

Representing Animals

Normalizing Nonhuman/Human Relationships

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Dedication

For my husband Bao-Er

&

My dear friend Liisa Cotterill (16.4.46 – 18.10.11)

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.....
Dianne Hayles

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Abbreviations

Critical Discourse AnalysisCDA

Human Animal StudiesHAS

Systemic Functional LinguisticsSFL

Focus Texts

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find ThemFB

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's StonePS

Harry Potter and the Chamber of SecretsCS

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of AzkabanPA

Harry Potter and the Order of the PhoenixOP

Harry Potter and the Goblet of FireGF

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood PrinceHBP

Harry Potter and the Deathly HallowsDH

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Abstract

This thesis is a response to the call for the development of a critical theory of nonhuman animals in fiction and the challenge of creating new habits of mind that make it possible to view the singular exploitable ‘animal’ as individuals in their own right.

A Critical Discourse Analysis approach that includes aspects of narrative theory will be used to examine contemporary children’s literature, the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling, to demonstrate how narrative and grammar work to render cultural practices associated with nonhuman animals as *natural*. These *naturalized* representations of cultural practices interpolate children into relationships with nonhuman animals that perpetuate oppression and exploitation.

Given that the recognition of a link between representation and cultural practice is an essential starting point for change, the aim of the thesis is to demonstrate analytical methods that are capable of actively reading the presence of nonhuman animals *into* literary texts. These analytical methods are not meant to be reductive, imposing limits on how any text ‘should’ be read. Indeed, the methodology has been chosen precisely because of its ability not only to reveal naturalized/embedded discourses, particularly those *currently active* within contemporary texts, but also its capacity to create spaces in which to consider how these discourses relate to social practices beyond the text. This

then allows for an informed evaluation of these discourses alongside the historical and social contexts that produce them.

The thesis demonstrates how a pro-nonhuman animal perspective in literature is capable of contributing to an awareness of the discourses that work to construct and maintain our current, too often oppressive, relationships with nonhuman animals. Such an approach leads to the potential for a positive change in these relationships.

Thesis Overview

Introduction

At the 2009 *International Academic and Community Conference on Animals and Society: Minding Animals*, Simon Lumsden posed the question that ‘if norms are governed by the space of reason why aren’t we all vegetarians?’. He then posited, following the philosopher John Dewey, that the source of norms in society is not actually governed by the space of reason but rather through habits and that these habits, that in turn construct our identities, are shaped through social and political forces.

Such social and political forces, that come under the rubric of socialization, have the ability to shape the way we view nonhuman animals when we are young and these views can then become our habitual way of seeing our relationships with animal others for many years, if not our whole lifetime. Indeed, Anderson and Henderson (2005) are of the opinion that '[t]hese enduring models influence belief systems, shape attachment behaviors, and determine future actions'. However, because much of this does not happen consciously, 'individuals often are unaware that early childhood representations may be replicated in our adult relationships and exert a powerful and ubiquitous influence on our adult behavior' (301). Coming to some understanding of how we acquire ‘these enduring models’, therefore, allows for an appreciation of how certain relationships, attitudes and treatment of nonhuman animals are assumed to be *natural* within our culture.

Along with other media, children's literature is one of the ways these belief systems are transmitted and children learn about their society and internalize its patterns of hierarchy and social cohesion. As Charles Sarland (2005) observes, it is now generally acknowledged that '[w]e have learned from the more international debate in literary studies that ideology is inscribed in texts much more deeply in much more subtle ways than we thought...', and that there has been 'a re-recognition of the moral/didactic role of children's fiction, now recoded as its ideological role' (45). For as John Stephens (1992a) states, while children's books can 'exist for fun ... they can never be said to exist without socializing or educational intention, or else without specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them' (158). Peter Hunt (2005) also makes the point that 'most adults, and almost certainly the vast majority of those in positions of power and influence, read children's books as children, and it is inconceivable that ideologies permeating those books had no influence on their development' (1).

The 'enduring models' developed in childhood with regard to our relationships with nonhuman animals can be made plain by adopting 'a critical theory of animal issues in fiction' (Shapiro & Copeland, 2005: 343) in the critical analysis of popular contemporary children's literature texts. By so doing it is possible to interrogate the 'specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them' (Stephens, 1992a: 158). In this way we can come to some understanding of 'what animals signify' in dominant Western culture (Baker, 2001a: xxxv). For as Baker

points out, '*any effective cultural strategies on behalf of animals must be based on an understanding of contemporary cultural practice*' (5) (emphasis in the original).

Jacobs and Stibbe (2006) note that '[i]t is impossible to be neutral in the analysis of the relationship between humans and other animals because it is a relationship in which analysts necessarily are involved' (p. 2). And, as Goodale and Black (2010) observe, '[n]one of us are without bias' (7). This thesis makes no pretence of being a disinterested examination of the literary representation of animal others in the focus texts. Rather, the explicit aim of this project is to make a contribution towards emerging Critical Animal Studies research into the often-contradictory social constructs that serve to *naturalize* our relationships, attitudes and treatment of nonhuman animals by examining existing *currently active* discursive practices around their representation. The ultimate goal of this project is to effect a change to existing oppressive nonhuman/human relationships so that they can begin to reflect a more compassionate understanding of animal others.

The Critical Animal Studies approach to texts advocated by this thesis seeks to help foster new habits of mind that will make it possible to view the singular exploitable 'animal' as individuals in their own right over whom humans have no *natural* right to own, eat, kill, wear, experiment on or otherwise exploit. Francione (2004) considers that, '[w]hen it comes to animals, we humans exhibit what can best be described as moral schizophrenia' (108). As Francione observes, '[w]e claim to regard animals as having morally significant interests, but our behavior is to the contrary' (110). This is evidenced by the billions of nonhumans animals that we kill, eat, wear or experiment on every year

despite numerous polls in many countries that show support for the protection of nonhuman animals from cruelty (109). This situation, Francione states, 'is related to the status of animals as property, which means that animals are nothing more than *things* despite the many laws that supposedly protect them'. Only by according nonhuman animals 'the right not to be treated as our property' can we 'make good on our claim to take animal interests seriously' (108).

The Critical Animal Studies approach to texts in this project considers how representations of nonhuman/human relationships effectively reproduce as *natural*, and so help to maintain, this 'moral schizophrenia'. A consequence of this naturalization is its ability to then interpolate children into *natural* relationships with nonhuman animals that effectively reinforce, and so perpetuate ongoing misery and suffering year after year for untold billions of our fellow creatures with whom we share the planet.

This project considers that a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts that employs Critical Discourse Analysis, along with aspects of narrative theory, allows for the use of 'critique [as] the mechanism for both explaining social phenomena and for changing them' (Fairclough, et al, 2011: 358). For, just as early feminist literary critique drew attention to, and problematized, the embedded patriarchal nature of language, a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts has the ability to demonstrate, and also problematize, the embedded nature of speciesist language that perpetuates our 'moral schizophrenia' with regard to other animals.

Chapter Order

The thesis is divided into three parts: Part I – Background; Part II – Methodology; and Part III – Text Analysis.

Part I – Background is comprised of three chapters. Chapter one, ‘From Animal Studies to Critical Animal Studies’, begins by first situating the thesis within a Critical Animal Studies paradigm to establish the perspective undertaken in the thesis. This chapter sets out the motivation for the research, discusses the growth of ‘animal’ studies and introduces key issues around Critical Animal Studies that inform the discursive approach to analysis of nonhuman/human animal relationships developed in this thesis. By situating the thesis within Critical Animal Studies, this chapter acknowledges the acceptance of the requirement for analysts to take a subject position that is not neutral. Rather than examining ‘human/animal relations as an intellectual exercise undertaken without social, ethical, and political contexts or consequences’ (Best, 2009: npn), adopting a Critical Animal Studies approach signals that this project has at its heart an agenda for social change.

Chapter two, ‘Naturalized Theories of Representation’, provides an overview of how nonhuman animals have been represented historically and how the theory of ‘The Great Chain of Being’, along with the concept of ‘Natural Theology’, together with Humanism work to encode many oppressive cultural practices involving nonhuman animals as *natural*. The more recent theory of Posthumanism is also discussed and found to offer potential for a positive re-evaluation of nonhuman/human relationships. This is due to its

ability to extend humanist concerns that limit the ‘meaning’ of literary nonhuman animals solely to *the human condition*. This ability is also regarded as vital in a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts as CAS must necessarily examine possible consequences of those ‘meanings’ for *nonhuman animals* and evaluate their potential impact on the lives of actual animal others.

In chapter three, ‘Children’s Literature and Critical Animal Studies’, the case is made for the need for a re-evaluation of the presence of nonhuman animals in children’s literature. This is considered an important endeavour, as a Critical Animal Studies approach to analysis is able to illustrate the major role children’s literature plays as a site of enculturation that interpolates children into their relationships with nonhuman animals. Children’s literature, therefore, is positioned as a vital site of concern for those interested in how cultural norms regarding human/nonhuman relationships are constructed, maintained and perpetuated.

Part II – Methodology consists of two chapters. Chapter Four, ‘Text Selection’, discusses the phenomenal success of the *Harry Potter* series and argues that such texts, that are both contemporary and popular, are capable of revealing current understandings of what are considered *natural* nonhuman/human relationships. By demonstrating the popularity of the *Harry Potter* series amongst readers and academics alike, this chapter establishes its importance as a contemporary cultural text and hence the appropriateness and utility of the *Harry Potter* series along with the bestiary associated with the series, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, as the sample texts for analysis.

Chapter Five, 'Tools of Analysis', provides an overview of the methodology employed. This chapter demonstrates that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an appropriate and effective approach to adopt as it provides a theoretical umbrella under which a range of analytical methods can comfortably congregate. As well as this, CDA lends itself readily to projects such as this that seek to facilitate social change through an interrogation of ideologies present in texts. This is because CDA not only allows for investigations into the role of discourse in regulating and normalizing social practice but also, implicit in adopting this approach, is the examination of language and power. However, it is acknowledged that the close textual analysis demanded by CDA requires an extra element when dealing with literary texts. In order to supply this necessary 'literary' component, the compatibility of the approaches advocated by Hollindale (1988) and, more particularly, Stephens (1992a, 1992b, 2005), with CDA is demonstrated.

While the *Harry Potter* series is an important contemporary cultural text it does not exist in an historical vacuum, as no text is free of intertextual influences. Therefore, chapter six, the first of the six chapters in Part III – Text Analysis, is 'The Importance of Fables'. In this chapter the focus text is contextualized within an historical discourse around nonhuman animals that stretches back millennia by acknowledging the continuing importance of the role of fables in perpetuating a number of pervasive nonhuman animal stereotypes. This chapter demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of fables in contemporary texts, including the *Harry Potter* series, and urges the need for a *conscious* reappraisal of the genre when the fable form is detected within contemporary texts.

Chapter Eight, 'The Bestiary', demonstrates how *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, the bestiary associated with the *Harry Potter* series, is positioned as the accepted authority on ontological concerns within the magical world of the *Harry Potter* series. This chapter provides a space to examine the more explicit assumptions of the *natural* place of nonhuman animals within the magical society. Analysis demonstrates how both the narrative and grammar of *Fantastic Beasts* reveal the legacy of historical representations which continue to work to *naturalize* our present day relationships with animal others. In the case of *Fantastic Beasts*, this is a Cartesian view of nonhuman/human animal relationships, which constitutes the world hierarchically and reproduces, and so reinforces, current social contradictions around those relationships. In this chapter the foundation is laid for an exploration of how these assumptions are also expressed through the narrative and grammar in the series proper.

The narrative and textual representations of nonhuman animals that most concern this project are those of nonhuman animals as food and 'pets'. These two categories are considered of most interest as it is generally assumed that child readers would find them of most relevance in their lives. Therefore, chapter eight, 'Nonhuman Animals as Food', begins with a discussion of food in the genres of children's literature and the boarding school story, as realized in the *Harry Potter* series. This chapter demonstrates how the rules of certain genres can constrain representation as they contain within them certain *natural* ways of seeing the world and our relationships with animal others. A number of strategies are discussed that work to effectively 'distance' food from its source. It is seen

that these ‘distancing’ strategies create an essential emotional detachment from nonhuman animals that allows readers to enjoy the lavish representations of flesh-as-food in the series without the need to reflect on those whose bodies supply our food.

Chapter Nine, ‘Companion Animals and Others’, examines how the *Harry Potter* series realizes the often-employed narrative device of representing the degree of sympathy displayed by a human character in their interactions with an animal other to establish the ‘moral worth’ of the human. This chapter begins by first considering the representation of Hagrid as an ‘animal lover’ and his relationship with other animals. An examination of the representation of Harry Potter’s cousin Dudley Dursley, an acknowledged unpleasant character, is then contrasted with that of Harry Potter, as the hero.

The findings show that, in fact, the narrative and grammar in *all* these representations reproduce the contradictory relationships humans have with nonhuman animals in the world beyond the book. In particular, in the case of Harry Potter, it is demonstrated that the text simultaneously constructs as *natural* Harry Potter’s understanding of ‘pets’ as both ‘family member’ and ‘disposable commodity’.

Chapter Ten, ‘Companion Animals as Metaphors’, continues to explore ‘pet’/human relationships via the series’ use of metaphor and the representation of cross-species intersubjectivity. Three nonhuman/human animal relationships are examined in order to demonstrate how the text constructs a paradigm that sets up ‘moderation’ in the degree of interspecies intimacy as being both *natural* and ‘desirable’: Hedwig and Harry Potter,

Mrs. Norris and Argus Filch, and Nagini and Voldemort. Transgressing these 'acceptable' limits of intimacy is shown to have dire consequences.

Chapter 11 is the conclusion that reviews the findings and discusses the contribution that the thesis makes to a Critical Animal Studies approach to 'a critical theory of animal issues in fiction' (Shapiro & Copeland, 2005: 343).

Terminology

'Animal'

Freeman (2010) observes that 'humanist terminology makes it hard to rhetorically avoid speciesism' (12). For as Midgley (1994) notes, there is ambiguity associated with the term 'animal'. While on the one hand 'animal', as a noun, refers to 'any of a kingdom (Animalia) of living things', which includes humans, this definition can be (and often is) narrowed to only include 'one of the lower animals as distinguished from human beings' (Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary). This dictionary definition with its use of the declarative with a high degree of certainty not only *naturalizes* a distance between 'human beings' and 'animals', it also endorses an hierarchical ordering of species by referring to other than humans as '*lower* animals'. Distancing of the *human* from the *animal* continues with a third common definition: 'a human being considered chiefly as physical or nonrational' (Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary). Such definitions as this, Midgley observes, 'banish[es]' those referred to thus 'from the moral community' (35). One result of the alienating of the *human* from the *animal* via the second and third

definitions is, Freeman considers, that '[a]nimal advocates must struggle with using the very central term *animal*' (13) (emphasis in original).

While noting that the terms nonhuman animals and other-than-human animals 'present the benefit of reminding humans that they too are animals' (14), Freeman (2010) prefers the term *humanimality* as a way 'humans might rhetorically construct themselves as animals' (11) 'as it reveals that the term *animal* is literally a part of human' (14). Dunayer (2001) favours the terms 'other animals' and 'nonhumans' throughout her text while noting that:

For nonhumans as well as humans, I use *persons* in legal contexts and to emphasize individuality, *people* when otherwise referring to multiple individuals, and *peoples* for entire communities and cultures (as in 'Different chimpanzee peoples have developed different methods of tool use' (203, n2)

This thesis avoids the use of 'animal' when referring only to the nonhuman and has chosen predominately to employ terms such as 'nonhuman animal', 'animal others' and 'other than human'. Although acknowledging Freeman's point that such terms 'still mark them as an "other" in negation to the dominant term *human*, such as *non-white* may imply a racial hierarchy' (2010: 14), these terms also 'present the benefit of reminding humans that they too are animals' (14). Freeman seeks the use of terms that 'promote the idea that "we are like them"', rather than the currently often-employed terms that signal 'they are like us' (12). However, the inclusion of 'animality', because of its essential human focus and negative connotations in the animal-instinct/spiritual-nature dichotomy, is considered to render *humanimality* inappropriate for this project. For although it allows humans to 'rhetorically construct themselves as animals' (11), the 'animal' of 'animality' may be

seen merely as base nature, ‘a natural unrestrained unreasoned response to physical drives or stimuli’ (Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary), in opposition to ‘humanity’, rather than as a species category. This would then result in *humanimity* being understood as solely focused on the duality of ‘human nature’ and so further distance the human animal from other animal species.

While agreeing with many of the arguments Dunayer puts forward regarding speciesist language, this thesis considers that referring to animal others as *persons* or *peoples* could also be seen as skewing the focus of the project from ‘we are like them’ to ‘they are like us’. Therefore, these terms will not be used.

