *Auswilderung* represents human-ape kinships that entail living alongside apes rather than attempting to integrate them into human social structures. These cross-species visions begin with our shared ancestry in apes and coevolution with other species and move into the present. Before I endeavor to analyze the texts, I describe who our closest relatives are, what their status in the world is, and how they figure in literature.

Hominid Literature

Chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, gibbons, and gorillas, alongside humans, are all part of the family *Hominidae*, from which we and other primates gain the moniker hominids.[97] Hominids have lived on Earth for roughly twenty million years and have split into other subfamilies, *Ponginae* and *Homininae*, otherwise known as the African hominids.[98] The African hominids can be divided into three major groups, gorillas, humans, and members of the *Pan* genus, which contains chimpanzees and bonobos. Humans are more closely related to chimpanzees and bonobos than other members of the subfamily, but still, gorilla DNA bears over 90% resemblance to human DNA. Even human DNA is not purely human, all non-African *Homo sapiens* DNA contains up to five percent Neanderthal DNA (Kolbert 247). Despite our genetic relationship with these apes, all nonhuman hominids are endangered. Since these apes are genetically related to us and physically resemble us, cohabitation with apes would appear logical, but that is not the case. Most apes have very small habitable ranges and retain very little habitat. For example, orangutan species lose more of their rainforest habitat each year to ever-expanding palm oil farms. All apes are hunted for bushmeat or out of retaliation for eating crops (Sorenson). To add to the list of grievances, juvenile apes around the world are abducted into the illegal pet industry that will often kill entire troops to acquire one or two infants, which quickly decimates ape populations. In the case of chimpanzees, for every infant captured, at least ten adult chimpanzees must die (Goodall, *The Chimpanzee* 32). Slow-reproducing apes such as chimpanzees cannot replenish their populations quickly enough to avoid extinction from the illegal pet trade.

[97] Another word for members of the *Hominidae* family is great apes, but I avoid such terminology because it inadvertently designates all the other primates as lesser since they are not as closely related to *Homo sapiens*.
[98] The subfamily *Ponginae* is otherwise referred to as the Asian hominids, with only three extant species of orangutans.

Killing apes has been prevalent since Western explorers first observed apes. For example, gorillas were portrayed as vicious sexual predators (Borgards, "Affen" 249; Sax, "When Adam and Eve" 290), and thus in African colonies, gorillas were hunted for trophies and medicinal purposes (Gott & Weir 23; Sorenson 43). Gorilla scientist and advocate Dian Fossey witnessed such trophy hunting into the 1980s before she was killed.[99] In 2021, several YouTube videos were reported for displays of animal cruelty in which people would torture baby macaques[100] (Nikolic, "Baby monkeys"). There were also reports that people joined private online groups and forums to purchase monkey snuff videos. To purchase a snuff video, one fronted the cost to "adopt" a monkey, and with the "adoption fee" the "owner" could make five requests of what the handler would do to the monkey (Geiger, "People Buy"). Violence against primates is not new; one could argue the similarities between apes and humans render killing an ape akin to killing a human but without legal consequences.

Among the advocates and foundations that seek equality between apes and humans, the Great Ape Project has been the most successful on a global scale. Italian philosopher Paolo Cavalieri and American philosopher Peter Singer, both famous animal rights activists, are the strongest advocates for the Great Ape Project. The project's most celebrated success is the Spanish Parliament granting apes human rights in 2008, which further disqualifies apes from being research subjects. Spain's parliamentary decision levels apes with humans at a legal standard in Spain, which sets a precedent for other European Union countries although other European Union members have not adopted such resolutions on apes' rights. Other developed countries have started

[99] Dian Fossey is one of the three "Leakey Angels" along with Jane Goodall, famous for her research on chimpanzees, and Biruté Galdikas with her work on orangutans. The "Leakey Angels" were all recruited by the primatologist Peter Leakey to lead longitudinal on-site studies of various ape species that were at the time largely unknown to Western science. If it were not for these women, the Western cultural outlook on apes would not be the same (Armstrong 210).
[100] While not apes, since apes do not have tails, the similarities between the two types of primates are still potent.

to restrict experimentation on apes, for instance, the USA's 2016 ban on medical testing on chimpanzees. There exists a degree of inherent speciesism in the Great Ape Project's scope since only human-like or anthropomorphic species are considered for legal protection.[101] The refusal to grant other animals human rights buttresses anthropocentrism's fundamental structure. Instead of only one species, *Homo sapiens*, that is granted protected legal status on Earth, any animal that closely resembles and is genetically related to *Homo sapiens* is granted special status. While I am thrilled that some political and legal action exists for apes, regardless of its efficacy, we must endeavor to consider new ways to co-exist with all that is Earthly. But because apes bear the weight of being our ancestors, we are doubly attuned to how they figure in human culture and science. The shared connection does not necessarily forge kinship between species, but if we wish to have any positive ecological impact on Earth, we need to forge kinship with all animal species.

Apes are, for lack of a better word, in the shape of humans, or humans are in their shape or evolved in their image. The etymology of anthropomorphism breaks the word down into *anthropos* (human) and *morphe* (shape) (Daston & Mitman 10; Karlsson, "Anthropomorphism" 108). I consider accusations of anthropomorphism to be a rhetorical move to avoid all discussion about the similarity of humans and other animals based on human exceptionalism: no other lifeform can be "human" because *Homo sapiens* conceive themselves to be different from the rest of life on Earth. Apes' appearance led to their reception in medieval European literature as the evil spawn of Satan since they resembled humans, who were created in *Imago Dei* (Borgards, "Affen" 240; Sorenson 51). If one accepts the physical similarities between apes and humans, anthropomorphism begins to mean very little. While humans descended from apes and dwelt

[101] There is much contention about how much the Great Ape Project accomplishes for animals overall. Some hold an optimistic view of the Great Ape Project that it will be able to convince more people to accept all other animals as needing rights (Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals* 21; Sorenson 183). Others are more cautious, noting that only *Homo sapiens'* closest relatives are granted legal rights (Bodenburg 13 & 334).

among apes, contemporary cultural perception of apes started in the 18th century in European literature, where they have posed problems for European science and thought, particularly since the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. As human evolution gained currency in scientific thought at the *fin de siècle,* humanity's shared ancestry with other apes redefined what it meant to be human and how we are related and should relate to other animals.

Despite such a positive outlook, evolutionary theory does not lead to utopic relations. Darwinism promises no teleology that compels us to achieve kinship with other animals, rather human behavior towards other animals drawing on this knowledge leads us to accept animals as kin (Preece 336).[102] Relations with other animals become unavoidable since Darwin's theory of evolution[103] and Thomas Huxley's refinement of human evolution indicate that humans are members of the primate family (Gott & Weir 158; Richter, *Literature After Darwin* 33). Redefining human origins began with Carl Linnaeus' taxonomy; he effectively argued that there is no significant biological difference between apes and other humans to demarcate the species from each other in taxonomy (Agamben 24; Sorenson 51).[104] If science cannot tell us apart from them, the last stronghold of human exceptionalism that remains is self-definition.

Apes, thus, mark a breaking point in the construction of humans. Being "human" becomes volatile and could radically change with shifts in cultural production or refinements in scientific knowledge. Humans' shared roots with apes begin the debasement of human exceptionalism

[102] The theory of evolution, in the form of Social Darwinism, has led to atrocities against humans and other animals since its inception. Various people groups have been "exterminated" since they were thought to be biologically inferior humans. Not only were various "inferior" races liquidated, but also those people with various disabilities because Nazi scientists thought they would taint the gene pool with their disability. Particularly in the German context, evolutionary thought led to racial hygiene and the extermination of unfit individuals practiced in the Third Reich. While evolutionary thought has led to atrocities against humans, one cannot reduce evolution to Nazism (Richter, *Literature After Darwin* 15).

[103] Darwin was anxious that depicting humans' shared genealogy with other animals could remove all "human dignity" (Sorenson 60).

[104] This is significant since Linnaeus was a devout Lutheran.

through the consideration that being human is not ontologically disparate from all other animals on Earth (Rose et al. 8; Preece 31; Rose, *Wild Dog Dreaming* 20), thereby acknowledging our place as animals on Earth (Richter, *Literature After Darwin* 117; Weil 58). There is perhaps no ethical or moral obligation to maintain the world's biodiversity unless we doom ourselves to early extinction (Goodbody, "Telling the Story" 306), but evolutionary theory offers a worldview where all species share ancestral connections and share the Earth (Stevenson 166).

Living with and living for other animals is at the crux of futures on Earth. Kinship is the term for such relationships which has been much theorized in Eco-criticism, Animal Studies, and Environmental Humanities. One can define kinship as interconnected nodes on Earth, each node being a different lifeform (Haraway, *Staying* 10); Haraway focuses primarily on the interconnection between all Earthly lifeforms: "Kin is a wild category that all sorts of people do their best to domesti-cate. Making kin as oddkin rather than, or at least in addition to, godkin and genealogical and biogenetic family troubles important matters, like to whom one is actually responsible (sic)" (2). While Haraway's language may seem overly poetic, she troubles the forms that kin can take and how one relates to these various forms of kin. In this chapter, I investigate the "genealogical and biogenetic" kinships that one can foster with other primates. Despite the hope for Earth embodied in cross-species kinships, the sacrifices that kinship relations necessitate are not easy:

> Kin relations are not 'especially nice', but 'full of waste, cruelty, indifference, ignorance, and loss, as well as joy, invention, labor, intelligence, and play' (Haraway, [*Manifestly Haraway* 103]). We understand that to face the other as kin means respecting their differences from us, while simultaneously facing the lived histories

> and moments both memorable and painful that make up, and inform, how we are co-produced alongside them. (Desai & Smith 46)

We realize the complexity of other animals and thereby our complexity, as if the other was a mirror by which to see ourselves. In seeing ourselves in other animals, relationships become more feasible and even desirable, yet cross-species kinship is more complex than selfish transactions for one party; kinship must not prioritize humans and consist of a mutual relationship instead of exploitative practices. Such mutual relations do not imply misanthropy, anti-natalism, or another extreme political position that forces humans to atone for the damage caused. Mutual relationships with other animals on Earth are open to interpretation, but in its essence, kinship finds itself in a world of reciprocity that can extend to the entire natural world (Barnett, *Mourning* xv). Entanglements and interconnections across species lines constitute such reciprocal kinships (Haraway, *Staying* 2). And this world of reciprocity requires that we relinquish the idealistic notion that relationships are free from pain, death, and change. Such reciprocity allows for possibilities to live with and have affinities for other life on Earth, but the current climate catastrophe evinces selfish action on behalf of humanity.

Yet it must be maintained that there are many cultural viewpoints of Earthly life and that such reciprocal kinship does not eliminate other human ways of living. A utopia brimming with interconnected animals and humans free from suffering and death seems appealing, but that is an impossibility. Cree poet and scholar Billy-Ray Belcourt highlights how the paradoxes formed when different cultural upbringings collide alongside forming kinships with other animals. Belcourt examines Tanya Tagaq's social media activism for Inuit seal hunting to depict Indigenous ways of life. Her social media posts were quickly criticized by organizations such as PETA, among others (Belcourt, "Coda" 235). Against what he terms the "politics of purity" (238), he antagonizes

the notion that a world without animal death would be an ideal world because it would doom Inuit people in Canada and around the world (235). A paradox arises from this example where hunting seals allows for Inuit and their kin—which includes other animals—to live. The Inuit seal hunt represents one of many Indigenous lifeways that necessitate the hunting of other species, and to restrict such cultural practices would only serve to repeat colonial logics. Embracing paradox enables different lifeways from what Western culture envisions (John 43). Such paradoxes are of particular importance in the Anthropocene.

