Defamiliarising the Zoo

Representations of Nonhuman Animal Captivity in Five Contemporary Novels

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English in the University of Canterbury

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2012

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank sincerely my supervisors Dr. Philip Armstrong and Dr. Annie Potts, whose remarkable way of engaging with and valuing my ideas while at the same time encouraging me towards new inquiries has ensured that writing this thesis has been both challenging and rewarding. Their fascinating under- and postgraduate classes first introduced me to Human-Animal Studies and as supervisors their vast knowledge and perceptive insights in this field have been invaluable and inspiring. I will always be grateful to have had the opportunity to work with them.

Studying human-animal relationships and the captivity of nonhuman animals in particular has been fascinating but also deeply troubling at times. I am grateful to those who have contributed ideas and supported me along the way:

I am grateful to my family for their input and support and for always taking an interest, especially my Mum and Dad and my brothers Ezra and Madison (who was there to make me feel brainy when I needed encouragement).

Thank you to my friends Susan and Melissa, who inspire me both as fellow students and fellow women.

Finally, I am grateful to Juliet for her companionship and reminders to take study breaks, and to my partner Tony, whose encouragement, humour, practical support and discussions about nonhuman animals helped me every day of this journey.

Abstract

While human-animal relations have always been part of human cultures the public zoo is a relatively recent phenomenon that reflects very specific elements of Western cultures' modern ideas about, and relationships with, nonhuman animals. By becoming such a familiar part of popular culture the zoo naturalises these ideas as well as certain modes of looking at and interacting with animals. In this thesis I argue that as literary works contemporary novels provide a valuable defamiliarisation of zoos which encourages the re-examination of the human attitudes and practices that inform our treatment of nonhuman animals. Through my analysis of J.M. Ledgard's novel *Giraffe*, Diane Hammond's *Hannah's Dream*, Lydia Millet's *How The Dead Dream*, Valerie Martin's *The Great Divorce* and Ben Dolnick's *Zoology* I explore the inherently anthropocentric social construction of nonhuman animals in human discourses and the way the novels conform to or subvert these processes. I demonstrate that nonhuman animal characters are constructed through a process of identification which involves naming, recognising the existence of their emotions and mediating their nonhuman forms of communication. Anthropocentric tendencies both aid and hinder this identification, for example the human valuing of sight over the other senses that sees eyes become important literary symbols and the gaze a crucial part of interaction and attributing meaning. Gaze and observation are also fundamental to the concept of the zoo where human treatment of nonhuman animals is represented in visual terms in the relationship between powerful spectator and disempowered object. Drawing on texts from multiple disciplines I argue that the anthropocentric nature of socially constructed nonhuman animals in human discourses means that any study of these animals is actually concerned with the human ideologies and processes that create them; as a site of captivity that markets wildness and freedom the paradoxical nature of the zoo provides the literary setting for an exploration of these themes.

Introduction

Over the past century zoos have become a pervasive part of Western societies; present in television shows, children's books, films and product advertisements the concept of nonhuman animal captivity is a normal and familiar one for most people and the zoo visit a popular recreation activity. In response to changing public attitudes to nonhuman animals and the natural environment zoos have had to reposition or rebrand themselves over the years and today maintain their status in society by identifying themselves as modern-day conservation arks. This thesis aims to investigate contemporary representations of, and ideas about, the captivity of nonhuman animals by analysing five recent novels set in and around zoos or animal collections. These texts (hereafter referred to as "zoo novels") are *Giraffe* (2007) by J.M. Ledgard, *Hannah's Dream* (2008) by Diane Hammond, *How The Dead Dream* (2009) by Lydia Millet, *The Great Divorce* (first published in 1993) by Valerie Martin and *Zoology* (2007) by Ben Dolnick. My approach to these novels will take the form of poststructuralist contextual analysis based on the belief that although fictional, works of literature are historically contingent and by understanding their socio-cultural context a reader may more fully understand the meanings of the text. For example if, as Graham Allen notes, a novelist uses a word like "God" or "justice" or (with more particular significance to the novels discussed here) "natural" or "artificial", these words do not have "clear and stable meanings" but rather "they embody society's dialogic conflict over the meaning of words" (Allen, 36). Consequently such texts remain "thoroughly connected to on-going cultural and social processes" (36).

In writing this thesis I adhere to the view of "culture" associated with contemporary cultural criticism, which insists that any one culture, for example that of contemporary North America, actually comprises "a set of interactive *cultures*, alive and changing, rather than

static and monolithic" (Murfin & Ray, 66, emphasis in original). In accordance with this belief my thesis adopts the theory of intertextuality proposed by Julia Kristeva that "any given work" must be viewed "as part of larger fabric of literary discourse" (Murfin & Ray, 176), but expands the scope of this concept to include the discourse of many forms of culture by including, for example, scientific, feminist, historical, pop culture and journalistic texts as well as literary texts in its discussions. This approach is an intrinsic part of the interdisciplinary field of Human-Animal Studies (HAS); as Margo DeMello notes, in HAS, "we study the interactions between humans and other animals, wherever and whenever we find them" (5). In taking this approach I follow the example set by critics such as Randy Malamud, who, in his book *Reading Zoos*, describes his approach to exploring the representation of zoos in literature:

> A valuable confluence links my postmodern scholarly approach - which asserts that the boundaries between literary culture, popular culture, and nature are highly permeable - and scientific sensibilities that challenge positivist received ideas about how people and animals relate to each other. ... Humanists, I think, can explore and expose the conditions of the world we live in, while scientists can work to repair the damage this exploration will reveal.
>
> (36-7)

The realisation that boundaries between different fields of study are "highly permeable" is an important one because only with the various evidences provided by these different discourses can we begin to understand the way in which, for humans, nonhuman animals are "socially constructed" (DeMello, 10). As Margo DeMello explains:

> On one level, animals surely exist in nature. However, once they are incorporated into human social worlds they are assigned to human categories, often based on their use to humans, and it is these categories (lab animal, pet, [zoo animal,] and livestock) that shape not only how the animals are seen but also how they are used and treated. … Moreover, these classifications are not neutral—they are politically charged in that they serve to benefit some (humans, some animals) at the expense of others (other animals).
>
> (DeMello, 10)

In this sense nonhuman animals themselves are intertextual subjects in human discourse; as Adrian Franklin notes, "[a]nimals convey meanings and values that are culturally specific; in viewing animals we cannot escape the cultural context in which that observation takes place" (62). The novels examined in this thesis were all published in the US or UK in the last two decades, a time when Western ideas of both humanity and animality were undergoing radical change. Franklin observes that twentieth century Western modernisation was categorised by a sanguine belief in human progress in which nonhuman animals figured mostly as resources and "the despoliation of nature, ethical uncertainties in dealing with animals, pollution and so on ... were seen as the inevitable, regrettable compromise" in achieving a fair and prosperous human society (3, 54). However the post-war period saw a growing disenchantment with the ideals of modernism and the decades after the collapse of the modernity project in the 1970s were "characterized by greed, loss, instability and change," until by the end of the century "a generalized misanthropy ha[d] set in" (55, 3). In the ensuing confusion of postmodernism nonhuman animals were increasingly seen as fellow victims of humans' greedy and destructive tendencies. "The speed with which habitats were being destroyed, species were becoming extinct and populations endangered by pollution" were identified with processes of "human destructiveness and ascendancy over animals" (55). As Chapter Three of this thesis will show, zoos were not unaffected by these changing attitudes and were forced to adapt in

light of the public's more sympathetic view of nonhuman animals. It is from this climate of misanthropy that the zoo novels examined here were written.

Because they necessarily contain elements of or reactions to the culture in which they are written, novels could be said to show us a reflection of ourselves. As Marcus Bullock notes, "Walter Benjamin defines that special quality of any serious work of art, which he calls its 'aura', as our 'investing it with the capacity to return our gaze'" (Bullock, 101, citing Benjamin, 188). Although Benjamin may not have included all novels in his account of "serious work[s] of art", a good novel will show us a reflection of a part of ourselves; our identity, beliefs, morals, or assumptions about what is true. For this reason as we read a zoo novel we may experience different layers of reflected meaning. We are aware of the captive animals and their otherness; subsequently we are also aware of our own identity, which is also that of the novel's human characters, as human captors. However the animals in the novel, both human and nonhuman, are constructed by a human author, as are any interactions between the two and the locations where it takes place; therefore we may also see in the novel's "aura" not the animal gazing back at us but the gaze of the human construction itself.

This special perspective afforded by novels is a lot more accessible than other texts purporting to educate about nonhuman animals. As Malamud points out, the language literary writers use is "immensely more interesting" than that used by zoo authorities to "identify and ... contextualize animals" (*Reading*, 10). Rather than conveying abstract information the function of literary language is to encourage a response in the reader, for example through the evocation of empathy or the defamiliarisation of naturalised concepts or behaviours. "Defamiliarisation", a concept attributed to Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky, proposes that "perception becomes automatic once it has become habitual" (Hawthorn, 68); in other words, that which is familiar is no longer noticed. Literary writing is an important antithesis to this "habitualization" (68), as Keith Oatley observes: "a principal function of literature is

to make the familiar strange, so that one's attention is drawn to it, so that one notices it" (Oatley, 74). In this way literary writing may add interest by complicating accounts of human-animal relationships.

In an interview about his latest novel author of *Giraffe* J.M. Ledgard, who works as an African correspondent for *The Economist*, was asked "[w]hat can you accomplish writing fiction that you can't accomplish in journalism?" Ledgard's answer to this question demonstrates his awareness of literature as medium which can inform and be informed by its wider cultural context.

> Perspective. Who are we as a species? What is our relationship to each other? These are not questions for the news desk. Journalism is fascinated with the moment, and with things which are breaking. Literature looks at the whole. It can be cosmic. I steer closer to non-fiction than some novelists, but I believe literature has a power to inform and endure beyond journalism.
>
> (Ledgard, "Q&A")

Journalism, while influenced by contemporary political and social context, strives to give a factual account of a single moment in time, free, as Ledgard goes on to note, from "your ego, or at least your adjectives." Literature, however, encapsulates an historical, cultural moment; as Ledgard explains, "in literature, the 'I am' is very large" (Q&A). Literary authors are able to (consciously or subconsciously) draw on a wide range of sources, including journalism; [1]

[1] After hearing of the "Czechoslovakian giraffes" the journalist Ledgard gathered the story through various interviews with people involved in the still-secret massacre (Ledgard, 325-8). In the 1990s the author of *Hannah's Dream*, Diane Hammond, worked as part of the Keiko project, a team working to rehabilitate the "killer whale" featured in the *Free Willy* films. In 2001 she saw television footage of the emotional and highly publicised parting of Shirley the elephant and her carer of twenty-two years Solomon James Jnr. following Shirley's relocation from a Louisiana zoo to the Hoehenwald Elephant Sanctuary. "Out of this remarkable moment, and informed by my experience with the Keiko project, Samson Brown and Hannah were born" (Hammond, v-vi). (A full account of Shirley's arrival at the sanctuary can be found at http://www.elephants.com/shirley/shirleyArrival.php). *The Great Divorce* author Valerie Martin also briefly describes aspects of her research process, in particular hours spent at the Audubon Park Zoo in New Orleans

by being necessarily rooted in the socio-cultural climate in which they are written literary works may "look at the whole".[2]

Perhaps because of these qualities novels have become an important part of Western cultures, both documenting changes in cultural values and also affecting significant changes in societal attitudes. When describing the history of Western societies' attitudes to nonhuman animals, several texts use the contemporary novels of the period to evidence the reigning cultural perceptions of animals of the time.[3] In his essay "The Moral Ecology of Wildlife", Andrew C. Isenberg gives the example of Ernest Thompson Seton (author and illustrator of a series of books about wild animals published 1898-1917) using "the literary tools available to him at the time ... to animate nature" (Isenberg, 50). However Seton's contemporaries "scorned his sentimental, anthropomorphized animal stories as deliberate misrepresentations of wildlife" (50). As Isenberg records, when Seton claimed that his stories are true, the nature writer John Burroughs called him a "nature faker". "True as romance, true in their artistic effects, true in their power to entertain the young reader, they certainly are; but true as natural history they as certainly are not" (Isenberg, 50, citing Keller, 153-54). As a naturalist Burroughs obviously disdains stories about wildlife written merely to "entertain" the reader and feels that romantic accounts of animals are "fake" by definition. However Isenberg disagrees: "Seton's animals, if anthropomorphized and therefore unreal, were nonetheless 'authentic' in the sense that they were apt projections of modern anxieties..." (50-1). Similarly, the novels explored in this thesis give us an insight into some of the attitudes to nonhuman animals that exist today in our own contemporary culture.

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accompanying an employee "on her extraordinary rounds" and asking her questions ("Acknowledgments", not paginated).

[2] For the remainder of this thesis any citations attributed to Ledgard refer to his novel *Giraffe*.

[3] (For example Isenberg, 49; Baratay & Hardouin-Fugier, 204).

The other important role of novels in our society is to affect real change in attitudes and values. Literature has been shown to be effective in changing both individual and cultural perceptions of nonhuman animals. Barbara Hardy Beierl's article "The Sympathetic Imagination and the Human-Animal Bond" explores how human attitudes toward animals in literature can enhance the "psychological and emotional link generated in the text when empathy develops among humans, animals, and readers" (213). This "empathy" is the ability to put oneself in the place of someone else (human or nonhuman) and see and feel as they do. Beierl found that

> [i]maginative literature, featuring both human and animal characters, conveys this bond to the reader through sympathetic imagination and becomes an effective vehicle through which to support both psychological shifts and cultural changes in the reader's perceptions. The psychological shifts produce greatly heightened empathy and a deepening of the human-animal bond in the individual reader; the cultural shifts result in the growth of a less anthropocentric sensibility toward animals in the larger society.
>
> (213)

These "psychological shifts" in how a reader thinks about animals obviously rely on the effectiveness of the text in representing the human-nonhuman bond; of course a reader's ability and willingness to feel empathy for at least one of the novel's characters is also a necessary for a shift to occur. In J.M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals*, the protagonist Elizabeth Costello asserts that "there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination" (Coetzee, 35). She says that this is so because humans and nonhuman animals already have something very important in common: we are all "full of being" (32). Costello argues that our "minds follow our hearts," and her argument is further explained by Beierl: "If we have closed our hearts to animals, our sympathetic imagination can restart by reading literature that induces empathy

and compassion. If literature is successful in this role, then perhaps philosophy will follow" (Beierl, 219). This power of empathy is also expressed by Malamud in his book *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls*, in which he argues that merely *having the desire* to imagine the experience of a bat (or other nonhuman animal) is valuable, despite the fact that this imagination must be limited by our own existence as humans rather than bats (7).

In the zoo novels the reader is encouraged to imagine the experience of a variety of different nonhuman animals. In Diane Hammond's novel *Hannah's Dream* Hannah is an elephant who lives in the small American Max L. Beidelman Zoo, formerly the private animal collection of a local eccentric, where elderly Samson (Sam) Brown has been caring for her over 40 years. Sam and his wife Corinna do not have any children but did suffer a miscarriage before Hannah arrived at the zoo; privately they believe Hannah is their daughter reborn and think of themselves as a family. At the zoo Hannah lives in a concrete barn with a small yard and at night she is shackled to the wall and locked inside. The Browns bring her treats, watch television with her, visit her after hours and try their best to heal her captivity-induced ailments. Sam has a recurring dream in which he is an elephant standing alone in a field; when other elephants come over the ridge and greet him he knows that he is home: it is the Browns' dream for Hannah. When young, highly trained zoo keeper Neva arrives at the zoo she is appalled at Hannah's living conditions and together with Truman, an administrator for the zoo, she and Sam conspire to move Hannah to a pachyderm sanctuary in California. Despite desperate measures by the zoo's director such as firing the staff involved, changing the locks to Hannah's barn and hiring extra security it is too late and the group manages to break Hannah out of the zoo and transport her to the sanctuary.

In Ben Dolnick's *Zoology* Henry is a college drop-out whose life at home with his parents is becoming claustrophobic. When his successful older brother gets him a job in the Central Park Zoo's children's zoo he is excited to be able to move to New York. Henry finds

working in the zoo physically demanding and decidedly unglamorous however over the summer he becomes familiar with the animals there, in particular a goat called Newman whom he sees as his friend. Near the end of the summer during a power blackout in the city Henry becomes distraught over a failed romance and breaks into the zoo to see Newman. He decides they both deserve some fun together but when he takes Newman out into the park a sudden noise frightens them both and the goat runs away. After a frantic search by zoo staff the next morning Henry is forced to confess what he's done and is banned from the zoo. He returns home to his parents' house and Newman is never heard of again.

J.M. Ledgard's *Giraffe* is based on the true story of a group of giraffes who were captured in Kenya in 1971 and taken as a herd to Czechoslovakia (ČSSR). After the long journey by lorry, train, ship and barge the giraffes arrive at a zoo in a small town where the zoo director has fantasies of creating a Czechoslovakian giraffe subspecies. A young local woman visits the zoo to see the giraffes and makes friends with the keeper; she learns to recognise each giraffe and visits them often. Four years later the herd has increased to forty-nine when test results at a secret State laboratory indicate the giraffes may have a disease which could spread and kill livestock, threatening the economy of ČSSR. Orders from the Communist authority are clear: the laboratory must erase all trace of the test results and the zoo must destroy every one of its giraffes. The novel is told by multiple narrators and the disturbing scene of the giraffe massacre is told and retold by the scientist, the shooter, the zoo visitor and the butcher. Finally the giraffes' broken bodies are put into the "Destruktor", a machine which turns them into dry cattle feed.

The Great Divorce by Valerie Martin was first published in 1993 and follows the lives of three women in New Orleans, two in the present day and one in the 1840s. Ellen and Camille, a vet and her assistant, work in the New Orleans Zoo, while Elisabeth lives with her violent husband on his estate. Elisabeth, seeking to free herself from her controlling and

abusive husband, visits a voodoo practitioner and one night becomes a wild cat who attacks and kills her husband. After being found (in human form) over the dead body she is later hanged for his murder. In the present day the two modern zoo employees are both going through personal struggles – Ellen, the divorce from her husband and Camille, depression and abusive relationships – while at the same time facing mysterious illnesses in the zoo's inhabitants and the reality of the modern conservation crisis and the mass extinction of nonhuman species. Cynical Ellen is frank about these issues but resigned to her role on the sinking ark of the zoo. Camille meanwhile suffers from psychotic episodes which give her the sensation of transforming into a large predatory cat. When her favourite cat at the zoo dies depression overwhelms her and she commits suicide.

The impending extinction faced by extraordinary numbers of Earth's species is also a theme in Lydia Millet's *How The Dead Dream*. T. is a successful finance broker whose main ambition in life is to acquire wealth. A series of tragic events – killing a wild coyote while driving in his car, the death of his girlfriend, his mother developing dementia – force him to confront the idea of loss and when one of his property developments accidentally causes the extinction of a species this concept of loss takes on vast proportions. T. becomes obsessed with nonhuman species and the rate at which they are disappearing. He begins to travel around the country, breaking into zoos after hours to spend time with the captives within: primate houses, butterfly sanctuaries, even visiting natural habitats and scientific research stations in the field. The final stage of the novel sees T. visit one of his developments in Central America where he decides to visit the natural habitat of the jaguar. When his guide suddenly dies T. is lost alone in the jungle and the novel ends with him struggling to find his way out.

In each of these novels the zoo is a place wherein human characters' encounters with the captives challenge not just their notions about nonhuman animals but also their concepts

of humanity and what (or who) an animal is. Chapter One of this thesis will explore the status of nonhuman characters in the texts and how this is expressed in human discourse through naming, recognition of nonhuman experience and emotion and the representation of nonhuman forms of communication. The concept of "speciesism" will also be introduced as a term for both anthropocentric discrimination against nonhuman animals and also the human propensity to consider nonhuman animals in terms of whole species rather than as unique individuals; a scene from *How The Dead Dream* will be analysed as an example of one character's first step to overcoming his speciesist worldview. In Chapter Two the authors' use of nonhuman gaze will be discussed along with the connotations of representing nonhuman animals as gaze-bearing subjects. In the third chapter the evolution of modern zoos will be examined in the context of Western societies' changing views of nonhuman nature; a particular focus will be the zoo novels' portrayal of captivity. In exploring these novels I found two poems by Rainer Maria Rilke valuable for their interpretation of the nature and captivity of nonhuman animals; these poems are "The Eighth Elegy" and "The Panther."

Finally, a note on the use of generic pronouns in this text: I consider use of the pronoun "it" inappropriate when referring to nonhuman animals for reasons that will be briefly discussed in Chapter One. In an effort to avoid this problem, and also to subvert "those elements in language which perpetuate a view of the male as a norm or universal and the female as deviant or individual" (Mills, 65), I will throughout this thesis use feminine generic pronouns when referring to an unspecified or generic animal referent.

Chapter One

Expressing the Other: Literary Construction and Recognition of Nonhuman Animal Identity

> As Berger (1980:2-4) reminds us, animals are silent, they have secrets and cannot reveal their thoughts. We have always to interpret, to provide the meaning for what we see, and for that we can only draw upon human values, emotions and interpretations. When we gaze at animals we hold up a mirror to ourselves.
>
> *Franklin, 62*

> If a lion could talk, we wouldn't be able to understand [her].
>
> *Wittgenstein, 235*

> "I am aware"
>
> *Ledgard, 9*

Much of the way we "socially construct" nonhuman animals involves defining them by their perceived differences from us; characteristics such as language, emotions, culture and even mind are usually seen as *human* traits. In accepting exclusively human definitions of these characteristics we position ourselves precariously atop the archaic Great Chain of Being, from which point our perception of other species is obstructed and distorted. For example to define "language" purely in terms of human speech is to ignore the multisensory reality of nonhuman animal communication including those olfactory and gestural modes which lead ethologist Marc Bekoff to conclude that animals "*do* indeed speak in their own ways" (*Strolling*, 23, emphasis in original). In "The Speech of Dumb Animals" Helen Tiffin describes the exclusivist human outlook and points to "imaginative writing" as way of questioning this mindset:

> Inextricably connected as it has been to concepts of animality, this triple lack—language, consciousness, and mind—is best interrogated by the kind of imaginative writing that questions, through the ways in which it represents animals, the dominant science paradigms whose contrasting generic approaches deliberately foreclose knowledge other than their own.
>
> (149)

Due to this anthropocentric tendency to see traits such as language in exclusively human terms many writers anthropomorphise nonhuman animals' communication as human speech while others interpret it for their readers. This chapter will explore the portrayal of nonhuman communication and emotions in the zoo novels; it will discuss elephants as an example of animals who clearly possess not only emotions but also what must be called "culture", and it will introduce the term "speciesism" as a useful term for this form of anthropocentrism and consider various ways of overcoming it in order to recognise the identity of individual nonhuman animals.

In the passage at the start of this chapter Adrian Franklin contends that nonhuman animals act as a mirror for humans. An important practice facilitating this conceptualisation is the habit of projecting human "social structures and morality" onto nonhuman animals to provide a "socially constituted animal world" version of human society through which humans can reason or "resolve social tensions, conflicts and contradictions" (Franklin, 9). In such instances nonhuman animals are reduced to metaphors, a process also noted by Helen Tiffin who observes that speaking animals in modern texts are usually limited to those for children and to satirical works for adults which rely on the anthropomorphism of the nonhuman characters, such as political cartoons and fables (140). Tiffin points out that even serious texts with speaking nonhuman characters risk being interpreted as mere allegories in which "we characteristically *read through* the animals to the humans for which they are

merely masks" (141, emphasis in original). Such readings remove nonhuman animals as independent subjects so that even when they speak we do not hear them; as Franklin points out such anthropomorphic exercises reveal far more about ourselves than about nonhuman animals.

In any case the speech of nonhuman animals in literary texts is necessarily anthropomorphic since it is written by a human author. As John Berger notes, the fact that humans do not share a verbal language with any other species prevents us from "reckoning" with nonhuman animals.

> Language allows [humans] to reckon with each other as with themselves. ... But always [a nonhuman animal's] lack of common language, its silence, guarantees its distance, its distinctness, its exclusion, from and of [humans].
>
> (4)

As I hope to show humans have developed many ways of striving to "reckon with" or know other species, but importantly Berger here makes the jump from nonhuman animals' "lack of common language" with humans to their status as "silent". This "silence" is of course not really silence at all – animals communicate and express themselves in myriad ways – but rather the propensity of humans to disregard the agentive discourses of other species. Language has long been seen as one of the defining characteristics that sets humans apart from "dumb" animals and nonhuman modes of communicating are usually considered crude and inferior. Tiffin observes that "[s]ubaltern *positioning* itself can confer voicelessness on an erstwhile 'speaker'" (139, italics in original); the exclusion of the consideration of animal expression from human discourse has the effect of *rendering* nonhuman animals silent, and rendering their subjectivity absent from human literary, scientific and legal texts, which in turn ensures their continued marginalisation. Consequently nonhuman forms of expression

are often ignored in literature, and animals' lack of speech equated to a narrative voicelessness which in turn serves to reinforce the superior position of humans in the text. In *Giraffe* Emil notes, "It is as Aristotle said, we differ from animals in our ability to speak. We alone can speak of the Communist moment, of justice and injustice. It is our speech which passes judgment on animals, excommunicating eels and condemning giraffes" (Ledgard, 253).

The nonhuman animals represented in the zoo novels do express themselves in ways that, although distinct from human speech, are often mediated by the narrator, as when for example we are told that the elephant "Hannah sucked on her trunk apprehensively" (Hammond, 126); however it is often left to the human characters to interpret and respond to (or ignore) their discourses. The nonhuman animals in *The Great Divorce* are represented almost exclusively from the point of view of the women characters, in particular Ellen the zoo vet and the young keeper Camille. Any sounds uttered by the zoo animals in the text are understood as representing an aspect of their wild otherness. When Camille stands in the big cats' night house they watch her as they eat and keep up a low continuous growl. None of the cats has ever been in the wild, "[y]et the sounds they made seemed to come from a dark continent…" (Martin, 10).[4] After cutting apart the dead body of a baby monkey to try and determine what killed him Ellen thinks about his last moments. "She remembered the little monkey's terrified expression when he approached the kennel. He had lost control of everything—even his agile, responsive musculature had deserted him—and all he could do was scream" (29). The screaming of animals is a recurring sound in this text, expressive of

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[4] As well as the obvious connotation of Africa, "dark continent" is also a term used by Freud to describe feminine sexuality as psychoanalytically unknowable (Irigaray, 48). Freud emphasises the passivity and otherness of feminine sexuality, and Mary Ann Doane observes that "the dark continent trope is hence invoked in the context of a return to the motifs of castration, lack and envy. … A metonymic chain is constructed which links infantile sexuality, female sexuality and racial otherness [as of 'dark' Africa]" (210). In the context of Valerie Martin's novel the term "dark continent" evokes colonial conquest and the subjugation of nature represented in the caging of the wild cats but also the sexuality of the three female protagonists who each suffer sexual abuse, violence or betrayal at the hands of their male lovers.

the captive animals' desperation. Lying at night in the dark prison of her bedroom Camille imagines the big cats in their night house at the zoo, and wonders if they have roaring matches, "filling up the closed compound with a magnificent sound no one ever heard?" (25). Flo the leopard issues "a strangled, terrified sound, something between a snarl and a scream" when she is prevented from leaving the night house (152). These explosions of sound are a violent last resort for the zoo animals who are mostly seen by the reader not in their exhibits but in their small concrete night houses. Not only do the cats have limited contact with each other but they do not have any of the physical contact or communication with humans that some of the animals in the other novels have. Their style of vocal communication is easy for the reader to interpret and reflects the style of their existence: lonely, isolated and desperate.

The animals Henry meets in the children's zoo in *Zoology* do not express this poignant, raw desperation. In fact, Henry has difficulty understanding many of the nonhuman animals he works with. When Henry first visits the kids' zoo the director Paul introduces him to the potbellied pigs Chili and Lily, and explains that Lily overeats and so has to be watched. Henry stands contemplating Lily's unbelievable obesity and thinks that she looks miserable and trapped by her enormous body. "Lily grunted when I touched her, and it could have meant, 'Help!' or it could have meant, 'More!'" (Dolnick, 43). Although he can see Lily standing in front of him and can hear her grunt, Henry still does not comprehend what she wants or how she feels. Instead, in trying to understand what Lily is feeling Henry compares her with obese humans he has seen in the city. This human perspective is his only frame of reference for trying to understand Lily's pig experience.

At the beginning of his article "The Animal *as* Animal" Steven W. Laycock first addresses the nature of questions themselves, more specifically, the human tendency to seek the satisfaction or obturation of a question with an answer. Laycock describes the difference between what he calls "digital questions" and philosophical interrogation; the former are

questions that “can be ‘answered,’ abolished as questions, by repletion,” in this case the nature of the answer is determined by the nature of the question which demands it. However this “determinate expectation” is absent from philosophical interrogation, in which “the answer does not ‘fill’ or satis/fy” a preestablished interrogative space but rather this space has the “ability to absorb multiple responses” (Laycock, 273). By approaching the communication of nonhuman animals with predetermined expectations of meanings or function any genuine understanding will be obscured by that which we expect to see. In considering the famous question posed by Thomas Nagel “What is it like [to be a bat]?” Laycock proposes that in expecting an answer “the legitimation of human paternalism reduces the question of animal subjectivity to trivial decidability. The question is annihilated through repletion. And our openness to the animate Other is thereby foreclosed” (280). To speak for nonhuman animals is to “impose” our voice on their silence, when instead we must “offer the animate Other a vehicle whereby it may express itself” (277). The form of this “vehicle” is not suggested by Laycock, who instead directs the reader to remain receptive and be content with endless questions.