The ‘animal’ referred to in the title of this thesis and the Critical Animal Studies approach to texts advocated by this project includes both the human and nonhuman. This thesis argues that only by interrogating the representation of the human animal and their relationships with nonhuman animals can we effect a change to the often-contradictory social constructs that serve to *naturalize* our present relationships, attitudes and treatment of nonhuman animals and thus effect a change in nonhuman/human animal relationships.

Part I – Background

Our task is especially difficult because we must transcend the comfortable boundaries of humanism and urge a qualitative leap in moral consideration. We are insisting that people not only change their views of one another within the species they share, but rather realize that species boundaries are as arbitrary as those of race and sex. Our task is to provoke humanity to move the moral bar from reason and language to sentience and subjectivity. (Best, 2004: npn)

Chapter One: Critical Animal Studies

Introduction

This thesis is motivated by a desire to contribute to the burgeoning field of ‘animal studies’, specifically Critical Animal Studies, and takes the view that it is by the interrogation of the language of representation that we have the facility ‘to provoke humanity to move the moral bar from reason and language to sentience and subjectivity’ (Best, 2004: npn). Therefore, I consider the most effective contribution I can make is a response to Shapiro and Copeland’s (2005) call for the development of ‘a critical theory of animal issues in fiction’ (343). My chosen area of interest is the application of tools of textual analysis and aspects of narrative theory to explore how both grammar and narrative work to represent as *natural* nonhuman/human animal relationships in texts, particularly children’s literature. The object of the exercise is to consider how such representations act to interpolate children into *natural* relationships with nonhuman animals that reproduce, and so maintain, the current range of contradictions present in our relationships with animal others. By situating the thesis within Critical Animal Studies, this thesis acknowledges the acceptance of the requirement for analysts to take a subject position that is not neutral. Rather than examining ‘human/animal relations as an

intellectual exercise undertaken without social, ethical, and political contexts or consequences' (Best, 2009: npn), adopting a Critical Animal Studies approach signals that this project has at its heart an agenda for social change. The chapter first discusses the recent growth of 'animal studies' in Australia (where the author is from) and overseas before introducing key issues around Critical Animals Studies that will inform the discursive approach to nonhuman/human animal relationships developed in the thesis.

From 'Animal Studies' to Critical Animal Studies

The Australian Research Council funded project *Sentiments and Risks: The Changing Nature of Human-Animal Relations in Australia* states that 'animals form a backcloth to a great deal of Australian life, both embodied and symbolic' (Franklin, 2007:8) and it is families with children under the age of eighteen who are most likely to have a nonhuman animal in their care (2007:10). Franklin (2006) states that this study:

suggests that the sociology of the family and the sociology of housing need a new post-humanist makeover, for it is increasingly doubtful whether either are exclusively human domains. This is because neither families, households or housing can be thought of any longer as humans among themselves. Companion animals are now found not only in the vast majority of human households/families but their position, role, agency and status has shifted quite profoundly (137).

Franklin's observations are mirrored in other recent calls for a shift in how human and nonhuman relationships are understood. These calls are not limited only to companion animals, nor are they confined to Australia. As Derrida (2008) notes, there have been increasing calls for a re-evaluation of the moral status of nonhuman animals:

[V]oices are raised - minority, weak, marginal voices, little assured of their discourse, of their right to discourse, and of the enactment of their discourse within the law, as a declaration of rights - in order to protest, in order to appeal [...] to what is still presented in such a problematic way as animal

rights, in order to awaken us to our responsibilities and our obligations vis-a-vis the living in general, and precisely to this fundamental compassion that, were we to take it seriously, would have to change even the very cornerstone [...] of the philosophical problematic of the animal. (26-27)

While 'the very cornerstone of the philosophical problematic of the animal' is yet to be seriously threatened much less completely demolished, Calarco makes the point that, '[w]hile there is no widely agreed upon definition of what precisely constitutes animal studies, it is clear that most authors and activists working in the field share the conviction that "the question of the animal" should be seen as one of the central issues in contemporary critical discourse' (2008:1).

That this conviction has been gaining ground can be seen from Shapiro and DeMello's 2010 review of the growth of Human-Animal Studies (HAS). The observation that 'the field has not simply grown over the last eight years; it has exploded' (Shapiro and DeMello, 2010: 307) is reflected in a March 2008 media release from the Australian Government Law Reform Commission that states that:

[t]he remarkable recent growth of animal law courses in Australian universities parallels a similar growth in environmental law courses a generation ago, and indicates that 'animal rights' is now firmly on the agenda for serious consideration (nbn),

However, Shapiro and DeMello also note a number of obstacles to the growth of HAS. One of these obstacles is echoed by William who considers that Human-Animal Studies still faces resistance from some academics due to '[h]ostility towards animals as a serious subject of study'. Among the reasons put forward for this resistance is the concern that advocacy which focuses 'on the well-being of animals will detract from the well-being of humans' (2007:2).

When considering the question of whether or not it is 'frivolous to care about animals at a time when human rights are under attack', Puchner (2007:21), concludes that when 'reconsidering the abuses that often reinforce the privileging of human rights over animal rights[,] [p]erhaps it is only by taking animal rights seriously that we can preserve the rights of humans' (2007:31). This notion that the way nonhuman animals are treated has a carry over effect with regard to the treatment of humans is not new, particularly in regard to the socialization of children. This can be seen in Knowles and Malmkjær's (1996) history of British children's literature where they mention Mrs Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories*, published in 1786, the stated aim of which was to encourage 'kindness to animals' in order to 'promote moral behaviour' (1996:4). This way of seeing reflects the influential Enlightenment philosopher Emmanuel Kant's (1724-1834) theory of indirect duties to animals, which illustrated Kant's world-view that 'places the autonomous, creative human person at its centre' (Turnbull, 1999: 120). Fieldhouse (2004) considers that Kant's indirect duties theory is 'reminiscent of what is sometimes termed an animal welfarist position, in that animals have no rights, but we still ought not to treat them cruelly and must strive to minimize their suffering'. Kant did, however, also posit that 'animals themselves are mere things without moral worth' (1).

Kant, of course, was not the first philosopher to ponder nonhuman/human animal relationships. Steven Connor (2007) considers that '[t]he question of the animal has thrummed away gently and for the most part harmlessly in the background of philosophy

for the last couple of millennia' (577). It is this gentle thrumming that Preece considers needs to be interrogated as:

[a]n analysis of the history of attitudes to animals is, [...], a prerequisite for understanding animal ethics as well. If we are to determine the ideal, our path must be through the historically real as witnessed through the development of character and culture - the attitudes, emotions, and beliefs pertaining to animals. (2005:360-361)

As will be seen in the following chapter, even a cursory glance at the history of 'the attitudes, emotions, and beliefs pertaining to animals' reveals a continuing hierarchical approach that has dominated thinking about the natural world and which does, on many occasions, make it possible, and justifiable, to take issue with Connor's use of the term 'harmless'. This is the primary reason that this thesis adopts a Critical Animal Studies perspective, in order to take issue with this notion of 'harmlessness'. 'Critical' is here used to indicate that the aim of this project is not merely to investigate how textual representations contribute to our ways of understanding other animals. Rather, it is an attempt to highlight, and indeed problematize, the role that language plays in maintaining the contradictions and ambiguities in our relationships with nonhuman animals and to raise often uncomfortable ethical questions regarding our relationships with animal others:

The ultimate purpose of this theory and critique is not to deconstruct textual contradictions, to explore the polyphony of meaning, or to experiment with alternative realities in literary imagination, but rather to align itself with animals and fight for their liberation. (Best, 2009: npn)

Chapter Two: Naturalized Theories of Representation

[T]here is a transhistorical dimension to the human/non-human relationship and[...] this conditions cultural production across very wide time frames. I am not arguing that what we find here is a universal condition, but rather a condition which has been with us for so long that it appears to be universal. (Simons, 2002: 12)

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of how nonhuman animals have been represented historically and how the theory of ‘The Great Chain of Being’, along with the concept of ‘Natural Theology’, together with Humanism work to encode many oppressive cultural practices involving nonhuman animals as *natural*. The more recent theory of Posthumanism is also discussed and found to offer potential for a positive re-evaluation of nonhuman/human relationships. This is due to its ability to extend humanist concerns that limit the ‘meaning’ of literary nonhuman animals solely to *the human condition*. This ability is also regarded as vital in a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts as CAS must necessarily examine possible consequences of those ‘meanings’ for *nonhuman animals* and evaluate their potential impact on the lives of actual animal others.

By examining how nonhuman animals have been viewed historically it is possible to draw out a number of enduring cultural assumptions. For a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts it is important to understand the historical genesis of much of the current discourse around our relationships with animal others. Such an understanding allows for an appreciation of the ways in which certain relationships with, attitudes to, and treatment of, nonhuman animals have become *naturalized* within contemporary

cultural practices. To that end, later chapters demonstrate how a Critical Animals Studies approach to the interrogation of the language of current representation is an effective strategy to expose these historical traces and their underlying ideologies that still fundamentally mediate our relationships with nonhuman animals.

‘The Great Chain of Being’

Lockshin (2007) states that ‘Ancient Greece constructed a world image that did not depend on divine creation’ and goes on to say that:

[i]n general, perhaps by noting the obvious biology and by understanding a hierarchical world in which animation (life) was superior to inanimation (rocks), movement (animals) superior to immobility (plants) and thinking (humans) superior to reactive behavior (animals) they perceived a creation in which plants preceded animals and animals preceded humans. (22)

The ‘logical’ outcome of such an hierarchical view of the world was that the ‘inferior’ positions in the hierarchy were considered to exist to serve the needs of those of more ‘superior’ rank. Therefore, plants were for the use of nonhuman and human animals while both plants and nonhuman animals were for the use of humans.

While both Connor (2007) and Preece (2005) make mention of divergent views amongst early thinkers contemporary with this position, this hierarchical view became dominant and the practice of literary borrowings across the ancient Greco-Roman world ensured that this view was effectively *naturalized* by those within the educated class. Clutton-Brock (1995) observes that Plato’s *Principle of Plenitude* and Aristotle’s hierarchical *Great Chain of Being* further contributed to:

the belief, from medieval times, that a continuous chain extended from the

inanimate world of nonliving matter, such as earth and stones, through the animate world of plants, zoophytes, and the lowest forms of animal life, upwards to the quadrupeds and eventually through man to the realms of angels and finally to the Christian God. This belief also entailed the view that just as nothing new could be created, neither could anything be exterminated, since this would counteract the will of God. (428)

Natural Theology

These views are evident in the writings of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and his *natural* or philosophical theology, so called as it was developed without reference to scriptures, being based rather on experience and ‘reason’. Aquinas studied theology under the Dominican Albert von Bollstadt, ‘who was beginning to be known as the champion of Aristotle’ (Sullivan, 1952: v). According to Preece (2005), much of the writing of Aquinas ‘is taken directly from Aristotle’ to the extent that Preece is tempted to view it as ‘blatant plagiarism!’(55). Although Aquinas advocates kindness to nonhuman animals, his representation of animal others as ‘things’, Hyland considers, has allowed ‘Christian scholarship’ to justify ‘the brutal treatment of laboratory animals’. As Hyland observes, ‘seven hundred years after his death, Thomist theology continues to be used by religious spokesmen to justify the abuse of animals’ (2000: npn).

Humanism

Renaissance humanism, Olsen (2004) states, also has its roots in the late Roman Republic, resulting from fifteenth and sixteenth century scholars ‘turning from obsession with God and the soul to exploration of the world of humans in all their variety and achievements’ (97). As Vardoulakis (2008) observes, ‘[a] humanist politics sees its fulfilment in individual liberation’ (137). Vardoulakis also states that nonhuman animals were excluded from any notion of fulfilling their individual liberation due to the general

acceptance of Descartes' (1596-1650) argument that nonhuman animals 'act without reason', in other words, they act 'automatically' (Descartes in Vardoulakis, 2008:137). While Preece (2005) discusses the often strongly expressed objections raised by a number of Descartes' contemporaries to the 'Cartesian conception of animals as insentient machines' (2), the superior status of the human endorsed by his rationalist philosophy was nevertheless widely accepted, with the presumed insentience of the nonhuman effectively functioning as a way to define the human. For 'as a species', Preece observes, humans 'identify ourselves against the "other" by what we see as the defining characteristics of humanity – intellectual reason, language, religion, a moral sense – those factors that, we believe, differentiate us from other species' (48).

Historically the 'other' has been understood as that which the self requires to define itself against, with Hegel's (1770-1831) master-slave dialectic often used to illustrate the concept. Turnbull (1999) paraphrases Hegel's argument using the following example:

[H]istory is a social process driven by contradictions between competing systems of ideas. This 'contradiction' was viewed as being rather like the struggle between master and slave, a struggle that could only be resolved once the master finally recognized the slave as a free person. So ideas struggle for recognition; once the 'weaker' ideas are recognized as valid and significant by the 'stronger,' a change occurs in the stronger dominant idea. At this point a new set of ideas emerges that supersedes both. Hegel called this a dialectical process, a process of historical change that produces new and better forms of knowledge via a process of thesis, antithesis, and, finally, a new synthesis. (130)

This way of understanding the 'other' can be seen as particularly poignant when human-nonhuman animal replaces master-slave in the equation. However, the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), though far from being the first to employ the term, is

generally seen as responsible for the contemporary understanding of ‘the other’ as ‘always and only the *human* Other’ (Calarco, 2008: 55) (emphasis in original). Calarco, however, questions this reading of Levinas and considers that, although Levinas himself was ‘for the most part unabashedly and dogmatically anthropocentric, the underlying logic of his thought permits no such anthropocentrism’ (55). Calarco states that according to Levinas ‘no nonhuman animal is capable of a genuine ethical response to the Other; and nonhuman animals are not the kinds of beings that elicit an ethical response in human beings’ (55). This argument is flawed, Calarco considers, as a close reading indicates that ‘Levinas’s ethical philosophy is, or at least should be, committed to a notion of *universal ethical consideration*, that is, an agnostic form of ethical consideration that has no a priori constraints or boundaries’ (55) (emphasis in original).

According to Fudge (2002b), ‘[t]he truly-human of humanism’ during the sixteenth century can be seen as even more narrowly defined than Levinas does his ‘other’. Fudge notes that only those who had a knowledge of Latin belonged to this ‘elite category’, while those who were illiterate were ‘outside humanism’ and thus ‘not human’ (70). This exclusivity is not unique to the period for, as Olsen (2004) observes, when historical categories such as ‘humanism’ and ‘Renaissance’ are looked at closely it is revealed ‘how much grand narratives always are someone’s story, but not everyone’s’ (104). As a result, since the idea of a Renaissance ‘was really a man’s view of things, defined, in fact, only by what some socially elite men valued’, in this case ‘humanism’, many others were effectively excluded, including women and the poor (104) as well as nonhuman animals.

The Age of Enlightenment

The legacy of the Roman Republic, together with the Renaissance humanist concept of individualism, went on to inform the underlying principles of another ‘grand narrative’, the eighteenth century’s *Age of Enlightenment* with philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), citing Cicero and Virgil as ‘authors which I was secretly devouring’ (Selby-Bigge, 1952: 447). While Hume regarded an emphasis on liberty and equality as an essential Enlightenment concern (Noggle, 2004: 617), he and many others still denied these rights to nonhuman animals for:

although many philosophers argued that we should not be cruel to animals, they did not derive the duty to humane treatment of beasts from a moral status, standing, or right held by animals themselves. Boyle’s justification of why we should not torture animals, for example, rested not on any standing animals had in and of themselves, but rather on the role of humans as stewards of nature, and by extension stewards of beasts. The idea of stewardship had importance for early-modern political and moral philosophers far beyond the issue of animal rights. For John Locke, and many others, Adam’s stewardship of God’s creation was the model for natural rights in general. But on Locke’s theory, animals were clearly property and due consideration no different than fruit trees. (Garrett, 2007: 245)

While it may be correct to say that it was generally accepted that the status of nonhuman animals at this time was ‘due consideration no different than fruit trees’, there were in fact some who took a different view. Amongst them was Jeremy Bentham, (1748-1832), the utilitarian philosopher. Bentham’s writings greatly influence the ethicist and animal rights advocate Peter Singer, notably his statement that ‘[t]he question is not, Can they *reason?* nor Can they *talk?* but, Can they *suffer?*’ (in Singer 2002:7). Singer points out that Bentham considered that the capacity to experience suffering is ‘the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration’ (7). That this idea of

‘equal consideration’ for nonhuman animals was not readily embraced by Bentham’s contemporaries when he published *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* in 1789 is evidenced by the fact that, as Clutton-Brock (1995) notes, ‘until well into the eighteenth century’, the method of classification of all organisms was based on genus, species, differentia, property and accident, known as the *Five Predicables*. This is an hierarchical system that was based on an adaptation of Aristotle’s classification of logic (428-429), which *naturally* places humans at its apex.