Laying blame for the current ecological disaster is difficult to navigate. Some research places the blame on religious worldviews (Derrida, *Beast,* 1: 55; Preece 284; Navet 221; Watts, "Growling Ontologies" 120), capitalism (e.g., J. Moore), masculinity (e.g., Adams), philosophy (e.g., Derrida, *The Animal*), specific technologies (e.g., Tsing), settler colonialism (Chang; Langston; Probyn-Rapsey), and so forth.[105] The plethora of terms that branch out from the concept of the Anthropocene seeks to lay the blame on a particular segment of human society or people group. While each different "-cene" has its respective merit, I do not see the value in blame placed on any one group.[106] Blame placed on any group could lead to violence against said group instead of acknowledging our collective culpability regarding anthropogenic climate change. Some lifestyles may not contribute to climate change in the same way—vegetarian and vegan diets for instance—yet all humans remain complicit in the current situation most other animals find themselves in. Animals are ever present in human society, especially considering how integral

[105] In a lecture by Rosi Braidotti, she considers the explosion of various "-cenes" to be the "anthropomeme" ("Posthuman Knowledge"). For another wholesome discussion of the various interpretations of the Anthropocene, I would recommend Kate Rigby's *Reclaiming Romanticism* (starting on page 7).

[106] This is especially the case since we understand the ancient antagonisms against wolves and similar carnivores in my third chapter. While that was human blame of wolves and wolf-like animals, it could equally stand to reason that if we blame a particular group it could lead to similar prejudice.

animal labor and animal bodies are; we should strive to forge kinships with other animals that focus on reciprocity rather than exploitation.

Kinship stories are crucial in the 21st century to counter human exceptionalism. Literature has a particular edge because stories have the potential to change the reader's perspectives and attitudes. Since "all kinship is fictive, all stories are possible, and in the end, love is about a story that always concerns oblivion" (McHugh, *Love* 192), such representations may not result in altruistic action, but reflection on human attitudes towards other animals can foster change in how readers view and treat other animals. If we accept that literature can create a path forward for humans and animal kinships (Lutwack 254), then we must listen to stories about animal kinships and consider what these kinships signify in the contemporary moment. While this argument may work in theory, my dissertation has demonstrated repeatedly that stories do matter and inform the status of animals. Fictionality does not preclude the possibility of these relationships since literature from a human point of view allows the reader to consider new forms of kinship with other fauna. Others have argued that stories form the basis of human attitudes and thus the treatment of other animals (Rose et al. 4). The reconfiguration of human perspectives is necessary for such an endeavor, especially in the Anthropocene. Although I can provide no ethical axiom to justify such a worldview, I adhere to scholars before me who have argued that love forms the basis of kinship (McHugh, *Love* 192*;* Kuzniar, *Melancholia's Dog* 179). To love others is to be in communion with other animals on Earth. Since apes are related to and resemble humans, it proves to be fruitful in fostering relationships with *Homo sapiens*' closest relatives. These relationships could facilitate human life with and alongside all other animals on Earth. If the results of kinship should be founded in a world of reciprocity, then love for other animals must not be self-serving

or selfish. Moving to my analyses, I briefly explore primate representations in German literature and how the texts I analyze fit into the tradition.

Apes are a relatively recent addition to the menagerie of German literature. While not as numerous as texts about wolves, birds, and bees, there are a few major texts in German literature and in other literary traditions that depict apes since modernity. In Medieval literature and religious iconography, apes, because of their similarity to humans, were often considered to be morally abject humans, the spawn of Satan (Sorenson 45-6). The novels bring these viewpoints into consideration when thinking about and with apes. For instance, the protagonist of *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt* notes that "[d]er Affe, eine Spottschoepfung des Teufels? Welch idiotische Idee. Und wir hatte dieser lächerliche Descartes je glauben können, Tiere seien biologische Automaten" (Draesner 177). But apes in literature changed dramatically after the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species.* Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* and H. G. Wells' *Island of Dr. Moreau,* among other texts, explore Darwin's scientific work to sketch potential missing links between humans and other primates. But at their core, these texts often consider apes to be primitive because they are understood to be animals, governed by instinct and not reason. While the inheritance of evolution has removed the notion that apes are evil humans, apes are at best an uncanny figure because their bodies greatly resemble humans. Contemporary Western cultural perception of apes has changed with scientific knowledge, but the fear of morally abject humans has been retained with cultural representations such as the character of King Kong or various apes in *Congo* or *Planet of the Apes*.

One of the most important texts, if not the most important, in German literature about apes is Franz Kafka's short story "Ein Bericht an eine Akademie" (henceforth "Ein Bericht"). The short story revolves around the humor of a chimpanzee who learns to be human very quickly. "Ein

Bericht" recounts the travails of a captured chimpanzee, named Rotpeter, who, on the boat to Europe, learns to mimic humans. Kafka's Rotpeter first learns to shake hands, "Handschlag" (323). The handshake has become an iconic connection between humans and other primates in German literature. Rotpeter transforms from a "kleinen Schimpansen" (323) to an average European in a few years. Rotpeter lectures "einer Akademie" about evolution (Norris 66), language (Calarco, "Boundary Issues"), humanity (Dekoren), and *Affentum* (Gerick 52; Richter, *Literature After Darwin* 111). While Rotpeter can be said to have gained much from the loss of his ape nature, he admits that he learned to be human to survive his capture (Norris 68). Specifically, he forgets his former primate life with the acquisition of human language. Animals in Kafka's work represent real animals and rebel against older literary animal depictions (Deleuze & Guattari 13; Driscoll, "Sticky Temptation" 214). To highlight this rebellion, Rotpeter lectures the scientists about what he has learned in becoming human, which for him means the disavowal of ape qualities.

Rotpeter's report exemplifies contemporary Western culture's fascination with apes: the scientific connection and their humanness or perhaps our *Affentum*.[107] Rotpeter's story adapts practices that took place in zoos across Europe and North America from the 19th century to the mid-20th century (Gott & Weir 70; Sorenson 16). Many apes brought to zoos would be taught how to take tea, smoke tobacco, and drink alcohol, which made them irresistible attractions to onlookers (Sorenson 77). One of the most popular of these apes was Consul in the Manchester Zoo in the years 1893 and 1894, whose life probably inspired the character Rotpeter in "Ein Bericht" (Baratay, *Animal Biographies* 8 & 100). "Ein Bericht" is a crucial and canonical text because it reveals new ways how other animals were depicted in 20th century German literature.

[107] While zoological terminology exists, monkeys and apes are commonly encapsulated in the word *Affe*, which blurs the distinction between the two orders of primates. In this chapter, *Affe* solely refers to apes. For more discussion on German vocabulary around monkeys and apes, Cf. Roland Borgards "Affen: Von Aristoteles bis Soemmerring."

The novels in this chapter interrogate close kinships with nonhuman others but in a different capacity than other relations that we have encountered earlier in my dissertation. Paul Arimond learns to listen to birds and begins to uncover for himself what significance beyond the human is; Egidius Arimond discovers through beekeeping their work towards the future; the wolves and their look-alikes are hunted and killed for their perceived threat to humanity. None of the animals in the previous chapters lived with the human characters, whereas this present chapter looks at humans living with other apes. These relationships are privileged, undoubtedly, because the animals in question are genetically related to and resemble humans. The human characters understand that the apes they live with are their closest genetic relatives apart from other humans; the reader thus can readily foster empathy for apes. In this way, it may seem apt to forego fostering empathy towards species because humans relate to apes. These texts manifest progressive ways of thinking about apes, but one cannot forget that numerous other species must be considered and conceived as possible kin.

Becoming Cyborg or Remaining Bonobo

Bonobos are the lesser-known member of the *Pan* genus alongside chimpanzees, and thus bonobos number among humankind's closest relatives. Although similar in appearance and genetics, bonobos radically differ from the far better-known chimpanzees. Whereas chimpanzees are patriarchal and very aggressive, bonobos are strictly matriarchal. Bonobos are one of the most compelling animals in regard to—potentially queer—sexual desire.[108] Bonobos are promiscuous and participate in sexual touching irrespective of gender to avoid conflict, share food, and negotiate space. Whereas chimpanzees often coerce, fight, and kill to sate their social desires, bonobos maintain a comparatively peaceful society. While bonobos in the wild have been observed to eat

[108] Cf. Schrefer, Eliot. *Queer Ducks (and Other Animals): The Natural World of Animal Sexuality*.

some small animals, bonobos are very peaceable. Bonobos and chimpanzees are closely related, but bonobos are lesser known since the species had not been described until the 20th century (Rudy 209). Chimpanzees have long been depicted in Western literature, whereas bonobos were considered to be pygmy chimpanzees and only recently started to become represented. The only recent German book to feature bonobos to my knowledge is Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt.*[109]

Ulrike Draesner is a German author and translator who has published since the 1990s, before which she worked in academia. She publishes both prose and poetry and collaborates on multi-media projects with much success, and her biggest literary success is the novel *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt* (henceforth *Sieben Sprünge)*, which was published in 2014. The novel was funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung, garnered her the *Usedomer Literaturpreis* 2015 and *Nicolas-Born-Preis* 2016, and landed on the longlist for the *Deutscher Buchpreis* in 2014. The novel, by and large, centers on themes of *Flucht und Vertreibung*[110] and the resultant generational trauma. *Sieben Sprünge* revolves around the primatologist Eustachius (henceforth Stach), born in 1930, and his life and research on apes. In the 2010s, Stach retires but wishes to live with apes, but his apes are discovered by the police. In an attempt to keep the bonobos, he participates in a television interview to advocate for apes' inclusion in assisted living homes. After the interview, his apes are taken away from him, and the rest of the book assumes his granddaughter Esther's perspective as she takes care of him until his death. The novel ends with Stach's death at 88 years

[109] There are few other bonobo texts from the year 1999 onwards. Cf. Charis Thompson Cussins' 1999 "Confession of a Bioterrorist" or Laurence Gonzales' 2010 novel *Lucy.*

[110] *Flucht und Vertreibung* is a prevalent theme in German literature since World War Two that revolves around refugees, in particular German refugees, in the face of and aftermath of the Nazi defeat in 1945. For more information, Cf. *Die Erinnerung an Flucht und Vertreibung. Ein Handbuch der Medien und Praktiken* edited by Stephan Scholz et al.

old.[111] While the novel revolves around Stach, only a single chapter is narrated from his point of view, and all the other characters talk about him extensively. Stach's life has been marked by tragedy: he and his family become refugees to flee the Second World War, and on this journey, he brother dies. The rest of the novel is narrated in the first person by a variety of characters from two different families, resulting in a fragmented structure (Sütterlin 178).[112] For example, Boris dates Simone to gain access to Stach, and even Boris' daughter, who has never met Stach, talks at length about Stach because she watches him on TV during the talk show with his bonobos. The novel is a complex story, which enables a wealth of different readings of the text. I focus on Stach's self-definition vis-à-vis other animals and how animal companionship figures in the present.[113]

Many academic readings of *Sieben Sprünge* center on the Grolmann family's generational trauma, which results from the family's flight from Poland into Germany during the Second World War (Jabłkowska 933; Salama 90; Sütterlin 168). The novel could be termed a *Familienroman* or *Generationenroman* considering interconnections between two families, multiple generations, and the diegetic time of the novel. Their flight from Poland forms a key memory for Stach and his parents and primes the narrative; the generational trauma is passed onto Simone, Stach's daughter, who worries about what she has already inherited, since his trauma may cause him to no longer

[111] The text's temporality has gone unnoticed as of yet. The novel was published in 2014 and if Stach is born in 1930, and dies 88 years later, the novel ends in 2018 or 2019, which is the unexplored future. Since the novel is often read as a *Generationenroman*, it seems quite compelling that Draesner's chooses for Stach's death to happen in a future that dovetails with the publishing of the novel.