> Busy imposing our own views, speaking for the animate Other, we are not genuinely open, receptive. And it is no excuse to complain that in attending the Other’s voice we hear nothing, that we must speak for the Other because the animate Other cannot speak for itself, that the screen would be blank without or own projection. Let the screen lapse into imageless blankness. Let all lapse into silence.
>
> (279)

However this silence, perhaps better understood as that which is unfathomable to the human listener, is not expressionless and so, paradoxically, the silence is voice:

> We know that '[t]he absence of language is pregnant with the pure possibility of all language' [Harold Coward, 1990]. If silence or incomprehensibility is the expression of the animate Other, we must nonetheless attend. And we must find a voice in this silence, this silence *beyond* 'silence,' that is not our own.
>
> (279)

The communication by nonhuman animals in the zoo novels offers various ways of understanding the expressions of "the animate Other," including those who are, and choose to be, literally silent. When Henry is feeling low in *Zoology* Newman cheers him up by scrambling to get close to him. "The rest of the goats made noises when they wanted something—they'd open their mouths, standing perfectly still, and force out a hard, angry *myaaaaaaaa*. Newman, though, was completely silent" (Dolnick, 59, italics in original). Henry finds relief in Newman's muteness. He sees it as a meaningful silence, as if Newman is choosing not to make any noise because his personality is more docile and friendly than the other "angry" goats. Henry sees Newman as a personality who displays his emotions through actions rather than noises.

In J.M. Ledgard's novel the giraffe Sněhurka describes hearing the Czechoslovakians discussing her readiness to be transported and how her temperament will enable her to survive in their zoo. "I have no answer to this; I do not even bleat, and so am condemned to further captivity, not only of time and gravity, but in the passage across also" (Ledgard, 12). Sněhurka watches other giraffes protest, like a young bull who "rushes about it fits. He snorts. He draws back his neck and shoulders in a bow and bares his yellow teeth like a wild ass" (11). Although the bull's discourse is not expressed in a "shared language" the Czechoslovakians understand his discontent and release him. Later, Sněhurka regrets her silence and timidity: "If only I had stood against the Czechoslovakians as the young bull giraffe did" (12).

In Diane Hammond's *Hannah's Dream* there is a very close relationship between Hannah the elephant and her keeper, the elderly Sam Brown. Sam, who had never seen an elephant when asked to look after Hannah, has had no training but has been with Hannah for over forty years. When he tells the young, highly trained new keeper Neva that he thinks Hannah has rheumatism like him Neva asks how Hannah shows that she is pain. Sam replies "She doesn't show it, she just comes right out and says it. She's a talky thing, talks all day long" (Hammond, 30). After being with her for so long Sam is used to talking to Hannah and interpreting not only her sounds but also her expressions and behaviour as replies. They have developed a shared language.

While Sam and Hannah's shared language developed through their close personal relationship, over the last decades primatologists have documented various more 'scientific' attempts at human-animal communication. Some of the most well-known of these involved teaching apes to communicate with humans using techniques such as American Sign Language or a symbols chart (Wynne, 112; Noske, *Humans*, 137), systems that obviously centre around human forms of communication. Such anthropocentric experiments often overlook the challenges faced by nonhuman animals in adapting to such unnatural forms of expression. This is something that Dr. John Potter discusses in the documentary about dolphin slaughtering entitled *The Cove,* which he was involved in as an underwater acoustic consultant.

> It sometimes amazes me that the only language which has been extensively taught to dolphins is a version of American Sign Language. Which of course– you use your hands, right? And so you have all these wonderful signals and people use their hands to give messages to dolphins. And this somehow kind of misses the point, because dolphins don't have hands. So this is inherently a very one way process. And it's this anthropomorphic "we have something to teach them" or "control *them*", and perhaps we should be looking at what they can give to us.
>
> (*The Cove*)

Although not common such cases of "two way" discourses have occurred. In "Meeting the Other" anthropologist Barbara Noske describes several instances of humans adapting to the language of other species, including the fascinating accounts of human children found living with various nonhuman species in the wild. Noske reports that over 50 cases of human adoption by animals have been recorded over the last 600 years (*Humans*, 162). One such case was observed in the 1960s by Jean-Claude Armen (alias Auger), who in the Sahara came across a child living with a herd of gazelle. Armen observed the herd over a period of time and even came back two years later to find the boy still living with the nonhuman animals. Through his quiet observation Armen slowly became aware of the existence of social rules within the group, and of their "coded" messages to each other in the form of "…the stamping of heels and hoofs, contortions of the neck, movements of the head, motions of the tail, the ears, the horns, wrists and fingers (in the boy's case)" (*Humans*, 166). The human boy behaved like a gazelle and participated in their communication despite some technical setbacks.

> Some gazelle signs the boy could not make because he did not possess the right “linguistic” equipment. He would imitate gazelle ear signals with his facial muscles and some tail signs with finger movements, having no tail of his own and his ears being covered with hair. The gazelle seemed to have had no trouble decoding these signs, which shows that the boy and the gazelles between them had constructed their own discourse.
>
> (166)

This mutual discourse is a rare glimpse into what life might be like if humans had the patience and dedication to develop meaningful communication with members of other species. While to Armen the communication of the gazelle seemed like “coded signals”, to the animals and the human boy who lived with them, these codes weren’t obscure but a clear language. Even in zoos, where the keepers spend most of their days looking after and hopefully caring for their charges, such a close bond has, to my knowledge, never been recorded between human and nonhuman. Reasons for this may become obvious in the third chapter of this thesis when the nature of zoos and zoo-keeping is discussed.

Nonetheless in several of the zoo novels we can see relationships in which, despite the absence of a mutual language, an emotional bond (like that of Hannah and Sam in *Hannah’s Dream*) has formed between human and nonhuman characters. In *Zoology* Henry’s affection for Newman develops into a friendship and when Henry is lonely and hurt it is not his brother or his parents that he turns to; instead he goes “to talk to Newman” (217):

> Newman stood up with lots of slow stretching. He spun around twice and then lay back down with his head in my lap, as casually as if it were an accident. I was so grateful that I choked up. “Oh, you’re one good boy,” I told him. “If you ever need to talk, just come find me, we’ll figure out what to do. I come to you, you come to me. Deal? Nothing too big, nothing too small.” I scratched him hard on his lower back, and he lifted his head and bent it way over backward, smiling with his lower teeth pushed out.
>
> (Dolnick, 218)

Henry implies that Newman not only cares for him but also acts coyly by pretending accidentally to offer Henry his head to comfort him. This interpretation of Newman’s behaviour is clearly influenced not only by Henry’s humanness but by his emotional state, however it also seems clear that Newman has some sort of connection with Henry as he repeatedly approaches him with no other apparent motive than to share his company.

Yet it is important to note that these close emotional connections in the novels are made almost exclusively with domestic animals. In *How the Dead Dream*, *Zoology* and *The Great Divorce* T., Henry and Ellen all have close relationships with their canine companions at home. They confide in them, care for them and wonder what they’re thinking. However this is definitely not the case with the zoo animals represented in the novels. Apart from Hannah and Newman, both of whom have regular contact with their human companion, none of the zoo animals in the novels make any sort of intimate connection with a human character. To those familiar with the nature of zoos the reasons for this may be obvious and the immediate effect of this lack of connection in the novels reflects that which may be seen in reality: the animals are rendered blank, empty of meaning. Each of the zoo animals comes to represent an idea ascribed by the human viewer. In *The Great Divorce* the big cats represent the last remnant of true wildness while in *How The Dead Dream* the zoo animals also represent for T. all that humans have taken from the world; for him the zoo animals are the “last animals”

(Millet, 166). In *Giraffe* Amina the somnambulist discusses the giraffes with their keeper. The keeper describes to Amina the difficulty of early taxidermists, who sought for ferocity but were unable to make a giraffe seem menacing. They merely looked "[l]ofty, alien; above all blank" (Ledgard, 190). The blankness that the keeper is talking about here is purely in terms of the human meaning that can be ascribed to the expressions of the giraffes. This reflects the tendency of people to view nonhuman animals in strictly anthropocentric terms, describing not the animal's own identity but how much or how little this resembles the human. Matthew Calarco points out that "[e]ven when the traits of being 'arational' or 'nonspeaking' take on a positive value, as they do in Rilke and Nietzsche, these traits are still nothing more than the negation of supposedly unique human characteristics. To say that the animal lacks them says very little positively about what the animal actually is and how it differs from other entities" (Calarco, 36). The distinctive pattern on the giraffes' hides, their towering height and even their deep eyes which draw so much attention from the human characters: each of these features is overshadowed by their muteness and inscrutable facial expressions. The "blank" nature of the giraffes merely describes their ability to resist the human traits that people attempt to project onto them.

In her conversation with the giraffes' keeper Amina accepts the description of the giraffes as blank and tries to describe the effect that this blankness has on human visitors to the zoo. "'Surely their blankness has a purpose,' I say. 'A giraffe can be a point of reflection. It can bring out of yourself some feeling you did not know was there.' 'For you perhaps, Amina,' he says, not unkindly" (Ledgard, 191). Marcus Bullock explains this effect that animals have on us, being ultimately outside our language.

> Animals may not participate in the world of human speech, but the muteness that shrouds their senses always accompanies us in the realm of our language. Whatever else we may establish in the realm of language about them, despite all our convictions, all our knowledge, all our reasoning, we have to acknowledge that we are looking at something that eludes our ability to form a concept. Therefore, unless we refuse to look at all, the muteness of an animal also imposes a moment of muteness on us.
>
> (Bullock, 99)

It is this "moment of muteness" that overcomes Amina in her first encounter with the giraffes. The reader can also see it affect those people who suddenly look up and see the giraffes as they pass through the Czechoslovakian countryside on their way to the zoo. Their faces astonished, they have no concept for the animals on the back of the truck, and their minds jump to various abstract associations such as their childhood (92) or a biblical scene (109). While Amina also experiences this "moment of muteness" as she watches the giraffes in their zoo enclosure, the keeper expresses doubt that other people feel this. In *Giraffe*, and in every zoo novel discussed in this thesis, this experience of muteness is largely absent from the experience of the zoo-goer. This would seem to be because the framing of the animals and their own nonhuman discourses within the context of the zoo changes their meaning for the humans who observe them. With muted voice and "blank" demeanour the isolated zoo animals no longer defy conceptualisation in the same way, rather they really do become empty vessels for the meanings ascribed by their human viewers.

The ability of nonhuman animals to express themselves to us is tempered by the limitations of human understanding in the characters, narrator and reader. There is one case, however, where this is not so; the nonhuman character is able to narrate her own account of her life. This partially eliminates the human lens through which her experience is related,

however we must remember that her nonhuman account was, of course, created by a human author.

J.M. Ledgard's novel *Giraffe* opens with a birth. The account of this event is unusual, for it is given by the one who is being born, something the reader knows is an impossibility. As we realise we are reading about a birth, described by she or he who is being born, we understand that the boundaries of narrative have been expanded. When, as we continue reading, we discover the narrator to be a giraffe, it is surprising but already less unbelievable. In his essay examining violations of mimetic epistemology in first-person narratives, Ruediger Heinze points out that it is an inherent tendency in us as readers which leads us to assume that a narrator must be human.

> If we assume that just because there appears to be a narrative agent, voice, or narrator narrating the story, this figure need not in any way resemble or, by ontological fallacy, even *be* a human consciousness or person, then first-person narrative could actually be told by a fish or demiurge without attracting too much attention. In fact, the term first-*person* tends to underline the misunderstanding of equating "narrator" with "human being."
>
> (280-1)

This assumption of a narrator's humanity is a further example of anthropocentrism, as humans we assume that a human perspective is the only perspective. We do not consider that the events in the novel are experienced by any characters other than human characters.

In the first two chapters of the novel the giraffe Sněhurka shows an amazing awareness of herself and of everything outside herself, from the constellation Camelopardalis (5) to Czechoslovakians (9). As she describes being born onto the dusty African ground she shows an awareness of her history, where she existed before she was born, her identity, her physical appearance and her situation both geographically and in life, "ordained" to be a reticulated

giraffe cow (6). In his essay Heinze asks "How, then, can one conceptualize first-person narrators in fictional narratives whose quantitative and qualitative knowledge about events, other characters, etc., clearly exceeds what one could expect of a human consciousness and would thus make them prone to being labelled 'omniscient'?" (280). Heinze seems here to have fallen into his own trap of assuming that the narrator is a "human consciousness". If Sněhurka was a human girl narrating her own birth, or an African human child encountering Czechoslovakians for the first time and recognizing their language and culture, we would indeed say that she must be omniscient, she must be all-knowing, and this would present problems for readers trying to accept her as an authentic, reliable narrator. That a newborn – a nonhuman newborn – is so aware, has so much knowledge and understands so much gives Sněhurka a mystical, wise quality. She alludes to "the constellations" where she came from, making her seem ancient and almost supernatural in her ability to transition between worlds and communicate her feelings across species boundaries.

Manfred Jahn, in his essay *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*, asserts theorist Gérard Genette's definition of paralepsis as "An infraction caused by saying too much; a narrator assuming a competence he/she does not properly have" (Jahn, N3.3.15.). In her short narrative Sněhurka repeatedly demonstrates that she is a paraleptic narrator. Firstly, as she narrates her own birth, then as she recognizes various things which are outside her experience such as the Earth's atmosphere, quarantine in a seaside port and the English translation of her Czechoslovakian name and the German name of the ship. Thirdly, though the reader may not yet be aware of it, Sněhurka is narrating her story from beyond the grave, since by the end of the novel she is destroyed. Finally, Sněhurka is relating her story through an English narrative to human readers; as Wittgenstein points out in the statement at the beginning of this chapter, even if Sněhurka could speak our vastly different ontological positions mean that we would likely not understand her.

Despite the readers' recognition of this paralepsis in Sněhurka's account, after our initial surprise we are able to accept Sněhurka as a reliable narrator and continue reading. Heinze explains why this is possible: "A paraleptic machine or dog [is] arguably less surprising than a paraleptic human consciousness projected by a narrative because we may presume that the reader has no frame of reference against which to judge the experientiality of a dog or machine" (283). As readers we do not accept an "omniscient" human narrator because from experience we know the limits of human experience and human consciousness. We know without doubt that a human could not be self-aware during her own birth, or able to understand foreign languages on first encountering them. However this confidence disappears when we encounter a nonhuman narrator, since we cannot say what it is possible for a nonhuman consciousness to be capable of knowing, doing or experiencing. By accepting Sněhurka's paraleptic narrative we acknowledge the author's proposition that the consciousness of nonhuman animals may be deeper, more omniscient than our own. Her demonstrations of her enhanced consciousness serve to further separate her from the human in the mind of the reader. Sněhurka is other, and her otherness suggests to the reader that she should examine more carefully the role of other nonhuman characters in the novel, that they too must be more than "just animals". In a novel in which nonhuman animals are so mistreated this is a very disquieting thought.

The first word in this novel is "I", spoken by Sněhurka as she describes being born on Earth. This word is a nominative singular pronoun: Sněhurka is referring to herself and no one else; in the first line of the novel she takes ownership of her own narrative. In this account of her birth Sněhurka also begins with her own deliberate action, "I kick now in the darkness…", however this moment of agency is quickly changed to helplessness, "I am squeezed towards the light" (5). This moment when Sněhurka is rendered passive is an omen for the rest of her life, a life which is largely out of her control. But in this opening passage

even as she acknowledges her own passivity, Sněhurka does so deliberately and thereby asserts control over her own narrative and the record of her experience, “Let it be said: I enter this world without volition” (5).

The inability of nonhuman animals to communicate freely with us in our language means that we must use our own human experiences to try and interpret their forms of communication to understand their nonhuman experiences. By writing the first chapters of his book from the perspective of a nonhuman animal Ledgard is not telling us exactly how a giraffe would feel in that situation but is urging us to realise that in that or any situation a giraffe would be feeling *something*. In addition the reader is encouraged to understand that a giraffe’s feelings possess meaning (for herself and perhaps other giraffes) independent of the need for any human interpretation.

While on a superficial level many of us may not disagree with the notion that nonhuman animals can feel and suffer we are part of a modern society which comprises systems operating under Cartesian understandings of nonhuman animal emotions. [5] All of us have memories we would rather forget; embarrassing, uncomfortable or hurtful incidents from our past which we try not to remember. Some humans suffer more than others from these memories: the trauma of losing a loved one, flashbacks and reliving a harrowing event, depression and rage or post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the worst experiences of our lives. However in yet another example of anthropocentric arrogance in Western culture

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[5] “Cartesian” is used here to refer to the theory commonly attributed to René Descartes that not only do animals not “think” in the way humans do (evidenced for Descartes by their lack of human language [Anderson, 20]) but also that as soulless automata their behaviour is not governed by emotions as humans understand them but rather by “mechanistic instincts” (Hayes, 704).

most people have never considered that other species might experience the effects of trauma as strongly as we do.[6]

In his book *The Age of Empathy*, Frans de Waal discusses the effects of social isolation on various animals (including humans). He describes the now infamous attachment experiments of Henry Harlow who, in the mid twentieth century, "set out to prove the obvious" by rearing baby rhesus monkeys for months in isolation in purpose-built "pits of despair" to see what the effects on their development would be (13). Furthermore, Harlow conducted experiments testing the need for comfort in babies, in which he frightened isolated infants until they fled to a "surrogate mother" he had created. This "mother" would then fling the babies away with a catapult, stab them with hidden brass spikes or blast them with compressed air. "He powerfully demonstrated the psychological need for contact, a need deeper even than that of relief and physical pain" (Montgomery, 95).[7] Unsurprisingly the monkeys became "mentally and socially disturbed" and were unable to function socially (de Waal, *The Age*, 13).

Hannah, the elephant in *Hannah's Dream*, experiences a traumatic separation in her childhood similar to that of the rhesus monkeys when she is taken from her home in Burma, possibly after watching her mother be killed, and put on a ship to America. Studies of established elephants herds in Africa have found that "young elephants stay within 15 feet of their mothers for nearly all of their first eight years of life" (Siebert, 45) whereas Hannah is

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[6] However recently relatively new fields such as cognitive ethology and trans-species psychology have developed, as Gay Bradshaw describes: "Trans-species psychology is the formal study of how animals think, feel, and behave. In contrast to conventional psychology, the neologism signifies that a common model of psyche applies for all animal species, including humans. It uses the same language and concepts used to study and achieve human wellbeing for all species" (Bradshaw, "Conservation", 147).

[7] As Sy Montgomery points out in his book on women primatologists, while Jane Goodall was sitting quietly in the African jungle observing a family of chimpanzees Harlow had not left the United States and was instead in a laboratory creating machines with which to torture animals. However in 1967, the year Goodall's first book *My Friends the Wild Chimpanzees* was published by National Geographic, Harlow won the National Science Medal for his work "with" rhesus monkeys (Montgomery, 94).

just two years old when she is exported to the United States. In the confined space of the ship she is beaten during the sea voyage and unsurprisingly she becomes anxious, traumatised and frightened of being alone. Finally she finds a close friend in Sam, her American keeper who cares deeply for both her physical and emotional health and happiness. However when he becomes sick and must leave her for the first significant time in their 40 years together, the temporary keeper leaves Hannah chained up alone in the barn for three days. As a result she is terrified of spending even the night alone in the barn, as Sam explains:

> she gets real upset if somebody gets here in the morning and they don't unchain her. It makes her feel bad, and then she starts rocking, and once she's rocking it's hard to get her to stop. She can keep it up for days, I've seen her do it. When she does, that metal anklet of hers just digs up her leg something awful. Took three months to heal, last time.
>
> (53)

Hannah's reaction is similar to that of traumatised individuals of other species. Like many humans living with the mental and emotional effects of past trauma and social deprivation, Hannah rocks herself and even self-harms as she ignores the damage inflicted by her metal bonds. What Harlow felt he needed to prove with the rhesus monkeys is exemplified here: although her physical mistreatment surely adds to her trauma, Hannah's psychological need for comfort is much greater than her concern with the physical pain she is suffering. The elephants that T. encounters in *How the Dead Dream* show similar signs of depression and mental stress and despite having each other for company they too stand and rock. "Sometimes, for sixteen hours of the day, they swayed where they stood, rocked and swayed as though catatonic, and likely they were" (Millet, 198).

One way in which Hannah's behaviour differs from that of the rhesus monkeys is in how quickly she apparently recovers from her depression. As soon as she emerges from the barn she rushes around finding the treats new keeper Neva has hidden all around her

enclosure. Unlike the isolated rhesus monkeys whose social skills were permanently damaged (de Waal, *The Age*, 13), Hannah immediately perks up and seems to forget her deep trauma as she participates in her first official enrichment, which Sam calls a "scavenger hunt" (Hammond, 48). Although it seems very unlikely that a few jelly beans and pumpkins would be enough to dispel years of psychological damage, this episode serves two functions in the novel: to give the reader hope for Hannah, that she will be able to be happy again, and it introduces Neva as a kind-hearted person who is an expert on Hannah and her needs.

While in modern Western discourse the highly competitive, "survival of the fittest" aspect of nonhuman nature is often emphasised, studies of many species such as dolphins, whales, chimpanzees, elephants and humans have shown strong social systems and relationships amongst individuals that support the health and wellbeing of all. This can be seen in practical encounters such as mutual grooming in horses or rooks working together to get to food, as well as in personal, emotional encounters such as dolphins helping an injured friend or relative, or a chimpanzee consoling and sympathizing with another chimpanzee or even a human (Boyd & Houpt, 242; Bekoff & Pierce, 56; Noske, *Humans*, 154; de Waal, *The Age*, 86-90). Bekoff and Pierce note that cooperation, just as much as competition, is essential to the survival of species and individuals (88). In the zoo novels there are few examples of animal cooperation, or of animal competition. In fact there are few instances of interaction amongst animals at all – many of the nonhuman animals are held in captivity and are kept isolated, bored and alone. In J.M. Ledgard's *Giraffe* when the herd of giraffes is locked in the barn at night Sněhurka and a bull whisper to each other memories of Africa and of their journey. The two giraffes lay their necks together and comfort each other (172). In other exhibits in the various zoos throughout the novels are other animals who are not housed alone. However even among these animals opportunities for cooperation would be rare. Animals who in the wild must cooperate to get food, defend themselves from predators or establish

homes would have these opportunities for significant social interaction severely diminished or eliminated in the zoo where every aspect of their lives is monitored and controlled.

Nonhuman animals clearly have a variety of complex social relationships and protocols which, through cooperation and comfort, enable them to live healthy and contented lives. However despite these complex social systems many scientists are reluctant to call the way of life of any nonhuman animals a "culture" (de Waal & Tyack, 2003). The American anthropologist Ruth Benedict famously explained "culture" in her antiracism pamphlet "The Cultures of Mankind" written with colleague Gene Weltfish:

> culture is the sociological term for learned behaviour: behaviour which in man is not given at birth, which is not determined by his germ cells as is the behaviour of wasps or the social ants, but must be learned anew from grown people by each new generation. The degree to which human achievements are dependent on this kind of learned behaviour is man's great claim to superiority over all the rest of creation; he has been properly called "the culture-bearing animal."
>
> (Benedict and Weltfish, 9-10)

This explanation defines culture by its exclusivity to humans, claiming that our ability to learn and pass on our learned knowledge makes us superior to all other animals. However the practice of each new generation in learning behaviour from their elders is not restricted to humans. Young of most species begin learning behaviour from their parents as soon as they are born, for example what to eat, how to get it, how to avoid predators, how to interact with others of their species, and so on. While some might argue that these basic behaviours are not learned but are inherent to that animal's nature, "determined by his [or her] germ cells", other kinds of learning are demonstrated by both human and nonhuman animals. Cultural transmission is when an individual acquires knowledge "not only from its physical environment but also from its social environment—or from aspects of its physical

environment that have been modified in important ways by others" (Tomasello, 14). There are many documented cases of cultural transmission in various species, for example a certain type of grooming invented by one captive chimpanzee and taught over time to her whole group (de Waal, "Foreword", 10). Types of tool use or communication can also be unique to specific communities of chimpanzees and monkeys, and in his foreword to Stephen Hart's book on animal language Frans de Waal affirms that "[i]n fact, the line between innate and learned communication has become so blurred that most scientists have given up on the distinction, seeing it as a false dichotomy" (9). Another example comes from a group of elephants who together experienced a traumatic event. In 1919 in Addo park in South Africa, farmers set out to destroy 140 elephants of whom between sixteen and thirty survived. As Barbara Noske reports, "[e]ven today this group is mainly nocturnal and responds extremely aggressively to any human presence" (*Humans*, 111). Descendents of the elephants who survived the massacre are notoriously dangerous, despite the fact that "few if any" individuals who witnessed it can still be alive. As Noske explains, "they obviously have transmitted information about our species even to calves of the third and fourth generation, none of whom can ever have been attacked by humans" (111-12). In the past two decades instances of elephant aggression and violence against humans and other species in India and Africa have risen immensely, with retaliation killings by humans also accounting for many elephant deaths (Siebert, 44). Investigations into the reasons for this escalation in aggressive, antisocial behaviour led Gay Bradshaw to call them symptoms of "cultures in crisis" ("Not", 321).

The closeness of elephant families is reasonably well-known in the western world, for example the way they mourn and bury their dead. The 2005 paper "Elephant Breakdown" by Gay Bradshaw and her colleagues details the importance of "patterns of social attachment" in elephant societies. Elephant infants are raised by a network of female caretakers known as

allomothers in a family group led by the matriarch. In addition, male adolescents also go through further periods of development (similar to that of human boys) in which older males play a crucial role (Bradshaw et al., 807; Siebert, 45). Because of their longevity – elephants may live up to 70 years – elephant communities usually remain intact for many decades (Bradshaw, "Not", 322; Siebert, 45). However the encroachment of humans into elephant territories has had a devastating effect on elephant numbers, and subsequently the relationships and cultures of the survivors. In African national parks like Kruger, for a long time elephant culling was an annual exercise, used as a way to curb populations within the limited boundaries of the parks (Bridgland, 1). This means that elephant herds who would usually stay together for over half a century are being repeatedly separated and traumatised through witnessing the death of family members. As herd leaders are killed and infants left to be raised by other inexperienced young females or as orphans, generations of elephants are maturing who suffer from disorders that Bradshaw et al. compare with post-traumatic stress disorder in humans, such as "abnormal startle response, depression, unpredictable asocial behaviour and hyperaggression" (807). Siebert cites the same paper by Bradshaw et al. when describing the state of elephant culture today:

> Decades of poaching and culling and habitat loss, they claim, have so disrupted the intricate web of familiar and societal relations by which young elephants have traditionally been raised in the wild, and by which established elephant herds are governed, that what we are now witnessing is nothing less than a precipitous collapse of elephant culture.
>
> (Siebert, 44)

Just as we are now realising the impact of fracturing close elephant communities, so we must admit that the healing of these "cultures in crisis" will come from restoring crucial elephant social relationships. Bradshaw cites research by biologist Rob Slotow which demonstrates that in cases of translocated (or "reintroduced") young male elephants rampaging violently,

the introduction of senior older males calmed the juveniles and restored normal social behaviour (Bradshaw, “Not”, 323-4). In a similar way in *Hannah’s Dream* Sam explains to the new keeper that when Hannah (whom he calls “sugar”, or “shug”) was young the presence of an older female elephant would be all that could calm her anxiety. “Reyna was a big old cow, and she’d stand right next to shug in the barn for hours, right up against her, not enough room between them for a flea to pass. Guess it made Hannah feel secure, having old Reyna plastered on her like that. She quit rocking after a while” (Hammond, 53). At the end of the novel Hannah’s ultimate salvation comes when she is taken to a “pachyderm sanctuary” to be with other elephants. More than the escape from her small concrete exhibit at the zoo it is the escape from her isolation and loneliness that is the real “happy ending” of the novel. Although the title of the book is *Hannah’s Dream*, it is the recurring dream of Sam that sees him, in elephant form, reunited with a herd. This is what he and his wife want for Hannah, even though it means never seeing her again. They understand that Hannah is not living her natural life, her elephant life, locked in a concrete barn. Becoming part of an elephant herd really will be the beginning of her life.

Considering that as humans we rely hugely on the support and guidance of our own families and support systems for healthy mental, physical and emotional development, it is astonishing we find it so difficult to admit that this sense of culture and community might be just as important for members of other species. In her essay about the work of sanctuaries like the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Kenya, Bradshaw records the words of Sheldrick’s wife Daphne: “We must liken the emotional trauma of the Elephants to that of humans under similar circumstances of hardship and deprivation. To deny this is simply to display gross ignorance born of human arrogance” (Bradshaw, “Not”, 326). A similar conclusion is reached by Eve Abe, an ethologist whose 1994 doctoral thesis “My Elephants and My People: The Twin Fates of Acholi People and Elephants of Uganda”, describes the parallels between

the decimated elephant herds in her homeland and her own people who have been ravaged by civil war. In a 2007 interview she told *Black Star News* of her project to heal the relationship between her people and elephants, “by use of stories and ecological knowledge that have been passed from generation to generation and re-establishing the respect that existed between these two groups whose history and livelihoods mirror each other.” She asserts that “human and elephant recovery are linked. One cannot occur without the other” (Allimadi, 2007). This comparison between human and elephant cultures is a radical one when contrasted with traditional Western views which usually see “animals” as a category of beings completely separate from humans, comprised of various species whose members are almost indistinguishable from each other.

The pervasiveness of these attitudes is apparent in the language we use to refer to nonhuman animals. In their book *Animals and Agency*, McFarland and Hediger explain how French philosopher Jacques Derrida “shows us how the very phrase ‘the animal,’ commonly used to mean all animals, is itself a profoundly unreasonable usage, denying the manifest proliferation of differences that exists in animal lives, from lizard to dog, shark to lamb, camel to eagle, and so on (to cite some of his examples)” (10). This use of “animal” falls within the practise that Marc Bekoff calls “speciesism”, the discrimination against someone because of her species (*Strolling*, 11). As Barbara Noske explains, speciesism

> amounts to judging animals, not as unique and sentient individuals, but solely by their species. They become specimens of a particular species which may be favored or abhorred by us, humans. (Noske 1993, 1994). The most common use of the term speciesism, however, centers on membership or, indeed, non-membership of one particular species, the human one, with as consequence the discrimination and often harsher treatment of anything non-human.
>
> (Noske, “Speciesism”, 183)

An example of this appears in Marc Bekoff's book for young people and adults called *Strolling With Our Kin* in a chapter titled "Who counts? Species, individuals, and the reintroduction of wolves". When most people hear about the reintroduction of a species to an area where they have become extinct, they are happy and relieved; they feel that finally something is going right. We take the "reintroduction" of a native species to an area as a triumph of conservation; that through good science and hard work humans have managed to reverse the damage caused by habitat destruction, hunting, or the introduction of foreign species. However Bekoff asks us to consider the rights of an individual versus the rights of a species. Using the reintroduction of gray wolves to areas such as Yellowstone National Park as an example he points out that while this is the reintroduction of the *species* to an area where they used to live, for the individual animals involved it means capturing them in an area where they and their ancestors have lived and transporting them in cages and vehicles to be released into a strange and unknown place where their quality of life may be much lower. Another example is the "social shuffling" of elephants in South Africa, where the "reintroduction of elephants typically entails bringing in unfamiliar elephants and the fragmenting of existing groups and families" (Bradshaw, "Not", 323). For such social animals this uprooting and destruction of social attachments is hugely damaging to the emotional and mental health of the individuals involved. Bekoff asks: "[s]hould these individuals suffer and perhaps die for the good of their species? While most humans can make decisions about whether their own lives can be used for the good of their species, other animals cannot" (*Strolling*, 51).