The Nineteenth Century and Beyond

The nineteenth century began to see a change, however, as naturalists ‘had finally realized that Aristotle’s legacy and the traditional ways of defining and categorizing living organisms in a Scale of Nature no longer fitted their modern world ...’ (Clutton-Brock, 1995: 433). A major contributor to this change was Charles Darwin’s (1809-1882) *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, which challenged the accepted thinking that human beings were ‘made in the image of God’ (434). However, as Singer (2002) notes, although Darwin had ‘demolished the intellectual foundations’ of the attitudes of earlier generations, ‘he continued to dine on the flesh of those beings who, he had said, were capable of love, memory, curiosity, reason, and sympathy for each other...’ (211). The difference now, as Fudge (2002a) observes, is that as a consequence of Darwin’s work:

[d]ominion, in this world view, must take on a very different meaning. No longer God-given, humanity’s rule over the rest of the animals can only be understood as a rule of strength and ingenuity, not right (20).

In spite of this, as Clutton-Brock observes, ‘most people still believe that the world is ordered according to a hierarchical Scale of Nature with unicellular organisms at its base and Man at the top’ (1995: 435).

Currently, humanism is alive and well as a generally held belief, with Olsen noting that the historically flexible definition of humanism has allowed the term to ‘be pressed into many causes’ (2004: 98). As an example Olsen cites the fact that ‘[i]n the second half of the twentieth century, the atheistic humanism of Communism and the Christian humanism of John Paul II can stand in direct confrontation, each claiming to be the true or proper humanism’ (99). With the result that, while atheistic humanism may dispute the claim that humanity is placed a little lower than the angels, both categories generally agree that ‘humans are to preside over the rest of creation’ (99). Singer (2004: npn) lays the blame for the continuance of this belief amongst nonreligious humanists on the historical weight of religious dogma:

During nearly two millennia of European history in which Christian dogmas could not be questioned, many prejudices put down deep roots. Humanists are, rightly, critical of Christians who have not freed themselves of these prejudices - for example, against the equality of women or against nonreproductive sex. It is curious, therefore, that, despite many individual exceptions, humanists have on the whole been unable to free themselves from one of the most central of these Christian dogmas: the prejudice of speciesism.

As a result, more than merely requiring humans to see themselves as individuals who possess free will, modern humanism still posits *the human* as the pinnacle of existence. Within such a discourse, concern for other than humans, unless that concern can be directly related back to a concern for *the human*, is often considered to be irrelevant.

The need for change is clear, John Simons (1997) argues, and he proposes ‘that both political science and cultural studies ... can and should be rewritten so that an entirely new perspective, based on the vision of history as a conflict of species, specifically a conflict between humans and non-humans, emerges’ (484). Steven Best (2004) also calls for radical change when he claims that ‘we are fighting for a revolution, not reforms’, he also considers that ‘[a]nimal rights is an assault on human species identity. It smashes the compass of speciesism and calls into question the cosmological maps whereby humans define their place in the world’ (n.p.). To achieve this ‘especially difficult’ aim Best states that ‘we must transcend the comfortable boundaries of humanism and urge a qualitative leap in moral consideration’ (n.p.). The task is made more difficult, however, by a lack of agreement on how, or even if, this transcendence of the foundation of semiotics of *humanness* is possible.

Posthumanism

Cary Wolfe (2006) notes that there is ‘a good deal of confusion about “animal studies”’ and that:

if philosophical work that takes the moral status of non-human animals seriously is, in some obvious sense, posthumanist (i.e., challenging the ontological and ethical divide between humans and non-humans that is a linchpin of philosophical humanism), such work may still be quite humanist on an internal theoretical and methodological level that recontains and even undermines an otherwise admirable philosophical project. (8)

Additional to this question of whether or not a posthumanist philosophy of nonhuman animals can transcend its humanist roots is the question of whether or not there is a generally understood and agreed upon definition of the term ‘posthuman’. While Wolfe welcomes the possibilities for nonhuman animals of a posthumanist approach that by its

very nature must challenge ‘the ontological and ethical divide between humans and non-humans that is a linchpin of philosophical humanism’ (8), others such as Francis Fukuyama (2002) consider that ‘the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a “posthuman” stage of history’ (7). From this it can be seen that the concept of the ‘posthuman’ impacts not just on the binary human/nonhuman animal but also creates a new dichotomy between the human and post-biological human or perhaps even the intelligent machine. This second proposition is beyond the scope of this project and so will not be discussed, apart from observing that it is logical to assume that however ‘what it is to be human’ is defined in the future, it will continue to affect the lives of nonhuman animals, as it has in the past.

The understanding of posthumanism that this project considers aligns with a Critical Animal Studies focus on texts is Freeman’s view that posthumanism provides:

a way of thinking that envisions the human as an animal in a larger ecological community where humans no longer privilege their own species as a wholly separate and superior category and begin to include themselves as one among other animated subjects. Posthumanism incorporates the human rights goals of humanism and blends them with concerns for animal rights and environmentalism (2010: 203 n 5).

This view that ‘envisions the human as an animal in a larger ecological community’ is gaining ground as it becomes more and more evident that humans can no longer confidently assert their ‘wholly separate and superior’ relationship to other animals. Historical attempts to establish a definition of ‘humanness’ and create a clear boundary between the human and the nonhuman animal have always involved representing the

human in opposition to other animals: ‘the defining characteristics of humanity’ that ‘differentiate us from other species’ have been seen to be ‘intellectual reason, language, religion, a moral sense’ (Preece, 2005: 48). That these attributes are to be found only in humans is now being called into question by many researchers across a number of disciplines. Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce (2009) consider that years of behavioural and cognitive research have actually proven that not only do nonhuman animals display intelligence and have recognizable emotions but that they also definitely possess a moral sense. Kate Soper (1995) also points out that seeing language as ‘the defining property of humanity’ is flawed logic ‘since language is itself a social system not an individual property (a truth which Descartes failed sufficiently to recognize)’ (54). That nonhuman animals do also use language is now also more widely acknowledged with Derrida (1991) seeing human language in a relationship of ‘différance’ with that of other animals:

I am thinking in particular of the mark in general, of the trace, of iterability, of différance. These possibilities or necessities, without which there would be no language, *are themselves not only human*. It is not a question of covering up ruptures and heterogeneities. I would simply contest that they give rise to a single linear, indivisible, oppositional limit, to a binary opposition between the human and the infra-human. And what I am proposing here should allow us to take into account scientific knowledge about the complexity of ‘animal languages,’ genetic coding, all forms of marking within which so called human language, as original as it might be, does not allow us to ‘cut’ once and for all where we would in general like to cut. (emphasis in original)

Where the ‘cut’ between species occurs, as Derrida observes, is wholly dependant on human choice. And if language use is to be the marker for the border between who is a subject and so is not an object, Derrida argues, then the languages of nonhuman animals should be recognized along with human language use. Such a move would also help to highlight the arbitrary nature of any ‘cut’ and so function ‘to assert and assess the ways in

which “human” is always a category of difference, not substance: the ways “human” always relies upon “animal” for its meaning’ (Fudge, 2002c: 15).

With ongoing research the once clear borders between species are now becoming increasingly blurred and indistinct, something that is to be welcomed by those interested in Critical Animal Studies. As Wolfe (2006) states, if the boundaries breakdown ‘between nature and culture, organic and inorganic, human and animal, and so on’ then we will be forced to realize that the concept of *the human* is a construct and that ‘if “the human” is made, ... then it can be made not just differently but more justly’ (1).

Posthumanism, Wolfe goes on to say, is not:

a ‘rejection’ or ‘surpassing’ of humanism and many of its animating values, concerns, and commitments. Rather, the point is to reveal, by rigorous theoretical investigation, how these values and concerns – what humanism says it wants (justice, tolerance, equality, and so on) – are undercut or short-circuited by the philosophical and theoretical frameworks from which they have arisen: frameworks that are, of course, historically contingent and quite ideologically specific (2)

Although, as previously stated, there is no general agreement as to what constitutes posthumanist ‘animal studies’, Calarco (2008) makes the point that such studies ‘comprises a wide range of disciplines within the humanities, social sciences, and biological and cognitive sciences’ which attempt to address a central concern and that is:

To place questions concerning animals at the center of critical enquiry. The precise manner in which these questions are framed, debated, and answered depends, of course, to a large extent on the particular field of origin. And yet, despite the disciplinary differences and multiple theoretical approaches in animal studies, there are at least two recurring and structural questions that undergird much of the work being done in the field. One question concerns the being of animals, or ‘animality’, and the other concerns the human-animal distinction’ (2)

The mere act of posing such questions, which can be seen as interdependent, does in fact make it possible to destabilize the historical category of *human* and reveal the underlying speciesism that is embedded in the term. Such revelations clearly demonstrate how a humanist worldview effectively limits any ethical considerations with regard to nonhuman animals. As a consequence of the growing acknowledgement of this limitation, the millennia old question of what it means to be human is now, at the start of the third millennium, beginning to be reappraised. This project argues that such a reappraisal will only be effective if there is an understanding of the existing discursive structures surrounding the categories of *human* and *nonhuman* animal.

Adopting a Critical Animal Studies focus in the analysis of the existing discursive structures surrounding the categories of *human* and *nonhuman* animals permits the fostering of an understanding of how these structures work to help *naturalize* our relationships with, attitudes to and treatment of nonhuman animals. Such an understanding potentially provides an opportunity to transcend and remake the foundational semiotics of *humanness*, a result that can contribute to effective social change and an improvement in the ethical consideration of nonhuman animals.

One benefit of Freeman's (2010) definition of posthumanism 'that envisions the human as an animal in a larger ecological community where humans no longer privilege their own species as a wholly separate and superior category and begin to include themselves as one among other animated subjects' (203), is that it facilitates a step on from a humanist approach to texts. Typically, humanism asks what animals *mean* in a given text, and what that meaning says about *the human condition*. This project considers that

adopting the above perspective within a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts not only allows but also requires analysts to go further and examine possible consequence of those meanings for *nonhuman animals*. The concern of a Critical Animal Studies centred focus on texts must be to avoid limiting research outcomes to *the human* and how we represent, and thus define ourselves through, *the nonhuman*. Rather, it is necessary that research findings be extended in order to consider the possible impact of such representations on the lives of actual animal others.

Chapter Three: Children's Literature and Critical Animal Studies

Cultural messages are considerably more complex than an initial fusion of child with animal, followed by a simple assertion of human superiority at the pinnacle of the evolutionary ladder. Children grapple with a complicated, often contradictory, mix of social codes governing animals and their treatment. There are creatures incorporated as family members, stamped out as pets, saved from extinction, and ground into Big Macs. The result is that children often mirror societal unease with culturally sanctioned uses of animals. If we wish to redefine those uses and recast them in more ecologically responsible terms, children's relationships with animals may be the place to begin. (Melson, 2001: 20-21)

Introduction

This chapter discusses children's literature as a site of enculturation that has the ability to interpolate children into their relationships with nonhuman animals. As Melson (2001) observes, 'children's relationships with animals may be the place to begin' when attempting to 'recast' our relationships with other animals (21) and, as this chapter demonstrates, children's literature offers 'a place to begin'.

Early Contributions to 'Animals' in Children's Literature

Considering that nonhuman animals have populated literary texts since time immemorial, and that they still are considered a *natural* part of children's literature, it is perhaps surprising that, until very recently, their representation has excited scant academic attention. As Copeland (1998) observes, '[a]nimals, the nonhuman varieties, have appeared as subjects in human stories since human stories began. In literary studies, this is not so' (87). This is almost unbelievable, considering the ubiquitous nature of the presence of animal others in literature for children. Only one full-length study that does concern itself with the representation of nonhuman animals in children's literature was

found. Unfortunately, Margaret Blount's *Animal Land* (1974) is almost forty years old. Inglis's article, 'Ideology and the Curriculum', published in the same year, speaks of the 'ideology of no ideology' as the 'style of thought which has so deeply marked curricular planning' and was generally current at that time (39). Blount's approach to nonhuman animal representation reflects this. Her concern is with writing style rather than the ideological implications of the representation of nonhuman animals in the works discussed. Indeed, Blount would perhaps say that *Animal Land* does not deal with ideologies of any kind, much less those around nonhuman animals, as there is no critical discussion of the possible ideological implications of the representation of race, sexuality or gender roles in any of the texts with which she deals. Blount not only accepts without question a *natural* hierarchical ordering of living creatures but also that '[t]he gulf between human and animal can never, in this world, be crossed' (1974: 17).

The dearth of academic interest in the way nonhuman/human animal relationships are represented to our children needs to be recognized and addressed. In a modest way, this project is one attempt to do so.

The Importance of Children's Literature

Tony Watkins (2005) speaks of '[t]he rise of the newer forms of literary historicism' that has 'benefited the academic study of children's literature' by legitimising 'texts that have never been considered worthy of academic study', including those dealing with 'blacks, women and minority groups within society' (54). Approaching texts to investigate how they deal with nonhuman animals can also be seen as 'legitimised', for as Shapiro (2008) notes, '[b]oth feminist studies and HAS [Human Animal Studies] play a role in the social

justice movements dedicated to ending discrimination against the respective oppressed group' (11).

When undertaking a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts, a major site of study and investigation must, therefore, be the representation of nonhuman animals in children's literature. Anderson and Henderson (2005) consider that the way young children relate to fictional nonhuman animals has a bearing on adult attitudes to '[t]wo interrelated issues - nonhuman animals' similarity to humans and their moral status' and how these issues 'often form the basis of a debate on controversial social practices involving animals'. As Stibbe states, '[h]ow animals are socially constructed influences how they are treated by human society' (2001:147). Anderson and Henderson are of the opinion 'that expectations engendered by childhood stories are one reason these issues play a key role in determining what social practices are acceptable' (298). Furthermore, how we are socialized to view nonhuman animals when we are young often becomes *naturalized* as the 'right' way to interact with animal others that we carry with us throughout our lives (301) and pass on to our children.

For this reason, this thesis sees children's literature as a vital site of concern for those interested in how cultural norms regarding human/nonhuman relationships are constructed, maintained and perpetuated. Therefore, this project seeks to contribute to the development of a Critical Animal Studies approach to children's literature that places 'questions concerning animals at the centre of critical enquiry' (Calarco, 2008: 2) in order to generate an awareness of the 'powerful and ubiquitous influence' (Anderson and

Henderson, 2005: 301) of the representation of nonhuman animals in texts designated as children's literature. For as Shapiro and Copeland observe, '[n]o less than feminist, Marxist, post-colonial, structuralist, and formalist approaches, a literary criticism perspective on animal issues is a point of view, a form of consciousness, a way to read any work of fiction' (343).

Nonhuman Animals and 'Childhood'

A Critical Animal Studies focus on children's literature acknowledges the strong cultural assumption of a *natural* bond between nonhuman animals and children. Such an assumption has a bearing on how our society constructs not only an understanding of *childhood* but also of nonhuman animals. As Myers (1999) observes, 'historical discourses found in the West associate animality with immaturity and growing up with the transcendence of this condition' (121). A number of developmental theories, Myers goes on to explain, 'set as the criterion of maturity the actualization of some capacity that is believed to set humans apart from animals' (121). Indeed, as Menely states, 'it remains a commonplace that there is something emblematically sentimental about loving animals' (2007:247) and that '[t]here are few emotional imperatives in Anglo-American [or Anglo-Australian] culture so widely accepted, if hazily understood, as those embedded in the perception that there is something essentially suspect about sentimentality' (244). Couple this with the fact that 'nonhuman animals play an extraordinarily salient role in the lives of children' (Serpell, 1999:87) and it becomes clear that children's literature can be considered a primary site of contradiction and ambiguity for children as they navigate their transition from their social identity of *child*, generally under a humanist ideology, socially constructed as not only a *natural* lover of nonhuman animals but also often

identified as being 'essentially unformed and animal-like', to perform their social identity of *adult*, one who has shed 'these animal-like attributes in favor of the actualization of adult qualities predefined as uniquely human' (92).

Gamble and Yates (2008) observe that many texts classified as children's literature reflect this *natural* progression from child to adult by taking 'the form of the *Bildungsroman* or education story in which a central character moves from dependence to independence, adolescence into adulthood' (66). Children's literature should, therefore, be of particular interest to Critical Animal Studies for, as Nodelman (2008) notes, such texts are not only 'what producers hope children will read' but also those that adults purchase for them. With the result, Nodelman goes on to point out, that '[i]n terms of success in production, what children actually want to read or do end up reading is of less significance than what teachers, librarians, and parents will be willing to purchase for them to read' (4-5). From a Critical Animal Studies perspective, the 'significance' of children's literature, therefore, lies in how fictive nonhuman/human animal relationships can be seen to reflect the judgements of producers as to 'what they believe adult consumers believe they know will appeal to children (or perhaps, what should appeal to them, or what they need to be taught)' (5) as they make their transition from *child* to *adult*.