[112] For a visualization of the human relations in the novel, Dina Aboul Salama's article "Flucht und Exil: Die Quantentheorie und die Poetisierung transgenerationaler Gedankenwelten in Ulrike Draesners Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt" contains a table that explicates the relationships between the novel's human characters.

[113] Dresner's novel ends with a QR code that leads to the reader to an extensive website that contains short stories and interviews that extend the story of *Sieben Sprünge.* As well, the website has interactive components where readers are encouraged to share their own stories. Due to the scope of this chapter and my corpus, I will not analyze this material. For readings on the web material, I refer the reader to Rebecca Braun's "Pacing Out a Polyglot Poetics: An Interview with Ulrike Draesner at the Victoria and Albert Museum" and Teresa Ludden's "Mobilisations of Mediation and Aporias: Reading Trauma as Metaphor in Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge Vom Rand Der Welt* with Caruth, Derrida, And Agamben."

care about humans (Braun 112; Sütterlin 171). Since Simone complains that her father cares more about the apes than her, their strained relationship has been interpreted to be the result of Stach's trauma from the war and the death of his brother (Biendarra 29). The apes for some are only there as a recipient of Stach Grolmann's care (Braun 112) or in some cases simply allegories (Ludden 454). The novel is an expansive work that spans myriad themes and historical moments. It would prove impossible to compress the novel and its contents into one specific reading. My intervention in the discourse on *Sieben Sprünge* is that the apes, specifically bonobos, are more than mere symbols of innocence in the novel; these apes become a form of atonement for Stach, and his atonement leads him to redefine his humanity.[114]

Stach has researched apes for 40 years, and in the last 20 years, the relationship between humans and primates. The basis of his relationship with apes is founded on the similarities between humans and other apes: "Das äffische Wesen liegt nicht in Nachahmung. Darin sind sie nicht einmal besonders gut. Das äffische Wesen ist Betrug" (12). The verb, to ape, means to mimic or to imitate something. Moreover, the word could imply being or acting like an ape. The verb *nachäffen* in German is to fool someone. Aping or mimicking has been a central theme in the definition of the human since Aristotle, who codified the differences between humans and other animals, argued that humans are the most imitative of animals or that humans ape most of the apes. *Sieben Sprünge* evinces that human perception and conceptualization of objects and processes are not dissimilar from that of other apes.

[114] Another reason why I utilize Animals Studies methodologies to guide my analysis is due to the myriad of animal comparisons throughout the book. All the characters are very attentive towards animals throughout the time of the novel. Bird migrations are noticed, almost everything is compared to animal behaviors, and there are even word coinages that attempt to capture what it means for humans to come closer to other apes.

In the novel's first chapter, Stach receives research footage from a colleague that he watches with his entire family.[115] Eustachius' first beliefs about animals are that they are superior to humans because they seemingly do not practice violence (Biendarra 28). His early thoughts about humans are that "Affen seien normal. Der Mensch habe einen Überschuss, der vermutlich ein verstecktes Defizit sei" (Dreasner 95), but his attitude towards humans changes very quickly in the first chapter. In the video, the Grolmann family watches the chimpanzees' lives and the peaceful moments of them foraging in the trees and on the ground (41). But soon, another chimpanzee troop ventures into the troop's territory to launch an attack. The offensive is successful in killing an infant, whom the aggressors begin to tear apart and cannibalize. The documentary footage brings Stach to tears since he realizes that humans and animals are not so dissimilar. He viewed animals as more innocent than humans, not wantonly killing their own kind: "'Sie sind so brutal wie wir. Der letzte, entscheidende Unterschied - einfach weg'" (43). His tears mark the initiation of his character development. The novel begins with Stach as a character who idealizes animals to be better than humans because humans are mere *Mängelwesen* because of the atrocities of the Third Reich (Biendarra 27-8), but the chimpanzee attack footage forces Stach to learn that all life on Earth is marred by violence, which pushes him to foster a way of living with apes that benefits all parties involved. The documentary footage alters the way that the reader perceives chimpanzees, hence why bonobos feature in the novel; they are peaceful, matriarchal, and kind apes as opposed to chimpanzees, who are known to have an aggressive nature, not unlike humans. Hiding human violence towards each other is a strategy that seeks to separate humans from other animals. *Sieben Sprünge* depicts how humans comport themselves against apes, which is

[115] This video segment seems to be adapted from the famous BBC documentary *Planet Earth.* In this documentary, the camera crew observes a group of chimpanzees on a raid.

fascinating since for Stach there is no difference at all. If humans were found to be equally "violent" as chimpanzees, for instance, it would challenge Stach's definition of humans and animals. The apes' violence is compelling because it reveals two qualities: apes are not innocent, nor are they dissimilar from us. The indistinction of humans and apes is echoed by the sentiment that "perhaps to other species, humans, orangutans, and gibbons are tough to tell apart too" (Flores 29). Stach is not the archetype of how one should live with apes, but Stach acknowledges the failure of his perception of humanity and laboratory research on apes, which compels my reading of the text since he repents and seeks to cease the damage wrought against other apes. But despite Stach's attempts, the other characters in the novel are reluctant to accept his convictions.

One of the key interlocutors is Boris Nienalt; Boris is a psychologist from Poland who is married with children, but he is obsessed with Eustachius. His obsession with Stach stems from Stach's research about and fascination with apes and how this fascination informs his thoughts about humans. Stach's opinions of other humans are shaped by his youth during the Third Reich and the memory of when he realized how he, alongside many other Germans, had been duped into senseless violence in the Third Reich (Biendarra 28). Memory Studies plays a significant role in the novel's critical reception on account of Stach's characterization in addition to Draesner's references to the Memory Studies discourse. Specifically, the character Boris cites Marianne Hirsch's "postmemory" and Eva Hoffmann's "postgeneration" throughout the novel (Sütterlin 169). The references to contemporary research on trauma invite the reader to interpret the text to be a story about trauma. Boris interviews Stach on numerous occasions, but Stach's conversations with Boris often take ecocritical turns. While discussing his scientific work, Stach asserts that "'Affen bezahlen den Preis dafür, dass die Menschheit mehr über Gehirne erfährt. Das nennt man

natürliche Artendominanz'" (Draesner 74).[116] Stach's assertation underlines the ecocritical undertones present in the book, which compels the reader to question how the rest of the book functions. "Tierschutz, korrektes Gewissen, aber beim Fleischeneinkauf über die Preise klagen" (159). Egidius' sentiment highlights the hypocrisy of how people consider animals, quick to judge how animals are treated but still full participants in carnophallogocentrism. People's participation in anthropocentric discourse is further complicated in the novel when accusations against Stach crop up on account of the fact that in the 1970s, he kept apes in suboptimal conditions.

In the novel's third chapter, Boris attends Simone Grolmann's lecture about apes and humans, to learn more about Stach by observing him listen to his daughter's lecture. For Simone, the brain is the human body's most important organ, but this organ is "'[n]icht genetisch, nicht sexuell, nicht biologisch, nicht theologisch, nicht human, nicht metaphysisch, nicht nur vernünftig, sondern grundsätzlich: von der Familie her. Von den Menschenaffen her'" (114). Perhaps human brains have developed in ways unique to *Homo sapiens* (Kotrschal 20),[117] yet the development of the human brain is part and parcel of evolution and shared between all apes, despite individual species differences. At the core of Simone's lecture, she asserts that humans are not absent from nature in that human brains and bodies are not products of self-definition. Human bodies and brains are products of evolution, from a common ancestor with other apes. The implications of her lecture shape the way that the reader sees the evolutionary relationships between humans and other apes, as well as trauma and traumatic events between the two species. Strangely, however, Simone's lecture has been ignored in other interpretations that center on trauma, but Trauma Studies revolves

[116] The price paid by apes in science is evinced in the Critical Animal Studies literature Cf. *Critical Animal Studies: Towards Trans-Species Social Justice* edited by Atsugi Matsuoka and John Sorenson.
[117] Research on Neanderthals shows that they had larger skulls on average than *Homo sapiens* so they possibly could have had larger brains (Kolbert 266). Matthew Calarco argues that there has been an implicit bias towards the size of the brain as what renders an animal superior to others (*Zoographies* 130).

around human experiences of trauma, thus such readings cannot include nonhuman trauma and its healing.

Throughout her lecture, Simone cites J. M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals.* In the text, Elizabeth Costello gives a contentious lecture about the state of animals which draws much ire from those who refuse to acknowledge similarities between human intraspecies violence and interspecies violence. For Costello, the academy is the anthropocentric institution par excellence because it seeks to cordon other animals from knowledge except when they prove useful in knowledge production, which Simone references throughout the lecture about apes and their similarity to humans: "'Costellos Rede ist dort richtig, wo sie uns Menschen angeht. Wir forschen mit Affen um etwas über sie herauszufinden? Welch fromme Lüge. Wir forschen mit Menschenaffen auf der Suche nach uns selbst'" (Draesner, *Sieben* 118). Simone's research on primates, along with Stach's, seeks to uncover human nature and the connections between *Homo sapiens* and other animals. Simone breaks away from any notion that scientific research must be anthropocentric to exhort that laboratory research on other animals should seek to improve life for all species involved.

Throughout the novel, Emil, Stach's older brother, is mentioned repeatedly. Born with a disability and threatened with euthanasia, Emil manages to survive with a disability in the Third Reich. The novel contains two chapters narrated by Emil;[118] Emil's second chapter takes the form of a letter he wrote to his father in 1945 the day before he was killed. Emil's murder—if one can term it such—is ambivalent and never fully explained. Stach kills his brother because Emil wants to join the SS to find his father. While Stach could either be a cold-blooded killer or a radical anti-

[118] Some argue there is only one chapter narrated by chapter present in the book (Ludden), but there is an introductory prelude to the novel that is written in an identical style to Emil's chapter at the end of the book. While I concede that the prelude is not marked as the other chapters are with the narrator's name at the beginning, it would seem peculiar that the presence of Emil's idiosyncratic narration style in the unmarked prelude cannot be read as Emil's.

fascist, Stach is only 14 years old when he kills his brother while knowing full well that his parents had gone to great lengths to keep Emil alive against the attempts of the Third Reich to kill him (Ludden 454; Sütterlin 174). Emil was forcibly sterilized and was supposed to be euthanized, halted only by his parents' bribes to various officials. In the last chapter, Emil recounts how he was compared to an ape (Sütterlin 174). It is a particularly heart-wrenching account because Emil's mental capacity does not allow him to see the tragic irony when he dons a uniform for a nation that wishes to exterminate him. The tragic irony is doubled by the fact that Emil acquires a uniform to join the SS to find his father, not to fight for the Third Reich. Stach, upon witnessing his brother in an SS uniform, kills his brother and keeps Emil's murder secret until he is close to death when he confides in Esther, his granddaughter. While the novel does not offer direct answers, Emil's treatment in the Third Reich reminds the reader of the human cost of animalization, which directs the treatment of animals and inevitably reflects the treatment of humans.

Disability Studies and Animal Studies are closely related fields that seek to interrogate the definition of what it means to be human across various forms of alterity. While work on disability examines differing forms and abilities of *Homo sapiens*, there are connections between the alterity of form, the ability of other animals, and the process of animalization that enables the wholesale slaughter of people with disabilities without moral or ethical recourse. Emil's absence is crucial to Stach's characterization and his suffering in the first chapter after watching the footage of a chimpanzee conflict. He acknowledges the indistinction between humans and other apes, hence why his desire to care for traumatized apes and install an experimental piece of technology into his head. While never manifest in the novel, Stach's home for simians would equalize humans and apes. Stach, because of his trauma, tries "die Tiere von innen zu verstehen, radikal, also körperlich" (95).