This question goes to the heart of the fundamental "us" versus "them" distinction we continue to make between humans and nonhuman animals. According to the speciesist perspective, one nonhuman animal is the same as the any other; it is the *idea* of the animal that is important, the knowledge that somewhere "out there" live wild animals. J.M.

Coetzee's character Elizabeth Costello describes this form of speciesism in "The Poets and the Animals" by explaining the "the dance" of an ecosystem as seen in an "ecological vision".

> The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In the dance, each organism has a role: it is these multiple roles, rather than the particular beings who play them, that participate in the dance. As for actual role-players, as long as they are self-renewing, as long as they keep coming forward, we may pay them no heed.
>
> (53-4)

As long as the roles are being played, the players themselves do not concern us. This willingness to sacrifice individual animals in captivity and through reintroduction programmes, and indeed our reluctance to consider that their welfare is relevant at all attests to our ambivalence. As Bekoff points out, "Many of these decisions are made because it is humans who want to see or to know that wolves once again are roaming about in areas such as Yellowstone" (*Strolling*, 51). As humans we feel comforted to know that the gray wolves are in their "proper place" (that is, the places where we read about and heard about them being when we were children). That this may not bring the same peace for the individual animals themselves does not occur to us; this possibility is obscured by our nostalgia, our guilt at their declining numbers and of course by our anthropocentric world views.

In sharp contrast to this position, the novel is an art form fundamentally defined by its intimate attentiveness to the inner life of individuals and therefore is bound when representing nonhuman animals as characters to work against this tendency to value the species over the individual. Although a member of a herd of goats in the children's zoo, Newman's independent identity is established in Dolnick's novel by describing his unique physical characteristics and behaviours and by demonstrating his personality. In Sněhurka's case, her first-person narrative in *Giraffe* allows the reader to understand not only that she has

her own inner thoughts and emotions, but through her eyes the individuality and character of other giraffes is also apparent.

The novel's defining focus on individual character also allows it to describe in close detail the process of a human character overcoming her speciesist tendencies to recognise nonhuman animals as unique individuals. In Lydia Millet's *How The Dead Dream* T. is a man who has spent his life in pursuit of wealth and his career. The beginning of the second chapter marks the first real "now" event of the novel; although still told in the past tense this experience is the first in the novel which is dramatic, emotional and described in a way that involves each of the senses. The events of this chapter, which begins "He killed her driving to Las Vegas…" have a huge impact on T. and inform the rest of his actions and decisions in the book. The "her" whom T. kills is not a woman but a coyote, an animal traditionally seen by many city-dwellers and ranchers as a dangerous pest (Millet, 36). T. also has little affection for coyotes in general, however this encounter with the dying animal sees a fundamental change in his attitudes about death, nonhuman animals and what it means to be human. This profound change can be detected in the way that T. thinks about the coyote and how this alters throughout the encounter.

When T. first realises that who or what he hit in his car is a coyote he feels relieved. He knows that because the animal belongs to the coyote species (instead of, for example, being a domestic Labrador) he will not be punished. He sees the animal only as a member of larger group and thinks, "[p]eople said *they* were pests" (36, emphasis added). When T. approaches the injured coyote he looks at "its" face, into "its" eyes and sees that "*[I]t* was dying" (36, emphasis added). Identifying with the coyote's pain T. sees the animal as an individual, an "it" rather than a general "they". Shocked by the extent of the coyote's injuries T. tries to comfort "it" and says "[g]ood *boy*. Quiet there, *boy*" (37, emphasis added). In trying to relate to the animal T. automatically uses the default human gender, the masculine. Finally, looking at her

underbelly and seeing that she is a bitch, T. tells her “Steady, girl. It’s OK.” (37). After approaching the animal as just a member of an undesirable species, a “they”, as T. identifies more closely with the coyote he moves on to consider her as an “it”, a “he”, and finally a “she”. In the end he sees her for what she is, a female individual, and he imagines what her life was like, what she would want him to do, and what she must be feeling. As he stays with her, waiting for her to die, he feels “the fullness, the terrible sympathy!” unlike he has ever felt in his life (37).

The evolution of T.’s attitude towards the coyote is reflected in the language he uses. This is one example of the power of language and the important function it has in our relationships with nonhuman species. In her book *Ethics and Animals* Lori Gruen reminds us that “the use of gender-neutral and gender-inclusive pronouns, or, more precisely, the lack of their use, have implications beyond grammar” (Gruen, xvi). The language we use to talk about nonhuman animals reveals how we truly think about them and by becoming part of the common English vernacular it perpetuates these views by dictating how everyone talks, and therefore thinks, about nonhuman animals. A powerful example of this is the use of gendered pronouns to refer to other animals.

When writing her book Gruen found that the spellcheck on her computer constantly admonished her for using either “him” or “her” when talking about an animal, instead suggesting the pronoun “it” (Gruen, xvi). In English today it is usually acceptable to use gendered pronouns to refer to nonhuman animals only if one is reading a children’s book or narrating a nature documentary on television. As Marc Fellenz notes in his book on philosophy and animal rights, “because common nouns in English are not gender-inflected, applying personal pronouns to animals often sound anthropomorphic or childlike, while the standard use of the pronoun *it* for an animal antecedent is overtly objectifying” (128). In *The*

Great Divorce zoo keeper Camille corrects a boy who uses the wrong gender when referring to a lion she is observing.

> He stopped close to Camille, hanging over the rail. “Look!” he shouted. “He’s playing with that log.”
>
> Camille frowned at the boy, who seemed indifferent to her. “That’s a female,” Camille said. “It’s a she.” The boy gave her a sidelong look full of suspicion, then called back to his mother. “Look, Mom, he’s playing with that log.”
>
> (Martin, 273)

The young boy is suspicious of this stranger who seems to contradict him for no reason. To him, the male pronoun is appropriate to all animals who have no real identity or gender. However he does not use, as Camille does, the generic pronoun “it”; as a child he has not yet been indoctrinated into the cultural discourse of framing nonhuman animals as almost-objects. Using the pronoun “it” (usually reserved for inanimate objects) to refer to nonhuman animals is another symptom of the anthropocentrism that causes us to deny their emotions. Each practice is part of the shroud we draw over the truth that animals are living, feeling beings. It is essential that as a culture we maintain this self-deception because acknowledging the reality would necessitate a seismic change in every aspect of our lives. As Al Gore notes about climate change, “if they acknowledge it and recognise it, then the moral imperative to make big changes is inescapable” (*An Inconvenient*). It is far easier to deny the status of nonhuman animals as thinking, feeling beings and to obscure evidence of this truth wherever it surfaces than to acknowledge it and be forced to re-evaluate every part of our society. In *Divorce* Camille is both an adult who exists in our culture of denying animal subjectivity and a zoo keeper who feels a personal connection to her charges. She straddles the boundary between these two understandings of animal identity, as exemplified in her phrase “It’s a she” (273). Although she conforms to the accepted practice of using “it”, she does feel the need to

speak out when she feels the boy is ignoring the lion's individual identity. Just as sexist pronoun use (the practice of using the masculine as the generic pronoun) is challenged by feminists (Mills & Mullany, 153), supporters of animal rights understand that using "it" in reference to nonhuman animals is an important part of our collective denial of the realities of animals' existences. As Carol Adams explains, "just as the generic 'he' erases female presence, the generic 'it' erases the living, breathing nature of the animals and reifies their object status" (93). This allows us to use animals as tools and resources to construct our human world and to exclude them from consideration in any of our decisions or plans. By simply referring to them as "it"s, as objects, we are able to construct a discourse in which animal interests are irrelevant and invisible, present only in the same way as crops, coal deposits or oil reserves.

This is the way that T. thought of all animals in *How the Dead Dream* before he hit the coyote in his car and before he looked at her and recognised her individual identity. Eventually, as T. sits waiting, she dies.

> Presently he realized that her flank had ceased to rise and fall. He was relieved but oddly disoriented. Where was the ambulance? No: he was all that she had. All her lights, all her rescue workers.
>
> It was just a coyote. No one would fault him for leaving. And yet he felt confused.
>
> "Good girl," he whispered.
>
> (Millet, 38)

This encounter is one that changes T. He is confused because his world view has been altered and he is beginning to be aware of the discord in his life, the devastating yet silent crisis that is happening all around him. It is his first inkling that there are other beings "out there" who experience lives, pain and death but in a way that is a secret to him and everyone he knows. This has huge implications for his life and the things that he values most. The effect of his

encounter with the coyote on the highway is evident in the permanent change to the way he thinks about coyotes. Weeks later he stands at dusk considering his new urban development. "He thought of the cool of night descending over the settlement—were those coyotes howling out there in the dark, beyond the warm lights from thousands of standardized windows? Coyotes. He thought of them rarely but when he did he felt a pulse of identification and regret, curious and painful…" (61). Identification with a nonhuman animal is something which several human characters in the zoo novels feel at one stage, and like T., identifying with another animal leads them to comprehend the individual identity of the animal herself.

One of the key ways that we acknowledge someone's individual identity is by giving her her own word, a name that signifies who she is. This applies to both human and nonhuman animals – one of the most common and observable ways that the recognition of animal individuality is expressed by humans is by giving the nonhuman animal a name. This is as true for the human-animal relationships in the zoo novels as it is in reality. In her paper about the use of proper names for laboratory animals, Mary T. Phillips explains that

> [i]n giving an animal a name and using that name to talk to and about the creature, we interactively construct a narrative about an individual with unique characteristics, situated in a particular historical setting, and we endow that narrative with a coherent meaning.
>
> (121)

Phillips argues that the biography and narratives which give lives (both human and non-human) meaning are socially constructed through people using a proper name for them. As a process that relies on human language, naming is obviously concerned with creating human meanings; nonhuman animal lives may be supposed to hold meaning for themselves or each other without the need for human names or constructions.

As Mullan and Marvin note in their book *Zoo Culture*, zoo animals are usually labelled with several different names within the context of the institution. The first is the "scientific name", for example *Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*, then the more recognisable "popular name", in this case, Reticulated Giraffe (10). These names obviously refer only to the species of an animal and in no way reference the existence of the individual. The final name which may or may not be given to zoo animals is what Mullan and Marvin call their "individual name", the name by which specific animals in an enclosure are known. These names are usually "absolutely local" and often are known only to those within the zoo or who work closely with the animal (10).

In her article "Animal Selfhood" Leslie Irvine describes coherence as the self-experience that "provides the boundaries of the self" (333). She expands, "coherence has generated the cultural practice of naming animals," which recognises the animal's unique identity (334). The concept of naming involves a very personal understanding between two individuals. As humans we can tell a lot about the relationship between people by the names or nicknames that they use for each other. Although with most nonhuman animals we cannot understand whether she or he has a name for *us*, the relationship represented by the name we give to them may nevertheless be a strong one. By choosing a particular name for an animal we are differentiating her from all others as a distinct, recognisable individual. A domestic animal may even recognise this name and respond to it in her own way.

Sněhurka is the central nonhuman character in *Giraffe*; various human characters are drawn to her along her journey and she also is the only one among the herd of giraffes with whom the reader grows familiar in the course of the novel. This is emphasised as she is the only nonhuman animal who is given a name that is known and used by various human characters throughout the novel. She is given her human name when she is first captured in Africa and her white underbelly and legs remind the Czechoslovakian hunters of the snow on

Mt. Kilimanjaro; they name her Sněhurka, "Snow White". She remembers that day: "From this point on, for as long as I live, the voices of men will call after me, 'Sněhurka!' They will call my name, and I will recognize the sound, as I have long ago learned to distinguish the sound of one insect from another" (Ledgard, 10). Sněhurka herself understands the name and recognises it but describes her own way of knowing something as a process of distinguishing different from the labelling of humans. She describes the name as just another sound in her environment, disconnected from herself in the same way she describes part of her species' "scientific name", *Camelopardalis*, as a constellation outside the Earth's atmosphere from which she descends. She does not tell us whether she has ever had any other giraffe name.

Of course, as with almost any practice in a zoo the naming of its captive animals serves a primarily human function, for example the naming of "charismatic" mammals makes them more relatable to the public, who are then more likely to pay to see them. Many zoos around the world make the most of this publicity opportunity by holding naming competitions in which the public is invited to submit potential names for a new (or old) animal (see for example Garland; "Al Ain"; "Naming competition"). This gives people a sense of connection to and even ownership of the animal with the winner's name often published along with the name of the animal and sometimes written on the animal's enclosure. The naming of a zoo's animals can be financially beneficial in other ways when the idea of a naming competition is taken a step further. While many zoos invite individuals and companies to sponsor animals or exhibits, some zoos also auction naming rights to their animals. One reader of the *Buffalo News* was shocked to see the names of the Buffalo Zoo's three new lion cubs, named after the local law firm of Siegel, Kelleher and Kahn. While the reader had no problem with the law firm sponsoring the zoo habitat, he felt that "naming animals after representatives of any business entity is just plain wrong", "ostentatious", and "crosses the line of good taste" (Smukall, 2010). The reader suggested that "Animal names should have simple and appealing

names that are easy to relate to and identify with." One way that some pet owners choose to do this is by selecting names inspired by an animal's physical characteristics, such as Fluffy, Socks, Spot, or Goldie. In the same way the physical features of zoo animals are often used to tell them apart and sometimes this is apparent in their name; just as Sněhurka is named after the fabled Snow White because of her white belly, in *Zoology* Othello the big black bull is presumably named after "the Moor" in Shakespeare's famous play.

While Sněhurka is the only animal recognised by name by most humans in *Giraffe*, after watching them for hours each day Amina learns to tell the herd apart by their markings and in her head she gives them names. She tells the giraffes' keeper, "I have memorized the patterns on the necks of the giraffes so that I can say aloud to myself on the bench, that one is Jánošík and this one is Rudolf, named for the emperor" (Ledgard, 189). In *Zoology* too the zoo director Paul differentiates between the seven goats mainly by their physical attributes and also their position in the herd. "That little one's Suzy. She's the mom. Her kids are Pearl, there, and Onyx, who's over there with the gray spot. Sparky's up on the stump, Spanky's this one—he's trouble—Scooter's asleep right there with the long beard…" (Dolnick, 33). Newman, however, is obviously an individual of whom the zoo staff have become fond: "'and that,' he said, pointing to the tall white one, the only one without horns, 'is Newman. He's a Nubian. Totally different species. He's a big goof. One of the security guards calls him Jar Jar, because of the ears.'" (44). His large ears earn him a "pet" name and by describing his as a "big goof" Paul indicates that staff know this particular goat to have a playful, silly personality. Newman is the only goat at the zoo to have both a given name and an affectionate nickname.

It is not strange that the animals Henry works with are given names because these individuals are held in the children's zoo. It is natural for children to name animals and the juvenile names of many of the goats reflect their "petting zoo" status. As species which are

domesticated in most cultures around the world the animals of the children's zoo are framed by the zoo as "ordinary"; they are able to be approached, touched, fed and given affectionate names like Scooter. While the children who visit the zoo clearly love to interact with the goats the petting zoo animals are obviously seen by both staff and visitors to the zoo as inferior to the comparably wild and exotic animals in the adult zoo, who apparently remain unnamed (at least to zoo visitors). In a 1989 paper psychology professor Donna FitzRoy Hardy suggests that deliberately naming only the "domestic form" of a species is a good way for zoos to educate visitors about the appropriate ways to relate to each type of animal. For example, "mustang colts would receive names but Przewalski colts would not" (Hardy). Hardy realises that naming zoo animals encourages people to connect emotionally with captive animals, to think anthropomorphically about them in terms of their feelings (which she clearly views as a negative response) and she also writes that this ultimately supports the market of exotic animals as pets by making these species more desirable.

One zoo which at least partially supported this view – although it did not discriminate by species – was the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium where president and CEO Barbara Baker in 1990 installed a policy of not allowing its animals to be known "by affectionate names" ("A Human Zoo"). Baker explained that the purpose of the no names policy was "to preserve the wild mystique of our animals and encourage visitors to admire them for their natural beauty as a species" (Srikameswaran). The animals in the zoo were not meant to be individually valued and identified with, but rather were present only as supposedly generic examples of their species.

Although the policy may have been intended to prevent the anthropomorphising of the zoo's animals, as one newspaper editor pointed out the people who worked with the animals had to call them something, so many of the zoo's animals already had names which were used by their keepers ("A Human Zoo"). Therefore the issue was really a public relations one.

The decision not to let the zoo's animals be publicly named was to preserve the animals' marketable exoticism and "mystique"; while the first elephant born at the zoo was named Victoria by staff, she was only known to the public as the more anonymous and mysterious "V". Jeffrey Hyson has written on the history of zoos in North America and he notes that "[o]ne of the reasons why zoos are reluctant to reveal the private names that keepers might call the animals is because that would give the impression that the keeper has made the animals into pets" (Srikameswaran). This would certainly be problematic for an institution attempting to market the untamed exoticism of its captive animals and would also conflict with the zoo's desire to be seen as a scientific institution.

Another reason that Baker was reluctant to allow public naming of the zoo's animals was the speciesism that is apparent in the process itself. She is aware that those who she calls the "warm-and-fuzzies", charismatic megafauna such as elephants and big cats, attract affectionate names easily while other animals like birds and reptiles do not. This tendency has also been noted by Mullan and Marvin who observe that

> even in a culture where animals are given individual names, those which do not attract attention (those with low exhibition value) and those which live in large groups in the zoo – a shoal of fish, a herd of deer or cage of mice for example – are unlikely to be named, even though they might be recognized as individuals.
>
> (11)

It is only those animals with whom people connect individually and on an emotional level that are usually named by zoos. As Hyson points out, this is dangerous because it can suggest that some animals "are more worthy of names than others" or are more valuable and worthy of conservation efforts (Srikameswaran).

The Pittsburgh Zoo's no-naming policy was eventually changed in 2004 after studies suggested to Baker that "naming zoo animals can instil in children a lifelong devotion to animals" (Srikameswaran). By publicly naming their animals, the zoo's CEO hoped to create a new generation of devoted zoo-goers. This promotional opportunity was utilised by naming April of that year as "Meet the Animals" month, in which "[s]igns will be displayed with not only information about the animals, but also their names" (Srikameswaran). For the first time the public was invited to see each of the animals as an individual. A quick look at the zoo's website today, however, does not reveal any evidence of this change in policy. For example in the "Animals and Exhibits" section click on the page about the "African Elephants" and you will learn not about the zoo's actual elephants, for example their names, physical characteristics or behaviour, but general facts about African elephants as a species: "[t]he African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) is the largest living land-dwelling animal … These animals can weigh anywhere between 13,228 and 19,843 lbs" ("African Elephant"). This is what most of us expect from a zoo: scientific, dispassionate, informative facts about abstract species. Click over to the "Press Room" section of the website, however, and it is a different story. One press release from 2009 is titled "Jackson, Our Bull Elephant, Is a Dad Again!" The release details the new birth of a calf at another zoo and gives accounts of Jackson's other daughters. "Jackson is the father of Angeline and Zuri, born here at the Zoo last year, as well as Victoria and Callee, born in 1999 and 2000" ("Jackson"). With these two very different accounts of its elephants the Pittsburgh Zoo is obviously trying to balance the two aspects of its identity as a zoo: the generic scientific data which portray African elephants as animals not to be named or valued as individuals but as a species to be studied, and the public relations notices which encourage the public to celebrate events in the lives of individuals in their elephant family just as if it were a human family.

The inherently political nature of zoos has also become an issue in the naming of captive animals in even more overt ways. Two pandas who were chosen from the Wolong Panda Reserve in Sichuan as a gift from the Chinese government to Taiwan were also named after a national naming competition in which over 100 million people voted (Toy, 2007). However the winning names exacerbated an already tense political situation when the public voted for the names Tuan Tuan for the male (formerly named just "No. 19" in the Wolong Reserve) and Yuan Yuan for the female (formerly known as "No. 16") ("Giant"). Together, the names form the Mandarin phrase "tuán yuán" which means "reunion" or "unite". This took the "panda diplomacy" too far for Taiwan's DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) president and the gift of the pandas was ultimately rejected by Taiwan's Council of Agriculture, officially on the grounds that the Taiwanese zoo did not have the necessary facilities to properly care for them (Jennings). However after a KMT (Kuomingtang) president was elected in 2008 the pandas were accepted and arrived at the Taipei Zoo in December that year. This incident exemplifies the way in which nonhuman animals have become symbols in much of our modern cultural discourse and this status means that any names given to animals will be enhanced as signifiers to have even greater symbolic meaning that can be culturally, emotionally, even politically loaded.

While naming animals after their physical attributes is quite common, like Jackson the elephant, named animals in the zoo novels are predominantly called by typically human names. In *The Great Divorce* the female cats all have names like human women: the white tiger Sonya, leopard Magda, clouded leopard Flo and the lion Antonella. While in theory bestowing human names on the powerful cats might be thought to make it easier for human zoo visitors (and readers of the novel) to relate to them, in fact the contrast between their human names and their nonhuman identity actually emphasises their otherness. This incongruity echoes the strangeness of the situation the cats find themselves in; just as their

names may seem foreign or unsuited to them, so they themselves seem alien and unsuited to the concrete and metal enclosures where they are contained.

One nonhuman animal in the zoo novels whose human name is somewhat contentious is not a zoo animal at all but a companion animal (pet) bought by a zoo employee. In *Hannah's Dream* Miles the miniature pig becomes a focus in the narrative of Truman's life around which his insecurities about his ex-wife revolve. Rhonda has left Truman and their son Winslow a year earlier and Truman always hears her exasperated and derisive voice in his head criticising him and Winslow and the way that they choose to live. Epitomising this is the name that they choose to give their new porcine companion: "Miles. Truman could see Rhonda rolling her eyes at the name he and Winslow had deliberated over for so long. *It's a pig, not a banker. Why not name it Sir Francis Bacon, something clever?*" (Hammond, 69, italics in original). In his mind the flamboyant and self-absorbed Rhonda sees the name chosen by Truman and Winslow as showing a lack of imagination compared with her own "clever" one. In her paper on the use of proper names for laboratory animals Mary T. Phillips notes that when researchers named laboratory animals after people "the name had less to do with recognising the animal's individuality than it had to do with poking fun at the namesake" (133). Phillips also gives the example of the famous chimpanzee Nim Chimpsky, named after American linguist Noam Chomsky. Although the pun in the name itself is amusing, in giving that name to an animal the namer was obviously thinking of themselves and their own aspirations, not the individuality of the animal. While the hypothetical Rhonda considered only her own "cleverness" in naming Miles, Truman and Winslow take the process very seriously and in doing so show their respect for Miles as a new member of their small family.

Another animal in Hammond's novel who has a typically human name is the book's eponymous elephant, Hannah. Although we don't know who gave Hannah her name it serves an important function and represents the unique relationship she has with her keeper Sam

Brown and his wife Corinna. The couple's only child was a daughter who was stillborn, a loss which helped draw zoo owner Max to Sam after the death of her other beloved elephant, and upon meeting Hannah the Browns were convinced that she is their baby daughter reborn. For forty-one years later the couple still has pet names for Hannah like "shug" (sugar) and "baby girl", just as they call each other "mama" and "papa"; anyone listening to them talk about her wouldn't immediately know that Hannah is not human. Sam tells Corinna that the new keeper looks at him strangely when he talks to Hannah.

> "Don't you stop talking to her, now," Corinna warned.
> "There's nothing out there than can shut me up, you know that. Hannah knows it, too. It would probably scare her half to death if I came in quiet."
>
> (Hammond, 43)

Hannah's human name allows her to be naturally included in the familial discourse, although not in a way which challenges the traditional anthropocentric view of "family" as a strictly single-species family; indeed, since the Browns see Hannah as the reincarnation of their human daughter their family dynamic could be seen as supporting this view; Neva observes (and is "unnerved" by) the way that "Hannah's Hannah-ness" is "more important to Sam than her elephantness" (Hammond, 196). For the reader, Hannah's name serves to familiarise the family's relationship while for the other human characters her human-like name also indicates her individuality and value (by differentiating her from other nonhuman animals). When Sam first meets the boy Reginald at the zoo he introduces him to Hannah.

> "Say hello to her. Her name's Hannah."
> The boy lifted a hand self-consciously. "Hey."
> "Hey, *Hannah*. Elephant's got the right to expect good manners."
> "Hey, Hannah."
>
> (16, emphasis in original)

By insisting that Reginald use Hannah's name Sam is insisting on Hannah's identity as an individual and her right to be treated as such. He is also encouraging Reginald to set aside his "self-consciousness" and see Hannah for who she really is.

In her article on naming laboratory animals Phillips discusses her observations of animal experiments over three years in 23 different laboratories. When interviewing researchers she noted that many thought of laboratory animals as being ontologically different from other categories of animals such as pets, wildlife or vermin (120, 134; see also Birke, 216). A rat who lives in a human home as a companion, for example, is a different type of animal entirely from a rat who is sold to a laboratory for use in experiments. It is completely natural to name the former because she an individual with whom a human will share a relationship. The latter, however, is simply a collection of parts which exist to be used for science. The two animals are not the same; one is a named individual, the other is an unnamable component of a much larger experiment. As Phillips notes this socially constructed category of "the laboratory animal" "contrasts with nameable animals (e.g., pets) across every salient dimension" (119). In which category then do zoo animals fall? Are they nameable, as are domestic animal companions, or are they unnamable like laboratory animals and vermin? In thinking about this question it is helpful to note that in her interviews with researchers in animal laboratories Phillips found that the different categories into which researchers separated animals were often "expressed in teleological terms, the category being based on the *purpose* for which the animal was *intended*" (134, emphasis in original). The use that humans intend an animal for dictates into which category that animal falls. The category that she belongs to is then used to validate why she can be treated in a certain way when an animal from another category may not be. Whether or not an animal in a zoo is named is therefore evidence of the purpose that the zoo intends to use the animal for. Most zoo animals are publicly unnamed because their purpose is to represent an exotic wildness.

However when a zoo decides to officially name an animal, as the Pittsburgh zoo did, this indicates a teleological shift in the classification of the animal; the purpose of that animal has changed from representing a glimpse of the mysterious wild to becoming a sort of ambassador of her species, intended to promote the zoo by appealing to the emotions of the wider public and attracting more paying visitors who will then develop a lasting affection for her.

While keepers at zoos have practical reasons for calling their charges by a name, the emotional bond this represents is now becoming more widely acknowledged. Not only does forming a relationship with a nonhuman animal encourage us to name them, but giving an animal a name also creates or strengthens the relationship as well. In a 2012 episode of *Campbell Live* investigating the home-kill practice of "cow pooling" (in which several human individuals or groups invest in the purchase and maintenance of a cow and then each receive a share of the meat when she is slaughtered), social trends researcher Jill Caldwell notes that the unwritten rule of cow pooling is "[d]on't name your beast—don't name your food", the reason being that "it's very much harder to kill a friend than it is to kill a perfect stranger" ("Kindest Cut"). Despite purchasing the cow for the purpose of killing and eating her, the simple act giving her a name is enough to move her from being in the teleological group "food" to uncomfortably close to being a friend in the mind of the purchaser[8]. Phillips also observes that researchers who worked with lab animals were aware of this and it was one of the reasons they do not name the animals they work with. "They saw a direct connection between naming animals and developing emotional ties to them" (Phillips, 132). As Phillips

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[8] This is also noted by Jovian Parry in his thesis "The New Visibility of Slaughter in Popular Gastronomy" examining the recent "New Carnivore movement" (14-17). However he goes on to show that acknowledging the sentience and subjectivity of a nonhuman animal (for example by bestowing a name on her) before slaughtering and eating her distinguishes for the New Carnivore the "authenticity" and "prestige" of the meat (63-67). In fact the animal's carcass may continue to be identified using her name during the process of cooking and consumption; for the New Carnivore "this recognition of the animal as a living, feeling being imbues the eating of her carcass with a special significance" (65).

explains almost all the experiments she observed must end in the death of the animal, therefore the scientists sought to distance themselves from the animal by not naming her, and further, by framing her as unnamable. This correlation between naming and emotionally bonding has also been observed by Bekoff who notes that more researchers are starting to realise that genuinely caring for the animals one studies actually enhances one's observation of and therefore understanding of a study ("Deep Ethology", 154-5).

One character who struggles with this conflict between the clinical, supposedly objective approach and the more natural human response is the giraffes' keeper in Ledgard's novel. Like Emil the keeper is familiar with Sněhurka but he tries to resist naming her, perhaps because he wishes to remain scientific, perhaps because he understands the emotional effects of naming nonhuman animals mentioned by Caldwell, or perhaps because he would like to set the nonhuman animals he works with, captive in every other way, free from human names.

> "That's Sněhurka," he says. "She's one of the leaders. She is always the first to step out when I open the doors in the morning. She stands quite still in the open with her head pushed back, like this, almost lifting up off the ground. Then she nods and the others venture out."
>
> He looks up at Sněhurka.
>
> "Animals should be stripped of names," he says, "but I cannot bring myself to do so in her case."
>
> (188-189)

For some animals, like the big cats in *The Great Divorce*, being "stripped" of their human name might seem like something of a release, an acknowledgment of their unknowable otherness. In this passage, however, the keeper describes his familiarity with Sněhurka; this awareness of her identity makes her different in his mind from other nonhuman animals and therefore makes her worthy of a name. Although he believes nonhuman animals should not

be given human names he feels that taking Sněhurka's from her would be wrong; stripping Sněhurka of her name would both be to deny her worth as an individual and to again render her as other and admit his inability to ever truly know her.