The many different opinions expressed over the years as to what appeals or 'what should appeal' or what children 'need to be taught' reflect the longstanding tensions between the assumed didactic socializing role of children's literature, as exemplified by Sarah

Fielding's 1749 opinion that 'the true Use of Books is to make you wiser and better, ...' (in Sarland, 2005: 32), and the view, as expressed by Harvey Darton in 1932, that children's books, by definition, are 'works produced ostensibly to give children spontaneous pleasure, and not primarily to teach them, ...' (in Sarland, 2005: 32). While the importance of the pleasure of the text for contemporary young readers has generally gained precedence over an emphasis on overt instruction, reflecting current western assumptions regarding the concept of *the child*, as Stephens (1992a) points out:

[w]riting for children is usually purposeful, its intention being to foster in the child reader a positive appreciation of some-cultural values which, it is assumed, are shared by the author and audience. These values include contemporary morality and ethics, a sense of what is valuable in the culture's past (what a particular contemporary social formation regards as the culture's centrally important traditions), and aspirations about the present and the future. Since a culture's future is, to put it crudely, invested in its children, children's writers often take upon themselves the task of trying to mould audience attitudes into 'desirable' forms, which can mean either an attempt to perpetuate certain values or to resist socially dominant values which particular writers oppose. (3)

Interrogating children's literature from a Critical Animal Studies focus creates the opportunity to consider at least some of the *naturalized* assumptions that accompany the representation of fictive nonhuman animals. In this way it is possible to examine how such representations could 'attempt to perpetuate certain values' or else be seen to 'resist socially dominant values' with regard to nonhuman/human animal relations.

From a Critical Animal Studies approach to children's literature it is no longer unproblematic to write of nonhumans that '[a]nimal life is not happy in the human sense; it is merely neutral ... Giving these small animals human qualities is to put them out of reach of inevitable fear, pain and death which is their natural lot' (Blount, 1975: 131).

Jonathon Balcombe (2006) points out that '[s]cience has neglected animal pleasure ... Research tends to focus on evolutionary explanations for natural phenomena. By considering only natural selection and reproductive success, it overlooks the experiences of individuals - their feelings, emotions, pleasures' (8). While science and society as a whole generally do not view nonhuman animals as individuals, as Tom Tyler (2007) observes, 'it is *individual* animals who demand fresh thought *about* animals' (56) (emphasis in original). Derrida (2008) also states that:

[c]onfined within this catch-all concept, within this vast encampment of the animal, in this general singular, within this strict enclosure of the definite article ("the Animal" and not "animals"), as in a virgin forest, a zoo, a hunting or fishing ground, a paddock or an abattoir, a space of domestication, are *all living things* that man [sic] does not recognize as his fellows, his neighbours, or his brothers. And that is so in spite of the infinite space that separates the lizard from the dog, the protozoon from the dolphin, the shark from the lamb, the parrot from the chimpanzee, the camel from the eagle, the squirrel from the tiger, the elephant from the cat, the ant from the silkworm, or the hedgehog from the echidna. (34) (emphasis in original).

As evidenced by the preceding quote, the task of creating habits of mind that will allow us to think of nonhuman animals as individuals may not be an easy one. Derrida's call for a shift from the 'general singular' of 'the Animal' appears to allow for no finer distinction to be drawn than the 'general singular' of categories of species: *the* lizard, *the* dog, *the* protozoon, *the* dolphin, *the* shark, *the* lamb, *the* parrot, *the* chimpanzee, *the* camel, *the* eagle, *the* squirrel, *the* tiger, *the* elephant, *the* cat, *the* ant, *the* silkworm, *the* hedgehog, *the* echidna. The implication here is that nonhuman animals should be differentiated by individual *species* identity rather than individual *personal* identity. This would also imply that, while not all nonhuman animals are the same, all those who belong to a species are simply interchangeable.

How humans view nonhuman animals, whether as individuals, as a species or as 'the Animal', depends to a large extent on processes of socialization. In order to fit into a society and be considered a *good* social subject, participants must internalize their culture's social controls, along with values and norms relating to rights and wrongs. Children's literature is one of the ways culture is transmitted and children learn about their society and its patterns of subordination and social control. The 'moral/didactic role of children's fiction, now recoded as its ideological role' (Sarland, 2005: 45) is, however, only part of the picture. As Wolfgang Iser (1989) points out, it is reading that 'causes the literary work to unfold its inherently dynamic character' (76). Readers, Iser observes, must first 'accept certain given perspectives' that are made up of 'statements, claims, or observations, or convey information' which the act of reading or listening causes to 'interact' (77). As Iser states, there are gaps in every story and 'each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his [sic] own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities ... With "traditional" texts this process was more or less unconscious' (78). It is the nature of these 'gaps' that are available to be filled, with their 'specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them' (Stephens, 1992a: 158), that must also be taken into account, especially if this process becomes 'unconscious', when considering children's books as active sites of socialization.

Shapiro and Copeland (2005) argue that when deconstructing literary texts, from an 'animal' centred approach:

The critical task is to explicate the form of [the human-nonhuman animal] relationship and to place it in the universe of possible relationships - from the

animal as forgotten resource for the consumer (the steak, medium rare) to the animal as more or less equal partner in a relationship - the fruit of which is a common project, a shared world (345).

With that in mind, Shapiro and Copeland urge an ‘animal’ centred literary criticism that will ‘deconstruct reductive, disrespectful ways of presenting nonhuman animals’ as well as evaluating ‘the degree to which the author presents the animal “in itself,” both as an experiencing individual and as a species-typical way of living in the world’. Such an approach would also ‘include an analysis of human-animal relationships in the work at hand’ (345).

This thesis seeks to contribute to ‘the development of a full-blown, animal-based interpretative theory’ for the representation of nonhuman animals in fiction as urged by Shapiro and Copeland. To that end, this project sees a Critical Animal Studies focus on texts that employs a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, plus aspects of narrative theory, as offering an effective way of reading current literary texts. Such an approach has the capacity not only to reveal how textual representations construct the nonhuman animals within a fictional text but also to recognize the ideologies that underpin that representation and the relationships with, attitudes to, and treatment of nonhuman animals that those ideologies *normalize*.

To be relevant, along with the examination of historical representations of nonhuman/human animal relationships, Critical Animal Studies must look closely at how such relationships are represented in contemporary texts, particularly those considered to be successful. Such an examination allows for an exploration of *currently active*

discursive strategies and how they effectively *naturalize* our relationships with, attitudes to, and treatment of nonhuman animals. For this reason J. K. Rowling's very popular *Harry Potter* series, along with her bestiary *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, have been chosen as the focus texts.

Part II – Methodology

Just exactly what kind of world is constructed, validated and celebrated by this novel [Harry Potter] would seem to be a vital enterprise of cultural analysis. (Goatly, 2004: 117)

Chapter Four: Text Selection

Introduction

This chapter discusses the phenomenal success of the *Harry Potter* series and argues that such texts, that are both contemporary and popular, are capable of revealing current understandings of what are considered *natural* nonhuman/human relationships. By demonstrating the popularity of the *Harry Potter* series amongst readers and academics alike, this chapter establishes its importance as a contemporary cultural text and hence the appropriateness and utility of the *Harry Potter* series along with the bestiary associated with the series, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, as the sample texts for analysis. The chapter reviews the academic literature on the representation of nonhuman animals in these texts, which highlights the gap in existing scholarship associated with the series on this theme. This project seeks to simultaneously address this gap and demonstrate how a Critical Animal Studies approach to the series not only is able to centralize the representation of nonhuman animals but also to reveal *currently active* discursive practices around their representation.

Why Harry Potter?

One outcome of the phenomenal popularity of the Harry Potter series is that its didactic potential has, almost from the date of first publication, been widely recognized. With the result that the series has prompted a plethora of journal articles and books that promote these texts as useful in the teaching of a diverse range of topics both moral and practical,

including philosophy, religion, gender studies, law and politics, marketing, psychology and technology. While the majority of articles addressing possible moral instruction to be found in the series deal mainly with interpersonal human relationships, reflections inspired by the series on our moral obligations towards nonhuman animals are few.

Indeed, the presence of the multitude of nonhuman animal characters within the series appears to function for many commentators as only constituting that which ‘should appeal’ to young readers rather than ‘what they need to be taught’ (Nodelman, 2008: 5). However, as Stephens (1992a) observes, ‘children’s writers often take upon themselves the task of trying to mould audience attitudes into “desirable” forms, which can mean either an attempt to perpetuate certain values or to resist socially dominant values which particular writers oppose’ (3). Adopting the *Harry Potter* series and associated bestiary as the focus texts not only facilitates a demonstration of a method of approaching literary texts that centralizes current representations of nonhuman animals but also fills a gap in existing scholarship associated with this extremely popular and influential series. For, by employing a Critical Animal Studies approach, it is possible to examine the assumptions within the *Harry Potter* series that speak to the ““desirable” forms’ that young readers ‘need to be taught’ (Nodelman, 2008: 5) concerning our moral obligations to nonhuman animals.

The analytical methods adopted in this thesis can be applied to any fictional text. The choice of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* as the focus texts for this project is due to a number of factors: its categorization as

‘children’s literature’ and the recognition that children’s books are active sites of socialization; it is a recent publication, which allows for an interrogation of currently active discursive strategies and how they effectively *naturalize* our present relationships with, attitudes to, and treatment of nonhuman animals; its undoubted worldwide popularity, which indicates the effectiveness of those discursive strategies; and last, but by no means least, is the abundance of animal others who inhabit Rowling’s world along with human Muggles and wizards. Indeed, as the nonhuman animals within the series fulfil many and varied roles, it is possible, in this one series, to consider how the representations of these nonhuman animals deal with a number of issues related to their welfare and rights, treatment in agriculture and science, and as food and ‘pets’. However, to explore all these categories within the limits of a thesis would necessarily result in only a very superficial and general analysis. Therefore, the scope of this project is limited to specific examples of the representation of nonhuman animals as food and ‘pets’ that coalesce around the character of Harry Potter. As the hero of the series, Harry Potter can be expected to be the human character that most young readers identify with and the two categories of food and ‘pets’ are considered to be those that child readers would generally find most relevant in their lives.

The popularity of this series is a strong indication that the narrative and textual devices used to *naturalize* the treatment and representation of these two categories of nonhuman animals have been accepted by the readership. By analysing these successful strategies to interrogate both the explicit and implied understandings of ‘desirable’ ways that humans should *naturally* interact with food and ‘pets’ in this series it then becomes possible to

assess and draw some conclusions as to the possible consequences for actual animal others resulting from the concepts of 'desirable' and *natural* as represented in this series.

That the *Harry Potter* series of novels has been a phenomenally successful publishing venture is an irrefutable fact. J K Rowling is credited as being 'the first U. S.-dollar billionaire author in history' (Beckett, 2008: 215) with sales of well over four hundred million books that have been translated into sixty-seven languages (Flood, 2009). This series of books can also be seen as reinvigorating reading as a contemporary cultural practice and, as John Stephens observes, 'children's fiction belongs firmly within the domain of cultural practices which exist for the purpose of socializing their target audience' (1992a: 8). How nonhuman animals are represented in these texts, therefore, can be seen as part of that socializing process.

The current popularity of these texts speaks to a world-view shared by author and audience. Hollindale (1988) notes that 'writers for children are transmitters not of themselves uniquely, but of the worlds they share', therefore they are 'strictly limited' as to how they can represent their fictional worlds in order to avoid alienating their audience. To achieve this, the resultant narrative needs to be able to construct 'a shared understanding of the present, and an actuality which the young reader believes in' (15). The undoubted popularity of this series indicates that J. K Rowling and her readers possess a 'shared understanding' of the ideology activating her world. The representation of nonhuman animals in the Harry Potter universe, then, can be understood to form part of 'an actuality which the young reader believes in' (15).

The *Harry Potter* series can be seen as being created at an historical moment in time when ‘the question of the animal’ had gained a momentum that is beginning to challenge how the category of *human* and *animal* are understood. Literature in general is considered to reflect the culture of its creation and as Bloom (2000) points out, ‘[s]o huge an audience’ positions the *Harry Potter* series as ‘a millennial index of our popular culture’ (npn).

Harry Potter and the Academy

The view of the series as an ‘index of our popular culture’ (Bloom, 2000: npn) may account for the *Harry Potter* series being embraced as a subject for study by academics from many fields, almost since the first book in the series was published in 1997. As Kaplan (2009) observes, apart from university courses and books dedicated to the study of the series, ‘a plethora of articles have already appeared in academic and popular journals’ (npn). A review of all these articles would constitute a thesis in itself, as even a brief search of the available sources reveals literally thousands of articles, books, websites and blogs that deal with different aspects of the world of Harry Potter as their central theme. The broad range of academic disciplines that have taken an interest in the series has resulted in courses, books and journal articles featuring the *Harry Potter* series that cover a wide area of study. A small sample include: philosophy (*Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*, Baggett, 2004), religion (*Looking for God in Harry Potter*, Granger, 2007), gender studies (*Heteronormative Heroism and Queering the School Story in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series*, Pugh and Wallace, 2006, *Females and Harry Potter: Not All that Empowering*, Mayes-Elma, 2006), law and

politics (*The Liberty Tree and the Whomping Willow: Political Justice, Magical Science, and Harry Potter*, Chevalier, 2005), marketing (*The Travels of Harry: International Marketing and the Translation of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Books*, Lathey, 2005), psychology (*Prisoners of Azkaban: Understanding Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Due to War and State Terror (With Help from Harry Potter)*, Katz, 2003) and technology (*Magic in the Machine Age*, O'Har, 2000), to name but a few areas of academic interest.

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all the areas of study that find this series relevant, even a cursory inspection of the literature reveals the seemingly consensus view amongst commentators that the *Harry Potter* series contains lessons that can or should be used to *teach* readers, both child and adult. However, perhaps surprisingly, considering the number and variety of creatures present in the series, while there are literally thousands of articles and books examining similar topics to those cited above, there are very few articles that address the representation of nonhuman animals in the series or the nature of the relationships between the nonhuman animals in the texts and the human characters.

It is also particularly interesting to note that, from those so far examined, of the articles that are specifically concerned with how the series can facilitate the moral development of young readers, only one specifically raises the subject of the moral status of the nonhuman animals in the texts, this is Andrew Goatly's (2004) 'Corpus Linguistics, Systemic Functional Grammar and Literary Meaning: A Critical Analysis of Harry Potter

and the Philosopher's Stone', discussed below. For other commentators, the nebulous concepts of 'good' and 'evil' that they discuss appear to be concerned only with interpersonal human relationships. For example, Binnendyk and Schonert-Reichl (2002) suggest that the series 'could be used as a "springboard" for the discussion of real-life moral dilemmas that students confront in their everyday interactions' and suggest that the 'pressure to use drugs or alcohol, or the effects of parental divorce' could be 'contemporary issues' suitable for student discussions (200). While these topics may be relevant to many young people, equally, it could also be argued that a discussion on the moral status of nonhuman animals is relevant to *all* students and more directly related to the series. The pressure to use drugs or alcohol and the effects of parental divorce are not central themes within the series and it is unlikely that every student will face all these dilemmas. Whereas, nonhuman animals do perform many functions within the narrative and all participants in contemporary western societies make decisions, on a daily basis, of whether or not to eat, wear or own a nonhuman animal. These decisions, together with the growing community debate around the moral status of nonhuman animals, should constitute a 'real-life moral dilemma' worthy of investigation and discussion.

Nonhuman Animals in Harry Potter – A Review

Andrew Goatly (2004) employs a critical analysis of corpus linguistics in order 'to investigate to what extent this critical corpus linguistics (CCL) gives a valid representation of the meanings and ideologies of a literary text' (115). In his investigation, Goatly compiled 'a word frequency list' to consider a number of categories, including nonhuman animals (owls, cats and dogs), nature, gender, rules and conventions, food, self-control and time. He then 'accessed concordance lines for these

categories' (120), which were 'analysed according to transitivity systems of systemic functional grammar' (115). Goatly's approach definitely has value for gaining a general overview of 'ideological patterns' (153) in extended texts. Though he does concede that his approach 'cannot entirely succeed in accounting for how literature, in particular, is understood and interpreted, and how ideology works within and behind it' (115). However, Goatly considers that his approach seems 'more valid in terms of the conclusions about the construction and reproduction of ideologies' (153) in novels for children. This is because they may 'be less complex in terms of propositional attitude, and the degree of ironic distance one can expect the reader to detect' (152). While this project similarly found that the *Harry Potter* series is 'fundamentally' speciesist (149), it is suggested that a more delicate analysis of specific instances of representation can enable a more nuanced reading of the text. For example, in his findings on the representation of food, Goatly concluded that the food served at Hogwarts is 'quintessentially English' (141). This is so, but as will be seen in chapter eight, 'Nonhuman Animals as Food', the representation of food in the series works on a number of levels. For instance, it not only constructs characters and atmosphere but also, through the narrative and the grammar, premises these constructs on a *naturalized* assumption of the value of flesh as food.