There are two ways that the reader witnesses the manifestation of Stach's radical corporality at work here. The first way he manifests radical corporality is through his wish to live with other apes. As Donna Haraway and Timothy Morton, among others, have argued, there is no basis for a biological human that stands outside of nature. Humans are part of nature no matter how self-definition is achieved or how much is cordoned off from animals (Challenger 48). Stach wishes to live with apes, in a way that benefits both humans and apes; he lives with apes to meet mutual needs to challenge human ways of living by accepting apes fully as kin. These mutual needs are companionship and healing through companionship (Draesner 95). The second way that the reader witnesses his radical corporeality is through the device he implants into his head. The implant should remind the reader of experiments humans have conducted and continue to conduct on apes. For instance, primate stereotaxic devices insert electronic devices into ape brains and then gather scientific data from these devices. This practice, which one would term cruel when done to apes, would be unthinkable if not atrocious if done to a human.

As Stach considers retirement, he assesses the damage he caused to other apes and humans throughout his life. He coins the slogan "Affen für Alte" and wishes to start a home for traumatized apes that also houses seniors. This potential living situation of these unlikely companions may strike the reader as uncomfortable, albeit ideal through Stach's eyes. Stach conceives of the ape-human sanctuary shortly before the confiscation of the bonobos he acquired illegally. In his last attempt to keep the apes, he consents to advocate for "Affen für Alte" on television (399). During the scene, narrated from Boris' daughter's perspective, Stach appears on an unnamed popular German talk show where he advocates that he should be allowed to start his home for seniors and traumatized apes. The television show begins with the bonobos, Monty and Vlek, including themselves to the moderator, who is quite skeptical of them. Being unfamiliar with apes, the

moderator does not realize their species-specific comportment. The bonobos offer their "Pfote hin," which the moderator does not immediately recognize as an invitation to shake hands which results in his embarrassment (407). Recalling Kafka's "Ein Bericht," the bonobos appear more human than the moderator, who cannot recognize a basic human greeting. After the apes have been introduced and their lifestyles discussed, Stach takes off his wool cap: "Aus der Mitte seines Schädels erhob sich eine schmale, sechs Zentimeter lange, zweieinhalb Zentimeter hohe Metallkiste" (409-10). Upon seeing the device implanted in his head, the moderator is visibly disturbed "[u]nd [er] wackelte stärker… 'das war nicht abgemacht'" (410). The narrator, along with the reader, evidently witnesses the moderator's discomfort at Stach's becoming posthuman. The moderator's anthropological anxiety cannot be ignored so the moderator then decides to postpone the rest of the show until the next day. The image of Stach with an experimental device attached to his head creates an image fit for a horror movie.

During the second segment of the show, the moderator asks Stach to explain why he affixed a metal box to his head. Stach begins to give his explanation for what he terms his "Gehirnumbau" (410) that he believes that he must renovate his mind to become a better person. The word "Umbau" challenges the scientific conceptions of the human brain as explained above in Simone's lecture. His physical renovation is intended to sublimate his troubled past from the flight from Poland and the murder of his brother to his retreat from humanity into primatology. All the research on Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge* has ignored this crucial section because it challenges the very definition of human. There is no way to conceptualize the way a cyborg—for lack of a better word—can process and overcome trauma. With Stach's resignation of his body and mind, he has become a cyborg.

The TV moderator is furious at Stach because he suspects Stach will experiment on these seniors especially if Stach is willing to experiment on himself (413). The moderator assumes that he will handle the seniors as if they were primate experiment subjects, despite no evidence to prove his suspicion. Then the moderator asks if Emil survived the Third Reich, to which he does not respond until eventually he breaks down and says: "'[i]ch möchte Tiere aufwerten, nicht Menschen herabsetzen'" (413). This quotation highlights the process noted throughout my dissertation; to think of the human as unexceptional is perceived as a "herabsetzen" of human value and dignity. Any move towards animality reduces humans to "the animal" which would then necessitate to say that humans lack ethics, morality, and reason, so-called traits proper to humans. The assumption that animality lacks ethics is a conflation between Earth's fauna and philosophical concepts of "the animal," but since it remains an impossibility to human points of view, any affront against "the human" is understood as an attack against the species *Homo sapiens*. In Stach's case, the human has vanished, which the narrator of this chapter remarks "Grolmann wirkte unmenschlich. / Etwas zutiefst Gefühlloses ging von ihm aus" (415). While her remark seems to demonize Stach for his cyborg assimilation, in this scene, he has become posthuman, and Jessica, along with the TV moderator, begins to fear becoming posthuman.

While a flawed character, other characters in the novel misunderstand Stach's intentions. Owing to the TV moderators' prejudice towards Stach's earlier experiments and his status as a survivor of the Nazi regime, he misreads Stach's intention as that of utilizing seniors as test subjects for experimental technologies. It appears peculiar to place these two populations together, but what Stach attempts to accomplish with the "Umbau" of his body is confused with misanthropy. He does not advocate that these people be experimented on or advocate that both populations are unwelcome in human society. Stach lives with other animals that rely on equality

and mutual needs between all ape species. The equality with which he regards both humans and other primates is particularly evident through his becoming a cyborg. Stach acknowledges the "thoroughly breached" barrier between animals and humans (Haraway, *Simians* 151) and has moved to the second "leaky distinction" between lifeforms, humans and other animals, and machines. Stach's transformation decenters the human to the extent that the TV moderator cannot do anything but rage at the notion that humans can readily live with animals and machines. Stach's desire to create a hospital for traumatized apes (Draesner 88), which exceeds the German standard for apes (244), signals his attempt to move beyond his humanity. His initiative is met with disgust, and he abandons his project after the TV interview. The talk show could be considered tragic since the reader experiences catharsis from Stach's embarrassment, but human exceptionalism and anthropological anxiety in the world around Stach force him to abandon his attempts to become posthuman. Stach's "Affen für Alte" is central in my interpretation of the novel; Stach wishes to create a hospital for traumatized apes because apes and humans become equals.

Literary Animal Studies, in many ways, redefines the borders of what marks acceptable human action towards other animals on the planet. While some branches of Animal Studies advocate for political or social action more than other branches, the first step entails the rejection of the current carnophallogocentric paradigm of Western culture. This rejection manifests itself in the novel with Stach's refusal to partake in the sacrifice of animals at the altar of scientific progress. If we are to accomplish anything in the 21st century and beyond, we must forge long-lasting kinships with other animals. At this point, the question of evolution enters the scene; one possible avenue is that humans will cease being "human" so to speak. As discussed with the example of *Crimes of the Future,* we fear becoming something other than human, and in the same way, extant

ape species will change. Growing old with our closest biological relatives paints a picture of co-existence with other apes based on our mutual need for care and affection.

All in the Family: Chimpanzees and Kittens

Chimpanzees have a privileged place in literary fiction because they are perceived as the closest biological relation to humans; chimpanzees do share much DNA with humans. There are four distinct subspecies, Central, Western, Eastern, and Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzees, all of which are endangered. They live in groups, called troops, that consist of 20 to 30 individuals, but the troops can be much larger and are highly territorial. All members of the *Pan* genus have a varied diet, which mostly consists of plant matter, but all subspecies of chimpanzees hunt extensively and sometimes cannibalize other members of their species. Incredibly strong and strictly patriarchal, chimpanzees resemble humans more than the other apes who are, on balance, more peaceable. With the refinement of scientific knowledge on the genetic relationship between *Homo sapiens* and chimpanzee species, Western cultural media has included chimpanzees more frequently.

In contemporary Western culture, chimpanzees have often been utilized as comedic relief in film.[119] In the 19th and early 20th centuries, chimpanzees were kept in zoos to mock human behaviors because of their physical similarities and willingness to adopt human behaviors. These displays manipulated the chimpanzees and were abusive (Baratay, *Animal Biographies* 10; Sorenson 77), since apes, specifically chimpanzees, raised by humans often consider themselves to belong to human social groups (Baratay, *Animal Biographies* 87; Weil 8). Such chimpanzees do not bond well with other chimpanzees, often never becoming sexually attracted to other

[119] For a list of movies or television commercials, Cf. Sorenson, *Ape.*

chimpanzees. An example of such is Washoe[120] who had a large sign language vocabulary and after being sold to a zoo would often sign to humans outside of her enclosure to save her from the other chimpanzees (Weil 8). One could argue that cultural chimpanzee representations function to establish dominance over similar species, yet mocking human behaviors such as smoking cigarettes, drinking tea, and wearing clothing necessarily decenters the human. To see an ape replicate human behavior erases any clear line between humans and other apes. Turning to the novel, I briefly introduce Karen Joy Fowler and the critical reception of her novel.

Karen Joy Fowler is a popular American author who has published since the 1990s, beginning with science fiction and then moving into mainstream fiction. Her book *Jane Austen Book Club* was a New York Times best-seller that was adapted for film in 2007. Her second most popular novel is *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (henceforth *Beside Ourselves*), published in 2014. The novel won the PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. The popularity of Fowler's novel foregrounds my assertion that narratives about animals can be powerful voices in cultural discourse. While Fowler's novel may not be marketed towards an academic audience, its popularity imparts hope for the impact of animal stories in the 21st century since Fowler's novel targets a different audience than the other texts in my corpus and perhaps has a broader reach.

Beside Ourselves tells the story of Rosemary Cooke[121] and her family's journey towards atonement. The narrator, Rosemary, tells the reader that her family suffered trauma from the loss of a sibling at a young age. Her sister, Fern, did not die; rather her parents surrendered Fern to the university when Rosemary was five years old. The trauma of losing a sibling and child affects

[120] Born in 1965 and dying in 2007, Washoe was the first chimpanzee to learn sign language. She was socialized with other "talking" apes that used language spontaneously between humans and apes themselves (Herzfeld 145).
[121] Some scholars disagree whether Rosemary's last name is spelled Cook or Cooke in the academic literature on the novel, but very clearly, the correct spelling of her last name is Cooke (Fowler 11).

every member of the Cooke family. Rosemary's brother, Lowell, eventually disappears from their lives; Rosemary goes to jail in the novel's first ten pages; and her parents are deeply unhappy with their lives to the point that the father dies at an early age from the side effects of alcoholism. Their ominous loss is particularly striking because the narrator forces the reader to uncover what happened. The narrator announces that the book unfolds in a rather strange manner in that the story will commence from the middle and then return to the beginning and end at the end (2). The narrator's self-awareness unsettles reader expectations since she utilizes analepses to tell the reader past events in a fragmented way so that the pieces come together towards the end of the novel. Rosemary withholds the characters' identities from the reader to push the reader to investigate who Fern is. The reader does not even encounter the mention of any other animal until page 74 when Rosemary finally admits that Fern, her lost sister, is not human, but a chimpanzee. Rosemary emphasizes repeatedly that Fern is part of the Cooke family: "Fern was not the family dog. She was Lowell's little sister, his shadow, his faithful sidekick" (78). Everything for Rosemary and Lowell revolved around her, as a sibling, as a loved one: "'Remember how Fern loved us?' Lowell asked" (88). In the USA in the 1970s, some American families raised chimpanzees alongside their children, a practice known as cross-fostering. These chimpanzees were sometimes termed monkids (Sorenson 71). Cross-fostering followed the example of the Kellogg family experiment in the 1930s.[122]

[122] The Kellogg's family chimpanzee, Gua, and her life with them is analyzed in their book, *The Ape and The Child: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Influence Upon Early Behavior.* One can find a different account of Gua's life in Eric Baratay's *Animal Biographies*, which includes also Gua's biography and attempts to reconstruct her life in a way that does not center around human actions. Gua was born in 1930 in Cuba and then sent to the United States to be a test subject at the Yerkes' Anthropoid Experiment Station in Florida. She lived with the Kellogg family from June 1931 to March 1932 and then returned to Yerkes' laboratory until her death at a young age from pneumonia in December 1933.