As we have seen, for various reasons many zoo animals remain unnamed and after detailing the importance and functions of a name for human and nonhuman animals, Phillips assures us that those who have no name still live lives that are meaningful. "This is not to say unnamed animals are meaningless … For creatures with no names … construction of meaning follows a different path from that of the narrative account" (Phillips, 121). One insight into this alternative construction of meaning can perhaps be seen in Millet's *How the Dead Dream*. In this novel the protagonist does not develop a close relationship with any of the zoo animals he meets. Instead, his encounters with them are more like glimpses into their experience; there is an awareness for him and the reader that the animals he visits in the zoos existed in the same way before he arrived, and that same existence will continue uninterrupted after he leaves. There is a sense, then, of a collective narrative of captivity which is recognisable to the reader. As we accompany the protagonist on his nocturnal visits we glimpse quiet moments inside the cages but the animals themselves remain unnamed and unknowable.

The one nonhuman animal the protagonist forms a close relationship with is his adopted dog; however she too remains nameless in the novel. Despite the fact that she is only ever referred to as "the dog", she is the one who provides the main character with comfort, companionship and a sense of mutual trust. Finally, the novel's protagonist himself is almost unnamed. Called only "T.", his first name is only revealed incidentally through a conversation near the end of the novel. In terms of the text's narrative this namelessness aligns T. much more closely with his dog and with the other nonhuman animals he encounters than with any of the human characters. It suggests names are purely arbitrary

constructions which in fact hinder emotional connections and by removing these from his interactions with other animals it allows T. to see them more clearly. T. does not get to know each of the zoo animals in an individual way but in his night-time observations he does acknowledge their identity as individuals in the collective narrative of captivity. In this case it is not the absence of a name which precludes the existence of a unique biography or structure of meaning for each animal, but the captivity which is imposed on them. Within the context of the narrative of their encounter, T. meets the zoo animals on a more even footing than any other human character in the zoo novels because as a nameless character himself he is in a position to see past their namelessness.

The names of animals serve a variety of functions, from the practical need of zoo keepers to have something to call their charges, to a way to show respect or express a deep emotional bond. All animal names, however, reflect the way that humans choose to interact with nonhuman animals. After her observations of adoption and renaming at a humane society shelter, Irvine points out that "[t]he act of changing an animal's name reflects the degree to which an animal's identity emerges through interaction" (Irvine, 334). Names, therefore, are a sign not of an animal's individuality, but of the recognition and acknowledgement of this individual personality by a human.

While the form of nonhuman animals' expression in the zoo novels may be seen as necessarily anthropocentric, since their accounts are of course written by a human author for human readers, I argue that speciesist narrative elements are overcome by creating genuine nonhuman characters who possess a narrative voice and who are recognised as subject-bearing individuals by human characters within the text. This recognition is expressed through the awareness that nonhuman characters experience emotions and by bestowing names on nonhuman characters to signify awareness of their unique identity. In the next chapter I will explore the human visual sense as a primary channel through which human

characters try to identify with individual nonhuman animals and both human and nonhuman eyes and gaze as serving important literary functions within the zoo novels.

Chapter Two
"With a View to Seeing": Reading Eyes, Interpreting Gaze

An animal looks at me. What should I think of this
sentence?
Derrida, 6

With both its eyes the creature-world sees
the open. But our eyes are
as though reversed and set around it
like snares, all around its path to freedom.
What is outside, we know from the animal's
countenance alone. For we already turn the small child
around and compel it to look backwards
and see formed nature, not the open that
is so deep in the animal's face.
Rilke, "Eighth Elegy," lines 1-9, trans. Llewellyn, 223.[9]

At their most basic, zoos are sites of (human) looking and observation. For humans as a species vision is a hugely important sense. Although many other species in fact rely more on their other senses to experience the world and communicate, when observing or representing other animals humans nonetheless often tend to emphasise the eyes and vision. For example in his "Eighth Elegy" quoted above Rainer Maria Rilke proposes that humans, separated from "the open" (a term used by Rilke for "the universe as a timeless continuity of life and death" [Llewellyn, 136]) by their awareness and fear of their own death, can only experience it in the "countenance" of nonhuman animals. Unaware of their separation from the open at birth and not fearing death, nonhuman animals can see the open, indeed they remain part it and move

[9] "Elegy Eight" from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies*. For Terry Llewellyn's translation of the full poem, see Appendix.

already "in eternity" (line 13). For Rilke, then, humans' separation from the open is expressed in our "reversed", inward-looking eyes; however even nonhuman animals' privileged access to the open is also expressed visually: the creature-world sees the open "with both its eyes."

The value of eyes as signifiers imbues them with meaning in much of human discourse. This is true for the zoo novels, in which human characters use eyes as a point of familiarity with (or difference from) other species. This chapter will explore the ways that the gaze of nonhuman animals in the novels can appeal, confront or disregard and may, occasionally, act as the means by which a human character experiences a transformative identification with another animal. In this chapter I will also demonstrate that the zoo is not only the site where many of these encounters take place, it also defines the context of the mutual gaze as being that between subjective (human) observer and objectified (nonhuman) observed. For this reason most of the meaningful visual exchanges between human and nonhuman in the novels take place outside the conventional parameters of the zoo visit. Finally, this chapter will discuss the status of modern zoos as authority-bearing institutions and examine the role of Science and the Scientific gaze in two of the zoo novels.

Eyes, as we all have heard, are the windows to the soul, but while humans may exchange meaningful looks and convey emotion to other humans, what do the eyes of nonhuman animals – thought by many (for example Cartesians and many Christians) to be "soulless" (Scholtmeijer, 3) – tell us about their bearers?[10] The animals in the zoo novels have a range of anatomies and a variety of eyes, from the pupfish in *How The Dead Dream*, who are tiny "but their eyes [a]re large, and for this reason even the adults loo[k] like babies"

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[10] For a detailed historical discussion of the connection between the spiritual status of animals and their treatment in human society see Rod Preece's *Brute Souls, Happy Beasts and Evolution: The Historical Status of Animals* (2005).

(Millet, 160), to Othello the bull in *Zoology*, whose eyes are “as big as pool balls” (Dolnick, 42). In *Hannah’s Dream* Harriet Saul loves small finches for their nonhumanness. She “didn’t share the prevailing worship of wolves and whales and dogs of all descriptions. They looked out of eyes just like hers” (Hammond, 61). For Harriet the eyes of other large mammals are too similar to human eyes, too familiar; like Camille in *The Great Divorce* as a result of her past treatment at the hands of other people she sees any similarity to humans as a repugnant and undesirable trait. However in most of the texts discussed here the description of nonhuman animals’ eyes, including those of large mammals, tends to highlight not their familiarity but their otherness; nowhere is this more evident than in Emil’s description of the eye of a giraffe in J.M. Ledgard’s novel.

> Giraffes see the world. The giraffe eye is the largest in the animal kingdom, several times larger than the human eye, larger still than the eye of a mermaid. It is almond-shaped, framed by long lashes that in Africa blink away flies and swarming gall-ants, but in Magdeburg now only flutter. The optic nerve of a giraffe is as thick as an index finger and the celestial view which plays through the nerve on the brain of a giraffe – of stars invisible to the human eye and all the subtle colours denoting the age of the star, which twinkle prehistoric down on us – is more finely grained than any Brahe could have hoped for.
>
> (Ledgard, 108)

Haemodynamicist Emil sees the giraffes’ eyes from a biological perspective, as someone who has studied diagrams and perhaps cut open the faces of giraffes to observe the mechanics of the eye. As well as comparing the eye of a giraffe with that of a human Emil declares giraffes’ eyes to be biologically superior, imagining that giraffes perceive stars more accurately than (sixteenth century Danish astronomer) Tycho Brahe could have.

More than just examples of the differences in our anatomies, the many different nonhuman eyes present in the novels convey much more of each animal’s identity. These

eyes, while varied, contain something that the human characters recognise; if not a "soul" then the spark of life. It is this that zoo vet Ellen watches disappear as the small howler monkey dies beneath her hands: "she saw the light leaving his eyes, a dull gray sheen in its place that seemed to flood the eyeball from the inside, announcing that life had gone" (Martin, 19). Rather than using the similarities between primate and human faces to describe the death of the monkey and enhance its effect on the reader, Martin chooses to focus on his eyes. Ellen witnesses the loss of something that most of us will recognise as more than just the absence brought by death; she witnesses the loss of the feelings and emotions that make up a self, as she confirms later when she remembers the little monkey's "terrified expression" (5).

In *Hannah's Dream* this spark is present in Hannah's eyes and conveys her personality and self to human characters almost despite her vast nonhuman body. The elderly Sam recalls the first time he saw Hannah, the first elephant he'd ever seen, forty years ago.

> When he first met her, Hannah had reminded him of nothing so much as a worn-out, hip-shot, low-slung, dog-ugly, poorly dressed old floozy in bad shoes. … And yet there was a soul, a thing of pure beauty, behind those eyes. Max Biedelman had seen it clearly all those years ago and … Samson Brown saw it shining there every day.
>
> (Hammond, 15)

In his book about how various nonhuman animals express their emotions, Marc Bekoff notes that "[e]ven when we can't measure their meaning, it is the eyes that most evocatively convey sentience" (Bekoff, *Emotional*, 50). Despite being unimpressed on first encountering Hannah, when he sees her eyes Sam recognises her as a unique and sentient being. It is this realisation that causes him to treat Hannah as an individual and a friend throughout his life, something it takes other human characters (who haven't spent time with Hannah and recognised her sentience) much longer to realise. Similarly, When Amina first sees the giraffes on the back

of the lorry in Ledgard's novel she is drawn to them, both to their otherness and also the commonalities they share with her, such as their "sensitivity of expression" (Ledgard, 161).

As well as showing the presence of a self, like those of the howler monkey the other animal eyes in the novels also offer the reader an insight into the feelings of nonhuman characters and are often used by the authors to help the reader understand what the animal is experiencing. For example in *Zoology* when Henry first meets Othello he describes his eyes as looking "hungry and worn out" (42). As Bekoff writes, "Eyes are magnificently complex organs that provide a window into an individual's emotional world. As in humans, in many species eyes reflect feelings, whether wide open in glee or sunken in despair. Eyes are mysterious, evocative, and immediate communicators" (Bekoff, *Emotional*, 49). Importantly, Bekoff states that eyes are windows into an *individual*'s emotions and so acknowledges both that "animal eyes" is not an anatomical category – each species experiences vision in a different way – and that individual animals have unique emotional lives different to other members of their species.

While human and nonhuman eyes may both be powerful communicators, as Bekoff points out we are not always able to "measure their meaning" (*Emotional*, 50). In *Hannah's Dream* Neva remembers an old war veteran employed as a sun-bear keeper. Despite the bears being "sad, sleepy", "old" and "vegetarian", the man is terrified of them and insists on being armed in their presence. He tells Neva "*I see them watching me—I see them watching me all the time. You look in those eyes and you can see murder, plain as day*" (Hammond, 52, italics in original). Clearly the man's interpretation of the bears' eyes is influenced by his own experiences.

In Dolnick's novel the strange horizontal pupils of the goats are indicative of both their separation in Henry's mind from the other animals in the children's zoo and of their stark

physical otherness to Henry himself. "The goats looked smart and scrappy … Their pupils went the wrong way, and they all looked up at me expecting something—they were the Bad News Bears and I was their coach" (Dolnick, 44).[11] Despite the otherness of their eyes Henry is still able to recognise expression in them and in the stance of the goats: expectancy. Although he cannot relate to the goats' "wrong way" pupils, they enable Henry to recognise something in the goats and form an immediate bond with them.

Although, like Henry, many human characters may recognise something in the eyes of nonhuman animals there is much more there that is unfamiliar to them, the first sign of which is the jolt of being confronted by the other-than-human. In Millet's *How the Dead Dream*, the protagonist T. experiences this confrontation in surroundings which are already unfamiliar to him and also probably to the reader. In the middle of the night, after climbing over a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, T. sits in the quiet dark of the Mexican gray wolf's pen before aiming his torch in front of the wolf and switching it on. "A quick yellow flicker of eyes and then the wolf moved fluidly, fleeing along the fence" (Millet, 136-7). This "yellow flicker" of the wolf's eyes in the torchlight is starkly nonhuman, a characteristic of various predators' eyes which struck fear into the hearts of people for generations. In his article "The Gaze of Animals" Philip Armstrong explains how for many centuries eyesight was believed to be "an active force" consisting of a "current, flame, fire, steam of particles or corporeal ray" emanating from one's eyes and nocturnal eye-shine, a characteristic "strongest in the gaze of humanity's most feared animal predators", was thought to show the transmission of venomous or evil effects on the subject of the gaze (181). In the case of the wolf's vision it was believed the "noxious influence" of her glowing eye had the power to take away the

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[11] *The Bad News Bears* is a 1976 film (remade in 2005) about a Californian Little League baseball team called "the Bears" comprised of supposedly untalented social misfits rejected by the other teams in the league. The players form a close relationship with their coach, a down-on-his-luck former player, and together they surprise everyone with their success.

voice of any unsuspecting person caught in her gaze (179, 181). While today we know this conclusion to be false, Armstrong notes how in the bestiaries' fantastic descriptions of the fiery, wrathful eyes of animals like wolves and cats "a dynamism is ascribed to the nonhuman gaze that correlates with uncertainty about human mastery over the animal in question" (178). However such long-held beliefs about the powers of nonhuman animals' vision were eventually challenged and in 1672 Sir Thomas Browne posited that the speechlessness of a person upon encountering a wolf was not caused by "venomous emanation, but a vehement fear" (Armstrong, 181). T., suddenly encountering the luminous gaze of the wolf, does not meet with a "venomous emanation", but neither does he feel a "vehement fear". In fact, it is the wolf who immediately "flees" and, having nowhere to go, remains in a corner of his pen, not allowing T. to come any closer (Millet, 137). The potent and mysterious power of the wolf's gaze is largely absent from this encounter, the wolf himself isolated, contained and subjected to the objectifying human gaze. Armstrong observes the foundations of this unequal power dynamic in the seventeenth century works of scientists like Kepler and Descartes, which "represented the progressive abandonment of the ancient and medieval notion of vision ... in favour of an abstract and mathematical concept of vision as a field of intersecting vectors" (Armstrong, 182). This was an important shift away from thinking about animals as gaze-bearing subjects and a move which would have far-reaching consequences for human-animal relations in Western culture.

> One consequence of this paradigm shift was the removal of visual agency from nonhuman animals and its sole investiture in the human mind, which alone possessed the capacity to apprehend optical geometry. (182)

As Armstrong demonstrates, this method of understanding the world by its reduction to two-dimensional planes "is a crucial enabling factor in the modern conquest of nature", ultimately facilitating practices of geographical colonisation, anatomical dissection and the incarceration

of animals in modern zoos (182). Despite this scientific legacy of denying agency to nonhuman animals, when T. remembers the yellow flicker of the wolf's eyes it is not as the empty gaze of a dumb beast; rather, the wolf's "visual agency" remains clear to T. "He thought he recalled feeling, in the flash of its eyeshine, a similar flash in himself—a fleeting awareness that in the wolf's gaze there was a directness unlike the directness of men" (Millet, 137). After trying to look into the eyes of the wolf, expecting to read there something of his feelings or his experience, T. is confronted not by passive "windows into" the wolf's "emotional world" but by the returned gaze of the wolf himself. Not only is the wolf looking at him, but his look is more direct that those of humans. This realisation echoes the acknowledgment by Ledgard's Emil, cited above, that "Giraffes see the world" (Ledgard, 108). In *The Great Divorce* young zookeeper Camille also experiences the regard of nonhuman animals as she stands before the night cages of the zoo's big cats. "Though they never looked one another in the eye, they were all willing to stare coldly at their keeper, so Camille stood in a crossfire of feline eyebeams" (Martin, 10). The power of the cats' gazes is evident and Camille does not look into their eyes.

We know, then, that in the zoo novels the eyes of nonhuman animals are not empty; they are used to convey feelings and expressions of sentience. Nor are they passive, mere windows into another's experience; rather they look, see and gaze around them. In her essay on animal gaze in the work of two German authors, Jutta Ittner draws on the writing of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to try and explain how nonhuman animals see the world. "In his attempt to locate the source, or 'original point' of vision, Lacan differentiates between the eye and the gaze. This distinction introduces a subject whose intention is to see and attribute meaning to the image that its eye sees" (Ittner, 107). Similarly, in the novels I am concerned with here human characters find the gaze of a nonhuman animal startling because they see something there they did not expect: a subject looking back at them. T. is startled by

the wolf's gaze because he is not approaching the wolf as a subject. Entering the wolf's pen he expects to be the only subject "whose intention is to see and attribute meaning to the image that [his] eye sees." Another man who was similarly startled is the philosopher Jacques Derrida, as he describes in the first chapter of his book *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. In an encounter called by Danta and Vardoulakis a "modern fable" (5), the philosopher stands naked his bathroom and turns to find himself being gazed at by his small cat. What he feels in this moment, naked before a cat, is shame. Then more than that he feels ashamed of his shame; embarrassed that the cat looking at his nudity makes him feel ashamed. As Derrida points out, philosophers traditionally profess that what makes nonhuman animals different from us is that they are naked and do not know it (4-5), therefore the cat cannot recognise his nudity. However the philosopher stands "face-to-face" with the cat and sees her eyes "looking at me from head to toe, as it were just to see, not hesitating to concentrate its vision—in order to see, with a view to seeing—in the direction of my sex" (4). The cat does not look passively, therefore, but is a subject who concentrates her vision "in order to see." Gerard Bruns suggests that "the joke is that if the cat had not looked at the naked Derrida, he (Derrida) would have remained (like) an animal, unaware of his nudity. The gaze of the cat is what makes him human" (Bruns, 82). However this is not entirely accurate, as Derrida realises he has been caught off-guard and the cat has been considering him for longer than he was aware of it. He describes "that strange moment when, before the event, before even wanting it or knowing it myself, I am passively presented to it as naked, I am seen and seen naked, before even seeing *myself* seen by a cat" (Derrida, 11). Thus it is not the gaze of the cat that makes Derrida human, but his awareness of her gaze and his own reaction to it. The function of the cat's gaze is not to render Derrida human, but to see. She is a subject in herself, with her own motivations for looking, and for seeing. Never is her subjectivity more obvious to a human observer, than when that observer finds herself under the cat's gaze. In

their essay “The Political Animal” Danta and Vardoulakis explain this effect: “While gazing at the human, the animal prohibits (its) animality being reduced to a pure naked body, a body of absolute passivity, a body to be brushed and patted. With this interruption, the animal also becomes political, in the sense that it conditions the possibility of singularity and of identity” (5). In finding himself the subject of the cat’s gaze, Derrida is confronted with her identity and her singularity. Her own point of view and its stark difference to his own occur to him more strongly than ever before.

> And from the vantage of this being-there-before-me [the cat] can allow itself to be looked at, no doubt, but also—something that philosophy perhaps forgets … —it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever given me more food for thinking through this absolute alterity of the neighbor or of the next(-door) than these moments when I see myself naked under the gaze of a cat.
>
> (Derrida, 11)

It is not only seeing the cat or the gaze of the cat that gives Derrida pause, but seeing himself under her gaze.

In *Hannah’s Dream* Hannah’s singularity and identity are known to Sam, who feels a special, fatherly connection to her. However he faces a challenge in trying to convey this identity to strangers who haven’t had the opportunity to interact with Hannah themselves. The tendency of humans to discount the possibility of nonhuman subjectivity is shown in the first interaction young Reginald has with Hannah. Sam is walking with Hannah one day when they meet Reginald for the first time.

> He heard someone call, "How come you're walking that elephant, mister?" A boy appeared at his elbow, a small but good-looking kid about eleven years old.
> "How come you're walking around the zoo?" Sam asked.
> The boy shrugged, falling into step beside Sam. "To see stuff."
> "Guess you answered your own question, then," Sam said.
> (Hammond, 16)

Reginald makes the assumption that the reason Hannah is out walking is different from his own. It does not occur to him that as a nonhuman animal Hannah could enjoy walking for the same reason that he does. In a non-confrontational way Sam encourages Reginald towards a similar realisation to Derrida's: that Hannah *looks* in order to *see*. Reginald is doubtful, however, and asks Sam, "[c]an she see me? She's awful damned big" (16). As with Derrida's cat, whose diminutive size and entirely nonhuman anatomy are an initial barrier to the philosopher's considering the possibility of her subjecthood, Hannah's size and physical otherness distract Reginald from recognising that she has a point of view. Her stature makes it impossible for him to look into her eyes or be sure that he himself is the subject of her gaze. It is important to him that Hannah sees him and it is only once Sam reassures him that she does that Reginald begins to consider her as an individual.

While experiencing the gaze of the nonhuman animal forces us to realise that other animals have their own points of view, the experience is far from making those points of view known to us. Marcus Bullock argues that every part of an animal, being so different from ourselves, "looks" at us and forces us to respond to it. Although the gaze of a nonhuman animal makes us acknowledge in these moments the sentience and subjecthood of the encountered other, we are far from understanding them or their perspective: "there is no part of an animal that does not look back at us. There is no part that does not remind us that there

is something, a life, an existence that in some way echoes our own, but which remains always behind what meets our gaze, elusive, impossible, unimaginable" (Bullock, 101).

While the whole being of a nonhuman animal can be said to "look back at us", challenging our perceptions, it is when our eyes meet theirs that we may be forced to comprehend that the encounter really is an exchange between two subjects, a true experience of eye *contact*. In *The Emotional Lives of Animals* Bekoff acknowledges that understanding what we see in the eyes of nonhuman animals is not simple. "Reading emotions in eyes is not as clear-cut as reading gestures like the play bow. Personal interpretation or intuition plays a role, and yet there is no more direct animal-to-animal communication that staring deeply into another's eyes" (Bekoff, 50). While the mutual gaze between two individuals provides the opportunity for meaningful interaction its effectiveness depends on the culturally-formed perceptions and personal interpretation of the human participant.

At the end of *The Great Divorce* Ellen visits Minx, the young jaguar who has been sick overnight. "She leaned closer in to see the jaguar's face, and as she did he stopped drinking. He lifted his head, the water pouring in two thin streams from his slightly open jaws. He gave her a long, steady look, his yellow eyes betraying nothing of his sentiments, if he could be said to have any" (Martin, 320). Ellen doesn't see Minx's eyes as windows into his feelings, but rather has amplifiers of his subjecthood. Since his eyes don't betray his emotions, much less his thoughts, Ellen naturally reverts to "personal interpretation". "In fact, Ellen thought, his look was the opposite of sentiment. This was the look that sees no moment beyond the present, that contemplates the world in an eternal now, the natural, healthy, straightforward, and increasingly rare regard of the wild and predatory cat" (Martin, 320). In his "Eighth Elegy" Rilke attributes the calm gaze of a nonhuman animal, who lives already "in eternity" to her being so much a part of "the open" that she barely sees humans who are separate from it.

> Or that an animal,
> a silent one, looks up, and calmly through and through us.
> That is what destiny means: being opposite,
> and nothing but that, and always opposite.
>
> (lines 31-4, trans. Komar, 145-6)

Just as lines thirty-one and thirty-two of Rilke's poem "confront insecure mortals with the secure animal" (Llewellyn, 143), Ellen recognises that Minx's gaze is "natural, healthy" and "straightforward", apparently free of the insecurities of human sentiment. Ellen's interpretation of Minx's look is informed by her own experience and her knowledge of the wider context of their interaction, including her culturally-learnt presuppositions about how "wild animals" and in particular big cat predators "should" be. She was expecting him to be sick, so in the absence of illness his look seems "healthy"; recently she has been thinking a lot about the imminent extinction of species like Minx's and she projects the status of his entire species onto him as an individual when she sees his look as being on the brink of nonexistence, viewing the world in "an eternal now". Through this cycle of observation and interpretation we can see that our understanding of an animal's gaze tells us more about ourselves than about how that animal truly thinks or feels. Bullock writes, "Yet precisely because the gaze of an animal refuses us so much compared to the look we exchange with another person, to whom we may speak in expectation of a reply, we can say that the animal glances back not only literally but figuratively, through a capacity with which we must invest it, as well" (101). Because the meaning of an animal's look is withheld we are forced to endow it with our own meanings and, like the paranoid veteran in *Hannah's Dream*, these meanings may have more to do with ourselves and how we perceive the animal than with how she perceives us.

For these reasons the eye is a powerful symbol, an image that may beckon and appeal to the viewer and also arrest and confront her. The five novels examined in this thesis each use the eyes of a nonhuman animal, an animal's square regard, on the cover of the book.

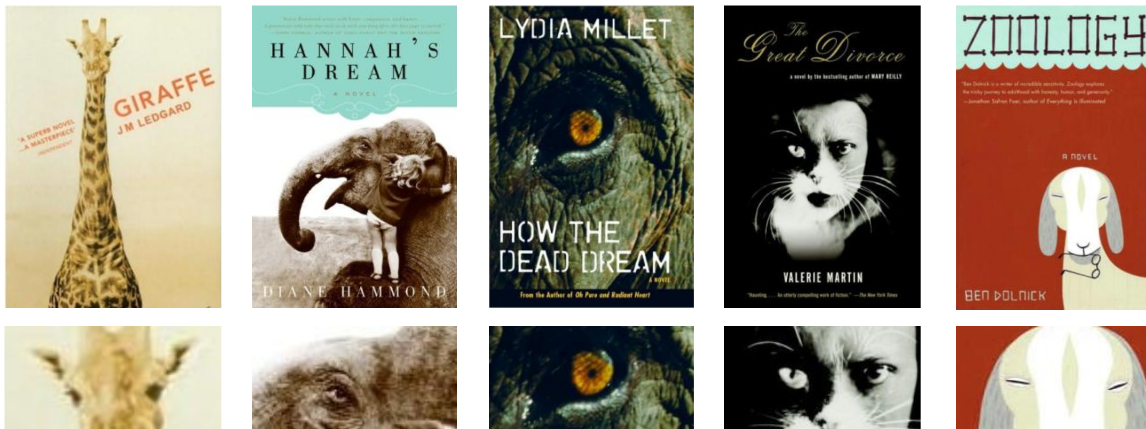

Fig. 1 Book cover and detail of the five zoo novels.
From left: *Giraffe* (Ledgard), *Hannah's Dream* (Hammond), *How The Dead Dream* (Millet), [12] *The Great Divorce* (Martin) and *Zoology* (Dolnick).

In large part these cover images reflect the role of the animals themselves in the novels. The giraffe on the cover of J.M. Ledgard's novel is shown as "lofty", "alien" and subdued, while the elephant on the cover of *Hannah's Dream* has one startlingly human-like eye looking toward the viewer. The close-up image of the elephant eye on the cover of *How The Dead Dream* is cropped to remove all context, leaving the viewer to apply a human emotional inference of panic and turmoil to the widened eye and floating pupil; the drama evoked here reflects the novel's themes of helplessness and destruction of the vast majority of nonhuman animal species. The image of the half-woman half-feline face on the cover of Valerie Martin's novel stares out at the reader, the starkness of the contrast between the human and

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[12] This cover image is taken from the 2008 edition of Lydia Millet's novel published by Counterpoint. Throughout this thesis references to the text of the novel refer to the 2009 edition published by Vintage, the cover of which features an image of a black bear who is also looking out towards the reader. I have chosen to use the cover featuring the image of the elephant eye here to illustrate the effect of the single confronting nonhuman eye, and to contrast this with the eye of the elephant on the cover of Diane Hammond's novel.

nonhuman eye embodies the concept of humans' divorce from the natural world: eerily similar, yet discordant even as they exist in the same face. Finally the illustrated cover of *Zoology* emphasises the "wrong way" pupils of the goat's eyes ensuring that his gaze, which is directed out to engage the viewer, is emphatically nonhuman.

While encountering the gaze of a nonhuman animal causes many humans in the novels to confront the animals' individuality and subjecthood, several humans also take the next step and are drawn to imagine what it is like for the animal in their position. The most common way they try to do this is through the animals' eyes: they literally try to imagine what looking out of an animal's eyes feels like. Human characters attempt this in various contexts and with varying degrees of success.

When Emil is considering the eye of a giraffe he imagines how superior the astronomer Brahe's discoveries would have been if he could have "employed giraffe eyes" (Ledgard, 107). Here Emil's contemplation is inspired not by meeting Sněhurka's gaze or even by watching her and the other giraffes. He is simply drawing on his knowledge of giraffe anatomy, considering the eye of *a* giraffe, anonymous and supposedly generic. He imagines only how such an eye might be used for human ends, removing the giraffe's point of view and inserting a human one. Later in the novel Amina is walking through the zoo and stops to watch a rhinoceros. She observes that her eyes are "small, without colour or expression" (166). Amina tries to imagine how the rhinoceros must see the world but like Reginald looking up at Hannah she struggles with the rhino's physical otherness, distracted by her large, grey, dinosaur-like armoured body, "I cannot imagine how dimly the world must arrive inside the head of this rhino, whether it sees me through its lanced eyelets, or ever notices the red banner hung over its pit declaring: *Our Morals Are Fixed!*" (166-7). Amina shows that she is too trapped in the human "Communist moment" to be able to try to truly empathise with the rhinoceros and imagine her nonhuman experience. The nature of Amina's encounter

with the rhinoceros also inhibits her ability to connect with the animal, for reasons which will be discussed in the next chapter.

In Lydia Millet's novel, T. takes a very different approach to his own encounter with a rhinoceros. After breaking into her cage at nighttime T. considers her in the gloom. Like Emil, he uses a human perspective to understand the rhino's experience but unlike Emil and Amina he focuses on seeing the rhinoceros on an individual level and instead imagines humans as the anonymous ones. "She was the only one of her kind for thousands of miles, across the wide seas. What person had ever known such separation?" (Millet, 145). Meeting the rhinoceros in the dimness of her night enclosure doesn't affect T.'s ability to imagine her perspective since instead of looking at her eyes, he imagines her vision.