In his conclusion on the representation of nonhuman animals, Goatly finds that:

in the general pattern of representation, animals are used and exploited (owls), regarded as insignificant relative to humans (cats) or, negatively, as inferior (pigs) and as a destructive or violent threat (rats, dogs). (2004: 126)

Again, the conclusions regarding the representation of owls, that they are ‘used and exploited’, can be seen to parallel the findings in chapters nine and ten, to some extent, with regard to Hedwig, Harry Potter’s owl. Though, as will be seen, close analysis of specific representations of the Hedwig/Harry Potter relationship allows for a greater understanding of how the text *normalizes* ‘desirable’ nonhuman/human animal relationships as those that, as a matter of necessity, maintain an ‘appropriate’ distance between the human and other animals.

Adult writers of children’s literature may be unaware of the latent ideologies within their texts or they may seek to address their child readers’ perceived lack of ‘ironic competence’ (Goatly, 2004: 153). In either case, children’s literature is a vital site of concern for those interested in how cultural norms regarding nonhuman/human relationships are constructed, maintained and perpetuated. As such, Goatly’s approach is considered a productive way of initially identifying instances of nonhuman animal representations in extended texts that demand a closer inspection.

Unfortunately, rather than considering their moral status, of the few other articles that do deal with the representation of nonhuman animals within the series, the majority are wholly concerned with the more fantastic beasts and discussions of their mythical antecedence. Huey (2005) explores ‘the significance behind the symbolism’ of Rowling’s use of the numerous mythical creatures in the series and does not address the presence of any ‘ordinary animal’ (66). While the presence of these mythical creatures and their ‘classical allusions’, Huey contends, allies the *Harry Potter* series firmly with the

‘elegant literature’ discussed by Bulfinch in his nineteenth century mythology (65), Simons (2002), in general, notes that such representations depend ‘on a common language of interpretation’ to make meaning and that ‘the significance of this [symbolic] presence is both explained and limited by a language predicated on the binary opposition of the terms human and non-human’ (115). Huey, it would seem, is unconcerned with the limiting factor of such representations. In this article basilisks, centaurs, hippogriffs, unicorns and others are discussed as generic categories rather than as individual characters. Their presence in the narrative is seen by Huey principally as a vehicle to ‘transmute’ fans of the series into ‘schooled readers’ who ‘can now understand and appreciate “the elegant literature of our own language” (Bulfinch v)’ (Huey, 2005: 83). This determinedly humanist interpretation of the presence of nonhuman animals within the series sees them functioning as the singular ‘animal’ whose purpose is not only to maintain the borders between the human and nonhuman but also as a conscious reinforcement of those categories and divisions.

Although Gibbons (2005) does begin by acknowledging that some nonhuman characters within the series ‘such as Buckbeak the hippogriff, Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback, and Fluffy the three-headed guard dog become characters in their own right’, because their presence is limited to ‘the course of one novel’, she states that their importance to the narrative is not considered (85). The focus of the article, while not denying Fawkes agency within the series, is the myth of the phoenix. The historical commodification of this myth, of which the *Harry Potter* series partakes, Gibbons argues, has led to the myth’s survival and she concludes by stating that ‘[m]ythology needs commodity and we,

as scholars, readers, and humans, need mythology' (102). Gibbons is silent on the nature of this 'need', perhaps purposely leaving to individual readers the specifics of what myths are and what they can offer them in order to avoid any strict definitions. For as Levi-Strauss (1963) observes:

Myths are still widely interpreted in conflicting ways: as collective dreams, as the outcome of a kind of esthetic play, or as the basis of ritual. Mythological figures are considered as personified abstractions, divinized heroes, or fallen gods. Whatever the hypothesis, the choice amounts to reducing mythology either to idle play or to a crude kind of philosophic speculation. (n.p.)

Levi-Strauss goes on to caution that '[w]hatever the situation, a clever dialectic will always find a way to pretend that a meaning has been found'. Myths and mythical interpretations, therefore, can be seen as another way of interpreting texts to support a proposed ideology. In this case, both Gibbon and Huey are interpreting the fantastic creatures within the series through a humanist lens that subordinates their presence to that of the human characters in ways that attempt to educate readers to the historical *rightness* of this position. This way of reading the text signals a reinforcing of the boundaries between human and nonhuman that is not only desirable but also *natural*.

While the first edition of *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter* (2003) made only passing references to nonhuman animals, Peter Dendle's chapter 'Monsters, Creatures, and Pets at Hogwarts: Animal Stewardship in the World of Harry Potter' in the 2009 second edition demonstrates the growth of interest in the representation of nonhuman animals in literary texts. In apparent contrast to Gibbon and Huey, Dendle considers that '[t]he line between human and animal, or indeed between animate and inanimate, is fluid throughout the series' (163). Dendle is also of the opinion that 'the moral problem of

animal suffering and animal stewardship' is as 'equally present' within the narrative as is the 'melodramatic battle between good and evil' (173) and that '[t]he moral relationship of human with lesser creatures is a recurring theme' (164). The attitude towards nonhuman animals in this magical world, Dendle observes, is 'much like our own Muggle world attitude, [...] riddled with ambiguity and hypocrisy' (166). While Dendle does not go into great detail concerning these ambiguities and hypocrisies in the text he does reflect on how they are textually represented. How the treatment of other than humans is described, Dendle notes, presents 'an uncomfortable obstacle Rowling must navigate as she crafts humorous scenes that often involve the exploitation and sometimes pain of lesser creatures'. Dendle considers that 'the series as a whole creates an ambivalent moral space in which uncomfortable questions are raised' with regard to the rights of nonhuman animals (164).

The repeated reference by Dendle to other than humans within the narrative as 'lesser creatures' (164, 166, 167) appears to indicate that he adopts a humanist welfare position to nonhuman animals as opposed to a nonhuman animal rights position. His analysis of the character of Hagrid further strengthens this view, as will be discussed in Part III. In spite of the fact that Dendle does not attempt to address many of the apparent contradictions in character representations, for example, the meat eating, hide wearing, 'animal lover' Hagrid, he does raise a number of important questions not only with regard to the negative treatment of nonhuman others by characters within the story but also the literary devices used by Rowling to render those actions morally acceptable when performed by 'good' characters. Dendle concludes by stating that:

[t]he moral contours of the uneasy relationship between ‘wizards’ and subordinate creatures are neither simple nor consistent, and in this way – whether Rowling intended it or not – they can serve readers as abstract thought experiments whose intuitions can then, perhaps, be applied variously to the very real problems and challenges of real world monsters, creatures, and pets. (2008: 173)

While offering many insights into the text, ultimately Dendle’s analysis is limited by its humanist acceptance of ‘the natural order of things’ that not only allows for other than humans to be unproblematically referred to as ‘lesser’ or ‘subordinate’ but also does not see the consumption of nonhuman animals nor the wearing of their skins as a moral issue worthy of discussion.

Morris (2009), in his article ‘Middle Earth, Narnia, Hogwarts, and Animals: A Review of the Treatment of Nonhuman Animals and Other Sentient Beings in Christian-Based Fantasy Fiction’, like Dendle, discusses how those other than human are treated in the series. While Dendle draws direct parallels between the contradictions evident in the series and contemporary society, Morris takes a dimmer view and considers that the world of *Harry Potter* ‘does not even attain the inconsistent position Western society holds toward iconic or endangered species, or the Western tendency towards eating less flesh’ (354). Morris writes from a Christian animal liberationist perspective and is concerned with how popular literature can impede or encourage the view ‘that animals should be regarded as beings in their own right and not simply instruments for human use’ (345). Little distinction is drawn by Morris between Voldemort’s use of the dark arts to enslave house elves and humans and the domination and enslavement of nonhuman animals through the use of their body parts for potion ingredients by ‘good’ characters as

‘[t]he use of animal parts to produce magical effects can be compared with vivisection in our own world’ (347).

While, as previously stated, Dendle (2009) considers that ‘the series as a whole creates an ambivalent moral space in which uncomfortable questions are raised’ with regard to the rights of nonhuman animals (164), Morris takes an almost diametrically opposite view as he considers that:

J. K. Rowling has created an overly simplistic world, morally and ethically, in which beasts both magical and mundane have very limited intrinsic value and are enslaved and reduced to sources of food, entertainment, and exploitation for potion ingredients (2009: 348).

Morris’ analysis is conducted via a comparison of the series with the fantasy worlds of J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth and C. S. Lewis’ Narnia. He concludes that both these worlds, more particularly Middle Earth, offer a far more ‘respectful treatment of animals’ than the *Harry Potter* series, going so far as to say that the characters in the *Harry Potter* series ‘appear to belong to an earlier era when animals and some human members of society were not so well respected’ (354). Coming from a liberationist ideology allows Morris to consider many aspects of the narrative that, because of their assumed *naturalness*, pass other commentators by unseen and unquestioned, such as the use of nonhuman animals for food, clothing and potion ingredients. Significantly, Morris does not investigate the language use that not only allows but also actively encourages most readers to accept as unproblematic attitudes towards nonhuman others that ‘appear to belong to an earlier era’. Nor does he fully explore the issue of how the underlying

humanist semiotics not only positions the nonhumans within the narrative but also the implications of that representation for real-world nonhuman animals.

Jose Rodolfo Da Silva (2009) attempts 'to prove that [the representations of nonhuman animals within the *Harry Potter* series] outline posthumanist conceptions of animality and, consequently, of humanity' (6). Da Silva adopts a philosophical framework to identify and analyse '*literary moments* crucial to the narrative' (6). He concludes that the books in the series 'propose many kinds of animal interactions' that encourage 'exercising the faculty of sympathy and compassion' (82). According to Da Silva 'posthumanist wizards and witches know that the only transcendental sense that still preserves truth and freedom is the infinity of the responsibility for the Other' (83). While Da Silva makes a number of interesting points, his contention that there exists a 'truth' that will be revealed to 'enable true posthumanist ethics' (67) is worrying. This thesis is premised on an understanding, not that there is no such thing as 'truth', but that there is no ultimate 'truth' that can reveal 'true posthumanist ethics'. Rather, following Wolfe's observation that, if the concept of 'the human' is a construct and further that 'if "the human" is made, ... then it can be made not just differently but more justly' (2006: 1), it is also understood that what constitutes 'just' is also subject to change at different points of historical time.

It is considered that by adopting a Critical Animal Studies approach to examine the *Harry Potter* series not only can strategies that centralize the *current* representation of nonhuman animals be demonstrated but also a conceptual gap in existing scholarship

associated with the extremely popular and influential series can be filled. For by examining the language use in this phenomenally popular series, from a nonhuman animal centred focus, it is possible to come to an understanding of a number of assumptions within the *Harry Potter* series that speak to the “desirable” forms’ (Stephens, 1992a: 3) that young readers ‘need to be taught’ (Nodelman, 2008: 5) concerning our moral obligations to nonhuman animals. Particularly, how such representations are contributing to the creation of, and the maintenance of, contemporary habits of mind that *naturalize* certain relationships, attitudes and treatments of nonhuman animals that are constructed as ‘just’ and at this point in time.

Chapter Five: Tools of Analysis

The first rule of analysis, then, is that **mere identification of features has no function.** (Stephens, 1992: 17) (emphasis in the original)

Introduction

This thesis is a response to Shapiro and Copeland's (2005) call for the development of 'a critical theory of animal issues in fiction' (343) and the challenge of creating 'new' habits of mind that make it possible to view the singular exploitable 'animal' as individuals in their own right. As with a feminist literary critique that calls for an 'altered reading attentiveness' (Evans, 1992: 151) to actively consider the representation of women in texts, by developing ways of reading that encourage an 'altered reading attentiveness' to the representations of nonhuman animals as a *natural* part of literary studies, we can come to appreciate ways in which texts contribute to the formation of our habits of mind.

Understandings of how cultural practices involving nonhuman animals are being represented in cultural artifacts, in this case texts designated as children's literature, is important, for as Stibbe (2001) notes, '[h]ow animals are socially constructed influences how they are treated by human society' (147). By adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis approach that includes aspects of narrative theory to examine contemporary children's literature, it is possible to explore the ways in which both narrative and grammar often work to represent many cultural practices associated with nonhuman animals as *natural*. The *naturalized* representations of these cultural practices help to interpellate children into relationships with nonhuman animals that perpetuate oppression and exploitation. The recognition of a link between representation and cultural practice is an essential

starting point for change with Baker considering that '*any effective cultural strategies on behalf of animals must be based on an understanding of contemporary cultural practice*' (2001a: 5) (original emphasis). The object of the exercise, therefore, is not to impose one 'right' way of reading, and evaluating, the focus texts. Rather, it is to demonstrate analytical methods that are capable of making a valuable contribution to the development of ways of actively reading the presence of nonhuman animals *into* literary texts. These analytical methods are not meant to be reductive, imposing limits on how any text 'should' be read. Indeed, the methodology has been chosen precisely because of its ability not only to reveal naturalized/embedded discourses, particularly those *currently active* within contemporary texts, but also its capacity to create spaces in which to consider how these discourses relate to social practices beyond the text. This then allows for an informed evaluation of these discourses along with the historical and social contexts that produce them.

A pro-nonhuman animal perspective in literature is capable of contributing to an awareness of how discourses work to help construct and maintain our current, too often oppressive, relationships with nonhuman animals, not only those evident in children's literature but also within texts in general. Such an approach to texts ideally leads to an acceptance that there exists the potential for a change in these relationships, for as Roger Fowler (1981) observes, through 'careful analytical interrogation of the ideological categories, and the roles and institutions and so on, through which society constitutes and maintains itself and the consciousness of its members' it becomes apparent that '[a]ll knowledge, all objects, are constructs' and that critical analysis allows for an

interrogation of ‘the processes of construction and, acknowledging the artificial quality of the categories concerned, offers the possibility that we might profitably conceive the world in some alternate way’ (25).

To that end, this chapter suggests practical strategies that facilitate the examination of ‘reductive, disrespectful ways of presenting nonhuman animals’ along with ‘the degree to which the author presents the animal “in itself,” both as an experiencing individual and as a species-typical way of living in the world’ (Shapiro and Copeland, 2005: 345). Such strategies also enable an analysis of ‘human-animal relationships in the work at hand’ (345). The chapter begins by noting the acknowledged role of the language of representation in efforts to effect social change. It then discusses the suitability of adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach by analysts who seek to expose social abuse of power and inequality along with key terms. Following this, there is an outline of practical methods of analysis, proposed by Fairclough (1996), that this thesis draws upon. How this approach to text and methods of analysis are relevant to a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts is then explored. Finally, how this approach can effectively work with aspects of narrative theory, put forward by Stephens (1992a, 1992b, 2005) and Hollindale (1988), in the examination of children’s literature is then examined.

Language and Social Change

Fudge contends that ‘we lack a language at present in which we can think about and represent animals to ourselves *as animals*, in ways that are not metaphorical’ (emphasis in original) (2002a: 11). By acknowledging the current ‘frequently cruel’ contradictions

in our present relationships with nonhuman animals, Fudge argues, there is the possibility of ‘creating a new language’ (12):

The language will not precede the lived relation, a renewed acquaintance with the lived relation will, I hope, help us to create another language. (12)

However, as Dunayer (2001) points out, it is largely through language that the present ‘lived relations’ are sustained. Consequently, it is through an examination of the language of nonhuman animal representation that the textual processes that *naturalize* these ‘frequently cruel’ contradictions are revealed. For as Baker observes, a nonhuman animal can ‘*only* be considered, and understood, through its representations’ as there is ‘no unmediated access to the “real” animal’ (emphasis in original) (2001a: xvi).

Social reformers have long recognized that language shapes and is shaped by a given society and, in attempts to change social practices that are seen as oppressive or discriminatory, they therefore actively seek to draw attention to the ideological dimension of language use and, in particular, to contest classificatory systems. As Grey (2002) notes, ‘[s]ocial movements are seen to raise cultural challenges to the dominant language, to the codes that organise information and shape social practices’ (13). Feminist studies, such as Dale Spender’s *Man Made Language* (1980), highlight the importance feminists have long placed on the analysis of language and discourse practices to expose embedded sexist ideology, as do similar studies concerned with the rights of other groups, such as those who have been marginalized due to their race or sexuality. More recently, environmentalists have called for the development of eco-criticism, a form of literary criticism that has an ecological perspective. Such approaches accept that by studying language use it is not only possible to interrogate cultural attitudes and assumptions but

also that, by drawing attention to inconsistencies and contradictions in existing power relations, there is the possibility of contributing to social change.