Beside Ourselves can be read as a text that centers on the definition of family, but it also expands what a family is, in that the familial diction is altered to include other animals. Familial diction appears to have species-specific connotations, as exemplified by the fact that Rosemary withholds vital information from the reader until nearly a third of the way into the novel. She simply refers to Fern as a "sister" for an extended part of the novel before the reader learns of her species. The word "family" is similarly crucial to the novel in expanding the term to also encompass how humans form kinships with other animals. If one reads the novel as a family novel, then other more sentimental qualities of such a relationship should be read into the novel as well; the Cooke family is reunited despite their strife, and they do heal, but at great cost, the father's life and son's criminal record.

Many scholars have analyzed *Beside Ourselves* along the lines of the trauma of losing a family member, regardless of the family member's species. Matthew Calarco argues that the text is primarily about the problems with language and how one can have better kinships with animals if one does not overly focus on language as the criterion to engaging meaningfully with one another ("Boundary Issues" 620) and instead privilege our "indistinction" with animals (633). Gabriele Dürbeck posits that *Beside Ourselves* represents childhood trauma, explicating how the loss of a sibling affects families. Such a reading critiques any notion of a categorical human-animal divide (336). Both readings have been expanded on by other scholars to encompass the main protagonist's critique of language (Barrett 389; Gordon 260). My intervention is located at the level of narration and the protagonist's description of her family with multispecies siblings as a potential future for humans and other apes. While other scholars have highlighted the way that Rosemary's voice directly addresses the reader, no interpretation of the novel's narrator has discussed the various fictional and factual statuses of the many vignettes throughout the novel. An intertext for *Beside*

Ourselves is Kafka's short story "Ein Bericht." Each chapter of the novel is preceded by an excerpt from "Ein Bericht." The novel and the short story are not analogous since Rotpeter surmounts the anatomical differences that disable apes from using human language, but Rotpeter's and Fern's lives parallel each other throughout the novel with the section breaks. Fern unfortunately is robbed of her agency and is forced into life in a cage, which Rotpeter manages to avoid.

The masterfulness of *Beside Ourselves* is displayed in the use of first-person narration, which contains jarring narratological breaks. The narrator often utilizes a didactic tone in certain sections regarding animal experimentation in the United States. Others have noted the presence of such didactic tones in Fowler's text but attribute these to Rosemary's character rather than to breaks in the narration (James 591). Some paragraphs and sentences seemingly ignore the novel's plot to inform the reader about the status of animals in the United States in the past century. An example of this tone is the mention of stereotaxic devices. Rosemary describes instruments found in an Animal Liberation Front raid of a primate laboratory: "They took photos of vivisections for release to the press. They destroyed lab equipment, including a tool called the primate stereotaxic device — I didn't know then nor want to know now what that is" (Fowler 140). Rosemary knows what vivisections are and then does not question what the "lab equipment" is apart from the primate stereotaxic device. Her knowledge comes from press releases on the raid, but the narrative style forces the reader to expand their knowledge. This break in particular nudges the reader to learn what a stereotaxic device is, which halts reading the novel. Such breaks in the narration push the reader to take action for nonhuman apes since they openly criticize how people in the Western world treat animals.

There are moments when the novel could very well be a nonfiction text. The status of animals in the novel is identical to their status in the world; Fowler reaches through the text to

inform the reader about the status of apes in North America. On multiple occasions, Rosemary tells the reader about various experiments conducted on apes or other developments conducted on apes in the early 2000s. These sections do not reflect Rosemary's narration in the rest of the novel, which is broken up into internal monologues and memories, whereas any nonfictional material is explained thoroughly. These informational passages represent pauses in the diegesis where the reader is brought from the story to the real world, and then back again.[123] The text does make an effort to be critical through Rosemary tells the reader to act (Calarco, "Boundary Issues" 617; James 580), but the pauses that call the reader to action cannot fully account for the passages that transform the novel into a nonfiction text and then back again. The novel informs the reader about experiments on primates and animal rights in general, in a similar fashion to how a nonfiction text would accomplish such work, and then the narrative returns to Rosemary's family story.

Fowler achieves Fern's inclusion into a human family without anthropomorphizing Fern (Gordon 260; James 589). I agree with such readings of *Beside Ourselves* for a couple of reasons: Firstly, the reader is not given access to Fern's psyche. The reader does not ever see Fern in the diegesis because the novel's focus is on Rosemary's childhood recollections. Fern is closest to the diegetic present at the end of the novel when the reader encounters the heartwarming scene of Fern and Rosemary standing across from each other, separated by glass as if they were each other's mirror image (Barrett 393). But their separation is present also at the level of narrative time in that Fern is never in the present with Rosemary. In other words, Fern is outside of the narrative present, which suggests that other primates cannot share in life with humans but instead represent past iterations of the human. If chimpanzees are no longer research subjects in the diegesis of the novel

[123] Perhaps when the novel was published in 2014, these pauses in the diegesis were not noticeable, but to rely solely on a close reading of the text would forego other details in the novel.

and in the real world, perhaps they can enter the present with humans as companions instead of simulacra of humanity's past. The second way that the narrator declines to anthropomorphize Fern is by withholding vital information and details about the intimacies of their family life. Fern grows up with the Cooke children for years, and they become inextricably attached to her. This revelation of Fern's species shocks the reader because the language precisely bars access to knowing anything about Fern that would preclude her from being human.

Rosemary often writes that language did very little for her as a child and that language was her only advantage over Fern, who was capable of so much more (Barrett 380). In one of the central quotations from the book, Rosemary explains that "[l]anguage is such an imprecise vehicle I sometimes wonder why we bother with it" (Fowler 85). This passage appears shortly after Rosemary informs the reader that Fern is a chimpanzee, which highlights Rosemary's contention with language. For her, language's uses are often not helpful in communication, despite the way human civilization and thought privilege it. Rosemary misleads the reader into believing Fern is human using familial diction, which simultaneously genders Fern and places her in a family unit. The reader's privation typifies what scholars have commented on regarding *Beside Ourselves:* namely, that the narrator highlights language's uses and abuses.

Rosemary often bemoans the fact that humans rely on language so greatly, to whose failings Rosemary is also privy. For example, the Cooke parents told their children that Fern was given to a farm instead of living with them. But both children learn that Fern was not sent to a farm but rather sold to a laboratory[124] where "'…they treated Fern like some kind of

[124] Notions of family are complicated by the fact that Indiana University owns Fern. Rosemary's father was a psychology professor at the university who believed he could figure out a way of teaching a chimpanzee language by extending the time spent with a human child. Fern was owned by Indiana University, but her relationship with her foster siblings and mother reveals the complications of how other animals are incorporated into law. For the children, she is their sister; for the parents, she is their daughter and research subject; for the university, she is property.

animal'" (125). The word animal in this sentence reminds the reader of the power that the term holds (Derrida, *The Animal* 31). To refer to Fern as not an animal may be problematic since it then may infer Fern's superiority over other species. While one can highlight problematic words used in the dialogue, Rosemary remarks that language often fails, and one can never fully capture reality with it. One can only talk about the world through a medium darkly.

Rosemary's narration takes aim at human exceptionalism to deconstruct it. She often alludes to the constructed differences between humans and chimpanzees. Having been raised alongside a chimpanzee for most of her childhood, she feels that it is only a matter of integrating other apes into human social structures, but these social structures often disavow the similarities of other animals to humans. Her brother, Lowell, tries in his way to dismantle the current paradigm of human exceptionalism by destroying laboratories for the Animal Liberation Front. His activism destroys millions of dollars worth of equipment and frees animals, "[b]ut everyone agreed it was only a matter of time before someone was killed. Someone who mattered. Someone human" (141). Lowell's activism—ecoterrorism in a post 9/11 world (Dürbeck 333)—is considered to be a dangerous game to humans. Rosemary notes the concern with the violence against humans when the novel often documents disturbing experiments on animals. But as I have shown in the third chapter of my dissertation, animal death is devalued, whereas terrorism and political violence are perceived to be a larger threat to the United States than the "misery" that fuels the world (Fowler 232). Such a perspective may seem an overly pessimistic way to view life on Earth, yet it reinforces the point that kinship is not a utopic mode of living on the planet. As with all relationships, kinship requires sacrifice.

Human exceptionalism in the face of chimpanzees is difficult to maintain. Not only do they look similar to humans, but their natural family structures and activities are also deeply

familiar. Such similarities lead Rosemary to write: "If chimps used money and we didn't, we wouldn't admire it. We'd find it irrational and primitive. Delusional. And why gold? Chimps barter with meat. The value of meat is self-evident" (228). Rosemary pinpoints that humans seek to separate themselves from other animals because of their desire to be separate from the rest of the animal kingdom (James 586). The narrator reveals how tenuous human exceptionalism is as a rational framework (Dürbeck 335). Human exceptionalism is based on concomitant elements that are constructed into perceived superiority. In *Beside Ourselves,* the fragility of human exceptionalism allows for the forging of kinship across the species boundary.

As witnessed in *Sieben Sprünge*, an unfortunate connection between chimpanzees and humans is their proclivity towards violence. Chimpanzees, comparable to humans, do not often avoid confrontation in social situations. While Rosemary attends UC Davis, she attends a lecture for her course "Religion and Violence," in which the professor compares chimpanzees and bonobos. The professor tells the class about various scenarios witnessed by researchers in which a female chimpanzee was raped hundreds of times during her estrus and that the patriarchal power in their society lends itself to such acts that we, as humans, consider horrible (147-8).[125] The lecture then quickly turns to bonobos, who are thoroughly peaceful. The contrast between bonobos and

[125] The religion professor in the novel cites one of Jane Goodall's research assistants in Gombe without listing a source. I have sleuthed around for a possible citation knowing that the lecture happens in 1996 (Barrett 381) and that it would cite Goodall's research. To no avail have I been able to find the reference made in this lecture. Goodall does acknowledge the presence of coercion in sex with chimpanzees but only uses the word rape in quotations (Goodall, *The Chimpanzees of Gombe* 468). I assume the quotations are a strategy to mitigate anthropomorphism because the professor in the lecture does not make any gestures or attempts to consider rape as the exclusive property of *Homo sapiens*. The quotation marks in Goodall's seminal monograph and the absence in the novel evince the slipperiness of anthropomorphisms in the 21st century. Beyond this reference to Goodall's work, there has been very little written about rape in chimpanzees since it is difficult to determine consent (LaCapra 73). But there are indeed instances in human experiments on other animals that would be difficult to classify not as rape as such Harry Harlow's "Rape Rack" (alongside his other experiment to ascertain whether monkeys needed mothers, "The Pit of Despair). Cf. Deborah Blum's *The Monkey Wars* and *Love and Goon Park.*

chimpanzees reminds Rosemary, but also the reader, of the violent nature of chimpanzees, which is what led to Fern's exile from the Cooke family, when Fern killed a kitten.