> Sight was less important to a rhinoceros than to him, he knew that, but she still had to see. He put his hand to his nose, blocking sight between his own two eyes, closing one and then the other. He had read that the vision of many animals was dichromatic; they saw everything in a scheme based on two primary colors, not three. Were they red, he thought, red and blue? He closed his own eyes, heard the rise and fall of his chest and nearby a rustle whose nature he could not discern.
> (145)

Like Emil, T. has scientific knowledge of how a rhinoceros' eye works. Unlike Emil, however, T. uses the knowledge to inform his imagining of this rhinoceros' experience. He experiments with his own sight, physically manipulating it to try and understand what the rhino's nonhuman vision might feel like. Throughout the encounter he acknowledges the total uniqueness of rhinoceroses as a species and also this particular animal, trapped alone in a zoo in the Bronx. "No other animal could have eyes like these, see the ground and the trees from this place with this dinosaur's consciousness" (146). Ultimately T. fails to completely commit his imagination to the rhino's perspective. Closing his eyes to focus on the sounds in her

enclosure he can't concentrate for long. "Behind the eyelids it was thick and dark but impressions of light passed there, distracting. They passed like clouds he found himself idly drawn to interpret, to fix into the shape of rabbits or swans" (145). His mind drifts away in this manner until it is brought back by a familiar sound: a sigh. "After a while the rhinoceros sighed. It was a familiar sound despite the fact that they were strangers. He knew the need for the sigh, the feel of its passage…" (145). Although he fails to completely experience the rhino's point of view, by simply trying T. realises how much they have in common as individual beings. By focusing his attention on the rhinoceros and the experiences they have in common (they both see, they are both standing in the same quiet room, they are both alone), T. both expands his view of her to include her individuality and subjecthood and at the same time contracts it, excluding the cultural and scientific presumptions of what a Sumatran rhinoceros is. In their essay "The Political Animal" Danta and Vardoulakis claim that "singularity only arises at the threshold of commonality" (6) and describe an important part of respecting animals as individuals:

> A key step here is to return the philosopher's gaze to the nonhuman animal – and, in what amounts to the same thing, to welcome the animal's gaze itself. Only through such a double gesture may human commonality be expanded to incorporate animality. This newfound being-with-the-animal requires nothing more or less from us than a slight readjustment of consciousness in the most precariously mundane moments.
>
> (5)

Although T. does not share eye contact with the rhinoceros he regards her passively, allowing her to choose to also look at him. He does not think of himself as the only subject in the room, there to observe an object. Instead he and the rhinoceros are both sentient selves sharing a moment in time, separated only by T.'s freedom to leave as he chooses. Sitting (illegally) in a quiet, dark room at night watching a rhinoceros might seem quite unusual and exciting but for

T. it is the kind of experience he is becoming used to. Sometimes on his night sojourns in different zoo enclosures he even falls asleep, overcome by boredom; however he becomes better and better at readjusting his consciousness in these "precariously mundane moments."

In *The Great Divorce* two of the main human female characters identify so closely with a nonhuman animal, a large female cat, that they physically become her – at least in their minds. A bond between women and cats has often been noted throughout Western history, the relationship at times perceived as demure domestic companionship like that of a lady and her pet (Rogers, 114-7), or as an unholy covenant with the devil like that between a witch and her familiar (Lawrence, 631-2). Women and cats have also been described as sharing many supposedly feminine traits both positive and derogatory, for example fertility, charm, beauty, female sexuality, gracefulness, vulnerability, lust, arrogance, spite, laziness, deceitfulness or cunning (See Lawrence; Rogers 114-141). In *The Great Divorce* the two human women are drawn to the female big cats both by the felines' physical power which they admire and the cats' embodiment of rage and resistance against captivity, which the human women share. White slave owner Elisabeth Schlaeger, finding herself trapped in an abusive marriage, seeks out the voodoo magic of the coloured community. In a nighttime ceremony a spirit, suggested in the shape of a black cat formed by melting wax, is transferred into her. The "petro" spirit is young, cruel and strong: "some said he was the spirit of rage against imprisonment" (Martin, 254). The next day Elisabeth is taken back home by her husband where he rapes her and locks her in her room. Looking out the window one night she sees a great black cat, a leopard, who "fixed its strange bright eyes suddenly on her face" (312). As she watches "[t]he golden eyes, like twin shafts of light, penetrated with uncanny accuracy the darkest corners of her pounding, incredulous heart"; Elisabeth is "mesmerized by the animal's unblinking, determined regard" (312) "Giving up all resistance" before the leopard's gaze Elisabeth closes her eyes and when she reopens them she sees the world

through the golden eyes of the cat. As the leopard Elisabeth experiences not only her night vision but other finely attuned feline senses:

> And the world was entirely different. The night was as bright as day; she could hear everything, even the smallest movement of a leaf, the flickering of a mouse's whisker in the thicket nearby. She could smell something strong, something dead. The smell assailed her and tempted her; she was ravenously hungry.
>
> (312)

Attracted to the house by the smell of raw meat she senses a man approach and his inferior human senses are exposed: "[t]here was nothing but the man and her perfect apprehension of the man. He could feel it now himself, though he didn't know it" (313-4). With her head full of rage she leaps at the man "in a delirium of purpose" and kills him with her teeth and claws (314). Opening her eyes Elisabeth is her human self once more, covered with blood and crouched over her husband's body.

Elisabeth's being with the leopard is very different from T.'s being with the rhinoceros. While the contemporary writer relating her story in the novel surmises that the leopard Elisabeth sees has probably escaped from a circus, the animal herself or where she came from is unimportant to Elisabeth. Although she fully transforms into a feline, engaging with her senses and desires, for Elisabeth the leopard functions as a symbol only, an embodiment of the rage she feels and physical power she desires. As a nonhuman animal the leopard's identity is significant only because of the petro spirit inside her; she is merely a vessel, a way for the cruel spirit to exist in the world and carry out its retribution. In contrast to Elisabeth's escape into the leopard, the young zookeeper Camille experiences an involuntary physical transformation into a nonhuman animal with whom she has a personal history.

Camille admires Magda, a leopard who is part of the zoo's "Asian exhibit" where she works as a keeper. She often watches Magda, the way she moves, eats and watches those around her. Away from the zoo Camille experiences a sensation in stressful moments which to her feels like a physical transforming into a cat like Magda. She describes to her psychiatrist the way the feeling starts in her mouth, then her hands and fingers, then her eyes, her hearing alters and she hears Magda's heart beating. Finally, "everything gets red. I see everything in shades of red" (Martin, 15). This often happens to her during sex when a rage like Elisabeth's fills her and she feels a barely-controlled violence. While Elisabeth transforms into a leopard as a means of escape and victory over her husband, Camille's transformation into Magda is involuntary and stems from her admiration for Magda and her perceived shared experiences with the cat. When Magda dies it is as if Camille loses the potent second half of herself and it is not long before she too is dead. Camille remembers watching Magda fight against the anaesthetic and her helplessness in the face of the impending darkness: "[d]on't fight so hard, Camille had thought, watching her. Just give it up" (307). Camille experiences a similar loss of dignity at the end and feels it as "a kind of liberty" as the day after Magda's death she sits naked on a stranger's bed and shoots herself (308). Although Camille feels that Magda is beautiful, powerful and impressive, knowing her is not necessarily a positive part of Camille's life. Camille's being with Magda is tainted by the isolation, loneliness, rage and helplessness of Magda's existence in the zoo which in turn affects Camille and, like Magda, ultimately destroys her. As these feelings start to influence her psychologically Camille is frightened of her own violence and inability to control her transformation into a nonhuman animal. In her nightmares she does not turn into a beautiful cat like Elisabeth, but instead she has twisted, stunted arms and legs and a monster's face. In the nightmares she feels unendurable pain and she wakes screaming (24). Despite this while she is awake during the day she still yearns for the beauty and power she sees in Magda. It is

only when she sees the zoo vet, Ellen, working on the unconscious clouded leopard, Flo, that Camille feels warmth and admiration for another human. The feeling only lasts an instant, "[b]ut the lie of the hidden world had been exposed, and for a moment Camille knew she resembled the woman sewing more than the unconscious leopard under her hands. She had no wish to deny it; for the first time in her life she was not ashamed of her own kind." (161) Although this glowing scene makes her proud to be a human, soon afterwards a seedy encounter with a man brings on a vision of feline transformation: "her hand was a black paw raking sharp claws into the flesh of his face" (182). The angry violence of her own transformation into a cat is directly influenced by the anger she so often feels emanating from Magda. Their common bond is their experience of alienation and helplessness in their own lives, which manifests itself in frightening and destructive ways in Camille's transformations.

Similarly, in *How The Dead Dream* T. senses that, like Magda, the final animals he visits (three retired circus elephants) are filled with "a massive and brooding rage" due to their confinement and the conditions in which they are kept (Millet, 198). Although T. does not feel the sensation of physically transforming into an elephant he does experience what Deleuze and Guattari call "becoming animal". As with the other animals he visits T. does not strive for eye contact with the elephants. He sits quietly in their concrete barn and watches them, imagining how they feel, how they experience the world, what makes them happy and sad, what they enjoy and what they dislike. He feels their warm breath, the touch of their trunks and he understands that they recognise him when he returns. Through his being with the elephants T. does not physically turn into an elephant but he does experience a psychological and emotional becoming-elephant. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, "[b]ecoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing … Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing,' 'being,' 'equaling,' or 'producing'" (39). Greater than simply

"identifying with" the elephants T. wakes one morning and feels that he is becoming one of them. Aware of their suffering and hopelessness he is terrified of what is happening and struggles to resist it.

> One morning he woke to the elephants pacing and felt he was pacing with them. A panic took hold of him. He was sinking into the torpor of the elephants himself, their permanent impoundment, and he had to get out. Their deep rage that was as heavy as they were, massive in its resignation – this lay over him in a swell, a contagion of misery. He almost thought they had conveyed it to him, had entrusted him with the purpose of getting out.
>
> (Millet, 199)

Although T.'s becoming lasts only a moment – he does not succumb to the elephants' rage but reacts against it with a desperate fear – for a moment he does feels himself becoming elephant. Just as Deleuze and Guattari argue that "contagion" across species is the "only way Nature operates – against itself", T. feels the weight of the elephants' emotional and mental pain as a "contagion" transmitted to him through the time he spends with them (Deleuze and Guattari, 41). As Matthew Calarco explains of becoming-animal, T.'s becoming-elephant "is a matter of being transformed by an encounter with nonhuman perspectives. Becoming-animal is thus better understood in terms of symbiosis, affect, alliance and contagion between beings that are usually identified as distinctly 'human' and 'animal'" (42). Ultimately T. feels as though the elephants have made him a kind of emissary, bestowed on him the vital mission to escape from the zoo on their behalf. While Emil feels he must leave the giraffes' zoo for the simple reason that as a human "[t]he zoo is not my place" (Ledgard, 148), in the moment of his waking T. feels the elephantine rage carrying him away from that zoo and from all zoos.

While the zoo is ostensibly a place for humans to go to observe nonhuman animals according to much of the fiction and cultural critique about zoos, most zoo visitors

(consciously or not) are actually seeking something more. As discussed above a truly meaningful gaze is an interaction, a moment of potential give and take, an acknowledgement. Visitors to the zoo may go there for the purpose of seeing exotic animals but, as studies of zoo visitors show (for example Kreger & Mench; Woods, 355-6), in seeing each individual the visitor feels the urge for something more: contact with the animal, interaction, reaction, acknowledgement. In *Giraffe* a sailor describes this urge when he tells Emil about the time he saw a mermaid, “I opened my mouth to call out to the mermaid. I felt a great need for her to look at me, as we all have felt the need for the giraffes to turn and meet our gaze” (Ledgard, 72). What the sailor and the other humans who encounter the giraffes feel in their presence is an overwhelming impulse, a need, for the giraffes to make eye contact. When Amina first sees the giraffes travelling on the back of the lorry she is drawn to them and they respond to her, “[t]he giraffes move towards me. They see me” (161). These few seconds have a profound effect on Amina and from that night on she continues to feel a connection to the giraffes. To Emil, this is a function giraffes serve for humans: “[t]his is a service the giraffe performs: it moves towards those who stand still before it and offers them a sense of otherness” (142). Whether it is seen as a service or a privilege, this nonhuman response is something most humans in the zoo novels desire, not merely to see but to be seen. Later in Ledgard’s novel the zookeeper explains to Amina the purpose of the zoo for the public of ČSSR,

> “The zoo is nothing more than a contrivance,” he says, “to make workers forgetful of the monotony of their lives. They arrive here from industrial towns. They move from cage to cage. What do they want? Not to contemplate, as you seem to do, but to make strange animals see them. You’ve seen how they put their hands through the bars, how they throw in food or litter, and how they wave their arms until the pygmy hippo takes the smallest step in their direction.”
>
> (191)

Caught up in the "Communist moment" the Czechoslovakian workers visit the zoo to regain something, to be "awakened" (165). They too feel the need for the animals in the zoo to see them and acknowledge their existence. Why do captive animals create this yearning in us? Why do we want so badly to be seen by them? Perhaps it has something to do with the place "wild" animals occupy in our culture which places them in pure Nature outside the taint of modern society. By placing them outside our society we exclude them from our own corruption and imperfections and preserve them in our culture as innocent, powerful, pure beings. This is may be why the acknowledgment of a captive animal means so much. In wanting animals to see them a person is seeking an acknowledgment not just of her self but of her self-*worth*. In this sense the gaze of an animal can truly be seen as a regard; an animal who withholds her regard of the human visitor truly seems to the human to disregard them.

In *Giraffe* the author offers us a glimpse into a mirror when Emil describes the "urgency" of an orang-utan in an enclosure at the Prague zoo, which (sic) "beat with open palms on the Perspex window of its cage to attract the attention of every passer-by, as though from the inside of an airless cockpit" (63). In this disturbing story the orang-utan is panicked and we imagine the horror and despair of her imprisonment, her desperation all the more arresting for its human-like expression. However the Perspex window in the story also acts as a mirror, in the orang-utan's actions we see a reflection of our own "urgency" as we try to attract the attention of the animals within the zoo enclosures. Alone outside nature, trapped on one side of a separation we constructed (but have forgotten how to overcome), we beat our palms on the Perspex window, shout at the zoo animals and try to attract their attention "as though from the inside of an airless cockpit."

Like the Prague zoo orang-utan, we too need the acknowledgement of other animals. As discussed above the gaze of an animal is one marker of her subjecthood and the freedom to choose whether to look or not to look, to bestow one's regard or to withhold it represents a

power which nonhuman animals retain. Randy Malamud writes: "[a] king may look at a cat, but perhaps a cat disdains to look back at a king" (*Reading*, 229). This form of power (and the conquering of it) is also an element of the zoo visit. As Mullan and Marvin note, "[z]oos are ostensibly about going to view animals, an activity in which the people are not important except as passive viewers. But this is not how it works in practice; in the zoo the humans *demand* to be noticed by the animals" (134, emphasis in original). Therefore one of the functions of the zoo is to contain the nonhuman animals within so that human zoo visitors can force themselves into proximity with the animal, proximity which the animal would not allow in her natural habitat (that is, if she had a choice), and attempt to (mis)appropriate the animal's regard. Beardsworth and Bryman also use Mullan and Marvin's work on power dimensions in the context of the menagerie when they argue that in the zoo as an institution, "the *powerless* are at all time subject to the gaze of the *powerful*" (Beardsworth and Bryman, 88, emphasis in original). This gaze takes many forms such as the "scientific gaze", "zoological gaze" and "recreational gaze", while in each of these may be seen the power of the "male gaze" (89). Beardsworth and Bryman agree with Kay Anderson's argument "that the gaze of the 'rational male subject' has established itself as the generic human gaze, objective and all-encompassing." Like the gaze of the powerful human captor over the powerless captive nonhuman animal, "[t]his dominance is, in turn, seen as based upon the denial or exclusion of competing possibilities" (89). Malamud suggests a different view: "[t]heir [animals'] obliviousness to human exploits may heighten people's sadistic compulsion to master them, to keep them in captivity. If animals in nature taunt people with their innocence and freedom, zoos represent people's revenge" (Malamud, *Reading*, 14). If this is truly the case then the need the zoo visitor feels for the captive animals to meet her gaze could be the result of that "sadistic compulsion", a triumph over the "obliviousness" of animals in forcing them to acknowledge us, our exploits and our power over them. While this

may definitely be the case for some zoo visitors, perhaps for others the need for the regard of an animal is more a supplication, an entreaty for forgiveness for the "sadistic compulsion to master them" to which the zoo itself and the very nature of their interaction attests.

An example of the former, more sadistic type of zoo visitor is found in *How The Dead Dream*, when T. witnesses a family throwing garbage at a black bear asleep in a zoo exhibit to try and provoke him into looking up towards the camera for a photograph. The litter "hit the bear a glancing blow on the ear and he stirred, disoriented, turned around once and then settled down again" (132). Fiddling with his camera the man tells his wife and children that he missed the shot and they should try again, next time throwing a foam cup of drink at the bear. The idea of trying to experience a kind of genuine observation or interaction with the bear has not occurred to the family visiting the zoo, although in their own way they seek the gaze of the animal. In this incident the camera serves as a useful symbol for the changes that have occurred in our encounters with nonhuman animals since the industrial revolution. The camera serves as a mechanical eye, technology designed and brought to bear on nature as a way of improving it. The eye of the photographer values image quality, the aesthetic and superficial appearance of a scene as well as composition, literally framing the nonhuman animal as an object to be observed. Although wildlife photography can be beautiful and powerful the camera nevertheless acts as a mediator between human and nonhuman, altering the value and purpose of the interaction. We are reminded of this in *Giraffe* when Amina describes watching zoo visitors with their cameras. "I have seen visitors who do not look at the creatures in the zoo except through the lens of their camera and curse when they run out of film, as though they have been made blind" (Ledgard, 191). For the visitors the camera is a way of capturing a piece of the beauty or otherness of the animals to keep for themselves, however they are so focused on this goal that they ignore the very animals they wish to know.

In this sense the act of photography is an extension of the philosophy of acquisition and captivity of animals by and for the dominant human gaze.

Although zoo visitors seek acknowledgment from nonhuman animals, such an intimate encounter is all but impossible in the zoo setting. As John Berger famously explains

> The zoo cannot but disappoint. The public purpose of zoos is to offer visitors the opportunity of looking at animals. Yet nowhere in a zoo can a stranger encounter the look of an animal. At the most, the animal's gaze flickers and passes on. They look sideways. They look blindly beyond. They scan mechanically. They have been immunised to encounter, because nothing can any more occupy a *central* place in their attention.
>
> Therein lies the ultimate consequence of their marginalisation. That look between animal and man, which may have played a crucial role in the development of human society, and with which, in any case, all men had always lived until less than a century ago, has been extinguished. Looking at each animal, the unaccompanied zoo visitor is alone. As for the crowds, they belong to a species which has at last been isolated.
>
> This historic loss, to which zoos are a monument, is now irredeemable for the culture of capitalism.
>
> (28)

If it is true that we all seek the gaze and acknowledgment of nonhuman animals but that “nowhere in a zoo can a stranger encounter the look of an animal”, how then do the zoo novels examined here create convincing interactions between human and captive nonhuman characters? The answer is that none of the main human characters in the novels have a realistic zoo-going experience. Not one is a mere zoo visitor. Each human character in the zoo novels occupies a privileged position in relation to the animals held captive in the zoo. For characters like Sam, Neva and Truman in *Hannah’s Dream*, Ellen and Camille in *The*

Great Divorce, Emil and the giraffe keeper in *Giraffe* and Henry in *Zoology*, it is their employment by the zoo which permits them to have close encounters with the zoo animals. Young Reginald is perhaps the only genuine zoo visitor, taken to the zoo by his aunt; even Amina visits the zoo only after a freak middle-of-the-night encounter and connection with the giraffes outside the zoo. For both these zoo visitors an early encounter allows them to interact personally with a nonhuman animal (Hannah and Sněhurka) and then through forming friendships with a zoo employee gain continued access to those animals. Every main human character in the novels is able to develop a relationship with or at least have interactions with captive animals either repeatedly or over an extended period of time. The reason that none of the human characters in the novels are typical zoo visitors is simple: it is impossible for a casual zoo visitor to have a meaningful interaction with a captive animal. If "nowhere in a zoo can a stranger encounter the look of an animal" then that all zoo visitors are doing is looking at animals. That would not make for a very thrilling or emotional novel. Something extraordinary must occur for the zoo visitors to be able to experience that connection with animals which ordinarily is impossible in a zoo.

Once these characters gain access to the captive nonhuman animals, circumventing the inevitable "disappointment" of the typical zoo experience, they nevertheless are always disturbed or discontented by what they find within the zoo enclosures. When T. searches for the desert pupfish he first visits their natural pool, then seeks out the facility built for their protection. "But there was another place: the scientists had moved some of the fish to a refuge, not open to the public" (160). Like most others in his society, T. trusts "the scientists" to manage the natural world using their superior knowledge and skills. As Helen Tiffin notes, Science is "the dominant paradigm of our time" (139); it is valued and venerated in both academia, where funding is often withdrawn from the humanities and directed to the "hard sciences" (Hurn, 151) and public discourse, where Science is usually presented "as a marker

of ‘progress’” (151). In his book *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* Philip Armstrong explains the distinction drawn by French theorist Bruno Latour between “the sciences” and “Science”:

> The former term, he suggests, refers to the multiplicity of theories and activities actually formulated and practised by scientists, which comprises a constantly changing, non-unified and non-totalising network of propositions pertaining to “the plurality of external realities”. The latter term, capitalized and singular, represents a reified and unified “myth” that conceals how partial, provisional and contested the sciences actually are: “Science” therefore gains social authority by claiming unique access to a unified Nature.
>
> (182)

One example of Science’s “social authority” at work is the case of Japanese scientific whaling. In 1986 the International Whaling Commission (IWC), of which Japan is a member, banned commercial whaling (that is, killing whales to sell their meat) due to concerns about the depletion of whale populations. However in the same year as it announced the cessation of commercial whaling the Japanese government commissioned the Japanese Institute of Cetacean Research (also responsible for marketing whale meat and pro-whaling education) to begin lethal scientific research (allowed under Article 8 of the IWC’s “International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling” [IWC, 2]); the resulting dead whales are processed and sold as meat on the Japanese market (Morikawa, 38-9; 47). Despite opposition from other members of the IWC and environmental groups (Zifcak, 1; “Scientific Whaling”), and despite non-lethal research methods being used elsewhere (Australia, “Non-Lethal,” 1), the size of the scientific whalers’ annual catch continues to grow (Morikawa, 45). While the actual scientific value of the whaler’s research is disputed (Gillespie, 133), the authority of Science in modern social politics ensures the whalers can continue their practices. As I will show in the following chapter, at the same time that Japanese whalers began using Science to

justify their killing of whales for meat Western zoos were in the middle of their own process of rebranding to emphasise their (self-conferred) scientific value.

In the zoo novels Science's claim of a "unique access to a unified Nature" is evident in the structure and politics of the zoos, even as this claim is proven hollow. When T. locates the pupfish's scientific "refuge", he is stunned by the reality: "It was a concrete tank" (Millet, 160). Knowing it was built by "scientists" and the exclusivity of it being "not open to the public" led T. to believe that a great amount of care, effort and finance was going into the protection of the pupfish. In his mind was perhaps a glistening state-of-the-art facility with tight security, a dedicated team of scientists and various equipment and technologies to ensure the safety of the pupfish. The reality is a concrete tank surrounded by a fence in the middle of the desert. Similarly, in Ledgard's novel the giraffes are brought to the zoo amid hopes of developing, through scientific breeding techniques, a new "*camelopardalis bohemica*" giraffe subspecies. However when a disease is supposedly detected in a secret test the Communist regime exerts its power on the zoo: it is quarantined, disinfected and every trace of the giraffes is destroyed. But the futility of even the Communist authority's containment efforts is exposed when in the final stage of the process one of the butchers saves a piece of hide from one of the allegedly infected giraffes as a souvenir.

In *The Great Divorce* zoo vet Ellen is trained in veterinary science; at home in the world of "machines", "tubes" and "gleaming metal" she confidently brings scalpels and chemicals to bear on the zoo's nonhuman animals, seeing their body as an "elegant mechanism" (Martin, 157, 29). Zoo keeper Camille is in awe of Ellen, who to her seems to live "on a higher plane" (160). As Armstrong notes, "Latour suggests a quasi-religious authority is arrogated by the Scientist, who assumes the prerogative to commune with the objective world of nature and to return to the subjective world of society 'like a latter-day Moses,' bringing back 'the legislation of scientific laws, which are not open to question'"

(Armstrong, *What Animals Mean*, 182, citing Latour, 9-11, 249). Although she is trained to look after the animals in the zoo's Asian Exhibit, Camille sees Ellen's position as completely separate from her own, elevated far above through her association with the world of Science. To Camille, "Ellen seemed to come down to her from another world, the world of science, of the hospital, which Camille had seen only from the outside..." (150). Like the other keepers, who are anxious when Ellen visits their animals' enclosures "lest she find something amiss in their supervision", Camille is partly afraid of her and watches shyly from outside the hospital room as the vet begins work on the unconscious leopard, Flo (160, 157-8). Within the clinical site of the hospital Ellen has absolute power and may control the access of both human and nonhuman animals throughout the areas of the zoo.

Although Camille sees Ellen in the glorified role of Latour's Scientist for much of the novel, the reader is privy to Ellen's reservations about the abilities of Science and the status of the zoo as a supposed ark. Despite the authority wielded by Science, even within the clinical space of the zoo hospital the limitations of human control are obvious, for example when Flo briefly lifts her head during an operation using a new anaesthesia drug.

> All three humans watched the cat's mouth drop open. Her mouth twitched again.
> "I thought this Tiletamine was seizure-free," the technician said.
> "I guess Flo didn't read the insert," Ellen replied.
>
> (Martin, 159)

It is the most clinical of scenes: after drugging her Ellen cuts into Flo's body to insert a plastic implant which will remove the leopard's ability to have cubs. Yet at the centre of this tableau in which the nonhuman animal is objectified and apparently rendered powerless Flo's unconscious action forces the admission that she has agency which is not entirely oppressed by the application of human science.

While Camille continues to admire Ellen and respect her status at the zoo, in *How The Dead Dream* T. becomes disillusioned with Western capitalist societies' ideals of empirical knowledge and authority. Growing up T. loved authority, those (men) who possessed it and the institutions they created. "Great institutions and the tall columns and white soaring domes that stood for them—these seemed to him the crowning achievement of his kind. Authority inspired him..." (Millet, 2). As his understanding of modern society's relationship with (or exploiting of) nonhuman nature grows, it erodes T.'s respect for human knowledge and achievement. This disillusionment finally finds expression in his reaction to the politics of zoos and the power of such institutions to control people's relationships with nonhuman animals. "And how arbitrary it was that certain authorities ruled over zoo animals, decided which persons could draw near to them—authorities vested by neither the state nor any other body, handed permits with a near-infinite laxness by the Department of Agriculture" (151). The authority of the zoo is shown to be hollow, a meaningless construction. T. realises that the reason he can no longer love institutions is his loss of respect for the "wisdom of men". "As a child he had thought man advanced ... That was what had changed, he thought. To love posterity and the great institutions you had to believe in the wisdom of men. You had to love them as a child might, gazing upward (117). The arbitrary authority of "the great institutions" exists not because of any inherent or earned quality but simply because society is willing to venerate them. Like Laycock's proposition that an informational answer is determined by the question which expects it, so T. believes that to love society's authorities and institutions a person must first adopt the role of small, wondering child in relation to them.

At home in his apartment T. researches many species of nonhuman animals and their habitats around the world but in the Central American jungle, cut off from the authority of Science, T. realises he is "barely equipped"; without the "data", "foresight" and "research" of other people he would not even recognise a "last animal" (Millet, 218). When he sees a small

furry animal on a tree branch "[h]e had no idea what it was. And this pleased him: maybe there was hope yet" (231). After learning of all that Western society and modern Science have wrought on the natural world and understanding the powerlessness (and unwillingness) of humans to avert ecological disaster despite their vast knowledge, T. ultimately finds hope in the realisation that there are still spaces and beings outside the control of humans. "How was it that his own ignorance was a comfort? But it was" (231). In Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* Elizabeth Costello challenges the idea that nonhuman animals, lacking the supposedly human quality *logos*, are therefore inferior Cartesian machines. Helen Tiffin quotes Costello's argument that experiencing the fullness of living is more valuable than mere "ghostly reasoning." Costello says "[t]o thinking, cognition, I oppose fullness, embodiedness, the sensation of being ... of being a body with limbs that have extension in space, of being alive to the world" (quoted in Tiffin, 149). Alone in the jungle, it is this experience that T. embraces. Thinking back on his life he rejects the human-built cities, monuments and lights and instead re-examines the spaces between them and the "spectacular bestiaries" which dwell in the darkness there (Millet, 235). For years he has idolised human knowledge, authority and power; he has himself excelled in the economics of greed. Finding himself alone in the jungle, however, T. thinks about the "miracles" that are "the beasts" and discards the masculine knowledge of Science and authority for the simplicity of a mother's love. "He was fortunate. He had ended up here, in the middle of what was real—not what came easiest but what turned out to be closest to the center ... This was the knowledge that mattered, he thought: simple, simple, simple" (237).

While eyes are most humans' primary way of experiencing the world our self-consciousness and subsequent constant struggle to comprehend the world, represented in modern Western society by the authority of Science, mean that our gaze is always directed inward, as Rilke puts it, "set around [the creature-world] / like snares, all around its path to

freedom." In the zoo this form of entrapment is quite literal, as a site of human observation of nonhuman animals the zoo is empowered to contain wild animals for the purpose of subjecting them to the rational male "scientific", "zoological" and "recreational" human gaze. Several of the zoo novels expose the limitations of Science in allowing us to fully know or understand nonhuman animals and in Lydia Millet's novel T. finally journeys past the "snares" of empirical human understanding to the "simple" knowledge of an individual embodied being. The following chapter will continue this discussion of the zoo gaze, in particular how the altered power dynamic of the zoo's Scientific site changes the function of the gaze between humans and captive animals and how this change can represent an alteration of how the identity of the animal is constructed by zoo visitors.

Chapter Three
"A Different Kind Entirely": Actors and Illusions in the Modern Zoo

The Panther

In the Jardin des Plantes, Paris

His vision, from the constantly passing bars,
has grown so weary that it cannot hold
anything else. It seems to him there are
a thousand bars; and behind the bars, no world.

As he paces in cramped circles, over and over,
the movement of his powerful soft strides
is like a ritual dance around a center
in which a mighty will stands paralyzed.

Only at times, the curtain of the pupils
lifts, quietly—. An image enters in,
rushes down through the tensed, arrested muscles,
plunges into the heart and is gone.