Unfortunately, while the presence of nonhuman animals in literary fiction has historically not gone unremarked, the language of their representation has rarely been the focus of study. This is a fact evidenced by Joan Dunayer's 2001 *Animal Equality: Language and Liberation* being hailed as '[t]he first book on language and non-human oppression' (inside front cover flap). Dunayer states that:

Standard English usage supplies these lies [regarding our treatment of nonhuman animals] in abundance. Linguistically the lies take many forms, from euphemism to false definition. We lie with our word choices. We lie with our syntax. We even lie with our punctuation. (1)

The 'lies' that Dunayer deplores, that is, the current naturalized dominant discourses around ways of representing nonhuman animals in spoken and written texts, reflect the ideological assumptions of our culture. Such ideological assumptions are comprised of both the explicit and the unexamined beliefs of the producer of a text within a specific cultural framework. A close examination of linguistic usage, Dunayer considers, also allows for a close examination of these ideological assumptions. A Critical Discourse Analysis approach to texts facilitates the examination of both linguistic usage and ideological assumptions.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to language and discourse that draws on poststructuralist discourse theory and critical linguistics. Leaders in the field, such as Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak, along with others, focus on how

social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts within a social context. Van Dijk (2001) traces some of the principles of CDA to ‘the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second world War’, but notes that ‘[i]ts current focus on language and discourse was initiated with the “critical linguistics” that emerged (mostly in the UK and Australia) at the end of the 1970s’ (352). Van Dijk describes CDA as focusing primarily ‘on *social problems* and political issues, rather than on current paradigms and fashions’, as ‘[r]ather than merely *describe* discourse structures, it tries to *explain* them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure’. Further, Van Dijk adds that, ‘[m]ore specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society’ (353) (emphasis in original). From being considered one of the ‘more marginal research traditions’ in 2001 (Van Dijk, 353), ten years later, Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) observe that CDA ‘has become a well-established field in the social sciences’ (357). They go on to cite ‘an upsurge of critical interest in language in contemporary society’ as a reason for this growth of CDA as a field (359).

Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) note that the term ‘discourse’ is used in different ways within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis: as an ‘analytical category’, the alternative term for ‘semiosis’; and as ‘a category for identifying particular ways of representing some aspect of social life’ (357). Discourse is to be seen as ‘a form of social practice’ (357) and so also ‘socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped’ (358) (emphasis in original). This constitutive aspect of discourse sees it not only as helping ‘to

sustain and reproduce the social status quo’, but also able to contribute ‘to transforming it’ (358). Therefore, discourse is seen as ‘socially influential’ as ‘in language, we do not simply name things but conceptualize things. Thus discursive practices may have major ideological effects’ (358).

While tracing the use of the term ‘Critical’ from ‘ancient Greece, through the Enlightenment philosophers to the present day’ (358), Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) also link the term more specifically to the critical theory of Marxism and the Frankfurt School, ‘in which critique is the mechanism for both explaining social phenomena and for changing them’, with ‘this emancipatory agenda’ having ‘important implications for CDA as a scientific practice’ (358). Best (2009) specifically aligns a Critical Animal Studies with the aims of the Frankfurt School, seeing Critical Animal Studies, ‘[l]ike the Frankfurt School’ as multidisciplinary, synthesizing ‘social theory, politics *and* the critique of capitalist domination in a revolutionary project to transform society and psychology alike’ (n.p.) (emphasis in original).

Adopting a CDA approach to texts allows analysts to examine ‘opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language’ (Wodak & Meyer, 2009: 10). For as Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) state:

CDA sees itself not as a dispassionate and objective social science, but as engaged and committed; a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships. What is distinctive about CDA compared with other approaches to research is that without compromising its scientific objectivity and rigour, it openly and explicitly positions itself on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups. (358)

However, though the aims underlying the reason for undertaking text analysis utilizing CDA are clear, the methodology is less so as ‘CDA does not begin with a fixed theoretical and methodological stance’ (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011: 358). Indeed, as van Dijk (2001) notes, ‘[s]ince CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework’ (353). Though van Dijk goes on to observe that because of the ‘common perspective and general aims of CDA’ the ‘overall conceptual and theoretical frameworks’ employed by CDA analysts ‘are closely related’ (353). The choice of methodology is invariably a response to the research topic for ‘the CDA research process begins with a research topic’ (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011: 358). There is, however, one element that is necessarily common to any of the ‘various linguistic analytic techniques and theories’ that an analyst may employ when undertaking CDA and that is ‘some form of close textual (and/or multi-modal) analysis’ (359).

To facilitate this close textual analysis, Fairclough (1992) proposes a three-dimensional framework for the analysis of discourse that incorporates texts, discursive practice, and social practice. Within this framework Fairclough defines discourse as ‘a form of social practice’ which ‘implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation’ (63).

One implication of this is that discourses have a dialectical relationship with social structures, as social structures are ‘both a condition for, and an effect of’ social practice (Fairclough, 1992: 64). There are three distinguishable aspects of the constructive effects of discourse, Fairclough adds, namely the construction of ‘social identities’ or ‘subject positions’, ‘social relationships between people’ and ‘the construction of systems of knowledge and beliefs’ (64). Fairclough refers to these three aspects as being similar to, though not the same as, Halliday’s categories of functions: textual, interpersonal and ideational.

Halliday’s (2004) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach to textual analysis, because it provides effective methods of analysis for demonstrating how power relations and ideologies are reflected in patterns of language use, is one of the main methods of analysis used in this thesis when considering Fairclough’s first dimension of discourse, discourse-as-text. Discourse-as-text looks at linguistic features and organization within discourses. Fairclough (1992) arranges these under four headings: ‘vocabulary’, ‘grammar’, ‘cohesion’ and ‘text structure’ (75) which examine lexical choice and patterns, including metaphors; grammar use, including transitivity and modality; cohesion, including conjunctions and schemata; and how the text is structured.

An examination of discourse-as-text looks at choices made at the sentence level and includes determining who or what appear as the grammatical subject and are, therefore, foregrounded. As Huckin observes, ‘[i]n choosing what to put in the topic position, writers create a perspective, or slant, that influences a reader’s perception’ (nd: npn).

Related to foregrounding of information is backgrounding, where concepts/characters are not given any textual prominence. Huckin refers to omission as '[t]he ultimate form of backgrounding' and considers that '[o]mission is often the most potent aspect of textualization, because if the writer does not mention something, it often does not even enter the reader's mind and thus is not subjected to his or her scrutiny'. A necessary task for a Critical Animal Studies approach to literary criticism is to make visible these omissions that relate to nonhuman animals for, as Huckin states, '[i]t is difficult to raise questions about something that is not even there' (nd: npn).

Sentence structure also indicates tenor. Tenor speaks to the social roles, relationships and status of participants: 'the relationships between the speaker and hearer (or, of course, writer and reader)' (Butt et al, 2000: 5). In literary texts, tenor identifies aspects of the author, or implied author, as well as the implied reader. The implied author is revealed through evidence of attitudinal positioning, or ideology. The narrative strategies that signal attitudinal positioning include 'word choice, humour, and the manner in which characters are introduced' (Herman, & Vervaeck, 2001: 17). The implied reader, a role implicit in the text (Stephens, 1992a), is the reader who is constructed by the text and who can be identified by an examination of both grammatical structure and knowledge content.

Tenor also relates to character roles within the text, 'who is doing what to whom?' (Huckin, nd: npn). For a Critical Animal Studies approach to literary criticism, an interrogation of the ideologies evident in the construction of the implied author and the

implied reader is equally important as the question of whether or not nonhuman animals are represented as possessing agency or if they are seen as passive recipients of actions. Such an examination is also able to point to presuppositions. Huckin notes that '[p]resuppositions are notoriously manipulative because they are difficult to challenge: Many readers are reluctant to question statements that the author appears to be taking for granted' (nd: npn). Additionally, of interest is the notion of connotation. That is the additional meanings that words or phrases carry due to either context or usage. Often metaphors or figures of speech related to nonhuman animals are the carriers of connotations. Connotations depend on the recognition by the reader of intertextual references and, therefore, can be seen as carriers of culture. Fairclough (1992) makes the point that '[w]hen we signify things through one metaphor rather than another, we are constructing our reality in one way rather than another. Metaphors structure the way we think and the way we act, and our systems of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way' (194). This is achieved, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, 'through a coherent network of entailments that highlight some features of reality and hide others' (55). Goatly (2006) considers that an 'awareness of these latent ideologies' makes it possible to appreciate 'how they may be structuring and influencing our attitudes and behavior toward animals and our fellow humans' (16).

Fairclough's second dimension, discourse-as-discursive-practice, situates texts within their sociocultural context by considering 'three main headings': 'speech acts', 'coherence' and 'intertextuality' (1992: 75). Fairclough extends the concept of intertextuality to include an examination of 'any assumptions of ideology' (2003: 192),

stating that 'texts inevitably make assumptions. What is "said" in a text is "said" against a background of what is "unsaid", but taken as given' (40). The difference between intertextuality and assumptions, Fairclough observes, is that assumptions 'are not generally attributable to specific texts. It is a matter rather of a relation between this text and what has been said or written or thought elsewhere, with the "elsewhere" left vague' (40). Examining this idea of a vague 'elsewhere', together with the notion of naturalized ideologies, is an important consideration for a literary criticism with a Critical Animal Studies focus, for as Fairclough points out, '[t]he ideologies embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalised, and achieve the status of "common sense"'(87).

Fairclough (1995) considers 'genre' as an aspect of intertextuality (2). Huckin (nd) notes that, rather than first beginning with a word-by-word analysis, readers 'usually begin by recognizing that the text belongs to a certain genre (text type) that manifests a characteristic set of formal features serving a characteristic purpose'. And it is through genre, Hukin considers, that 'textual manipulators have their most powerful effect' (npg).

Eggins (2004) notes that 'contextual coherence' is an indication of genre and observes that 'the systemic functional interpretation of genre [is] the "cultural purpose" of texts' (54). For, as Stephens (1992b) points out, when 'making a generic choice an author also implicitly makes an ideological choice, since genres in one way or another are connected to social practices' (58). Once the schematic structure of a genre has been identified, Eggins (2004) positions 'the step of relating stages of schematic structure to their linguistic realizations' as 'the central analytical procedure in generic analysis'. For '[t]he

systematic hook-up we're suggesting here between dimensions of context and types of meaning in language is fundamental to the functional approach to language' (65).

Representation of characters and functions 'may have generic implications – that is, they declare themselves typical manifestations of that character function (hero or villain, say) in the genre' (Stephens, 1992b: 56). Stephens cites the example of Luke Skywalker, 'a nondescript youth of apparently lowly origin who emerges as the true hero with special skills and powers', as possessing 'the typical attributes of the space fantasy version of a folktale hero' (56). The description of these attributes can, of course, be equally applied to the character of Harry Potter and, therefore, following Stephens, such 'heroic' fantasies as the *Harry Potter* series can be seen to sustain 'a hierarchical view of society and power structures' (58). As observed elsewhere, the *Harry Potter* series incorporates 'a vast number of genres' (Alton, 2009: 199) and so, therefore, 'implicitly makes [a vast number of] ideological choice[s]' (Stephens, 1992b: 58), some of which, that relate to nonhuman animals, particularly as they are represented as either 'pet' or food, are examined by this project.

From a Critical Animal Studies perspective, genre analysis is important for, as Eggins (2004) observes, '[g]enre theory is about bringing [the] unconscious cultural knowledge to consciousness by describing how we use language to do things, and reflecting critically on just what our cultural life involves' (84). Huckin considers that the level of conformity to a given genre that a text demonstrates 'often allows the analyst to see why certain kinds of statements appear in the text and how they might serve the purposes of the text-

producer, as encoded in that genre. It can also help the analyst imagine what has been left out – what could have been said, but was not’ (nbn).

As observed in previous chapters, by examining how nonhuman animals have been viewed historically it is possible to understand the historical genesis of much of the current discourse around our relationships with animal others. This in turn allows for an appreciation of the ways in which certain relationships with, attitudes to and treatment of nonhuman animals have become *naturalized* within contemporary cultural practices. And just as an historical cultural understanding of the representation of animal others is considered an important component of an effective nonhuman animal approach to literary texts, so too is an historical literary understanding. As Serpell (1999) observes, ‘[t]he overwhelming majority of fairytales, fantasies, fables, story-books, and other literary genres associated with children are either about animals or feature animals as important central characters’ (87). Many of these genres have long histories that span vast time frames which allows their generic structures and representation of animal others to become deeply embedded within western cultures. Therefore, children’s literature, as a medium ‘through which society constitutes and maintains itself and the consciousness of its members’ deserves ‘careful analytical interrogation of the ideological categories and the roles and institutions and so on’ (Fowler, 1981:25) that are represented in these texts that help to shape our relationships with, attitudes to and treatment of nonhuman animals.

Fairclough (1992) defines genre as:

a relatively stable set of conventions that is associated with, and partly enacts, a socially ratified type of activity, such as an informal chat, buying goods in a

shop, a job interview, a television documentary, a poem, or a scientific article.
(126)

Employing terms, such as 'genre', to refer to major discourse types has a number of benefits, Fairclough (1992) maintains. One of these benefits is that it:

enable[s] us to pick out in our analyses major differences of type between the elements of orders of discourse which we might otherwise lose sight of, and in so doing make clear the sense in which discursive practice is constrained by conventions. (124)

Another advantage of 'an analytical framework with a small number of fairly well-differentiated categories' (124), such as genre, is its ease of use. Importantly for this project, Fairclough also observes that some of these categories, including genre, 'are widely used by social scientists in, for example, the analysis of popular culture'. Therefore, using these categories in discourse analysis 'helps to make its value as a method more immediately obvious to social scientist' (124-125). As a result, a Critical Animal Studies that adopts this approach to texts is able to employ terms that are already familiar to those working across a number of areas of cultural research.

Along with the benefit of familiarity, the importance of genre analysis is highlighted by Kress (1988) when he observes that:

Every genre positions those who participate in a text of that kind: as interviewer or interviewee, as listener or storyteller, as a reader or a writer, as a person interested in political matters, as someone to be instructed or as someone who instructs; each of these positionings implies different possibilities for response and for action. Each written text provides a 'reading position' for readers, a position constructed by the writer for the 'ideal reader' of the text. (Kress, 1988: 107)

Miller (1984) also argues that genres teach ‘not just patterns and forms’, but also, ‘more importantly’, that they help to teach actions and interactions appropriate for that genre:

As a recurrent, significant action, a genre embodies an aspect of cultural rationality. For the critic, genres can serve both as an index to cultural patterns and as a tool for exploring the achievements of particular speakers and writers; for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community. (165)

As Chandler (1997) notes, such a view allows for the argument that ‘particular genres develop, frame and legitimate particular concerns, questions and pleasures’ (5). Genres, then, can be seen as both reflecting and shaping cultural mores. And, as such, can also be seen as embodying ‘the crucial ideological concerns of the time in which they are popular’ (Fiske, in Chandler, 4), whether the author is aware of doing so or not. Furthermore genres can be seen as not only able to ‘act’, by reflecting and shaping cultural mores, but also able to be ‘acted upon’, Neale’s (2000) observations of genre in film being equally relevant when speaking of literature:

Genres do not consist solely of films. They consist also of specific systems of expectation and hypothesis which spectators bring with them to the cinema and which interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process. These systems provide spectators with means of recognition and understanding. They help render individual films, and elements within them, intelligible and, therefore explicable. (31)

Knowing generic forms allows consumers to anticipate both action and plot. As Neale notes, ‘[i]nasmuch as this is the case, these systems of expectation and hypothesis involve a knowledge of, indeed they partly embody, various regimes of verisimilitude – various systems and forms of plausibility, motivation and belief’ (31). Culler (2002) suggests verisimilitude can be established through five types of *vraisemblance*, or likelihood, which is the basis of intertextuality (163):

First there is the socially given text, that which is taken as the 'real world'. Second, but in some cases difficult to distinguish from the first, is a general cultural text: shared knowledge which would be recognized by participants as part of culture and hence subject to correction or modification but which none the less serves as a kind of 'nature'. Third, there are the texts or conventions of a genre, a specifically literary and artificial *vraisemblance*. Fourth, comes what might be called the natural attitude to the artificial, where the text explicitly cites and exposes *vraisemblance* the third kind so as to reinforce its own authority. And finally, there is the complex *vraisemblance* of specific intertextualities, where one work takes another as its basis or point of departure and must be assimilated in relation to it. At each level there are ways in which the artifice of forms is motivated or justified by being given a meaning. (2002: 164)

Establishing what is to constitute the most plausible or most likely motivations or beliefs within a specific genre can result in 'a genre in any medium [being] seen as embodying certain values and ideological assumptions' (Chandler, 1997: 4). Indeed, Tudor (1974) considers that 'a genre [...] defines a moral and social world' (180). The importance of notions of genre for any examination of children's literature from a nonhuman animal centred perspective becomes obvious when considering Stephens (1992a) observation that '[a]n awareness of a text's genre creates certain expectations in readers and offers conventions for interpretation' (52).