Until now, Rosemary has not elaborated why Fern was sent away from the Cooke family. Lowell tells Rosemary that she had given his parents an ultimatum between her and Fern (222). The only apparent factor which led them to abandon Fern was the fact that Rosemary belongs to the species *Homo sapiens*, but the real reason is that the Cooke family became afraid of Fern. Before this, Fern and Rosemary ventured to an old barn near their house. When Rosemary hears a cat[126] from just inside the old barn and goes to investigate, and since Fern follows Rosemary all the time, Fern comes along to investigate. Rosemary finds that the cat has kittens and because cats and humans have long lived together, the mother cat allows Rosemary to pick up a kitten. Fern wishes to have a kitten too, but the cat does not recognize Fern's species. Rosemary then gives Fern a kitten after which the mother cat strikes at Fern who retaliates by throwing the kitten against a tree, killing it instantly. She told her parents the story but, once again in her laconic style, withheld vital information from the recipient. Firstly, she gave Fern the kitten, and secondly:

> …this is what I meant to say -
>
> That there was something inside Fern I didn't know.
>
> That I didn't know her in the way I'd always thought I did.
>
> That Fern had secrets and not the good kind.
>
> Instead I'd said I was afraid of her. (270)

Growing up with apes, or perhaps in more literary terms loss of innocence, complicates the ways that kinship with other apes can work. Rosemary learns by watching Fern kill a kitten Fern is a

[126] Rosemary's father detests cats because they are "the only animal that kills for fun" (246). This remark is deeply ironic coming from a man who fishes to relax.

complicated individual who cannot be understood fully. Rosemary's withholding of information leads to Fern's exile from the family, which then results in the whole family's traumatization by Fern's sudden departure and obfuscated destination. Moreover, kin relations are not utopic peace and cooperation, rather they are asymmetrical. Kinship is also not just between two species, rather they are nodes among many. There is no zero-sum outcome possible for life on the planet in the novel: "'The world runs,' Lowell said, 'on the fuel of this endless fathomless misery. People know it, but they don't mind what they don't see'" (232). While Lowell refers in this passage specifically to the scientific progress accomplished by experimenting on animals, all ways of life result in the death of others, whether plants, bacteria, animals, or other humans.

The sad commonality between humans and chimpanzees teaches Rosemary that Fern is an individual. While this commonality may seem to play against kinship's worth, especially if one of the central similarities between us and chimpanzees is violence, such thought would reduce the complexity of relations when Fern kills the kitten. The human "domestication" of cats has led to deep familiarity between the species (Meijer 113). Because of their old relationship, house cats and humans share a bond that leads to deep familiarity with each other, while chimpanzees and cats do not share such a bond. While the result is disastrous, just before the mother cat swipes at Fern, the reader witnesses the beginning of a new kinship between a cat and a chimpanzee. And with Fern and Rosemary's loss of innocence, the reader sees a similar process between a chimpanzee and a human. A new relationship forms on the novel's pages, and in this final scene, Rosemary's realization reminds the reader that kinship is not innocent; we do live on Earth after all. While there are other ways that this scene could have played out, the reader bears witness to the formation of new kinships. Growing up with apes reveals the ends of humanity and its potential transformation into a more pluralistic mode of living on Earth. There remains the possibility of

multispecies living in human society with other apes because we can change anthropocentric norms that exclude multispecies kin. These experiments openly excluded the chimpanzees from human life and others accepted them fulsomely into the family (Baratay, *Animal Biographies*). There is no reason an ape cannot live in a similar way to human beings, bearing in mind that there are singularities with each species and individuals.

Silent Subversion

Gorillas, the most distant of *Homo sapiens*' relatives, are the largest of the hominids, with adult females weighing up to 113 kilograms and males 227 kilograms. There are two major species, the Eastern and Western gorillas, which both live in Central Africa. The Eastern and Western gorillas and their respective subspecies are separated by the Congo River and its tributaries. An adult male silverback leads gorilla troops—the silver hairs are a sign of male maturity—and its members can number from three individuals to eleven. All subspecies are strictly vegetarian and often seek to avoid conflict whenever possible. Gorillas today are threatened by two major factors: habitat destruction and poaching. With their range often in developing countries, gorillas are losing much of their habitat to ever-expanding agricultural operations. As well, many gorillas are killed each year for bushmeat and medicinal ingredients. While these medicinal practices are parts of Indigenous traditions, with the destruction of habitats and the bushmeat industry, gorilla populations are generally unsustainable (Gott & Weir 23). The genus *gorilla* was not described in Western science until 1847 (32) although there are some gorillian depictions before then. Since then, gorillas feature in cultural representations largely as brutal beasts that will kill anything that gets in their way. Contrary to such beliefs, gorillas are strict vegetarians who rarely kill and when so, only to defend their troop from harm.

Gorillas have often been depicted with fearful representations such as King Kong who consumes Black women and finds white women beautiful. The prototypical image of a gorilla holding a woman originates with the French artist Emmanuel Frémiet's sculpture[127] "Gorilla carrying off a Woman," and has been transplanted into other gorillian depictions, especially King Kong. Anatomically incorrect, the gorilla is represented as a much larger bipedal that preys on women. Gorillas can indeed walk bipedal, but they only do so for short distances, preferring to walk on all fours. And while gorillas weigh more than humans on average, their stature is comparable with a human's. The representations of gorillas in Western culture are fictional beasts created in the image of the gorilla, rather than any danger that gorillas pose to humans. *Auswilderung* challenges older paradigms of gorilla representations and proposes new ways to view and cherish gorillas.

Bettina Suleiman is a German writer who has published one novel, *Auswilderung,* published in 2014, short stories, and essays that have appeared in various newspapers or anthologies. Her writing interrogates human and other ape relations and the similarities between them. For instance, she has written on nonhuman art with the example of Congo[128] and how art connects all simians.[129] Beyond her interest in apes and humans, she defended her dissertation on philosophy's reaction to Israeli-Palestine conflicts at the Universität Leipzig. Since she is a relatively unknown writer, who has authored only one book, *Auswilderung* has received no academic attention. While it may not be the most poetic book about apes from the 2010s, its themes and unique use of punctuation prove worthy of analysis. Reviews, the few there are, are generally

[127] Frémiet's sculpture "Gorilla Carrying Off a Woman" was awarded the prestigious Medal of Honor in 1887 when displayed in Paris (Gregersdotter et al., "A History of Animal Horror Cinema" 19). Despite the high praise for this sculpture, his earlier sculptures of the same theme were often censored or found to be too explicit.
[128] Congo was a chimpanzee born in 1954 in the wild and died in 1964 in the London Zoo. His prolific period happened between 1956 and 1962 when he painted over 400 paintings (Herzfeld 140).
[129] Cf. Bettina Suleiman's nonfiction text in translation "Lessons from the Human Zoo."

favorable of the book, stressing Suleiman's commitment to questions of rights for greater apes but also the ethics involved in research on apes. Each book in this chapter problematizes apes in experiments, but Suleiman's novel interrogates how the research on apes changes the researcher (Schmartz, "Auswilderung"). The relationship between researcher and simian subject is reminiscent of Haraway's idea that research on animals is an act of co-creation between researcher and subject (*When Species Meet* 59).[130] While contentious, Haraway argues that it is not torturous experiments that constitute the co-creation of knowledge, but rather ethically created experiments that seek to enlighten both humans and other animals. As a trained biologist, her research interests lie in analyzing species and their interactions with other species such as humans. Haraway's ethical experimentation is difficult to justify given the past atrocities committed against many animals. In regards to the laboratory environment, some reviewers have noted how Suleiman maps gorilla social structures onto supervisor and doctoral student relationships (Kämmerlings, "Sind Gorillas"), but her supervisor's laboratory embodies a culture of the survival of the fittest (Schmartz, "Auswilderung").

Auswilderung assumes Marina's first-person perspective; Marina is a primatologist, who specializes in sign language and apes. To the rest of the research team, Marina is an outsider: no one laughs at her jokes, and she simply wishes to become more important, but her work on ape sign language is disregarded in favor of the studies her boss conducts on releasing the gorillas (14) and their lack of futurity (134). Her outsider status among her colleagues allows her to abandon herself and her humanity to draw closer to gorillas. Initially, she communicates with the gorillas that live in Germany in her role as an envoy, but when her boss Griffin has plans for the gorillas

[130] Haraway's reasoning has been criticized heavily in the Critical Animal Studies world, particularly by Richard J. White and Simon Springer's "For Spatial Emancipation in Critical Animal Studies" and Zipporah Weisberg's "The Broken Promises of Monsters: Haraway, Animals and the Humanist Legacy."

in Germany to be removed from the country, she is no longer needed, since sign language becomes a taint on the gorillas. One reviewer defines the novel as "ein findiges Gedankenexperiment" (Hayer, "Im Paradies"), but while he does not accept any of the fictional elements of the book, he does argue that the empathy in the novel is compelling. One could deem the gorillas wearing human clothing to be fantastic, but it would be possible to put clothing on gorillas, but fortunately such practices did not feature in early zookeeping, and with zoos' turn to conservation as opposed to entertainment, there are no clothing-wearing gorillas in zoos today.

The gorilla protagonist Yeh-teh is a very welcoming gorilla. During their first meeting, Marina recalls "[o]ffenbar lud er jeden zu sich ein. Er war wirklich viel zu vertrauensselig" (44). His openness allows Marina to feel more comfortable with him and initiates their relationship. Marina is brought onto her supervisor's project Gorillas Return to Innocence, otherwise called Gorti, as a sign language consultant, but Marina's first contact with another species, which happens earlier, overwhelms her: "...übersetzte ich mit zitternden Händen..." (63). Marina's excitement in this scene is electrifying and compels the reader to think about how linguistic communication is not the exclusive property of *Homo sapiens*. If the species boundary is permeable vis-à-vis linguistic communication, then any definition of human or anthropocentrism would prove flawed and cannot remain a valid worldview. One cannot think of linguistic communication as a unique property of humans as much as contingent on biology. For instance, other apes do not have a larynx which is crucial in speech production. The presence of a larynx would be a difficult point on which to base all human exceptionalism. Although I discussed language in my first chapter, one cannot reduce communication to speaking. Paul's connection with birds does not lead him to speak in the language of birds, rather he simply seeks to listen. Secondly, the reader sees how Marina communicates visually. "Und ich verstand, dass ich gerade mein erstes Gespräch mit einem

Vertreter einer fremden Spezies führte. Kein einseitiger Monolog wie mit den Kaninchen meiner Kindheit, keine vage Ahnung einer Kommunikation, wie wenn ich die Körpersprache unserer Katzen imitiert hatte. Ein richtiger Austausch von Gedanken. Magie" (63). Marina establishes meaningful contact with another species for herself. Marina witnesses that her species is not alone on Earth, since Marina has encountered another interlocutor, albeit from another species. The first conversation with the gorilla is a meaningful moment for Marina, which reconfigures her perception and relationship with gorillas.[131]

Marina's and Yeh-teh's characters may have been inspired by the story of Koko[132] and Francine Patterson. In 1972, Francine Patterson started to teach Koko a variant of American Sign Language called Gorilla Sign Language. Koko was the first gorilla to learn sign language and learned over a thousand signs. Communication is not reduced to some invisible set of signs and signifiers; rather all interspecies communication is grounded in the physical, most especially in the body, reinforced through Marina's hyperattention to the spoken word. Throughout the book, much spoken German is "misspelt" to capture the dialect and intonation of the speaker: "'Lass disch nisch hetzen', hatte Sandra Voß gesagt; ihr ich-Laut deutlich koronalisiert, typisch für Rheinland" (62). Since the novel is focalized around Marina, the reader reads what Marina hears and attributes it to bodily movement.

As their relationship grows, Marina wishes to show Yeh-teh the world outside of the laboratory. She secrets Yeh-teh from the lab for a journey to the wilderness around Leipzig. Her trip with Yeh-teh outside of Leipzig marks her realization that her relationship with Yeh-teh and

[131] The attentive reader will notice that Marina's inner monologue contains a certain amount of speciesism against non-primate species. While I note her preference for gorillas over her interactions with cats and rabbits, I do not think this discredits the character or the novel.