(Rilke, trans. Stephen Mitchell, 25)

Both zoo stories and zoo culture suggest that spectators
tend to display few of the nobler instincts of inquiry or
epistemological and experiential appetite as they pass
from cage to cage.

(Malamud, Reading*, 226)*

Loud self-congratulation by zoos about the contributions
they are making to conservation booms noisily, but it is
amplified within a relatively empty barrel.

(Hancocks, A Different*, 150)*

The concept of the zoo is one that has become established in the modern psyche as an acceptable and even desirable one and often, as Mullan and Marvin argue, "people regard the

zoo as an easily understood and essentially unproblematic institution, and the zoo visit as an unproblematic event" (xxi) The zoo novels examined here give accounts of the conflicted and paradoxical nature of zoos enabling the reader, like Randy Malamud in his book *Reading Zoos*, to "problematize zoos" and the zoo-going experience (5). Each novel presents a view of a zoo that "cannot but disappoint" the reader's expectations, even as most zoo visitors in the text remain blissfully oblivious. This not only gives the reader an insight into the lives of the captive animals and their keepers, but also allows the reader to observe the human zoo visitors and their practices as "problematized" events. As I pointed out in my previous chapter, none of the main characters in these novels is a simple zoo visitor; instead each enjoys privileged access to the zoo and its inmates. While average zoo visitors in the novels seem to see the zoo as unproblematic, this chapter will explore how the characters who are allowed closer to the animals and the institutional system of the zoo itself often find the reality discomfiting and some, like T. in *How The Dead Dream*, are even made to consider "the complexity of the cultural processes involved in the selection, gathering and presentation of wild animals for display" (Mullan & Marvin, xxi). In each case, as a character is confronted by the realities of keeping nonhuman animals captive in zoos, the reader too is encouraged to consider the "cultural processes" at work.

One aspect of the zoo that a number of these novels' characters find problematic is the physical reality of the animals themselves. While most of the human characters in these texts seem able to appreciate the physical beauty of the captive nonhuman animals (with the exception of especially crass visitors like the camera-wielding, litter-throwing family encountered by T.), many cannot help but find the animals to be less, somehow, than they expected. This is because the animals they encounter are not animals "as they were meant to be", but animals who have been changed by their captivity. In *Giraffe*, Emil describes how this change will affect Sněhurka once she is captive in the zoo: "Sněhurka will become a zoo

animal. Her eyesight will falter. Distances will mean less to her. She will look across less often. Her view will instead be drawn down, to Czechoslovakians stopped and staring up at her" (Ledgard, 148). Emil understands that captivity will affect Sněhurka physically and also affect her behaviour. The reader is invited to infer, accordingly, that her thinking or feeling may also be affected. Emil draws a distinction between an animal and a "zoo animal". The former is natural, as she was born, "genuine"; the latter, although a genuine member of her species, is altered by the restrictions of captivity. As a haemodynamicist Emil has worked on giraffe carcasses and one living, captive giraffe; these do not prepare him his first experience of wild giraffes.

> I see the giraffes and am dumbfounded. I stop. I stare up. I have worked with one living giraffe, but an old giraffe, a zoo animal, weary, blind, hunched somehow under those electric lights. I have seen nothing like this. There are so many of them, and wild, not of a zoo, and impossibly stretched. There is no such animal!
>
> (62)

After visiting many nonhuman animals held in various zoos and facilities T., too, recognises this altered kind of animal in *How The Dead Dream*. He is drawn to "last animals", animals who are among the final living members of their species, and he imagines them as relics of disappearing ways of life. Yet T. also recognises that the last of their species may actually already be gone, since the remaining animals in captivity are altered from others of their species. "But even when the animals were relics they were less the last of their kind than a different kind entirely – a hybrid kind, he thought. A zoo kind" (Millet, 198). In *The Great Divorce*, zoo vet Ellen believes some captive animals, such as outcast primates, exist in a kind of semantic vacuum. "Neither wild nor domestic, they existed in a netherworld of human scrutiny and intervention" (Martin, 4). For her these outcasts and loners are the true "zoo animals".

Like Rilke's panther, the zoo animals in the novels are changed by their struggle to live in captivity without the purpose of their natural lives. For the panther in Rilke's poem, this struggle has consumed him to the extent that he no longer sees anything but his captivity. In *Giraffe*, Emil imagines that it will be similar for the captured giraffes as they are forced to become zoo animals.

> A lion roars. Sněhurka and the other giraffes start forward and wish to take flight from the wet floor of the lorry. Hus laughs. Perhaps he is right, perhaps the giraffes will come to understand that the lion is caged also and can never move on them, but is instead fated to plough, with ruined claws, its own furrow of despair on concrete. Only occasionally, when the light strikes their enclosure in a certain way, … will the pupils of the giraffes dilate in some contrary fashion, betraying in a clinically observable way, even to a haemodynamicist, a memory of something more than the walls which contain them.
>
> (148-9)

While to anyone who has known a nonhuman animal, or who has any imagination, it might be obvious that the transition from animal to zoo animal could be nothing else but altering, Emil's description of Sněhurka's memory places the emphasis on the biological manifestation of the memory, the fact that there is clinical, scientific, objective evidence of its occurring. This is in stark contrast to the description of the whispered memories shared later between Sněhurka and the bull in the darkness of their barn, which are vivid and emotional. Within the context of the story this exemplifies the opposition between what a nonhuman animal may feel, expressed here by Sněhurka herself as narrator, and what science will allow that a nonhuman animal feels, that is, what is biologically observable. Like Rilke's panther in whose eyes "the curtain of the pupils lifts, quietly", the dilation of the giraffes' pupils indicates their otherwise hidden emotional reaction to their captivity, or rather, to their memories of freedom.

This concept of the "zoo animal" seems to reflect Berger's description of the marginalised animals of modern capitalist culture, epitomised in the animals kept within zoos. "However you look at animals, even if the animal is up against the bars, less than a foot from you, looking outwards in the public direction, *you are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal*; and all the concentration you can muster will never be enough to centralise it" (Berger, 22, italics in original). For Berger zoo animals are the most visible reminder of the animality that has been lost through the commoditisation of nature under capitalism. Zoo animals are only shades or remnants of their species, and more importantly for Berger, of the human-animal relationship in general.

Randy Malamud agrees with the concept of a "zoo animal" as a hybrid alteration of a natural animal. At the beginning of his book *Reading Zoos* he states "[t]he spectator does not see a zebra in a zoo – a zebra is something that exists on an African plain, not in an urban North American animal collection" (2). Vicki Croke, too, writes that "[c]ut off from its place in the world, an animal appears as only a shadow of its true self" (14). In Ledgard's novel the hunter Jiří also recognises this. From the edge of the forest above the town he looks down through his binoculars at the zoo and sees an okapi. "It stands on concrete. It is not right to see it so revealed. It has no understanding of Czechoslovakian daylight. It belongs to the Upper Congo and is meant to move there through boles, creepers, vines and large leaves, shedding rivulets of water" (209). Jiří feels that the okapi is *meant* for the jungles of the Congo; her purpose is rooted there. In the Czechoslovakian zoo her meaning has been taken from her. Jiří understands that it is the mode of seeing the okapi that "is not right"; he does not see any visible change in the okapi herself but recognises that it is her position on the open concrete of the zoo which alters her meaning, both for himself as an observer and for the okapi who is now an object of human observation. Seeing her, a zoo okapi, is not the same as seeing an okapi in the African jungle. The shift in context has changed not only how

easy it is for humans to physically observe her but also the way they think about her, no longer seeing her as an unknown other but now as a "revealed", dominated and contained animal. The human *observer* becomes the *spectator*.

For Malamud too the transformation of a zebra into a zoo animal is not any particular change in physical appearance or behaviour caused by her captivity but rather is a result of the subsequent cultural framing of her. Human spectators approach her in a new way, a way valorised by her containment in the zoo, her status as a "zoo animal". Malamud explains:

> Passive spectatorship is not only not a good way to appreciate a zebra, it is a bad way. It teaches children and other zoo visitors exactly the wrong thing about a zebra: they do not see the creature as it is – an animal that lives its life in a certain way on a different continent – but rather as an amusement, a display, a spectacle in a menagerie.
>
> (Malamud, *Reading*, 2)

In this sense the change a nonhuman animal goes through to become a zoo animal relates purely to how humans see her; the new teleological status of "zoo animal" has changed the meanings that human spectators ascribe to her and her captivity. This is an important point; as Steve Baker observes, "the dubious notion ... that the 'zoo animal' is in some sense not a *real* animal" is one that "is peddled rather too easily and too often" (Baker, "Animals," 191). Malamud does not say "a zebra in a zoo is not a zebra", but rather "the spectator does not *see* a zebra in a zoo" (emphasis added). The fundamental difference of zoo animals, then, is in the supplanting of an animal's natural identity (for the human observer) with human-ascribed meaning. However it must also be conceded that nonhuman animals contained in the zoo and subjected to its anthropocentric processes, while still living, feeling animals, cannot remain unchanged.

In her book *Zoos: A Philosophical Tour* Keekok Lee distinguishes between the domestication and "immuration" of nonhuman animals, the latter being a collective term for the various limitations and alterations imposed on an animal during her transformation into a zoo animal, an animal "different in ontological status from ... animals-in-the-wild" (64-66). In the zoo novels the changes in nonhuman animals resulting from the process of immuration include physical and behavioural alterations. While the idea of emotional pain can be dismissed by some as anthropomorphism – the sentimental projection of human feelings onto nonhuman animals – unnatural physical and behavioural alterations caused by captivity are "clincally observable", and therefore are harder to ignore. Both T. in *How The Dead Dream* and those who work with Hannah in *Hannah's Dream* notice the stereotypic behaviour of the captive elephants. In a chapter entitled "Emotional Numbness and Deprivation" in his book on animal suffering, Neville G. Gregory explains that stereotypies and OCDs (obsessive compulsive disorders) are "persistent, recurrent and sometimes unwanted thoughts and actions" which "can be linked to types of automatism or repetitive comfort behaviours" (37). For Hannah, her tyre is a comforting object which she compulsively touches and carries with her trunk and keeps near her for security. When she is stressed or anxious, for example when her elephant companion died, her tyre is taken away or when she is locked up in the barn each night, she begins to rock herself. As T. experiences, the group of elephants in the zoo he visits also rumble and pace frenetically back and forth in the darkness of their night barn. Gregory also describes other kinds of stereotypies:

> Stereotypies are common in confined zoo animals and include fence-pacing, pathway-pacing, head-weaving and body-rocking … Sometimes zoo animals take to compulsive licking, gnawing or scratching, and these can develop into self-mutilation. Causes of these behaviours include insufficient exercise, unsatisfied drive to hunt prey and sexual frustration. (39)

Hannah's rocking becomes self-mutilation because of the shackle fastened around her ankle each night chaining her to the wall of the barn. Her rocking causes it to cut deep into her leg, creating a wound which, due to the frequency of her distress and subsequent stereotypic rocking, never fully heals. Far from being caused by mere boredom Hannah's agitation and distress are clearly caused by her loneliness and lack of control of her own life, and what Sam describes as a fear of the dark and of being confined inside the small barn. Gregory explains that stereotypies "can develop from a frustration behaviour, but they can also arise from depression or conflict caused by an inappropriate environment or management" (37). Former zoo enricher Simmons explains that "[a]pes in captivity get as moody as any intelligent being would." (Copstick) He notes that captive apes "develop the same behaviour patterns as some human prisoners" and compares chimp behaviour with the events of the Northern Ireland "Dirty Protests" in which prisoners, in protest at their treatment, refused to leave their cells and resorted to smearing their faeces on the walls (which caused a visiting Catholic Cardinal to remark that "one would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions…") (Coogan, 170).

In the zoo novels the primary reasons for the zoo animals' stereotypies seem to be frustration and waiting. T. notices this in *How The Dead Dream*, "[i]t was obvious: all of them waited and they waited, up until their last day and their last night of sleep. They never gave up waiting, because they had nothing else to do" (200). As their captivity stretches out, the animals' waiting takes many forms.

> Waiting for a feeding the animals paced or swam or leapt from branch to branch, as their natures dictated, with a bat now and then at a so-called enrichment tool or a peck at an errant insect. Their lives were simple monotony. They slept to use up time; this was how their days were spent, the last sons and daughters.
>
> (165)

While at first "in his smallness" T. assumes that the animals are waiting for food, he finally concludes "[t]hey waited to go back to the bright land; they waited to go home" (200).

The fact that animals suffer depression and associated disorders such as stereotypies due to captivity is never acknowledged by any of the zoos in the zoo novels, but is a realisation made by human individuals concerned by the welfare of the nonhuman animals involved. In the novels these stereotypies largely take place in the zoo animals' night compounds, away from the eyes of general zoo visitors. This means that in the text the plight of each animal is also put into an intimate context, allowing the reader to understand and consider the physical, emotional and psychological implications of the situation. Although some of the novels' zoo animals do display stereotypic behaviour while in their exhibit these are not necessarily recognised as such by the casual zoo visitor. For example in a zoo located in "a desert valley" T. sees "a sleek bobcat pacing restlessly" (Martin, 131). While the bobcat's pacing may be a captivity-induced stereotypic behaviour, zoo visitors see only the fierce animal that they expect. Despite being a stereotype created by captivity, this image of the ferocious pacing cat is one that has become so common in Western culture that it now accepted by many as natural behaviour. In this way the zoo reinforces an incorrect stereotype of an animal, a stereotype which it created in the first place.

In *Giraffe*, after being taken to the Czechoslovakian zoo Sněhurka and the other giraffes also develop stereotypies during their transformation into zoo animals. Wild giraffe spend most of the day foraging and feeding, using their long tongues to carefully browse for leaves while avoiding obstacles such as thorns and fire ants (Bashaw et al, 237). In their study of stereotypies in captive giraffe and okapi, Bashaw et al. suggest that the absence of this element of difficulty in feeding in captivity, where high quality food is easily accessible to the giraffe, is related to the increased occurrence of oral stereotypies, such as the licking of non-food items like the painted branches on the walls which the giraffes in Ledgard's novel

sometimes do (Bashaw et al, 237, Ledgard, 189). While in *Giraffe* zoo director Hus also expounds the diet of "[a]lfalfa, formulated pellets, fruit, plenty of beets, switches of elm and alder" which would double the natural life-expectancy of the giraffes in the Czechoslovakian zoo, the study by Bashaw et al. noted that "a high-quality feed (e.g. *alfalfa*) was associated with greater oral stereotypy" (237, italics in original). While Hus is focused on the removal of complexities from the giraffes' lives he does not consider the lack of purpose that results. He views the giraffes as biological machines that can be tuned and adjusted to ensure optimal running time. Finally, the study of giraffe stereotypies also found a relationship between smaller indoor enclosures and increased pacing (Bashaw et al., 242), one explanation for which Sněhurka offers in *Giraffe*: "We are sleepwalking beasts. Our eyelids flutter but remain open. Our teeth grind in fits of bruxism. We walk with unfocused eyes through the barn. We bump into each other, not waking but galloping inward across ash-coloured grassland, stretching ourselves up to the highest branches" (Ledgard, 173).

Although these physical and behavioural changes are made obvious to the readers of these novels, the zoo managers who are portrayed in them seem oblivious to the changes wrought as captivity alters their charges into zoo animals. Business people by definition, they seem preoccupied with politics, especially in the case of the fanatical comrade Hus in Ledgard's novel, or economics, like steely businesswoman Harriet in *Hannah's Dream*. Cheered by the prospect of using Hannah's image to revitalise the zoo's finances, Harriet tells Neva "[a]nything to keep our star happy!" But when Neva responds "[h]ow about another elephant?" Harriet "pretended Neva had said something funny and walked on" (Hammond, 63). The concept of Hannah's overwhelming loneliness still does not occur to her. However there comes a point when a zoo may recognise the negative impacts of captivity on zoo animals and choose to act. The term "enrichment" by definition concedes that the lives of zoo animals are impoverished, dull and unfulfilling and they are in need of

artificial stimulus. In a newspaper story about a zookeeper turned comedian, former "animal enricher" Sam Simmons described his job, "I just hung out with them, created fun stuff for them to do so they wouldn't get bored" (Copstick). In *Hannah's Dream* one of the first acts of the new young zookeeper Neva is to create a scavenger hunt for Hannah, hiding vegetables, peanut butter and pumpkins full of raisins and jellybeans around her yard. Neva says she loves doing it because "the animals light up just like it's Christmas" (Hammond, 48). Afterwards Hannah dozes "peacefully in the sun, sated with treats and happiness and hay" (51). The scene with Hannah rushing around finding the treats and then being able to relax is a heart-warming one, especially when shown in the context of her isolated and monotonous life. However a more cynical view of zoo enrichments is shown in *Zoology*, where Henry is responsible for the enrichments of animals in the children's zoo. One day Henry invites a woman he's interested in to visit him at the zoo and he introduces her and her little brother to the goats before giving Newman an enrichment.

> I held the trash can out in front of Newman—I'd smeared the insides with peanut butter—and he plunged in his head. This, or giving him a plastic ball to bump around, or dangling a set of keys from the end of a bamboo pole, was what we called Enrichment. These things are enriching, I guess, the way a honking truck might be enriching for a driver falling asleep on the highway.
>
> (Dolnick, 86)

Henry's view is starkly different from that of Neva, who has worked in different zoos for a lot longer than Henry and is perhaps used to the otherwise eventless lives of the zoo animals, seeing enrichments as the one precious interruption to the tedium or depression of the animals' existence. As a new employee not yet indoctrinated into the policies and practices of the zoo, Henry recognises the reality behind the zoo jargon. Although he has not been working there long, Henry too has considered the unending monotony of Newman's life in the zoo.

> Each morning when he first came out, his legs still stiff and his eyes even smaller than usual, I felt for a minute the weight of all the thousands of days he'd spent here. The day I moved into the dorm at American, falling asleep that first night on my new sheets with the new traffic sounds outside, Newman was in his pen. High school graduation, while I sat itching in my robe, not remembering which hand takes the diploma, he was in his pen. The Thanksgiving in tenth grade when Walter dropped the turkey taking it out of the oven. Every time you're waiting in line at the pharmacy. Every time you wake up in the middle of the night and can't decide whether to get out of bed to pee. How does he survive it? Is he miserable or just empty? Or is he happy—is he like a prisoner who discovers religion and turns gentle and stops noticing the bars?
>
> (80)

Henry shows not only an awareness of the conditions of Newman's existence in the zoo but also compares it with his own freedom, his choices with Newman's powerlessness, the rich detail and varied experiences of his own life are contrasted with the empty monotony of Newman's. Furthermore, he widens his discussion from a consideration of just his own life to that of people in general, "every time *you're* waiting in line … every time *you* wake up" (emphasis added). He includes the reader in his moment of realisation and perhaps in his sense of guilt at the deprivation of Newman's life in comparison with most humans'.

Since Henry knows Newman as a friendly, charismatic being who feels emotions the full realisation of Newman's captivity is somewhat astounding. This acknowledgement makes the statements of the head keeper of the children's zoo, just pages later, even more ridiculous. After Newman has enjoyed licking the peanut butter from inside the garbage can the head keeper arrives and admonishes Henry in front of his friend for using the goats to impress her.

> "Did you just give the goats an extra Enrichment?" Paul said.
> I felt like I'd pass out. "I just gave Newman a little peanut butter, because he didn't really eat breakfast."
> "We don't *ever* want an animal getting two Enrichments, especially not Newman. Quit showing off." He walked off like he'd slapped me with a glove.
>
> (87, emphasis in original)

The seriousness of the head keeper's reprimand is farcical; the idea that a nonhuman animal in the zoo could somehow become too enriched through the use of trash cans and peanut butter seems ridiculous. But of course there are political and social motivations at play here, too. Henry does enjoy giving Newman treats, but the trash can activity was indeed aimed at impressing the woman visiting him. The head keeper reproves Henry for breaking zoo protocol and for making a decision about the care of the animals which as a new and untrained keeper he was not in an official position to make. He may also be enjoying the opportunity to exercise his own power over Henry, as Henry has always seen him as a petty and controlling man who enjoys his authority at the zoo. The head keeper is also mindful, perhaps, of the financial cost of enrichments as is zoo director Harriet Saul in *Hannah's Dream*. When Neva arranges an easel and canvas for a painting enrichment for Hannah, Harriet's primary concern is the cost of the art supplies (Hammond, 108). But enrichments can also be used by zoos to provide financial benefits, as Neva explains to Sam: "It gives the elephants something fun to do, and the zoos can sell the paintings to raise money to improve the elephant yards" (95).

One thing that almost all zoo enrichments have in common is that they are not the normal events or activities that would enrich a nonhuman animal's life in her natural environment but artificial human constructions to try to stave off the effects of a monotonous, uneventful life wrought by captivity. At home in the jungles of Asia Hannah would not have

painted on canvases or used a mallet to play large drums (although she may have "doodled" with sticks or rocks [Croke, 67-8]). Only in a zoo would keys on the end of a pole be considered an enriching aspect of a goat's life. While the creation of such arbitrary and artificial enrichments may seem to disregard a nonhuman animal's natural lifestyle and enjoyments, the reality is that zoo animals already live in a totally artificial environment which dictates that any possible enrichments in their lives will be similarly artificial. Some human characters in the novels do however believe that these artificial enrichments can rouse the natural talent and interest of the animals in the zoo. When Neva asks the eccentric Johnson Johnson if Hannah could ruin his drums by playing them, he replies seriously: "Well, if she re-tunes them it'd probably be so she can play her own songs better. Maybe elephant music doesn't sound like people music" (Hammond, 217). While elephants in the wild obviously do not play drums, Johnson believes Hannah may still have unique musical tastes and abilities which could be nurtured and so enrich her empty zoo life.

Although by offering enrichments a zoo seems to concede that an animal's life has somehow been impoverished by captivity, zoos' response to this impoverishment shows an assumption about the depth of alteration or suffering that a captive nonhuman animal experiences. Assuming that a plastic ball or trash can of peanut butter can fix the problem simplifies and trivialises the animals' experience. This presumption precludes the possibility that the suffering caused by captivity is anything more than simple boredom, an absence easily filled by adding another foreign object to the captive animal's environment. This is a reductive attitude which frames the wellbeing of a captive animal like a mathematic equation or a mechanical problem to be fixed by the tweaking of external components. It does not consider the possible depths of feeling experienced by the animal that have been affected by her captivity. The existence of these feelings and emotions and the effect of captivity on them is shown in each of the zoo novels both through nonhuman animal narration and through

human characters whose interactions with captive animals causes them to wonder about the effects of the animals' captivity. Just as Henry wonders about how Newman copes with his captivity other human characters in these texts also wonder about the loneliness, boredom and discomfort felt by nonhuman animals kept in zoos. As the zoo's veterinarian in *The Great Divorce*, Ellen mostly believes she understands the zoo's nonhuman animals, for example Sonya the white tiger who Ellen thinks has "a miserable, truly vicious disposition" due to "the strictness of her diet" (Martin, 111). For Ellen this suffering or discomfort is an inevitable aspect of all zoos and how they must operate. All zoos share the common ethos of nonhuman animal captivity and all its implications and while he admits that "all zoos are not exactly alike", Randy Malamud argues that the differences between various zoos are merely "cosmetic" (*Reading*, 4) Cosmetically, the zoos represented in the zoo novels discussed here do vary. Some are modern, like the New Orleans zoo in *The Great Divorce* and the Central Park zoo in *Zoology*. In *How The Dead Dream* T. draws a distinction between zoos which are "accredited" (presumably by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums) and those that aren't. "He had standards. He only broke into accredited zoos. In the others he knew he would see nothing but misery" (Millet, 151). Conversely, in *Hannah's Dream* highly trained and experienced zookeeper Neva decides to become "an elephant-care ambassador, bringing what she knew to one of the country's many mediocre, backwater, needy facilities" (Hammond, 33). She takes the job at the small, unaccredited, not-for-profit zoo which has "clueless, arrogant misguided and blind" leadership (33). This leadership is something Hannah's zoo has in common with the zoo in *Giraffe*, whose manager is obsessed with politics and patriotism. The giraffes are brought to the small, propaganda-filled zoo to fulfil the director's delusion of a ČSSR giraffe subspecies.

The conditions in these latter two zoos are often rudimentary, while those in the other zoos are generally more modern. In his essay on modern American zoo exhibits Ken Kawata

notes that, as in many aspects of society, each generation sees itself as achieving where others have failed in terms of providing acceptable conditions for the welfare of captive animals. "This view, self-absorbed, cheerfully neglectful and ignorant of history, represents generational chauvinism that takes a position that the current generation is superior to all the past generations" ("Romancing", 242). We see this in *Hannah's Dream* when the narrator notes that when the zoo was the private menagerie of Max Biedelman, "the accommodations weren't luxurious, but for their time they were adequate" (Hammond, 7). This is an example of how human context dictates our view of what is acceptable in relation to the treatment of nonhuman animals. Malamud warns against this anthropocentric impulse.

> Zoos are better now than ever, many advocates would have us believe. We must mitigate this, however, with the standard caveat about temporal relativism: people always tend to think they are doing something better than it has ever been done before, and subsequent developments generally prove their self-congratulatory convictions hollow.
>
> (*Reading*, 46)

Just as the "conical thatched huts" (Hammond, 7) of the menagerie came to be seen as inadequate, so too might the concrete night cages of modern zoos also come to be seen as unacceptable by future generations. Of course throughout these ages of changing human values, the needs of nonhuman animals have not changed.

These human values have been changing ever since people began collecting nonhuman animals thousands of years ago. This process has accelerated since the nineteenth century saw the advent of "the golden age of science" and the proliferation of museums and zoos throughout Western societies (Lyles, 902). Heavily influenced by the imperialism of the era, the outside of zoos' bare concrete cages were built with a grandness designed to convey power and authority and were often embellished with architecture inspired by the human cultures associated with the animal's country of origin: "fantastical exhibits that replicated

castles, cottages, Greco-Roman and Far Eastern temples, alphine chalets, renaissance pavilions, whimsical ruins, and other follies" (Hancocks, "Zoo Animals", 96). Lyles compares this form of animal display with an art collection: "These animal collections were viewed as analogous to collections of art, and even the zoo architecture of the period came to be considered art" (902). Like artworks displayed in a stark, featureless gallery the "naked cage" was an empty box in which the animal was the only feature. As Mullan and Marvin explain, "[t]he architecture was not specifically designed to accommodate the animals' needs but rather was intended to create a mood in order to emphasize what was felt to be some cultural quality associated with the animal" (48). Despite the success of radical new zoo designs built by Carl Hagenbeck at the turn of the century in his Hamburg zoo, which used enclosures with artificial environmental elements and moats instead of bars to separate each exhibit, the advent of modern design with its emphasis on "boldness" and "simplicity" (Hancocks, "Zoo Animals", 100) brought about a period of popular zoo design that became known by many as "the bathroom period" (Kawata, "Romancing", 251). As Jeffrey Hyson describes, "[a]longside modernism, an increasing concern for more sanitary exhibits developed" (35) and as a result in this period the emphasis was on sterile, easy-to-clean cages such as small, glass-fronted, tiled rooms, and state-of-the-art self-cleaning features. Eventually during the twentieth century the Western animal welfare movement gained momentum and the public attitude towards nature and nonhuman animals changed. As Kawata notes, "[z]oos are no isolated island, hardly insulated from every mood and economic and political nuance of the society" ("Romancing", 240). Zoo visitors no longer wanted to see lone animals in stark, artificial cages. Zoos responded, as ever, by striving to give the public what they wanted and elements of Hagenbeck's designs began to appear. The bars and walls of the "naked cage" were disguised with "natural" details such as moats or "foliage". Exhibits began to be arranged by geographic regions and allusions to animals' natural habitats were

made with the addition of artificial scenery. In the zoo novels, token scenery like this is added to the giraffes' cage in *Giraffe* in the branches painted on the walls and in *How The Dead Dream* T. visits a zoo in a desert valley where bighorn sheep stand "on artificial cliffs" (Martin, 131). Berger notes that "[t]hese added tokens serve two distinct purposes: for the spectator they are like theatre props: for the animal they constitute the bare minimum of an environment in which they can physically exist" (Berger, 25).

In the second half of the twentieth century conservation also became a prominent issue in the West as the extinction of various species, human-made pollution and the destruction of natural habitats around the world was increasingly publicised. This shift in Western societies' attitude to the natural world brought zoos to a vital juncture in their history. Traditionally sites of entertainment and leisure for the public, zoos' premise of keeping animals captive for the amusement of humans, which had become unpalatable to much of the public in recent years, was starting to be seen as socially and morally unacceptable (Carr and Cohen, 176; Marino et al, 26; Beardsworth and Bryman, 93). A rebranding of zoos was necessary, an ongoing process which Beardsworth and Bryman call "a crucial structural and ideological transformation" (83). The role of zoos, their existence as an industry in our society, was under threat.

From their inception animal collections and menageries have been a place of spectacle. Whether created as a status symbol for an individual or a nation or as a public venue for the masses the purpose of an animal collection is to amaze, amuse, divert, surprise, impress or titillate the human visitor; in short: to entertain them. In *Zoology*, for example, in the children's zoo where Henry works the pens are arranged in a ring so that the animals "perform" for the crowds everyday by standing, scratching or allowing themselves to be fed. Henry finds the work of cleaning out the pens "stupid" and "embarrassing" but initially he feels he must play his part in the spectacle. "At first I'd make friendly, tired faces at the

families standing looking in, but eventually I realised they weren't looking at the keepers any more than they were looking at the water bowls. We were stagehands in a play starring Dudley and Frankie and Kramer" (Dolnick, 58). This role of zoo animals is also noted by Beardsworth and Bryman in their commentary of modern zoos: "Increasingly they will be 'staged' as attractions in quasified entertainment settings. In a very real sense, they will become 'workers' or 'cast members' in the playgrounds created by the leisure industry" (99). In the zoo it is the nonhuman animals who are the object of the spectacle: they are the performers and the stars. Without them there is no show. This means that the zoos' inmates are valuable to the zoo not simply as fellow beings, but as actors performing the role of "exotic animal" or "endangered species". As Amina observes the giraffes' zookeeper she notes that "the giraffes are desperately important to him in the way actors are important to a stage manager, seen always from behind or at side angles" (Ledgard 227).