Fairclough's third dimension, discourse-as-social-practice, is primarily concerned with ideology and the notion of hegemony, that is, rather than through coercion, power is achieved and maintained through the manufacture of consent.

Van Dijk (nd) notes that 'there are many definitions and approaches to ideology' (7). In children's literature, Sarland (2005) observes, '[a]t the heart of any consideration of ideology will be a consideration of moral purpose and didacticism' (31), which echoes van Dijk's 'general working definition of ideology' that 'Ideologies are the fundamental

beliefs of a group and its members' (6-7). This is the definition of 'ideology' that this thesis adopts and agrees with van Dijk that:

We learn most of our ideological ideas by reading and listening to other group members, beginning with our parents and peers. Later we 'learn' ideologies by watching television, reading text books at school, advertising, the newspaper, [and] novels ...'. (van Dijk, nd: 9)

As can be seen, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lends itself readily to projects that seek to facilitate social change through an interrogation of ideologies present in texts. This is because CDA not only allows for investigations into the role of discourse in regulating and normalizing social practice but also, implicit in adopting this approach, is the examination of language and power. As Van Dijk (2001: 352) observes:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

However, as Stibbe notes, 'with rare exceptions ... the role of discourse in the domination by humans of other species has been almost completely ignored' (2001: 146). In *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation*, Simons states that he has developed 'hostile positions to theoretical discourse of a poststructuralist nature' seeing 'such a discourse [as], in fact, a fifth column for oppressiveness' (2002: 70). This hostility is generated due to 'the great majority of cultural theories with which [Simons is] attempting a generalized critical engagement [being] underpinned by a Marxist or Marxian view of the world' (69-70). Such a view, Simons believes, requires academics who espouse 'these theories to keep the world at a distance' in order to avoid

acknowledging that ‘millions of people were killed as a result of putting that theory into practice’ so that they can maintain their belief in ‘a century of theory-making’ (70).

While Marxism informs the social theories that underpin Fairclough’s framework for Critical Discourse Analysis, it is not considered necessary to adopt a Marxist polemic in order to understand that discourse is ‘a form of social practice’ which ‘implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation’ (Fairclough, 1992: 63). Nor is it seen as a particularly Marxist approach to consider how language use helps to make the world and what that made-world says about the culture that produces it. As an approach, rather than a method of analysis, CDA, by necessity, accommodates a variety of methods. The point of adopting a CDA approach is that these methods of analysis are not carried out for their own sake as a theoretical exercise. Rather, at the heart of CDA there is always a concern with:

radical changes that are taking place in contemporary social life, and with how discourse figures within processes of change, and with shifts in the relationship between semiosis and other social elements within networks of practices. (Fairclough, 2001: 1)

As there is no caveat on how these ‘radical changes’ are to be interpreted, CDA is an appropriate approach to adopt in order to explore any such ‘changes that are taking place in contemporary social life’ with regard to nonhuman animals.

Stibbe (2001) also notes that a perceived limitation of CDA with regard to animal studies stems from its Marxist origin concentration on hegemony. Nonhuman animals cannot, via

language, show that they are willing participants in their own oppression, nor can they verbalize their acceptance of the dominant ideological construct of their role in the culture. As Stibbe points out, ‘in animals, the power is completely coercive’ (146). However, Stibbe also makes the point that this coercion depends on the consent of the ‘majority of the human population who, every time it buys animal products, explicitly or implicitly agrees to the way animals are treated’ (147). This consent is capable of being withheld and so ‘[i]t is in the manufacturing of consent within the human population for the oppression and exploitation of the animal population that language plays a role’ (147).

CDA and Literary Texts

A more practical concern for this thesis is whether or not CDA is an effective approach to adopt for literary text analysis. Stephens (2006) makes the observation that literary critics generally react sceptically to the application of linguistic analysis to literary texts and although a number of commentators have employed CDA to discuss the social construction of nonhuman animals, generally these studies have dealt with nonfiction texts (for example: Stibbe, 2001, Goatly, 2002). Pro-nonhuman animal perspectives in literature (for example: Armstrong, 2008; Kenyon-Jones, 2001; Malamud, 2003) generally employ traditional tools of literary criticism concerned primarily with stylistics, an exception, previously discussed, being Goatly’s critical analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (2004).

Stephens (1992a) makes the point that ‘[a] critical methodology able to examine the interrelated issues of the ideologies of texts and the subjectivity of readers will need to

incorporate both critical linguistics and aspects of modern theories of narrative' (5). Therefore, to be effective, any critical theory of nonhuman animal issues in fiction must include practical strategies for reading literary texts in conjunction with close textual analysis in order to recognize, what Hollindale (1988) terms, the three levels of ideology within such texts. Though possibly considered dated, both Hollindale's suggested questions and, more particularly, Stephens' (1992a, 1992b, 2005) theory of narrative provide the 'literary approach' component of the Critical Animal Studies approach to literature adopted by this project. At present there are many approaches to literary criticism currently active. The decision to employ Hollindale's approach to interrogating ideology in children's literature is an acknowledgement that his approach continues to be relevant and productive. John Stephens has a reputation of being amongst the foremost scholars of children's literature. His ongoing contributions to children's literature are extensive and provide a sound foundation for text analysis. Importantly, both approaches are also compatible with CDA and mirror its aims.

Hollindale and Ideology

In his influential article, 'Ideology and the Children's Book' (1988), Hollindale identifies three levels of ideology that can be present in texts. He first discusses how 'the explicit social, political or moral beliefs of the individual writer' (10) are sometimes foregrounded in an overt effort to influence readers. Such texts, Hollindale suggests, not only can result in reader resistance to the ideas being put forward, but also implicitly acknowledge that these ideas are not linked to 'normal' social practices, otherwise such foregrounding would not have been necessary. Much more persuasive, Hollindale argues are 'the individual writer's unexamined assumptions' (12). This is because these 'passive

ideologies' that are active within the world of the author, for '[a] large part of any book is written not by its author but by the world its author lives in' (15), present themselves as 'common sense' taken-for-granted ways of being in the world. Hollindale's third category addresses the ideology present within language itself, 'the words, the rule-systems, the codes which constitute the text' (14). This aspect of the language system, Hollindale argues, works in favour of dominant social groups by effectively restricting ways that challenges to the status quo can be articulated.

Hollindale (1988) proposes a list of eight questions as a way of training young readers to identify evidence of the presence of these categories in order to enable them to also identify how ideology works in the world beyond the book. This thesis considers a number of these questions that can be seen to have a bearing on the representation of the nonhuman/human animal relationships present in the *Harry Potter* series. Hollindale's second question is of particular interest to this project as it asks the reader to consider whether or not the conclusion of the story is 'imaginatively coherent, or does it depend on implicit assumptions which are at odds with the surface ideology?' Also to be considered is how the story ends; does a 'happy ending' effectively reinforce dominant ideologies and if so does that imply that an 'unhappy ending' offers some form of protest to those ideologies? (19).

Hollindale (1988) considers his final question the 'most important' as it concerns 'the question of omission and invisibility' (19). For this project too this category is most relevant as it deals with those who 'do not exist' in a story, in other words they are discursively absent, for although they may be present they have been 'downgraded'.

Hollindale notes that the downgrading of characters such as ‘foreigners, soldiers, girls, women and blacks’, and, from a nonhuman animal centred perspective, animal others, is ‘more serious’ than the downgrading of teachers and parents as such downgrading is not a sign of ‘mere story conventions, but curtailments of humanity embedded in an ideology’ (19-21). Hollindale’s purpose for asking such questions is ‘not to evaluate, discredit or applaud a writer’s ideology, but simply to see what it is’ (19). By considering Hollindale’s questions, a nonhuman animal centred perspective can achieve a similar outcome. That is, examine how ideology works to construct the ‘reality’ of nonhuman/human animal relationships within texts. Though in a Critical Animal Studies approach it is essential to also evaluate how these ideologies support *currently active* discursive practices around the representation of animal others that *naturalize* our present oppressive relationships, attitudes and treatment of them.

As Hollindale’s (1988) questions are concerned with revealing underlying ideologies they reflect the aims of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach adopted by this project. CDA involves observing how language acts upon, and is constrained and influenced by, its social context, what Halliday terms the ‘context of situation’, that is, the ‘systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organization of language on the other’ (1985:11). Although CDA is not usually an approach adopted to interrogate literary texts, there are theorists who propose methodologies based on CDA for the analysis of fiction. Most notably, in children’s literature, is the work of John Stephens. In 1992 Stephens regarded Hollindale’s paper as ‘the most comprehensive exploration of ideology and children’s literature so far

published' (1992a: 11). However, he also considered that there was further need for '[m]ore delicate analytical methods ... to extend the analysis further, particularly methods which enable both finer linguistic evaluations and more sophisticated narratological insights' (11). Stephens notes the similarity between the views of Fairclough and Hollindale; that language is the site of ideological struggle, while pointing out that Fairclough goes further as he considers that:

this is also a struggle *over* language, in the sense that language is not just a *site* of social struggle but also an object of struggle, since an important aspect of social power lies in the power to determine word meanings and legitimate communicative norms (1992a: 11).

Stephens' Theory of Narrative

Stephens' (1992a) concept of ideology reflects van Dijk's 'general working definition' that 'Ideologies are the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members' (nd: 6-7) when he states that '[i]deologies, of course, are not necessarily undesirable, and in the sense of a system of beliefs by which we make sense of the world, social life would be impossible without them' (8). Children's literature, Stephens observes, is a transmitter of ideologies being first and foremost didactic in nature in order to provide children with their 'basic education about the nature of the world, how to live in it, how to relate to other people, what to believe, what and how to think – in general, the intention is to render the world intelligible' (8).

To examine these ideologies Stephens suggests an approach to children's literature that encompasses both critical linguistics and aspects of narrative theory, including register, narrative voice, focalisation, the implied reader, genre, allusion and theme, 'which are

inextricably bound up with discourse' along with the cultural context of the text (1992a: 12). Stephens observes that 'discourse' is a term that is used by both linguists and narratologists, defining it linguistically as 'language organised into a *unified* stretch which is seen to have *sense* and *purpose*' (Stephens, 1992b: 15) (emphasis in original). Narratologically, Stephens defines discourse as 'the means by which a **story** and its **significance** are communicated' (16) (emphasis in original). As with Fairclough, who sees the benefit of 'an analytical framework with a small number of fairly well-differentiated categories' (1992: 124), Stephens considers that 'discourse' is a 'convenient term', with the two uses of the term sharing 'a focus on *how* something is being encoded' (1992a: 11) (emphasis in the original). As Stephens observes, while both senses of discourse are 'grounded in language', analysts must also consider 'the larger contexts of culture and genre of which the text is a part' (1992b: 16).

Stephens divides narratives into 'three interlocking components': the discourse, a story and a significance. A 'story' is 'the sense' of the narrative gained from 'an act of primary reading' and there is generally a broad consensus amongst readers at this primary level. 'Significance' is the result of a secondary reading and is more subjective and so meaning is more open to debate amongst readers (1992a: 12-13). In order to better appreciate 'the processes by which readers arrive at the thematic import of particular discursal representations of a story', Stephens recommends both a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approach so that readers are 'able to decode language in both small and large units, and be sensitive to how what can be called micro-discourses and macro-discourses interact'

(14). The link between a ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approach are aspects of text such as ‘theme and allusion’ (1992b: 17).

Stephens’ approach to text analysis positions a critical discourse analysis and elements of narrative theory within a cultural context and so is capable of making a valuable contribution to the development of ways of actively reading the presence of nonhuman animals *into* literary texts. Such an approach makes it possible to explore the ways in which both narrative and grammar often work to represent many cultural practices associated with nonhuman animals as *natural*. As these *naturalized* representations help to interpellate children into relationships with nonhuman animals that often perpetuate oppression and exploitation, this approach can be seen as an essential contribution to the creation of ‘a critical theory of animal issues in fiction’ (Shapiro and Copeland, 2005; 343).

Part III – Text Analysis

Chapter Six: Fables and Stereotypes

[O]ver and above any tendencies towards the conserving of culture, which may be endemic to children's literature, retellings of traditional story are especially apt not just to preserve culture but to reproduce conservative outcomes because of their shared assumptions about the functions of story and about what constitutes significant human experiences. In other words, if outcomes of other kinds are to be achieved, a reteller has to struggle with and overcome material which is always to some extent intractable because of its combination of strong, familiar story shapes with already legitimized values and ideas about the world. (Stephens and McCallum, 1998: X)

Before beginning the analysis of the focus text, it is useful to consider the fable generic form from both an historical and a socio-cultural perspective. Such an approach reveals not only the continuing all-pervasive nature of the fable in literature in general and children's literature in particular, but also the nature of the task ahead for those wishing to challenge and 'to struggle with and overcome material which is always to some extent intractable because of its combination of strong, familiar story shapes with already legitimized values and ideas about the world. (Stephens and McCallum, 1998: X). For as Lerer (2009) notes, '[Aesop's] fables have been accepted as the core of childhood reading and instruction since the time of Plato, and they have found their place in political and social satire and moral teaching throughout medieval, Renaissance, and modern culture' (35).

To aid in this challenge, Critical Animal Studies can benefit from strategies proposed by a feminist literary critique that calls for an 'altered reading attentiveness' (Evans, 1992: 151) with regard to gender issues. In the case of a nonhuman animal centred approach to texts the 'altered reading attentiveness' that needs to be encouraged must ask questions

about the representation of nonhuman animals as a *natural* part of text analysis in order to come to appreciate where and how our habits of thought are formed. Recognizing the power of fables to influence our understanding of fictive nonhuman animals that then has the potential to impact negatively on actual animal others is one positive way of acquiring this ‘altered reading attentiveness’.

This chapter first reflects upon the significant roles that representations of nonhuman animals have played since prehistory and their ongoing cultural significance, particularly in the fable form. It then discusses differing views of the value of the fable genre to nonhuman animal studies. It is argued that a consideration of the ongoing influence of the nonhuman animal fable genre on the discursive construction of animal others is important from a Critical Animal Studies perspective because of the continuing influence of fables on the portrayal of nonhuman animals in present day literary work, including the focus texts. Suggestions that seek to make the fable work for the benefit of nonhuman animals are also considered, as the strength of the stereotypical representations of literary nonhuman animals that fables perpetuate should not go unchallenged by Critical Animal Studies. The chapter concludes by observing that adopting a nonhuman animal centred approach to texts can facilitate an understanding of past practices that have led to *currently active* discursive representations of both the human and nonhuman and an appreciation that such representations are fluid and amenable to change.

Nonhuman Animals and Fables

Nonhuman animals have populated narrative genres that have helped to define the ‘moral and social world’ (Tudor, 1974: 180) for humans from our earliest beginnings. Evidence

from recorded history, along with the discovery in 1994 of possibly the oldest cave paintings in the world (Jack, 2009: npn), indicate that, for at least thirty-two thousand years, humans have felt compelled to document the animal others with whom they have shared their world. What role was played by the many hundreds of images of horses, bison, reindeer, lions, panthers, bears, owls, rhinoceroses, hyenas and others who make up the fourteen different species (Harrington, 1999: 18) depicted on the walls of the Chauvet cave in Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche, France is not fully known. However, the enigmatic presence of a small child's footprints in the clay floor of the cave, dated at between twenty to thirty thousand years old (18), strongly indicates that these representations of nonhuman animals fulfilled the role of illustrations that accompanied the stories, myths and legends told to educate the young. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to assume that these images had a central role in transmitting cultural understandings of these animal others down through the generations of the people who used this cave system. Whatever their function, their existence, along with the apparent care and skill with which they were executed, is a telling reminder that from prehistory, for humans, the representation of nonhuman animals has occupied a space of great cultural significance.

The beautiful illustrations by Arthur Rackham that accompany the 2003 Barnes and Noble edition of *Aesop's Fables* perhaps echo the experience of that long ago child in the Chauvet cave as both cave paintings and book can be seen as attempts to explain the world, made more entertaining, real or magical (or possibly all three), through the presence of nonhuman animals. Ashliman, in his introduction to this edition of the fables, notes that proverbs and fables that feature nonhuman animals have been found on

Mesopotamian clay tablets from 2000 B. C. and that these tales were based on earlier, now lost, material. It is interesting to ponder whether those lost sources took inspiration from even earlier ones that themselves harked back through the ages to the stories told so long ago in a cave in France, just as the fables that are now attributed to Aesop, following the form of those Mesopotamian clay tablets, have traveled forward through the centuries to be reproduced in 'classic' editions for the enjoyment and edification of the young (and not so young).