[132] Koko was born in the San Fransico Zoo in 1971 and passed away in 2018. Koko was famous for her companion feline named All Ball (Main), her friendship with Robin Williams, her paintings, and her usage of metaphor (Herzfeld 140).

his with her improve both of their lives. When Marina takes Yeh-teh out of the laboratory and into "nature," they become remarkably similar. Marina says to Yeh-teh: "'Du bist hier keine größere Sensation als ich'" (93). The animal-human boundary begins to leak when outside of the confines of human exceptionalism, which is manifest in the novel as the laboratory. While Marina taking Yeh-teh on an expedition may seem to infantilize the ape, kinship renders life palatable for both Marina and Yeh-teh. Instead of confinement in the laboratory, Yeh-teh is given the opportunity to walk alongside an evolutionary cousin. Their expedition to the forest outside of Leipzig is not the last journey on which Marina accompanies Yeh-teh.

Griffin believes that the gorillas living in Germany must return to the wild under the project Gorti. In the novel's diegesis, gorillas were integrated into some human families in Germany but after a while, Griffin tries to return to "innocence" in the wild. Their return to innocence is tragic because Griffin envisions himself to be the gorillas' savior by returning them to the "wild" where they have never been because it befits how gorillas should appear on Earth. The first pages of the novel depict the deaths of multiple gorillas that are returned to the wild as part of Gorti; the gorillas displaced by Gorti wish to return to their lives with humans and chance death to return to living with humans. Despite the failure of past attempts to rewild the gorillas, Griffin advocates for the gorillas to be moved to Gaia, an artificially created island in the Red Sea to which the gorillas are sent. Since the novel is focalized around Marina, the reader reads Griffin's project with disdain because Marina sees all the gorillas as individuals. While such discussions are absent from the novel, there is no longer or perhaps has ever existed a clear demarcation between humanity and nature. To return the gorillas to innocence brings two problems: first, that "the wild," is innocent and untouched, and second that humankind is the sole force on with the capacity to remove and restore innocence. Griffin's project supposes that humans have deflowered the gorillas and should

be made innocent. Marina though realizes that the gorillas cannot simply abandon the past lives that they lived and the humanness they achieved to return to some idealized "innocence." "Jeder Umgang mit Tieren, auch deren vermeintliche Befreiung und Aufwertung, dient am Ende menschlichen Interessen. Die Natur wird immer instrumentalisiert" (Kämmerlings, "Sind Gorillas"). The irony that Griffin manifests is not lost on the reviewer, who notes that Griffin wishes to suppose that animals have no past or future, thus humans must make decisions for them. The gorillas' names are taken away in the experiment and replaced with numbers only to be referred to as subjects (Schwartz). Her relationship with Yeh-teh is so that she must accompany them. He, alongside other gorillas, is forced to move to the island not for his benefit but for Griffin's benefit. Marina takes the journey with the gorillas. The novel ends with Marina staying on the island with a colleague to live alongside the gorillas there.

Since the goal of Gorti is to separate humans from gorillas, Marina lives outside of the gorilla enclosure. Only once does she enter the gorilla enclosure to try to save a drowning gorilla, which results in a standoff. The standoff only functions because of the past reception of gorillas in Western culture. For the rest of the team, the gorillas have become animals to fear, no longer in human clothing. Because of their perceived aggressive nature, Yeh-teh, like many other gorillas before him, is thought to be aggressive. Marina, however, views the gorillas as kin, thereby ignoring the sexual anxiety surrounding the gorillas. Marina's abandonment of her job and life in Germany points to another way forward to living with our nonhuman kith and kin. While *Auswilderung* is a fictional text, and I doubt Suleiman wishes for the reader to leave professional life behind to live alongside apes; rather the novel posits a vision of the future in which we let apes live as they are while maintaining the relationship and forging new kinships. Marina abandons her professional life in Germany to cultivate relationships with gorilla kin.

Since Suleiman represents gorillas in a realist mode, Marina can only communicate with Yeh-teh through sign language. Yeh-teh appears to have been taught sign language as a juvenile and ostensibly used it in his daily life in Germany before his move to Gaia. *Gebärdensprache* is the German word for sign language; formed from *Gebärden* and *Sprache, Gebärden* usually refers to signing in sign language but can also be understood as gestures.[133] Thinking of *Gebärden* as gestures reconfigures sign language with other animals to embody more than just memorized movements. The physical presence of sign language allows for a new layer of significance to be passed along. Sign language operates on the visual field and presents another medium to understand linguistic communication between animals on Earth. *Auswilderung* reflects scientific work that has been done with gorillas and sign language. Apes who have learned sign language often have large vocabularies of a thousand or more signs (Cavalieri 20; Herzfeld), can form novel sentences (Uddin 112), and employ metaphor (Weil 8). There exist anatomical differences between humans and other apes, yet humans and all other primates share hands, which is the vehicle of sign language.

The novel unsettles the written form with its quotation of ape sign language. If sign language and spoken language are used simultaneously, spoken language stands in quotation marks while sign language does not, but if only sign language is used in a conversation, the signed stands in single quotation marks. Suleiman's punctuation convention contributes to my reading of the novel in that simultaneously different modes of communication take place but do not inhabit the same space:

Willkommen, antwortete Yeh-teh.

[133] *Auswilderung* does not refer to sign language in relation to deaf culture or any other disability, but another novel that involves teaching gorillas sign language, Peter Goldsworthy's 1995 novel *Wish* interrogates the intersection of deaf culture and sign language beyond the species barrier. *Wish* is about a genetically modified gorilla who learns Australian sign language at an incredible rate and eventually wishes to mate with a human.

> Wahnsinn. Ich hatte gewusst, dass es funktionierte, aber wenn man es selbst erlebt, ist es etwas ganz anderes.
>
> Willkommen, sagte er noch einmal, langsamer deutlicher, als wollte er drauf Rücksicht nehmen, dass ich ein bisschen langsam war. Erwartungsvoll sah er mich an, und ich riss mich zusammen und übersetzte: 'Willkommen.' (63)

The two languages, spoken German and sign language, are separate modes—if not layers—of communication. However, the punctuation convention changes later in the novel as Marina becomes more familiar with Yeh-teh, which breeds possibilities for resistance. Marina obscures Yeh-teh's statements from Griffin by withholding verbal translations of sign language (72). Griffin is adamant that the gorillas need to be returned to nature as if they were never in contact with humans. While his vision may seem idealistic albeit naïve, he truly desires control over the gorillas since he threatens to cut off communication between Marina and Yeh-teh if he is not immediately told what Yeh-teh signs (75). There are more subversive elements to sign language since it operates on a different plane than spoken language, thus it breaks standard conventions of communication and opens a unique pathway to the subversion of carnophallogocentrism. While it may seem odd to invoke Derrida's term at this juncture, Marina and Yeh-teh find themselves in a situation where a male professor, who sees sign language as lesser, sacrifices the gorillas' lives in Germany for a romanticized dream of the apes returning to wild innocence. Even the location Griffin chooses is nowhere close to their natural range. The novel offers a vision of discourse alongside other animals that can subvert dominant power structures.

In one conversation with Yeh-teh, Marina mistranslates the sign for angel, thinking instead he means bird.[134] She figures out that she has mistranslated the word angel to bird because she does not understand what Yeh-teh tries to convey. Her mistranslation depicts two major breaks in human exceptionalism vis-à-vis language: firstly, Yeh-teh can utilize metaphor. Given that he believes in no religion which has angels, he utilizes the shared sign for bird and angel. While the novel does not analyze the similarity between the signs and how the concepts of bird and angel are related in metaphor, the reader is not given access to Yeh-teh's perspective so the reader must remain open to the possibility that Yeh-teh can use metaphor. The second major element is that sign language between humans and apes is open for mistranslation, which may seem to be a major flaw in their communication, but rather her mistranslation reveals the significance and range of expression present in ape sign language. Marina mistranslates Yeh-teh's speech because she assumes that Yeh-teh can only refer to the physical world, which is overturned because of his use of metaphor. Marina then realizes that Yeh-teh is not a creature constrained to instinct, rather he shares another vulnerability with humans that they are constrained to representations, that they are prey to language. While this encounter is fictional, it mimics scientific work with apes and thereby represents the possibilities that lay open in the world for cross-species kin.

Here sign language returns as "lautlose Sprache" (266). "Lautlose Sprache" is powerful because it at once makes it clear that the gorilla is speaking with her. Secondly, it defies the representation that gorillas possess a "furchtbare Stimme" (190) proliferated throughout the book. Thirdly, it marks a form of communication of cross-species communication, which could draw comparisons to Paul Arimond's attentiveness to bird's vocalizations in the first chapter. Beyond

[134] In my first chapter, I wrote about David Abram's claim that birds were the prototype for ideas about angels (*Becoming Animal*).

the subversive elements of sign language, the physical and visual nature of sign language forms the basis for a material-semiotic relationship (Haraway, *When Species Meet*). *Auswilderung* opens yet another layer of the concept to think about how gestures are a cultural material-semiotic gesture that can be shared between species, which opens new opportunities to live and forge kinships with other apes.

This chapter has depicted three ways that contemporary fiction has explored the formation of cross-species kinships. Draesner's novel offers a vision of how humans are already apes and that there is no separation already present between humans and other apes. This vision of a multi-hominid future begins with the assumption that despite our minor physical differences, humans and apes suffer the same traumas and require comparable care. Stach's vision of "Affen für Alte"—or perhaps "Alte für Affen"—reveals possibilities of living together that rely on our similarities. *Beside Ourselves* reveals new avenues towards integrating apes into human families to create multispecies units; there are fundamental differences between the species and both sides must be willing to make compromises for kinship to flourish. While Fern must sacrifice, and suffer, to be close to humans, Rosemary sheds all notion of human exceptionalism, which stands as a radical redefinition of the human. Suleiman's novel *Auswilderung* depicts a future of life alongside apes since the protagonist lives her life on Gaia outside of the gorilla enclosure and human society. These visions of cross-species kinships each bear their fruit.

These novels may seem to suggest that humans must force other animals to live with us. But what these novels leave tacit is that these forms of kinship do not force other animals to live with humans, rather all of these animals are already forced from their social groups and brought them into human social structures. In this way, these forms of kinship could be considered a form of atonement for other animals forcibly removal and exploitation in research. The form of living

alongside may seem expedient, since there is no direct contact, but as it stands, it may be where we can most actively live and work with animals today. This last form of kinship restricts human intervention in the lives of other animals and limits interaction with them. But as I have stressed, mutual appreciation is crucial to any form of sustainable living in the 21st century. In any case, living alongside other animals may be of exceeding benefit to other animals, who often fall victim to human curiosity and will-to-know.

Because of these visions of kinship with other primates, we witness the characters start to abandon anthropocentrism and renounce human exceptionalism in these novels. Stach inserts a chip in his brain to become more than human, Rosemary in *Beside Ourselves* grows up with a chimpanzee and acts differently from humans, and Marina abandons her professional life in Germany to live alongside gorillas. Renouncing human exceptionalism represents the inverse of the Kellogg family's anxiety that their boy could become chimpanzee-like (Dürbeck 326 & 332). While these are all actions one can readily take today, the weakening of human exceptionalism is the immediate fruit of renewed kinships with other animals. The novels in this chapter have shown that apes lead singular lives. The apes in these novels are assumed to have all these traits that are considered exclusive property of humans. Because these apes have them, we can live with them in diverse ways that do not preclude the importance of other animals. Each text in my dissertation reveals the meaningfulness of animals and their similarities to humans. Considering these similarities, we cannot avoid living with and cherishing other animals as we have otherwise done for so long. But this chapter offers a path towards abandoning anthropocentrism that can inspire us to change ourselves and our social structures to accommodate all forms of kinship across species lines.