Of course like any good show the zoo has other enticements with which to attract its audience. Concession stands, gift shop, café, restaurant, venue hire, performances, "encounters" and even rides have been added to zoos to entertain visitors and encourage them spend as much time and money there as possible. In most areas zoos are advertised in newspapers, magazines, tourist brochures, on the radio or even the television and drawing the crowds is the job of a dedicated P.R. person. In *Hannah's Dream* zealous new zoo director Harriet Saul, veteran of a regional science museum, a library system and a dairy cooperative, also takes on the Public Relations role after being hired to turn the zoo around. Harriet eagerly commissions a marketing study to find out how the zoo can make more money. "She wanted to know who came to visit and why; when they came, what they saw while they were there; how long they stayed; and how much money they spent per capita in the gift shop and food concessions" (Hammond, 60). Later she launches a "megalomaniacal marketing campaign" which includes a large billboard featuring herself dressed as the zoo's founder,

Max Biedelman, which increases zoo attendance by twenty percent (87, 121, 154). As the zoo director all Harriet's efforts are focused on attracting visitors and turning the zoo into a financially successful organisation.

While the communist zoo in Ledgard's novel is not as openly commercial as the Max L. Biedelman zoo in Washington State, the captive animals themselves are still commoditised. Once the giraffes arrive at the zoo Amina goes often to see them; even on her meagre factory wage she can afford to do this, noting "[t]he zoo is not expensive. It is a subsidised workers' entertainment" (Ledgard, 166). Bussed in from all around, workers are brought to be "awakened" by what the zoo offers (165). However one day when she arrives at the zoo the woman in the ticket office tells Amina she cannot see the giraffes that day. "'The giraffes aren't showing, dear,' she says, as if talking of a film, as if the zoo were a cinema" (165-6). While in the communist Czechoslovakia of the 1970s where *Giraffe* takes place the overt presentation of the zoo as a venue of "entertainment" was acceptable, at the same time it was rapidly (in terms of zoos' history) becoming unacceptable in the West. The commoditisation of nature in zoos reflected the international widespread destruction of nature that was being driven by the culture of capitalism. In light of this "the zoo as a site for the exercise of naked power over animals, and as a location for the indulgence of an unashamedly recreational gaze upon its captive inmates, becomes less and less appealing, and more difficult to justify" (Beardsworth and Bryman, 89).

As an industry, zoos were scrambling for a reason to justify their existence. One answer was to "loudly position themselves as leaders in wildlife conservation", revolutionising themselves as modern Noah's Arks that preserve species and are important educators of the public about animals and global conservation (Hancocks, "The Right"). This rebranding has been total, a message that "saturates" zoos from the exhibits to the gift shop (Marino et al, 26). Gathering speed at the end of the twentieth century this effort sought to erase from the

public consciousness the former purpose of zoos and replace it with rhetoric that fits the current social climate. As Malamud observes, this involved the traditional habit of blaming any problems with animal captivity on the mistakes of previous generations.

> A public relations deluge which zoos have embarked upon during the last decade – aggressively coopting green rhetoric – serves to anticipate and defuse potential resistance to zoos. Whatever negative thoughts may invade the spectator's experience are displaced onto the bad old days.
>
> (*Reading*, 48)

While this "deluge" has been largely successful, Beardsworth and Bryman agree that it is only cosmetic; the intrinsic nature of zoos has not changed, merely the way in which zoos package the idea of animal captivity:

> through its theming and entertainment motifs, this new configuration can offer an accessible and palatable model of humankind's continuing ability to exercise power over nature. The power, once conceived of as a right to exploit, has now been transmuted into a duty to manage and conserve. Thus the theme of conservation, delivered as part of a 'fun day out', becomes a reassuring legitimisation of the continued existence of one of the earliest forms of total institution, the menagerie.
>
> (101)

As Kawata notes, in the New Age zoo the ideal of Conservation (with a capital 'C') has been thrust to the fore of zoos' self-representation, "as a putative motherhood ideology, a driving force above all else as if it were to justify taking wild animals into captivity" ("Romancing", 241).

This sweeping change is evident in the evolution of the discourse employed by zoos to describe their practices. Kawata observes that by the end of the twentieth century "'cage' and 'menagerie' have become pejorative term[s] denoting some unholy marriage of anachronism and barbarism, and thus were purged from the collective lexicon of zoos" ("Romancing",

241). Beardsworth and Bryman note the "growing unease about the use of the depiction 'zoo' and the substitution of alternative terms stressing conservation and education" which has caused many zoos to label themselves using terms like "park" or "conservation society" (94). Kawata also references a letter to the editor of *International Zoo News* regarding the censorship of zoo vocabulary by zoo staff. "The verb 'to catch' was carefully replaced by 'to collect.' 'Notions of cage and paddock have gradually transferred via enclosure and exhibit into 'encounter' and sometimes, rather pretentiously, 'habitat'" ("Romancing", 251).

The overhaul of zoos' image included stepping up the "theming" of zoos in a process that Beardsworth and Bryman call the "Disneyization" of the zoo industry: the application of Disney theme park principles to the modern zoo. Cages, now called "exhibits", are often arranged in a more "abstract" way than just Tiger House, Monkey House and so on, instead grouped around a theme such as Jungle World or African Savannah (Beardsworth and Bryman, 91-2). The rebranding of zoos "in an institutional and cultural sense, in the light of changing public sensibilities" is also a form of theming (93). This deliberate theme of conservation extends, of course, to the cages themselves. As noted above in many zoos distasteful aspects of captivity such as bars and walls had been largely disguised in recent decades but now the conservation theme requires more: the total concealment of the physical realities of captivity. Modern zoo cages therefore aim for a "naturalistic" appearance or, even better, total "immersion". Lyles explains that "[i]mmersion exhibits are ones that seek to make visitors feel that they are in the habitat with the animals" (903). Techniques and technologies such as greenery, mist machines, habitat soundtracks and the use of the same terrain materials in the visitor area as in the cage (for example logs or rocks) are employed to make visitors feel like they are with the nonhuman animal in her own habitat (Kawata, "Romancing", 242; Lyles, 903). Importantly, these step are taken specifically to "hide cage

elements" and "help create an illusion" for the human visitor (Lyles, 905). The "immersion" at issue here is that of the human visitor, not the animal.

In her 1997 book *The Modern Ark* Vicki Croke points out some of the realities behind the illusion of "naturalistic" and "immersion" exhibits such as fibreglass trees, painted backgrounds and real foliage planted only near the human viewer or else protected from the animal inmates by electric wires (Croke, 76-9). David Hancocks, former director of four zoos in the United States and Australia, agrees, noting the deliberate deceptiveness of "naturalistic" exhibits:

> Today, zoos boast about their green revolution. The new zoos, sans cages, make visitors feel better, but it is all deception. The animals typically have no contact with living plants, separated from them by electric wires. Many "natural" features are made of disguised, unyielding concrete. The restricted dusty spaces the animals inhabit are often of no better quality than the old cages.
>
> (Hancocks, "The Right")

This concentration on the entertainment of human visitors rather than on nonhuman animal welfare is not accidental. Croke includes quotations from several AAZPA papers from 1978 to 1992 which clearly show the "homocentric bias" of zoo design – that the redesign of zoo cages is aimed primarily at the zoo visitor (Croke, 78). The natural elements, even if not artificial themselves, represent a "Faux-Naturalism" (Kawata, "Romancing", 245), a "quasification" of nature which involves imitating the environment in a way which is recognised as artificial, but causes the observer to be "diverted, entertained and impressed by the skill, scope or scale of the artifice." (Beardsworth and Bryman, 87) The captive animals themselves are presumably not impressed by this artifice but this is irrelevant since the entire enterprise is wholly for the benefit of human visitors (Croke, 77; Beardsworth and Bryman,

92; Kawata, "Circus", 355). Zoos are businesses and nonhuman zoo animals do not pay the bills; human visitors do.

This focus on the giving the zoo visitors what they want – in this case, to be deceived – is evidence that the fundamental role of zoos has not changed. As Berger observes,

> [w]ithin limits, the animals are free, but both they themselves, and their spectators, presume on their close confinement. The visibility through the glass, the spaces between the bars, or the empty air above the moat, are not what they seem - if they were, then everything would be changed. Thus visibility, space, air, have been reduced to tokens.
>
> (Berger, 24-25)

This ersatz deception does not go unnoticed by cynical zoo vet Ellen. In *The Great Divorce* she contemplates the painting of 'The Peaceable Kingdom' and its "inevitable" use in zoo marketing all over the world. "It's the lie the public requires these days; everything must be seen mysteriously to thrive" (Martin, 56). Ellen is aware of the transformation of zoos as the result of the changing nature of Western humanity's relationship with nonhuman nature.

> In other centuries, when the wild held its own against the forces of civilization, it was enough to look at a miserable, flea-bitten, half-starved lion stalking a cage barely large enough to turn around in, to point at him and taunt him for having been so unfortunate as to be captured; this was a satisfactory attitude toward the wild: bring it down. Now that we have been successful in that quest we want to be told it isn't so, to see wild animals at a safe distance, healthy and strong, as if their existence is not threatened at all.
>
> (56-7)

It is this public demand for a "healthy and strong" nature which is "serene and imperturbable" that drives the naturalisation of zoo exhibits (56), the covering-up of what we have done to nonhuman animals and what we continue to do. Nigel Rothfels calls this process "managing

eloquence—attempting to redirect the audience from seeing and imagining an animal's fate in captivity" (197). As Rothfels points out, while the eloquence of animals in traditional zoo cage were starkly obvious, "the illusion of freedom so carefully created" in modern zoos distracts the human audience from the reality of the animals' captivity, so that animals in modern zoos "face a much more difficult time finding a voice with which to query their audience" (Rothfels, 197-8). The purpose of a zoo exhibit is to create for the visitor a different, better reality in the same way that a stage set is created and manipulated to present different versions of reality. In his essay reviewing American zoo exhibits Ken Kawata quotes J.C. Coe's 1996 article on zoo exhibit design which advises that when creating an exhibit the designer must create a scenario with a similar purpose to "a cinematic or theatrical scenario" that "sets the scene for performance" (Kawata, "Romancing", 242). Modern embellishments to zoo cages are just so many "stage props", as Berger observed at the beginning of the "naturalistic" movement. The spectacle presented by zoos, themed in its current incarnation under the guise of conservation, continues to be one of audience-driven performance.

This also explains why the usual idealised version of nature is absent from the zoo novels, despite many of the exhibits being modern (notably those in *The Great Divorce* and *How The Dead Dream*). The purpose of a stage is to present a performance to be viewed by an audience. The set and stage props are designed to create an experience for the audience; flimsy façades and carefully placed suggestive details are enough to create not a new reality, but the quasification of one which will satisfy the audience and allow them to recognise the context of the performance. In a zoo the audience is of course the visitors. I have already described examples of the various techniques used to "set the scene" in immersion exhibits but, like theatrical props, these are only effective when viewed from the position of an audience member, a spectator, someone who wants to be deceived. The reader of the zoo

novels is not a member of the audience but rather someone who approaches from the wings. From this vantage the mono-faceted stage set is inconsequential, stripped of its deception, while the players and the nature of their performance are starkly revealed. At work zookeeper Camille moves along a narrow path in the “wings” of the zoo, a path “that separated the public from the secret world of those responsible for maintaining the illusion they paid to see” (Martin, 268-9). Just as the animals are the performers in the zoo spectacle, the keepers and staff are the “stagehands” moving in and out of the wings and doing most of their work offstage. As playwright William Somerset Maugham wrote, “[i]t is dangerous to let the public behind the scenes. They are easily disillusioned and then they are angry with you, for it was the illusion they loved” (77). However as readers of the zoo novels we are not part of “the public”; in the novels we are not presented with the illusion but with the means of its construction.

In reading the novels we continue deeper into the backstage area of the zoo where the mechanics of the theatre are revealed. Camille first appears in *The Great Divorce* “closing out the Asian exhibit” after the zoo visitors have left for the day. The beginning of her daily ritual involves collecting the meat sticks for the big cats and yoghurt cups for the sun bears before she enters the empty night house. “At the door she put everything down, beat against the metal with her fist, opened the door, and shouted, ‘Hello, hello,’ as she had been taught to do, for one could never be too careful around the big cats, particularly Sonya, who longed to tear apart something that would give her resistance” (8). The danger represented by the cats is acknowledged by Camille and also the existence of human error within the mechanical system of control. Before letting the animals into the exhibit she gives each of the padlocks “a perfunctory tug. Keeper-trainees were not always reliable” (9). Keeper safety is paramount and the mechanical system allows her to manipulate and control the nonhuman animals while maintaining her distance. “There were eight cats to bring in, a total of six steel doors to be

opened by means of heavy chains and wheels" (9). Like the ropes used to open the curtains on the stage and manipulate the performance space, the metal chains allow Camille to control the areas where the cats and sun bears may access. This world of metal and mechanics and concrete is where the captive animals spend most of their time. Ultimately the "naturalistic" exhibit is for the benefit of humans; once the human visitors leave the zoo animals are returned to their unadorned cages. This is something also noted by Hancocks: "It is still the rule rather than the exception for most zoo animals to spend the greater part of each day in concrete cubes or cages so like the conditions that Hediger argued against. Enter almost any service area in almost any zoo and you step back into the zoo conditions of the nineteenth century" ("Insufficiency", 2). The "naturalistic" revolution extends only to the area seen by the audience. As Kawata points out, not only do animals spend most of their time in an indoor concrete cage similar in size to a circus wagon, but for large animals like the big cats this is often where they are during their natural "peak activity hours" ("Circus", 353-4). Camille knows this and lying in bed in her dark room she imagines the cats closed inside their concrete cages.

> What did they do all night? Did they have roaring matches, filling up the closed compound with a magnificent sound no one ever heard? Did they pace all night? Certainly they didn't sleep much, because they slept all day. Magda was a night hunter; did she spend the long hours gazing into the darkness, listening for anything that moved?
>
> (Martin, 25)

Just like Hannah rocking in the darkness of her small concrete barn, Camille remembers seeing Magda tearing at the ceiling with her claws, "every muscle taut and straining with the same urgency: I must get out" (26). Throughout *The Great Divorce* the backstage area of the zoo is described in very hard, bare, metallic, mechanical, clinical terms. Kawata points out that "[s]ymbolism is important: Iron bars are associated with punishment while chains on an

elephant's foot, slavery, in the public's anthropomorphic prism and together they represent the embodiment of captivity" ("Romancing", 240). These symbols of bars and chains appear in most of the zoo novels in one form or another. Creating "naturalistic" exhibits removes the symbol or the signifier (the metal bars) and in doing so obscures the signified (the nonhuman animals' close confinement). By describing the backstage realities of a modern zoo *The Great Divorce* forces the acknowledgement of what these signifiers mean for the captive animals and about the zoo industry. Unlike in *Hannah's Dream*, this is not to garner sympathy in preparation for the animals' climactic rescue and relocation. Rather the shocking reality of nonhuman animal captivity and the impending environmental disaster represented by climate change, multiple species extinction, mass depletion of habitats and extensive pollution of ecosystems are used as a backdrop for stories of human women whose lives also become shocking and in some aspects, doomed. Camille and Elisabeth both identify with a particular big cat and in both cases this leads to the woman's death (Camille commits suicide after Magda's death while Ellen is hanged for the murder of her husband while she was in the form of a leopard). Ellen's marriage is likewise doomed and although she does not die her role at end of the novel is as a harbinger of death; not simply the death of one animal this time but the eventual collapse of most wild animal species. Camille listens as Ellen explains to her that "[w]ild animals, particularly the bigger ones, the dangerous ones, who took up space, were doomed. Zoos operated as arks, holding animals for the future, but it was a future that would never come" (Martin, 287). While the novel ends with a personal triumph for Ellen in the recovery of Minx, the sick jaguar, the novel's message of hopelessness in the face of the current environmental crisis is unrelenting. Ellen acknowledges that the survival of Minx is insignificant in terms of the losses about to be suffered by global biodiversity. "In the face of what was coming it was laughable, a joke, like struggling to scoop out a thimbleful of water from a sinking ship, from the *Titanic*, just before the great stern slipped beneath the icy black

water and the prow began to rise in the frigid air: that was how sure she was this ship would sink" (340).

The Great Divorce is deliberately positioned in opposition to the conservation message espoused by zoos as an industry. In contemporary society the concept of "conservation" is used broadly to describe almost any practise with beneficial or even neutral effects on the environment. One such general definition of "conservation" is found in The American Heritage Science Dictionary:

> The protection, preservation, management, or restoration of natural environments and the ecological communities that inhabit them. Conservation is generally held to include the management of human use of natural resources for current public benefit and sustainable social and economic utilization.
>
> ("Conservation")

For many zoos their conservation goals, which are used to justify their self-conferred status as important leaders in wildlife conservation, consist of protecting various nonhuman animal species, preserving and increasing their populations for reintroduction back into the wild, as well as educating the general public about conservation. These are certainly admirable goals; however conflict occurs when they meet with the traditional values of a zoo as a site of human entertainment. For example, one question that arises from this conflict is: how many of the animal species in zoos are actually endangered and therefore most in need of protection? As Koen Margodt puts it, "space on the Zoo Ark is limited", yet after analysing a variety of studies he concludes "*only a very limited part of available space in most organized zoos is dedicated to threatened species*." (13, italics in original). For most zoos the decision of which species to include and which individuals to display is less a scientific one than a business one. While it is highly desirable to have some rare specimens to display, to reinforce the exotic spectacle as well as provide evidence of a conservation agenda, as we have seen this is

certainly not the most important criteria when choosing nonhuman animals to put in a zoo. The most important thing is the species' attractiveness to the human visitor. The modern zoo is highly mammalocentric, which means that for the most part reptiles, birds and invertebrates, despite making up 97% of all species, are out. Those who are in are those who possess what Hediger calls "*Schauvert* or show value" (Sommer, 237, italics in original); the ones who are "furry, large, brightly colored, or otherwise captivating for people" (Lyles, 907). Kawata calls these the "ABC animals" (like those who appear in children's alphabet books, "T is for tiger" and so on) and Hancocks the "glamorous few", while Margodt prefers "charismatic fundraiser"s and Croke, those with the "money-making gene" (Kawata, "Romancing", 248; Hancocks, *A Different*, 152; Margodt, 23; Croke, 223). In *Hannah's Dream* zookeeper Neva Wilson arrives at the Max L. Biedelman Zoo and is briefed on its "financial challenges." She points out that at least the zoo has a "charismatic mega-vertebrate" and explains the term to Truman: "Whales, dolphins, elephants. They're the money animals. They're what people come to see" (Hammond, 25). After studying different zoos around the world Mullan and Marvin note the most popular zoo animals which seem to be "essential for the zoo-going public" (73). These are all mammals and are almost exclusively from Africa, including the elephant, giraffe, lion and so on. The authors point out that their popularity is due to the cultural framing of their species.

> What these animals possess is exhibition value, a cultural property (though not culturally specific) over and above their inherent zoological interest. This combination of animals seems to represent zoo animalness as well as a general sense of the exotic. The appeal of these animals derives not from any natural-history interest but from popular culture, in the sense of jungle adventure films or the circus.
>
> (73)

Visitors are drawn to the zoo not by the desire for education but to see the exotic animals they recognise from their books, films and soft toys. In *Hannah's Dream* Harriet Saul's marketing campaign is "balanced on the back of an ailing elephant" (87), something administrator Truman feels uneasy about. Harriet outlines her plan to impersonate Max Bieldelman and use Hannah's picture to market the zoo

> "Those pictures can go on coffee cups, refrigerator magnets, notebooks, a line of greeting cards, T-shirts, sweatshirts, postcards, you name it! Don't you think it's brilliant?"
>
> "You don't think it'll look like we're exploiting her?" Truman asked.
>
> "Who?"
>
> "Hannah."
>
> "No."
>
> "Oh."
>
> (86-7)

When Harriet tries to fight Hannah's relocation to a sanctuary she tells the mayor "Without that elephant, the zoo's nothing but a collection of hoofed stock, barnyard animals, and a couple of ratty primates" (272). Harriet does begin to give lectures each day dressed as Max Biedelman in which she speaks about the history of the zoo however even these are more for novelty and entertainment purposes rather than education, something to bring back the visitors they lost to the corn maze (37).

Just as people come to the zoo to see an idyllic, easily-accessible quasification of nature, visitors also want to see beautiful, benign and generic representations of the species they prefer. In *The Great Divorce* zoo vet Ellen notes that a blesbok was taken out of his exhibit due to a hard facial cyst which, though not dangerous, the keepers thought "looked bad" (Martin, 57). On the other hand the zoo's white tiger is the main attraction for many visitors.

> If she took a vote among the public, Ellen thought, they would all agree that Sonya, the white tiger, was the most beautiful animal of all. She embodied even a schoolchild's ideal of beauty, strangeness, wildness, power.
>
> (110)

By contrast Ellen has a very different view of Magda's rareness.

> To Ellen she was cross-eyed, knock-kneed, a great disaster of inbreeding, impossible in the wild and pointless in the gene pool, a freak who drew in the crowds and pleased the investors.
>
> (111)

This illustrates the tension in zoos between their conservation aspirations and the reality of the zoo as a business trading in spectacle. Captive white tigers are born through deliberate inbreeding; zoos carefully mate a white tiger with his or her own offspring to pair the necessary recessive genes (Croke, 220-2). As Croke points out, "Breeding these animals is counter to what zoos are preaching about genetic diversity" (220). While some zoos try to defend their display of white tigers on scientific grounds and others admit that "strange or novel animals mean money", Croke notes that "this discussion gives us a glimpse around all the talk about zoos being scientific institutions out to save the natural world, and into the Victorian impulses that have survived to the present in the hearts of many zoo directors" (222). The image of Sonya the white tiger is one example of the need to entertain the public overriding a zoo's supposed conservation mandate.

As Croke notes, zoos recognise that genetic diversity is important in captive populations of nonhuman animals. This is because these isolated groups may one day be called on to repopulate an area from which their habitat has been destroyed and their species eradicated during their captivity. This concept of "reintroduction" at some point in the future is a cornerstone of many zoos' conservation message. However, as discussed above, there are

many physical, behavioural and genetic differences between zoo animals and those in the wild. Furthermore the rate at which natural habitats and wild populations are disappearing caused Conway to comment that "[t]here is every reason to believe that the last individuals of growing numbers of vanishing species will live in captive collections and that future restoration opportunities will be as much introduction and reintroduction" (11). The larger and more genetically diverse the captive population, the greater "long-term viability" it has (11). This is made painfully clear to T. in *How The Dead Dream* when a biologist explains to him the impact of his property development on the decimated population of kangaroo rats. "With so few individuals in a population there would be problems of genetic drift and inbreeding depression. Resilience to disturbance drops. The gene pool is too small for long-term survival" (Millet, 125). T. can do nothing but awkwardly apologise. However despite this, because of their need to entertain the public, few modern zoos focus on maintaining a large population of a few select species (Margodt, 26). Most still seem to operate on the "Victorian impulses" invoked by Croke and strive to display many different exotic species to complete their collections and attract human visitors, in what Hancocks has described as a "'stamp collecting' mentality" (*A Different*, 44).

The type of visitor that zoos aim to attract is quite obvious; in each of the zoo novels the overwhelming majority of zoo visitors are children. Families with children, like Ellen, Sam and T. encounter in *The Great Divorce, Hannah's Dream* and *How The Dead Dream*, or large groups of children at school or on holiday, like the ones Henry sees in *Zoology* make up almost all the zoo visitors in zoo novels examined here. This allows zoos to expound on their other important, self-justifying function in modern society: education. While many of the first modern zoos were opened by scientific societies this was often despite the public demand for spectacle and entertainment. Often considered the first public zoo (Rothfels, 18), the Jardin de Plantes in Paris was originally a laboratory for the study of plants and many resisted the

introduction of animals there, fearing "relegating the park to public spectacle" (Croke, 139). But Croke records how in 1793 the park accepted the remnants of a Versailles menagerie on the condition that the animals would be kept for strictly scientific purposes. "However motley the collection, however popular with the people of Paris and however unwilling they were originally, the men who ran the park insisted that it be viewed and treated as a scientific laboratory" (139). Sir Stamford Raffles, founder of the colony of Singapore and co-founder of the Zoological Society of London also drew a clear line between the noble education of society's elite and the tawdry entertainment of the general public, stating the animals of the proposed nineteenth century London Zoological Gardens would be "brought from every part of the globe to be applied either to some useful purpose, or as objects of scientific research, not of vulgar admiration" (Mullan and Marvin, 109). However as Croke states, "[i]t obviously wasn't entirely a scientific enterprise": Queen Victoria wrote that upon visiting the zoo she enjoyed the sight of the trained "Orang Outang" responding to commands and drinking his tea (142). Despite starting as an exclusive, invitation-only scientific venue, within two decades the zoo was open to the public at a penny apiece.

Following this came the period of stark cages and flamboyant architecture described above. It was not until the second half of the twentieth century when public awareness was raised regarding animal welfare that education became a leading tenet of zoos once more. The melding of the core entertainment function of zoos with this relatively new trend towards education efforts has led to what Lyles calls "conservation edu-tainment" (905). This uneasy blending of zoos' various functions compromises the validity of their supposed educational value. None of the zoo visitors in the zoo novels seem to have come to the zoo for educational reasons; even the holiday group visiting the children's zoo in *Zoology* are screaming and rowdy, apparently uninterested in learning about the inmates.

By claiming to provide education on conservation issues but failing to do so zoos actually engage in mis-education. This mis-education is inherent in zoos right from their conception, as Marino et al. point out.

> If we pretend that we can learn about animals by watching them in these human-created compounds of cement and steel, then we are saying that natural habitats are irrelevant. And if the animals' natural context is implicitly presented as unimportant, then zoos are actually contradicting the message they claim to affirm, that environmental conservation is a pressing concern.
>
> (Marino et al., 27)

Indeed, the basic element of zoos' educational claim, that people can become more understanding of wildlife by seeing them in a zoo, is debatable. As discussed above, zoo animals are different altogether from wild animals who live their natural lives in their natural homes, for two main reasons. Firstly, separated from her natural biosphere the purpose or mode of a nonhuman animal's life is removed and by being held captive in an artificial environment she is altered still further. There is an example of this in *Giraffe*, when the zoo keeper tells Amina about the first documented giraffe in the Austrian Empire who arrived in Vienna after crossing deserts on the back of a camel, travelling the Nile and Adriatic Sea by boat and then walking all the way to Austria. The giraffe was a hit with the public and high society alike but died within a year. "When they cut it open they found that its pelvis had been fractured when it was tied to the camel" (Ledgard, 225). Not only were the crowds oblivious to the giraffe's suffering, but having only seen this captive, isolated, manipulated individual they could have no real understanding of what a giraffe is. Ironically it is the zookeeper, responsible for the African giraffes held captive in a Czechoslovakian barn, who points out, "[n]o one could have known from that animal how a giraffe galloped" (225). As Marino et al. explain above, by presenting altered animals in an artificial setting and claiming

that from this humans can learn about wildlife, zoos actually contradict the notions at the heart of conservation: that an animal is intrinsically connected to her context and her environment and that natural biodiversity is not only valuable but crucial for the survival of humans and all other species.

Secondly, any human meaning or understanding gained from such a zoo animal is completely distorted by the human's mode of looking: the human's passive spectatorship of a constrained nonhuman animal reduces the relationship to that of empowered subject and powerless object. By commoditising the nonhuman animal and promoting passive spectatorship as a valid attitude toward other species zoos are engaging in mis-education; teaching "the wrong thing" (Malamud, *Reading*, 2). While the zoo animal herself is not meaningless, in the zoo context her meaning is rendered inaccessible to the human spectator who relies on her domination to facilitate their encounter. As Malamud goes on to explain, "[t]he attitude that people are entitled to develop our awareness of animals in a way that suits our own habits is part of the problem, not the solution, of our limited perspective that threatens our future on this planet" (*Reading*, 9).

Evidence of this can be seen in two compelling video clips filmed by zoo goers of their children interacting with captive lions. The first clip, which was uploaded to YouTube by Julian Walker who titled it "Sophia the Lion Tamer", was filmed in Wellington Zoo and shows three-year-old Sophia Walker standing in front of the 33mm thick glass wall of the lion exhibit's viewing area. In an encounter which challenges Berger's assertion that "nowhere in a zoo can a stranger encounter the look of an animal", on the other side of the glass sits seven-year-old male lion Malik, his face against the glass and eyes staring intently at the little girl, growling a little. Suddenly he begins pawing rapidly at Sophia through the glass window.

Fig. 2 Malik and Sophia

Sophia flinches but stands with her hands against the glass as Malik continues to paw, while other children and adults run up and gather round, pointing. In a news article Sophia's father describes her reaction:

> Mr Walker said his curious daughter, who attends Churton Park Little School, was nonchalant about the ordeal.
>
> “She doesn’t seem phased [sic] by the whole thing.
>
> “We’ve got animals and pets at home so I guess she thought it was a big pet cat but I think he would react differently if she cuddled him.”
>
> (“Wellington”)

A similar clip shows one-year-old Trent at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo where he attracts the attention of lioness Angie. Both Trent and adults out of frame protest when his mother tries to carry him away from the lions and he is left to toddle along the glass. The clip progresses, accompanied by the continuous laughter and camera clicks of other zoo visitors, as Angie paws at Trent through the glass, follows him along its length and repeatedly opens her jaws as if trying to bite him.

Fig. 3 Angie and Trent

In each of these clips the unnaturalness of the encounter between human child and nonhuman animal is obvious. For some, this is a source of amusement while others find it disturbing. The clip of Trent and Angie, sensationally titled "Lioness Tries to Eat Baby", has been viewed almost six million times on the YouTube website and attracted comments both critical and in support of animal captivity and the value of taking children to the zoo, however most simply find the clip entertaining (for example, "[t]aunting lionesses...like a boss" from user 2bitgirly007) ("Lioness"). On the news website about the encounter between Sophia and Malik nine of the twelve reader comments express sympathy for Malik or disgust

at the function of the viewing area itself. Two other users argued for the value of the encounter, including reader Laurie-ann who commented, "[b]et this wee gorgeous girl grows up to be successful in an animal-care related career – what a darling and clever girl! Not scared at all by the giant 'pussy cat' – too precious!" ("Wellington"). While it cannot be argued that these encounters between human and nonhuman are natural, zoos still promote this activity as educational, a way of learning about our relationship with nonhuman species. The description of the Sophia and Malik clip includes an endorsement of the educational value of animal captivity: "Wellington Zoo is a magical place of learning and fun, leaving visitors with a sense of wonder and respect for nature and a belief in the need for a sustainable co-existence between wildlife and people" ("Sophia"). However when the very nature of zoo encounters leaves visitors with connotations of their toddlers as "lion tamers" and of adult lions as giant "pussy cats", the wonder and respect, not to mention accuracy, of whatever education zoos offer must be called into question. Not only are they not learning about lions as they exist naturally but the unnatural power dynamics of the encounters teach visitors "exactly the wrong thing": the idea that humans have the right to dominate and use all other species, a traditional anthropocentric attitude which will never contribute to achieving "a sustainable co-existence between wildlife and people."