Conclusion

In my dissertation, I have demonstrated that abilities and faculties that were once considered proper to humans are the property of animals more generally in contemporary German literature. In each chapter, I have analyzed literary texts that posit that animals possess language, futurity, and death just as do humans. By acknowledging such traits to be proper to all animals, these texts suggest that humans can forge meaningful kinships with other animals. Although my corpus encompasses primarily German texts, similar tendencies also figure in recent English-language texts such as Julia Leigh's *The Hunter* and Karen Joy Fowler's *We are Completely Beside Ourselves*. My dissertation thus uncovers a growing engagement among international authors with the variously posited and contested differences between humans and other animals and the crafting of literary protagonists who form new relationships with them. In this way, my dissertation adds to the Literary Animal Studies discourse by revealing an increasingly prevalent approach that Western authors adopt to depict animals in the 21st century. My research highlights the predominance of first-person narrators that move audiences to identify with the close relationships the characters cultivate with animals and reconsider how they perceive these. My dissertation refuses to essentialize literary animals into mere symbols or signs. Those literary animals I analyze are all diegetic, meaning they are treated as 'real' animals in the texts' respective diegeses, and yet carry symbolic value as rich characters who communicate, shape the world, and die just as do human characters.

The first characteristic discerned among these literary animals is language, analyzed in Norbert Scheuer's *Die Sprache der Vögel*. In philosophy and cultural thought, it has long been postulated that humans are the only lifeform on Earth with access to *logos* (Calarco, *Thinking* 8; Derrida, *The Animal* 142). If humans possess exclusive access to *logos*, only humans can respond

to the world whereas animals only react to the world. To challenge this sentiment, my chapter marries two definitions of zoopoetics, Driscoll's and Moe's definitions, thereby strengthening each of the definitions to better account for new possibilities of writing about animals in the 21st century. I have expanded the zoopoetics debate by focusing primarily on the goals of writing about animals. Scheuer's novel exemplifies my intervention through its focus on the body. Through listening to birds, the protagonist Paul Arimond finds escape from the frustrations of the NATO mission to Afghanistan but also from an anthropocentric worldview. Paul's desertion of the Bundeswehr and associated life in the desert reveal a sharp turn away from anthropocentrism redoubled by his acknowledgment that other animals can respond to the world. This turn manifests itself in his writings about birds but also in his bodily actions. Stripping away clothing and writing about Ambrosius' theory about human evolution from avian ancestors testifies to Paul's bodily response to bird language. Paul's bodily response reaffirms how crucial my retorquing of Driscoll's and Moe's definitions of zoopoetics is to future work in Literary Animal Studies.

Another faculty that philosophy has denied animals is that of futurity. Some Western philosophers have argued that other Earthly animals cannot change the world to their liking and that animals therefore cannot conceptualize the future (Lippit 62). I illustrated that the novel's protagonist Egidius Arimond acknowledges that bees shape—form—the world in their own way in Scheuer's 2019 novel *Winterbienen*. The bees' world-forming was evinced through the bees' economic resistance in the face of the Third Reich. Their resistance is portrayed by sustaining Egidius, a man living with a disability in a time when the Nazi regime persecuted and murdered those who were differently abled. In another scene, bees form an army to protect their hives in which refugees hide, whom Egidius secreted to the Belgian border. Without the bees' presence, the refugees would have been discovered in this scene. In this way, I assert that the bees shape the

world around them with their presence and hive defense instincts. The last means by which the novel evinces the bees' world-forming capacity is through parallel narratives: Bees sustain Egidius' forefather Ambrosius Arimond after his exile from a monastery. Since the bees in Egidius' care shape world politics and economics, their effects on the world are evident in the lives they sustain. Thus, it stands to reason that bees also possess futurity. Between chapters one and two, I demonstrate that Norbert Scheuer's recent literary work seeks to rework German diction surrounding animals to decenter humans from language. My research marks a unique contribution to the discourse on Scheuer, which has often sought to tabulate his realism and his categorization of *Heimatliteratur* (Erb, "Brot und Seele" 11; Jung 167). My intervention marks new avenues to read and interpret Scheuer's work as nonanthropocentric, thereby revealing new ways to explore the author's corpus.

The third trait posited as "human" in these literary depictions of animals is death. In my third chapter, I explicate how Western philosophers argue that animals do not die, supporting this claim on the grounds that they cannot understand death as humans do in Heideggerian thought (Sternad 55-56) or because they are desingularized (Despret, *What Would Animals* 82), which I argue creates the illusion that animals are clones of one another. Considering other cosmologies and traditions of philosophy, I clarify that animals die just as humans do because their deaths leave behind absences. While this may seem simplistic, the literature explores ways to mitigate animal death through acknowledgement and mourning of absences. In Christoph Ransmayr and Martin Pollack's short story "Wolfjäger," the absence of wolves from the Polish countryside reveals that the wolf hunters could perpetuate their hatred of wolves only by papering over the void they had created. Without their hatred of wolves, the characters in the short story would be compelled to acknowledge the ecological damage done to the Carpathian Mountains and beyond. Ransmayr and

Pollack, in turn, also reference the extermination of Jewish people in Eastern Europe during the Second World War. The anthropogenic extirpation of wolves is not necessarily to be understood as analogous to the Holocaust, but the text posits the political and cultural structures that allowed for the Holocaust are similar if not identical to those that led to the extirpation of wolves in Poland. Ransmayr's and Pollack's collaborative short story provides the disciplines of German and Literary Animal Studies with a text that balances the contradictory cultural status of wolves with the aftermath of the Third Reich. Julia Leigh's *The Hunter* represents how absences are created by killing animals from the perspective of the killer. *The Hunter* depicts the destruction of an entire species and how the world mourns the loss of each species. Leigh does not clarify on whom the most blame should rest for the state of the world, but the character M is particularly productive to examine in Animal Studies because he typifies the complacency of environmental destruction and thereby functions as an archetype of carnophallogocentrism. My research reveals how these absences figure in the emergent trend explored in my dissertation. This trend recalibrates our perceptions of animals, facilitating acknowledgment of how meaningful animal lives and deaths are. These shared traits that I have highlighted throughout my dissertation signal the attentiveness of the human narrators toward the animals present in the texts.

My final chapter culminates in a synthesis of these traits and suggests that if we can agree that other animals do not live in a state of privation then one should be prepared to form new kinships with them. This chapter sketches three forms that kinship with other animals can take in literature. The first shape kinship can take is to simply live with other animals based on mutual need. In Ulrike Draesner's *Sieben Sprünge vom Rand der Welt,* Eustachius Grolmann attempts to found a cross-species care home*,* only for his hopes to be dashed because other characters in the novel fear equality with other animals. His vision suggests that humans and other animals can live

with one another with little to no change because all animals, inclusive of *Homo sapiens,* possess mutual needs. Draesner's layered novel furthermore contrasts perceptions of other animals and those of people with disabilities, which opens my research to scholars in the field of Disabilities Studies. The second form of kinship was to integrate animals into human social structures and thereby destabilize human exceptionalism, which I explored in Karen Joy Fowler's novel *We are all Completely Beside Ourselves.* Rosemary Cooke, the novel's protagonist, critiques how human social structures privilege human desires, suggesting that if we are to live with other animals, we must change human social structures to accommodate other animals wholesomely. *We are all Completely Beside Ourselves* takes issue with anthropocentric social structures, such as the anthropocentrism of language and human conceptions of temporality, both of which block the integration of other animals into human social groups. With Rosemary's challenges to anthropocentric social structures, the reader is shown new ways that we can interact and live with cross-species kin. In Bettina Suleiman's *Auswilderung*, I explicate a third form that kinship takes in contemporary German literature: to live alongside other animals. This form of kinship assumes that, while humans harbor incommensurable differences with other animals, one must be wholeheartedly prepared to share Earth if we are to combat anthropogenic climate change in a meaningful capacity. *Auswilderung* advocates for humans to live alongside other animals while maintaining relationships with them. These three forms of kinship proffer new ways of reading German literature about animals and understanding how authors conceive of other Earthly lifeforms. My thesis reveals new ways that literature has included nonhuman life and decentered humans on Earth. This decentering allows for the abandonment of anthropocentrism necessary to live with other animals and, along the way, perhaps make better decisions to accommodate all life on Earth. As explored in my fourth chapter, kinship is not the ultimate goal that should be sought

in human-animal relations. Rather it marks a way forward that does not rely on anthropocentrism or human exceptionalism to forge a way of life. In accepting that animals and humans share traits, we cannot base our lifeways on human exceptionalism without harboring willful ignorance towards animals and their abilities.

The animals that I examined throughout my dissertation are crucial species for consideration and for engaging in potential relationships for a variety of reasons. Birds have long figured in human art and literature because of their vocalizations. Furthermore, birds remind us of our contrasting physical limitations since only in more recent history have humans been able to replicate avian flight. Similarly, humans do not possess the means to easily pollinate plants, thus we rely on other species to accomplish such work. In this case, bees are of crucial importance in many ecosystems—a detail I underscored several times with the contemporary example of Colony Collapse Disorder. The extinction of apian pollinators would spell disaster for billions of *Homo sapiens* and countless other fauna and flora species that rely on bee pollination. While dichotomous in human cultures, wolves and thylacines are crucial to represent in contemporary literature considering the ways they balance ecosystems. As evinced with the example of lupine reintroduction to Yellowstone, the presence of predators is integral to maintaining healthy ecosystems worldwide. But despite their status as keystone species, many wolf species and wolf look-a-likes have been driven to extinction because of negative cultural depictions. While there is little one can do to reverse extinctions, acknowledging that animal deaths leave absences marks a productive beginning to renewed relationships between predators on Earth, inclusive of *Homo sapiens.* Our shared ancestry with apes has helped nations grant apes human rights, which marks a wonderful start to rethinking our relationships with other animals. In my textual analyses, I recount how similar we are to apes and apes to us in evolutionary theory and literature. These

similarities help affirm, once more, that we can live and thrive with nonhuman others on Earth and that anthropocentric thought only results in the denial of such rich relationships.

Throughout my dissertation, the majority of my corpus of literary stories take place during a war or confronts memories of a war. The prevalence of war in these texts is attributable to human conflicts with animals. As explored in my third chapter, there are some animals with which humans have long maintained antagonistic relationships. These antagonistic relationships usually result in the wholesale killing of various species for little to no cause. Some scholars have termed this the war against animals that humans wage in order to maintain superiority over them (O'key 3-4; Wadiwel 24). The war against animals has led to extensive environmental degradation and species endangerment and extinction, highlighted throughout my dissertation. The situation we find ourselves in today may appear hopeless. Still, by abandoning human exceptionalism in the face of traits common to humans and other animals, there is hope for renewed relationships in 21st century literature and beyond.

The second reason for the extensive presence of war motifs in this corpus is found at the limits of human expression found in war. At the end of *Die Sprache der Vögel*, Paul deserts the Bundeswehr to connect with birds. His search for nonhuman logos signals a willingness to connect with other animals and listen to them. The attentiveness to the other and the willingness manifested by Paul Arimond permeate the rest of my dissertation. The characters in my corpus manifest attentiveness towards other animals to notice the traits and characteristics shared across species lines. Without such attentiveness, for example, Egidius would not have noticed the bees' action in shaping the world. Having looked at the similarities that occur across species lines in literature, there is a renewed call to rethink our relationships with other animals. Currently, our relationships with other animals are fraught with exploitation and recklessness that sideline the desires of other

animals and result in their suffering and death. Perhaps changing how we treat other animals will change the way we treat other humans.

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