For these reasons any learning that occurs by observing nonhuman animals in a zoo cannot be genuine. It is this realisation that finally leads Malamud to assert that he believes his son, Jacob, "can have a better imagination, a better appreciation of the multifaceted magnificence of nature and animals, by not seeing a zoo's giraffe than by seeing one" (*Reading*, 32). This conclusion is similar to the argument from Ellen's daughter in *The Great Divorce*. "Mom, people just don't care about lions and tigers. They never see them, except in a zoo, and if they never saw them at all it just isn't going to change anybody's life. It's not going to change my life" (Martin, 57). Although it was Ellen who originally complained

about the public's indifference to species' extinctions she is still surprised by her daughter's blunt admission, which seems to affirm that she does not believe zoos serve any valuable function in modern society.

As well as the contradictions inherent in institutions that present captive animals in order to educate about *wild*life, the fact that zoos' conservation messages cater largely for children can in itself be a cause of mis-education, as it implies that caring about conservation issues is predominantly for children, or is "a childish thing" (Baker, *Picturing*, 123). In a chapter of his book entitled "Kids and Zoos" Malamud notes that while many adults dislike the zoo they may feel culturally obliged to take their children to a zoo as an educational experience. However just as the assumption that caring about conservation is "childish" is misleading, the assumption that children are oblivious to those inherent aspects of zoos which make many adults uncomfortable may be similarly flawed, a point also made by Malamud.

> I have argued that the speciesist distinction the zoo projects (subject animal as other, caged for display; people regarding the spectacle as confirmation of empowerment) distorts our biological role as one part of an interrelated ecosystem, and panders to anthropocentric fantasies of natural supremacy. The assumption that ... young zoo visitors are oblivious to the dynamics of oppression and constraint – may be similarly erroneous.
>
> (*Reading*, 271)

Malamud argues that children are aware of the power relationships present in the zoo context even if their unease cannot be articulated until they are older. In the zoo novels we see few real zoo visitors however the children who are present do not seem conflicted when it comes to the zoo context, which of course is not only marketed to children but permeates Western culture (in the form of zoo themed cookies, children's clothes, books, movies, television shows and so on) as a natural setting for childhood fun. For the young boys Winston and

Reginald it is only once they start to know Hannah (through their privileged meeting with her outside the dynamic of zoo visitor/empowered observer and captive animal/disempowered object) that the zoo's treatment of her makes them uncomfortable.

While educating children about wildlife is important, even if they are successful aiming education efforts solely at children also raises questions about the seriousness of zoos education credentials. As Conway points out,

> [f]or the most part, we target our conservation education on children and other non-decision-makers in a process too slow or too far away to address the global extinction crisis in which we now live. Our efforts to inform law-makers and government authorities are usually low-key or non-existent.
>
> (9)

This point is also made by Lyles who concludes that while some zoos offer valuable programs for students, in the future zoos "may need to reach out more effectively to decision makers (politicians)" (911). The effects of this reticence appear starkly in *How The Dead Dream*. As T. becomes increasingly obsessed with collapse of species and ecosystems around the world and observes the changing of natural green, yellow and turquoise environments into the humanised gray he wonders why no one else seems to notice.

> But in the grey that metastasized over continents and hemispheres few appeared to be deterred by this extinguishing or even to speak of it, no one outside fringe elements and elite groups, professors and hippies, small populations of little general importance. The quiet mass disappearance, the inversion of the Ark, was passing unnoticed.
>
> (Millet, 139)

While zoos have touted conservation as the reason for their existence it is not in their interest to educate either the public or society's leaders on the true extent of the eco-crisis because

this would undermine their image of themselves as arks with the ability to somehow save nature. Instead zoos are forced to dilute the urgency and severity of Earth's conservation problems in what Conway calls the "professional conservation conspiracy" for fear of scaring off their sponsors in the face of an apparently lost cause (Conway, 9).

One of the ways zoos aim to address this conservation crisis is their much-lauded captive breeding programs. These rarely lead to the removal of a species' endangered status, however, and in other cases can lead to boom-and-bust breeding cycles where one desirable species is over-bred then, due to supply exceeding demand, the population allowed to age beyond the point where they can successfully maintain their population (Lyles, 908). One seldom-publicised reality of successful captive breeding is the existence of "surplus" animals. Zoos have limited space and often the birth of one animal necessitates the removal of another. The zoo must find another zoo or private investor willing to accept the unwanted animal, or take the "apparently logical stance" of killing her (Lyles, 904). Croke estimates that there may be up to eighty thousand such surplus animals in the U.S. every year (216). So while breeding is supposedly a top goal of zoos many captive animals, like the (endangered) clouded leopard Flo in *The Great Divorce,* are fitted with contraception. Camille watches as Ellen cuts into the unconscious Flo, removes the old birth control implant and scrapes out tissue to make room for the new one (Martin, 159). In the human-controlled world of the zoo, population management strategies, husbandry techniques, demographic controls and new technologies must be employed to manage every aspect of the nonhuman animals' lives, including surgical insertion of devices to prevent "unplanned [by humans] breeding." (Lyles, 904). Even with the use of all these modern strategies, indeed because of them, surplus animals are an inevitable by-product "*inherent* to breeding programs directed at maintaining maximal genetic variation" (Margodt, 27, emphasis added). Ellen explains this to Camille:

> Theoretically, captive breeding could increase diversity, but, especially with big cats, we're too successful. There's no place to put the surplus animals. Habitats are shrinking by the minute. We can't return them to the wild; there's just no place for them to go. That's why so many of our cats are on implants. If leopards are to survive, the world needs more leopards, but zoos don't.
>
> (Martin, 287)

Ever practical, Ellen succinctly lays out the zoo paradox for the young keeper: what is best for the zoo is not best for the world. In a business driven by economics what is best (for the planet, for human and nonhuman animals) will always have to compete with what is best for business.

Similarly, if J.M. Ledgard's *Giraffe* has any message about zoos it can only be a damning one. This is the only novel which describes for the reader the captured animals' natural origin as well as their zoo confinement and the only novel which uses a nonhuman animal as a narrator. Emil's last view of Sněhurka is in the rendering plant, after the massacre. "Sněhurka hangs enormous upside down on a metal chain, together with the remains of a Rothschild bull and calf. Her neck is broken, her tongue hangs out. Her eyes are open. A square of hide has been cut from her body" (318-9). The giraffes have all been killed in a marathon slaughter, a communist precaution against a fictional wartime contagion; their brutal deaths emphasising the senselessness of their capture, transportation and confinement. Their bodies disposed of in an agricultural plant, the giraffes are ultimately treated like any other animal put to use and consumed by humans, reminding the reader that the zoo is just another site of domination and utilisation of nonhuman animals by human culture. Emil sees how chemicals are used to render the giraffes' blood into a clear fluid which is drained into a stream and he imagines it flowing through river, marsh and sea to end as Arctic ice. This one event, the "cosmic collapse" of the giraffes, will have wide-reaching effects but humans will

remain oblivious as political powers erase the giraffes' existence and their violent end: "All the papers are shredded, the films exposed, the giraffes burned, so: farewell" (321).

Of all the nonhuman animals in the novels discussed in this thesis, Diane Hammond's Hannah is the one with the closest relationship with some humans and also perhaps the one who suffers the most at the hands of others. Some might perceive Hannah's portrayal as being overly anthropomorphic but the humanising of Hannah's feelings comes predominantly from Sam and Corinna, those who know her best and who believe she is their daughter reborn. While Neva believes in nonhuman intelligence and "person"ality, for example in relation to Hannah, Miles and Chip the housecat who is "a gentlemanly soul" (196), she finds Sam and Corinna's open affection and devotion to Hannah "unnerving" (196). Trained in the top modern zoos around the country, this simple love for another animal is new and strange for Neva but she recognises how lucky Hannah is to have had them with her. In end it is Sam, for whom Hannah's "Hannah-ness" and her "elephantness" is the same thing, who understands Hannah the best. Despite knowing little about elephants as a species he understands her deepest needs and wishes; he is the one who shares Hannah's dream.

At first glance *Hannah's Dream* seems to reach a similar conclusion to many zoo critics: that the only humane, or even viable, future for wild animal captivity lies in sanctuaries and parks. After Hannah's relocation is set in motion Sam receives a letter written by Max Biedelman before she died, in which she calls Hannah "the legacy of my last foolish act, for how selfish it was to bring her here to Havenside knowing she would outlive me" (247). The reader is encouraged to understand how egotistical it is to see animals in human terms and even Harriet Saul, upon learning about the extent of Hannah's condition (and having no other choice), supports her relocation. Finally Harriet finds "her salvation" imagining the rebirth of Max Biedelman's estate through the restoration of its "old and original glory", however this vision quickly turns ominous as she imagines gradually

restoring the animal collection, her final happy thought "And maybe one day there could be elephants again" (304). It seems that even after Hannah's long decades of suffering and final struggle to escape the zoo, other elephants may be fated to repeat her ordeal.

The other animal who finally escapes from the zoo is Newman, Henry's friend goat in Ben Dolnick's *Zoology*. While Henry feels a connection with Newman much of this is built on his belief that the goat is different from other animals, somehow more human. One night New York is in a power blackout and, filled with resentment and hurt after being rejected by his love interest Margaret, Henry goes to Central Park and breaks into the zoo to visit Newman. "He'd never looked so simple, so plain and unconcerned and animal. This could have been because he'd just been sleeping, or it could have been because I'd never wanted so much for him to be the opposite" (255). Henry thinks a walk together in the freedom of the Park will make them both feel better so he takes Newman out of the zoo. When they are frightened by a sudden noise Newman bolts off into the darkness and Henry searches for him all night without success. The next day, with the zoo in crisis at their first lost mammal, he is forced to admit what he's done. Fired and banned from the zoo Henry continues searching for Newman, first in the Park and then throughout Manhattan, to no avail. When Margaret sends him a fantastical short story of how Newman has turned into a fish and is living happily in the ocean, Henry feels "utterly certain" that this is the wrong ending, and fixes it by describing how fish-Newman is caught in a net and kept in a tank until he dies. "Newman cries invisibly into the water, left alone there in the dark, and he loses all sense of time—but then slowly, as the months pass, he learns to stand it" (287). Henry cannot imagine Newman as a free and happy animal; although he has escaped the zoo the urban landscape has nothing to offer the goat. While his existence in the artificial space of the zoo was empty and hopeless, outside the zoo he ceases to exist entirely.

The final zoo novel, Lydia Millet's *How The Dead Dream*, offers a similarly bleak view of the state of Earth's biodiversity, one in which nonhumans and their species are equally doomed both within and without zoos. T. is shocked at the silence and rapidity with which entire "volumes in the library of being" are annihilated, seemingly without anyone knowing or caring, and he is increasingly obsessed and horrified at the loss. A biologist tells T. that ants make up "fifteen percent of the weight of all land animals and T. thinks about them "roiling beneath the surface" of the Earth "in untold billions" (124). After learning about the extinction of the kangaroo rats caused by his property development T. begins to question the capitalist principles by which he lives his life and he imagines the crust of the earth crumbling and giving way beneath the modern "battlements of convenience and utopias of consumption" (125).

> He found he was barely breathing. He let out his breath and filled up his lungs again.
>
> When he slept that night it was the ants abandoning ship. They left in their billions, all of them, and as they went away holes opened up in the earth, yawning sinkholes into which oceans and mountains poured.
>
> (125)

For T. the ants are representative of all nonhuman animals to whose existence and termination he has always been oblivious. Now, just as he begins to understand their importance he also recognises the scale and certainty of their disappearance and he has no doubt about where the accountability lies.

> Angry, a person might thrash and fight—even against himself, because he did not know who he was, or who the others were either. Later he would have to sit, crying crumple-faced in the pile of the dead. This was how it would be with the men, after they finished their work. They would have to be alone after that, and for so many years. On and on they would live, surrounded by gray. Complexity would be gone, replaced with dull sameness that stretched out unending… and when they had killed all their friends and everywhere was empty; only then would they see how terribly they had loved them.
>
> (242)

Through the novel as T. learns more about the "final animals", climate change and the conservation crisis the mood of despair, desperation and hopelessness builds alongside T.'s personal tragedies: Beth dies, his mother forgets him and finally a hurricane strikes his new development. Stranded in the Central American country T. decides to travel upriver into the jungle to search out a jaguar but finds himself alone and lost, days from civilisation. Like Henry, who finally feels happiness again one night after rescuing a dog in the middle of nowhere, at his lowest moment lying lost and exhausted in the jungle T. feels lucky that an unknown animal comes and lies down with him. He is grateful to her, but pitying, too, and the last words of the novel are steadfast their hopelessness: "Poor animal. It thought he was its mother, but its mother was gone. As, after a while, all the mothers would be" (244). The novel ends with T. lying in the jungle with no food or water and one anonymous nonhuman companion. His situation seems to echo that of wider humanity as he sees it: alive and gradually overcoming his fear of the other creature who accompanies him; a creature whom, despite his gratitude, he is still struggling to recognise. Ultimately, however, there is little hope of survival.

Near the end of his "Eighth Elegy" Rilke describes the way in which, as observers, humans are overwhelmed by the world and by living; in continuously trying to order the world as we see it we endanger not only the world but also ourselves.

> And we: Onlookers, always, everywhere,
> turned toward all that and never transcending it.
> It overwhelms us. We order it. It disintegrates.
> We order it again and disintegrate ourselves.
>
> (lines 66-9, trans. Llewellyn, 227)

In several of the novels I have examined, the zoo as a site of human ordering of the natural world is in the process of being overwhelmed; in struggling to maintain the human ordering of nature by holding a few species captive the exploitative philosophies behind this "order" threaten to allow the disintegration of the biological networks on which humans rely. This chapter has explored the anthropocentric nature of zoos' "ordering" processes such as "immersion exhibits" which aim to immerse the human visitor in artificial nature and the valuing of species that appeal aesthetically to the human spectator. These practices highlight the conflict that modern zoos embody between entertainment, conservation and education. Many of the zoo novels employ theatrical imagery when describing the zoo, suggesting the zoo as a site of performance constructed for the benefit of the human audience. In this performance the nonhuman animals embody pre-determined roles while traditional signifiers of captivity such as tiles and bars, no longer desirable to the human audience, are replaced with the token natural scenery they demand. While many modern zoos have undergone a rebranding over the last century this is largely ignored by the zoo novels which instead predominantly show the nonhuman and human characters behind-the-scenes at the zoo where concrete and metal bars are still the norm.

The distinction between wild animals and zoo animals is either described or stated in most of the zoo novels, the human containment and control of the nonhuman animals changing them into “a different kind entirely – a hybrid kind ... A zoo kind” (Millet, 198). This alteration is a combination of changes in the animal herself due the processes of “immuration” (the physical, behavioural and psychological effects of captivity), and changes in the way she is viewed by humans; her change in context objectifies her and renders her as exposed, observable object in the mind of the human spectator. In Chapter Two of this thesis I found that several of the zoo novels question the authority of Science in some way; in this chapter I have shown the extent to which these novels also challenge the ability of zoos to fulfil their self-conferred role as arks. In *How the Dead Dream* and *The Great Divorce* this doubt is explicitly expressed by characters like Ellen and T; in *Hannah’s Dream* a sanctuary is proposed as a suitable alternative for one species, while in *Zoology* and *Giraffe* no alternatives are found for either Newman, who disappears after leaving the zoo, or the members of the giraffe herd who are destroyed.

Conclusion

The project of this thesis has been to explore the representation of nonhuman animal captivity in recent contemporary zoo novels with the understanding that such representations are both informed by the socio-cultural context in which they were written and are also able to defamiliarise cultural practices such as the captivity of animals in zoos. In this way novels provide a means to examine human practices and analyse the various ways in which humans construct meanings for nonhuman animals. Because humans can imbue nonhuman animals with so many meanings it is very easy for them to become anthropocentric symbols within human cultural discourses. Nowhere is this more evident that the zoo, where the concepts of “wildness” and the “natural” are marketed as commodities and human visitors come to see “the” tiger and “its” various appeals. These attributes such as beauty, power and wildness are all predetermined in the mind of the zoo visitor, all aspects of the Platonic tiger. This mode of looking at animals is presented explicitly and critically in zoo novels, for example in *The Great Divorce* where the public’s view of white tiger Sonya is contrasted with zoo vet Ellen’s zoological gaze, which disregards her aesthetic beauty and considers only her mutated genes and her lack of value as a scientific specimen. The zoo visitors in the novels examined here do not come to the zoo to meet an individual nonhuman animal but to see the supposedly generic “zoo animals”. In this sense the captive animals in the zoo are playing roles in a performance that was written long ago: the ferocious pacing tiger, the amusing apes, the regal lion, the “tall-man” giraffe and the “fat-man” hippopotamus (Ledgard, 191).

The texts examined in this thesis expose this anthropocentrism and challenge its validity in ways which prevent nonhuman animals from functioning merely as symbols or literary devices; instead they are presented as characters who are shown to have their own agency. Chapter One of this thesis discussed how the communication of nonhuman animals is

often marginalised in human discourses, causing the animals themselves to be disregarded and rendered "silent" in human dialogues. I went on to explore ways in which the zoo novels attempt to overcome this marginalisation by creating meaningful nonhuman characters who communicate, have emotions and whose names signify that they are recognised as individual beings. These nonhuman characters confront the reader not only with their mysterious otherness but also the unexpected familiarity of their common emotions and experiences. Characters like Hannah in *Hannah's Dream* and Sněhurka in *Giraffe* are shown to have emotions that go beyond their stereotypes, even if their manner of expressing these is unfamiliar to the human observer. As human characters try to understand other animals in the zoo novels the reader can observe the human process of assigning meaning to the nonhuman world and its inherent anthropocentrism. In *Giraffe* Amina reasons that the "blankness" of the giraffes' expression must have a "purpose" (191); like Socrates, Amina believes this purpose is a usefulness that giraffes serve for humans. She concludes that the purpose of a giraffe (that is, any and all giraffes) is to serve as "a point of [human] reflection" enabling a human observer to better understand her own feelings (191), however a reader of the novel will know that Sněhurka and the other giraffes experience their own feelings and desires, ones which are at odds with the reasoning of Amina and the human philosophy of captivity. Of course the human interpretation of these emotions necessarily contains a degree of anthropocentrism but the recognition that nonhuman animals experience emotions and the ramifications of this is an element of each of the zoo novels which confronts the reader and challenges the traditional way of viewing all nonhuman animals and our relationships with them.

The establishment of nonhuman characters' identity and "person"ality in the zoo novels often involves the human discourse relating to them. In several of the novels the practice of objectifying nonhuman animals – literally rendering them as objects – is directly challenged,

for example during T.'s encounter with the dying coyote in *How The Dead Dream,* described in Chapter One of this thesis. At first T. is relieved that who he hit with his car is a coyote, far from being human she is an "it"; T. recognises that she is part of the teleological category "pest" and as such is considered much less valuable than a domestic "pet" dog (Millet, 36). However when T. sees her injuries the human-defined categories begin to blur and he is momentarily confused by the isolation and anonymity of her death, "Where was the ambulance?" (38) T.'s intimate encounter with the coyote in the moment of her death changes his attitude towards nonhuman animals forever. Throughout his life he has seen many dead animals on the road and the indignity of their death has always reinforced for T. the difference between them and himself. "You saw their insides all exposed. You thought: that is the difference between them and me. My insides are firmly contained." (37) This reaction echoes the feelings of many zoo visitors on seeing captive nonhuman animals; the zoo's rendering of the nonhuman animal as a powerless object and of the human visitor as a powerful observer serves to reinforce traditional ideas of human superiority over other species. However seeing the familiarity of the coyote's pain makes T. realise "she" has an identity too, and in light of this revelation he re-examines his reasons for believing himself so different to other animals. "It was just a coyote … And yet he felt confused" (38). This encounter reflects the struggle many human characters go through in the zoo novels when they are made aware of the subjecthood of nonhuman animals and the suffering they experience due to human practices.

In Chapter Two of this thesis I described the emphasis humans place on vision and visual experiences and the subsequent importance of eyes as literary symbols, even in relation to nonhuman animals who may actually experience the world primarily through senses other than vision. Often the zoo novels provide descriptions of zoo animals' eyes as a means to convey the dual aspects of a nonhuman animal's challenge to the human viewer: wholly other

and unknowable, yet also familiar. This is the case in *How The Dead Dream* when T. encounters another canine, this time an endangered zoo animal. The eyes of the Mexican gray wolf flash and shine in the darkness in a way that no human eyes could and although T. is surprised to detect the wolf's returned gaze he realises that it is so direct as to be "unlike the directness of men" (137). Each time a human character encounters the gaze of a nonhuman animal she (and with her, the reader) is presented with the subjecthood of that animal and the reality that, like her, the other animal also looks in order to see. In a novel which centres on the zoo, a site where humans keep other animals in permanent captivity simply for the purpose of looking at them, this realisation that our gaze is not unique and that nonhuman animals have the ability to gaze back at us from a place of awareness and emotion is very confronting. The unequal power dynamic inherent in the relationship between humans and captive zoo animals was further examined in Chapter Two through a discussion of the various forms of the empowered human zoological, recreational and scientific gaze in relation to a disempowered captive nonhuman animal. The chapter went on to contextualise the position of modern Western zoos as institutions which control the nature of humans' access to wild nonhuman animals by using the work of Philip Armstrong to explore the authoritative status of Science in contemporary Western societies. I concluded the second chapter with a discussion of the ways in which the zoo novels undermine the validity of Science's authority and challenge the value of the zoological gaze.

Historically, humans' ability to recognise individual animals' identities has been restricted by the instrumentalist categories created for this purpose, separating other animals by their use to humans. In this system nonhuman animals used for human food and experimentation are seen as generic and anonymous, domestic pets are seen as having individual but benign personal traits, and wild animals, while remaining predominantly interchangeable, are also endowed with various meanings associated with nature, purity,

mystery and exoticism. While the concept of our superiority over other species shapes Western culture and continues to support our utilisation of nonhuman species for experimentation, marketing, as food and as raw materials, the zoo remains a site where human domination over other animals is most visible. In Chapter Three of this thesis I briefly described the evolution of Western zoos over the past century and explored the ways in which zoos continue to be driven by anthropocentric philosophies. I found that animal collections and menageries have existed for thousands of years and far from being essential for human survival they have been places of entertainment, sites where the wealthy demonstrate their power and influence and the general public go to be entertained and diverted. Zoos today conscript scientific rhetoric to promote themselves as conservation arks, however using the work of Randy Malamud, Vicki Croke, David Hancocks and others I have argued that the philosophy of modern animal collections has remained practically unchanged over the past centuries. In each of the zoo novels the anthropocentric nature of the zoo is revealed to the reader even as it is disguised for the zoo visitor. Zoo employees like Camille in *The Great Divorce* and Henry in *Zoology* work hard to maintain "the illusion [the public] paid to see" (Martin, 269), an illusion dictated by the need to amuse and entertain the paying human visitors to ensure their continuing patronage. In this respect zoos are no different from the menageries of the past and so "conservation" is a useful concept employed by zoos to distance themselves from their history. However the greatest investment by zoos is not in their conservation efforts but rather in the illusion which is the true purpose of a modern animal collection. This illusion functions in two key ways. First, for education reasons the zoo must endeavour to convey generic information about a nonhuman species to the zoo visitor; however the illusion also requires adherence to the "conservation conspiracy" (Conway, 9). This means that the true extent of the conservation crisis, and the inability of zoos to oppose it, should not be allowed to influence a zoo visitor's enjoyment. Second, the

very nature of the zoo and its participation in many of the attitudes and practices which perpetuate the conservation crisis, such as the valorisation of human domination over other species, the commoditisation of nature and the valuing of those species which are attractive to humans, should be kept hidden from the zoo visitor. In *The Great Divorce* Ellen calls this aspect of the illusion "the lie the public requires these days" (Martin, 56), and in some of the zoo novels it is maintained through the use of "immersion" exhibits which hide the realities of captivity from zoo visitors.

However as my analysis has shown, while illusion is the central element of the zoo visit, in the zoo novels it is rendered marginal; since the novels' interest does not lie in convincing the reader of the validity of nonhuman animal captivity the illusion is reduced to mere tokens. By focusing on the nonhuman animals who live their lives at the zoo rather than the humans who visit them for only a short time, the mechanical reality of the zoo is revealed not just in outdated collections like the small Czechoslovakian Zoo in *Giraffe* but also in modern institutions like the anonymous New Orleans zoo in *The Great Divorce*. The effect of this is that the physical and moral realities of keeping nonhuman species in captivity is very much part of the texts.

While none of the zoo novels seems in favour of zoos as institutions none of them directly condemns the concept of captivity either. Instead the novels each describe the realities of life at the zoo – behind the illusion – and it is the human characters and the readers who are left to question the ethics of animal captivity. In *Giraffe* this reality is particularly shocking as the entire herd of giraffe is slaughtered on the whim of a faceless political authority. In *Zoology* Henry comes to understand the magnitude of Newman's lifelong captivity in the zoo but no alternative is offered as when he leaves the zoo the goat disappears into the city. In *Hannah's Dream* hope is proffered in the form of a pachyderm sanctuary to which Hannah is finally taken but even this is a respite for just one animal and

her rescue only serves to highlight the speciesism that sees the public rally around a single "charismatic megafauna" while continuing to support zoos. In both *How The Dead Dream* and *The Great Divorce* the imminent collapse of vast numbers of nonhuman species weighs on the mind of characters like T. and Ellen. Both of these characters have researched ecological and conservation issues and both remain thoroughly unconvinced in the ability of zoos to do anything about the disaster. The final message in each novel is of human isolation: Ellen struggles to save just one more animal on an ark which she knows is sinking and T. finds himself lost, starving and confused in a jungle with only a single anonymous animal for company.

In writing about zoos these novels examine human-animal relationships by defamiliarising a site which most people seem to find unproblematic. In this thesis I have argued that despite our conquest of them nonhuman animals remain other; eluding our attempts at conceptualisation they are recognised yet remain outside our understanding. The defamiliarisation achieved by the novels then is not of nonhuman animals, who are already other, but of ourselves. Using works from Human-Animal Studies and other fields my analysis has shown that by concentrating their portrayal of zoos on the experience of the subjective captive nonhuman characters who are imprisoned there rather than on the human visitors who visit only briefly the novels interrogate the ideological foundations on which modern zoos are built; thus the anthropocentrism which pervades every aspect of our relationships with nonhuman animals is revealed and implicated in our continuing (mis)treatment of them. This process of defamiliarisation destablises human assumptions not just about other animals but also about nature, subjectivity and what it means to be human. Therefore in exploring literary constructions of zoos and captive animals it is human practices and ideologies that are ultimately revealed.

Appendix

[From Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies*; Translated by Terry Llewellyn in
Rilke's Duino Elegies: Cambridge Readings,
ed. Roger Paulin and Peter Hutchinson, 223-227]

The Eighth Elegy

Dedicated to Rudolf Kassner

WITH both its eyes the creature-world sees
the open. But our eyes are
as though reversed and set around it
like snares, all around its path to freedom.
What *is* outside, we know from the animal's
countenance alone. For we already turn the small child
around and compel it to look backwards
and see formed nature, not the open that
is so deep in the animal's face. Free from death;
10 we only see *that*, the free animal
has its decline always behind itself
and before it God, and when it moves, it moves
in eternity, just as springs flow.
We have never, not for a single day,
pure space before us, into which the flowers
open up infinitely. It is always world
and never the nowhere without no: the pure,
the unguarded realm which one breathes and
infinitely *knows* and does not desire. As a child
20 one loses oneself in silence to this and is
jolted out of it. Or someone dies and *is* it.
For near to death one no longer sees death
and stares out, perhaps with the creature's wide eye.
Lovers, were not the other there,
blocking out the light, are close to this and marvel…
As if in error they have opened to them
what is behind the other… But no-one can
elude him, and the world crowds in again.
Constantly turned towards creation,
30 we see on it only a mirroring of what is free,
obscured by us. Or that an animal,
a mute create, looks up calmly right through us.
This is fate: being opposite
and nothing but that and always being opposite.

If there were consciousness, such as we have,
in the secure animal that moves towards us
in another direction —, it would drag around us
with it in its progress. But its being is

Unending, not fixed, and without a look
40 on its state, pure, like its look forward.
And where we see future, it sees there all things
And itself in all things and healed forever.

And yet there is in the warm, alert animal
the heaviness and care of a great sorrow.
For something always clings to it, which
often overwhelms us —, memory,
as though what we urge towards was
once nearer, truer and its connection
with us infinitely tender. Here it is all separation
50 and there it was breath. After the first home
the second seems not one thing or the other and doubtful.
O bliss of the *tiny* creature
that always *remains* inside the womb that brought it forth.
O happiness of the gnat that still leaps *within*
even when it procreates; for womb is all.
And look at the half security of the bird,
almost aware of both from its origin,
as though it were the soul of an Etruscan,
of a dead man, enclosed within a space
60 yet with the figure in repose as a lid.
And how dismayed is the womb-born thing
that has to fly. As though afraid of itself,
it zig-zags the air like when a crack
goes through a cup. So the trace
of the bat flaws the porcelain of the evening sky.

And we: Onlookers, always, everywhere,
turned toward all that and never transcending it.
It overwhelms us. We order it. It disintegrates.
We order it again and disintegrate ourselves.

70 Who has turned us around like this, so that,
do what we may, we are in the stance
of someone who is leaving? Like him, who
on the last hill that shows him all of his valley
once more, turns, halts, tarries —,
so we live, forever taking our leave.

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