Discussion of how fables, proverbs or folktales have been and are regarded is considered important to a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts because of their ubiquitous presence in literature in general. That fables, 'a narration intended to enforce a useful truth; especially: one in which animals speak and act like human beings (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary), and proverbs, 'a brief popular epigram or maxim' (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary), have existed for millennia is beyond doubt and that their purpose was primarily seen as one of moral education is accepted as highly likely and rarely questioned. What is more contentious, however, is their significance with regard to the development of nonhuman/human animal relationships. Blount (1975), drawing a distinction between folklore and myth on the one hand and fables and satire on the other, though leaving these terms undefined, feels that:

[f]olklore and myth bring animals nearer to men [sic] while fables and satire, while apparently doing the same thing, do the opposite; they are divisive and put animals in their place – further off. (23)

Calkins (2007) appears to agree with the idea that all these genres divide us from animal others, considering that '[a]ncient texts, oral folklore and religious-philosophical

musings' ... 'often generated and reinforced the hierarchy of animals' that place the human at the apex with dominion over all other creatures. Howe (1995) goes further by regarding the animal fable, as a genre, as yet another form of animal exploitation:

That we burden animals by asking them to teach us how to behave like human beings seems no more than yet another way of exploiting them. We force animals to do physical labor, we raise them under cruel conditions, we mistreat them in all sorts of ways, and then we domesticate them most fully by moralizing them. (643)

Simons (2002) also sees little merit in animal fables for those with a nonhuman animal focus, stating that:

there is no stage at which [a] reader can doubt, or is invited to doubt, that what he or she is being offered is a tale which explores the human condition. Thus, the role of animals in the fable is almost irrelevant. They are merely vehicles for the human and are not, in any way, presented as having physical or psychological existence in their own right. (119)

Stibbe (2005), in general, warns against such 'categorical assertions of fact, with no hedging of the kind' (15) as this allows no room for further interpretation when discussing how nonhuman animals are represented in discourse and, as these fables have been so culturally enduring, it is here argued that they should not be dismissed so easily. As Howe observes, evidence of their longevity can be found inhabiting all-pervasive spaces within our cultural memory, as is demonstrated by our common understandings that foxes are sly, of what it means to 'cry wolf' and the caution against killing a goose who lays golden eggs. Examples such as these, Howe considers, are strong indications that fables were originally intended for a wide audience and not just children, '[f]or the questions they raised about the mutual company of humans and animals were not matters simply for children' (1995: 645). Howe argues that in fables:

animals can imitate the behaviors of humans, humans can imitate the behaviors of animals, but most of all the genre calls into question all categorical distinctions between animals and humans. If animals can speak human language, and they must if there are to be beast fables, then the most cherished of our modern distinctions between human and animal – that based on language as a creative, recursive faculty – seems pointless, even evasive. (642)

The genre of the animal fable, for Howe (1995), then, while exploiting nonhuman animals, also had the power to disrupt ontological categories and demand that readers questioned what it was to be human, what it was to be nonhuman, and relationships, one with the other. However, while memories remain, '[o]nce we stopped knowing animals as a direct matter of survival ... fables could be read as stories about cute animals that could safely be given to children' (656). As a result, according to Howe, 'the beast fable cannot be a vital, or even a possible, form through which adult human beings can explore their place in the larger scheme of the natural world' (657). This view is indeed unfortunate, for as Calkins observes, the accepted understanding of the representation of nonhuman animals within these texts tends 'to drive the perception, and therefore the portrayal, of animals in literature' (2007: 2). In which case, it would seem imperative that those with a nonhuman animal focus on texts find ways of reading nonhuman animals into fables and providing them with a 'physical or psychological existence in their own right' (Simons, 2002:119).

Harel (2009) believes that it is possible to read at least some of the fables in this way, if different reading strategies are adopted. To that end, two such strategies are proposed by Harel, one that focuses 'on the literal level of the fable', while the other extends the lesson of the fable and applies it 'not only on relationships within the human community but also on our relations with other animals' (11). Harel states that:

As any other literary text, the meaning of the fable and its significance do not originate from the written text exclusively but they are produced within interaction between the text and its readers. Therefore the traditional anthropocentric understanding of fables is at least partly a result of the speciesist bias of their interpreters. (19)

Harel's call to actively undertake new ways of reading nonhuman animals in literature is sound. Indeed, the animal fable, as well as its traditional role of offering the reader moral guidance, may also be seen as acting as a cautionary tale for analysts; not to accept without question traditional readings of texts and to be willing to make every instance of the literary representation of nonhuman animals count in the effort to effect social change. For it is not only the animal fable genre that impacts on the discursive construction of the animal other, it is also the critic's response to those fables. To dismiss the fable's worth in attempts to change how nonhuman animals are viewed is to leave unchallenged many deeply embedded culturally accepted stereotypes, with the result that foxes will always be sly, pigs will be greedy and wolves, cunning.

Stereotypes

Those who adopt a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts need to appreciate that what constitutes these deeply embedded culturally accepted stereotypes has power. For, as Lippmann observes, stereotypes are ways of ordering the world as they allow for 'short cuts' in understanding. The term 'stereotype' was first used in this psychological sense by Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion*, first published in 1922 (previous this term was associated with the visual arts). Lippmann goes on to observe that, with stereotypes, 'the kind of definiteness and consistency introduced depends upon who introduces them':

For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out

what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture. (2005: 95-156)

Importantly, apart from the 'economy of effort' afforded by stereotypes, Lippmann believes, '[t]he systems of stereotypes may be the core of our personal tradition, the defenses of our position in society' with the result that 'we so often hold to our stereotypes when we might pursue a more disinterested vision' (95-156). Tellingly, Lippmann positions 'a pattern of stereotypes' as:

the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy. (95-156)

As Dyer (1999) points out when commenting on Lippmann's observations, 'it is not stereotypes, as an aspect of human thought and representation, that are wrong, but who controls and defines them, what interests they serve' (npn). Dyer questions the identity of Lippmann's 'our' and 'we', noting that:

it is from stereotypes that we get our ideas about social groups. The consensus invoked by stereotypes is more apparent than real; rather, stereotypes express particular definitions of reality, with concomitant evaluations, which in turn relate to the disposition of power within society. Who proposes the stereotype, who has the power to enforce it, is the crux of the matter – whose tradition is Lippmann's 'our tradition'? (npn)

The power of the stereotype to maintain systems of oppression has been recognized by both perpetrators and oppressed. Whether it is a matter of race, gender or sexuality, stereotypes have functioned in all societies to designate those who will be included and those excluded. That this is not a recent development can be seen from Lippmann's

discussion of Aristotle's fourth century B. C. defense of slavery. At this time, Lippmann explains, 'Athenian slaves were in great part indistinguishable from free citizens', therefore '[t]his absence of distinction would naturally tend to dissolve the institution. If free men and slaves looked alike, what basis was there for treating them so differently?' In an observation that is particularly relevant with regard to the status of nonhuman animals, Lippmann continues, '[w]ith unerring instinct [Aristotle] understood that to justify slavery he must teach the Greeks a way of seeing their slaves that comported with the continuance of slavery'. To that end, Aristotle reasoned that:

there are beings who are slaves by nature. 'He then is by nature formed a slave, who is fitted to become the chattel of another person, and on that account is so.' All this really says is that whoever happens to be a slave is by nature intended to be one. Logically the statement is worthless, but in fact it is not a proposition at all, and logic has nothing to do with it. It is a stereotype, or rather it is part of a stereotype. The rest follows almost immediately. After asserting that slaves perceive reason, but are not endowed with the use of it, Aristotle insists that 'it is the intention of nature to make the bodies of slaves and free men different from each other, that the one should be robust for their necessary purposes, but the other erect; useless indeed for such servile labours, but fit for civil life... It is clear then that some men are free by nature, and others are slaves. ...' (2005: 95-156)

As Lippmann points out, these are statements, not arguments. The use of statements as arguments is also a strategy used by opponents of rights for nonhuman animals. One such argument runs: 'If an individual is a member of a species that lacks the capacity for free moral judgment, then he or she does not have moral rights'. As '[a]ll non-human animal species lack the capacity for free moral judgment...[t]herefore, non-human animals do not have moral rights' (BBC Ethics Guide – Animal rights website, 2010). However, while the BBC website considers that such statements are 'hardly persuasive', Lippmann regards Aristotle's slavery defense as 'the perfect stereotype. Its hallmark is that it

precedes the use of reason; is a form of perception, imposes a certain character on the data of our senses before the data reach the intelligence’:

When [the slave holder’s] eye had been trained to see them that way, he was to note as confirmation of their servile character the fact that they performed servile work, that they were competent to do servile work, and that they had the muscles to do servile work. (2005: 95-156)

The *truth* of the stereotype provided certainty, which in turn allowed no room for ‘the fatal question’ of ‘whether those particular men who happened to be slaves were the particular men intended by nature to be slaves. For that question would have tainted each case of slavery with doubt’ (95-156).

A Critical Animal Studies approach to texts should not underestimate the power of the stereotype to train readers ‘to note as confirmation’ of their exploitable character the fact that nonhuman animals have throughout history been exploited by humans. Many of the *truths* that fables perpetuate about animal others should also be recognized and actively resisted by those with a nonhuman animal focus, just as ‘the wholly justified objections of various groups – in recent years, blacks, women, gays, in particular’ have been raised against ‘the ways in which they find themselves stereotyped in the mass media and everyday life’ (Dyer, 1999: npn).

While it is beyond the purview of this project to find new ways of reading fables, some attention is here given to how closely the focus texts observe traditional nonhuman stereotypes and whether or not they reinforce or disrupt convention. On this point, it is interesting to note that though the stereotypes of nonhuman animal species in animal

fables are generally perceived to be fixed, in fact the fable form has not remained static nor are their moral lessons consistent. Ashliman (2003) makes the observation that the ‘succinct, proverb-like restatement of the moral illustrated by the tale’, that modern readers have come to expect from Aesop’s fables, is not believed to have originally been included in the fable’s oral form (xxiv). Ashliman also notes that many of the tales contradict each other. For example, considering tales that deal with loyalty, in *The Birds, the Beasts and the Bat*, a bat is ‘rejected as a double-faced traitor’ for first aligning with the birds then changing allegiance to the beasts, while in *The Bat and the Weasel* a bat is able to escape a weasel twice by first claiming to be a mouse and then, when caught again, claiming to be a bird (xxvi). These inconsistencies reduce certainties and allow for ‘fatal questions’ to be asked by activist scholars who recognize the fluidity of culture and their ability to help effect a change in nonhuman/human animal relationships.

Similarly, any inconsistencies in the focus texts could be viewed as points of entry to begin a reappraisal of traditional readings of the nonhuman animal stereotypes; for instance in Rowling’s use of nonhuman animal stereotypes as shortcuts to exemplify the characters of institutions and people. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry Potter’s boarding school, can be seen as one example. The school is divided into four houses, each of which has a nonhuman mascot. When Harry Potter first arrives at the school he is magically ‘sorted’ into Gryffindor house. Those who are chosen to belong to Gryffindor are considered to *naturally* possess virtues that include courage, chivalry and bravery as these are values stereotypically linked to their mascot, the lion. Along with these virtues, the lion has a cultural position as ‘the king of beasts’. This signals to the

reader that Gryffindor is the 'best' house and it, therefore, comes as no surprise that Harry Potter, the hero of the series, is *naturally* assigned to that house nor is it surprising that throughout the series he proves to be brave and courageous.

Slytherin house, on the other hand, has a darker reputation as '[t]here's not a single witch or wizard who went bad who wasn't in Slytherin', including the story's arch-villain, Voldemort (PS, 61-62). The Slytherin mascot is, therefore, *naturally* a snake with its biblical association with evil. This stereotype is reinforced by the character of Nagini, Voldemort's giant snake companion, who acts as his agent in his evil schemes to kill Harry Potter. However, at the end of the series, Severus Snape, the late head of Slytherin house, upsets the taken-for-granted understanding of the 'typical Slytherin' by being revealed as a secret agent for good and is subsequently described by Harry Potter as 'probably the bravest man I ever knew' (DH, 607). As well as this, the character of Harry Potter is not completely in line with the 'regal' lion. Though he is consistently brave and courageous throughout the series, his behaviour towards Parvati, his partner for the Yule Ball in book four, *The Goblet of Fire*, falls far short of being chivalrous. Also of interest are the numerous representations of Harry Potter's father, another Gryffindor, as a school bully. In themselves, these examples may not be enough to overturn entrenched associations between snakes and evil, nor lions and noble behaviour, indeed, they have been rarely commented upon. However, if attention is drawn to these inconsistencies of stereotypes then they can muddy the waters and perhaps allow for active reflection by the reader on how we use animal others in fiction and the implications of such use for their living counterparts.

Indices and Ciphers

In Tyler's (2007) discussion on the dangers of stereotypes for actual nonhuman animals, he states that there are 'two particular uses to which animals have been put by philosophy and critical theory that complicate the question of the stereotyped or stereotypic animal' (47). First is the use of nonhuman animals as ciphers, that is, their use is not due to any intrinsic worth, it is arbitrary and the animal other could easily be replaced by another animate, or indeed inanimate, 'faceless place-filler' (48). Tyler mentions Saussure's use of a horse and an ox to illustrate his discussion on language as a case in point. As Tyler observes, 'any other creature would have done. In fact, any object, animal or otherwise, might be substituted here' as the horse and the ox are 'simply filling a space within Saussure's analysis of language that a meaning might be conveyed' (48). Animal ciphers, Tyler states, are frequently found in literary and critical theory: 'Theorists have frequently conversed *using* animals, but less often do these discussions prove to be *about* animals' (48). However, there are times when an argument depends on the characteristics of certain nonhuman animals, in which case they are transformed into an index: '[t]he cipherous use of an animal, in which the selection is entirely arbitrary and inconsequential, stands in direct contrast to the indexical use, in which specific qualities of a specially chosen creature are required' (49).

Tyler (2007) relates Schopenhauer's use of 'prickly porcupines' as an example of an animal index: on cold days porcupines huddle closely together for warmth, but their quills become a problem if they get too close and so they must move further away from each other until the cold draws them back together again, and so it goes until they can

calculate their optimal distance from each other. For Schopenhauer, Tyler continues, the porcupines reflect human society and the necessary ‘compromise between the emptiness and monotony of people’s individual lives, which draw them together, and their many unpleasant and repulsive qualities’ (49).

While Tyler observes that both Saussure’s and Schopenhauer’s examples fall neatly into the cipher and index categories respectively, he cautions that it is not always so clear cut as ‘neither the ciphers nor the indices themselves are intrinsically or exclusively one thing or the other’ (51). For Tyler, the inconsistencies demonstrated by the use of animal others in Aesop’s Fables effectively demonstrate this movement between the categories.

This, Tyler reasons, means that:

[i]n the fables, as with philosophical and theoretical texts, animals *are* neither ciphers nor indices. Aesop’s fox is not intrinsically one or the other, but rather *functions* as a cipher or as an index. The use of any given animal will tend at one time towards *cipherous*, at another towards the *indexical*, and will many times exhibit elements of both. The more indexical the use, though, the closer we come to eliminating that rather lifeless creation, the animal in the ‘general singular.’ It is the particularity of the animal index, or rather, the particularities of a host of indices, that serve to reanimate the lifeless ciphers and thereby help to bring about the death of ‘the animal’ (53). (emphasis in original)

The danger, according to Tyler, is that these indices may ‘ossify into mere stereotypes’ as ‘the animal is reduced to a mere *exemplar* of their species characteristics’. With the result that there is a risk ‘that the indexical use will *define* and *delimit* the animal, specifying that the lion, fox and sheep is *always* and *only* like this’ (53). To avoid this development Tyler urges the indulgence of ambiguities: ‘[w]hatever boundaries the index sets up must remain fluid rather than fixed. What we need are disruptive and unruly indices who

question and contradict the stereotypes into which they might otherwise be fitted' (54). Drawing indices from new sources and presenting 'old lessons' in a new way, Tyler maintains, will ensure that these nonhuman animals 'remain *wild* animals'. (54). The second way to prevent stereotypical associations is 'to remember that each and every one is an *individual*' (54), for '[a]s individuals, singular and particular, they will always retain the capacity, whether it is exercised or not, to disrupt the repetition on which stereotypes depend' (55).

Two Reading Strategies

While Tyler's call for the nonhuman animals of fables to remain '*wild*' is beguiling, he does not provide any real strategies for achieving such an outcome. However, Harel's (2009) fairly straightforward reading strategies may be useful here. As an example of her first strategy of reading the fable literally, Harel analyses a fable she refers to as 'Jupiter and the Ass' (12). This fable, Harel relates, concerns an ass who feels overburdened by his master, a gardener, and so he prays to Jupiter to be allowed to work for a potter. His prayer is granted but, to his dismay, he is worked even harder by the potter and so he prays again to be allowed to work for the tanner. Once again his prayer is answered, but he fares even worse with the tanner than either of his previous masters, as the tanner is cruel, mistreats him, and desires his hide. Ashliman refers to this fable as 'The Ass and his Masters' and states that it illustrates the need for individuals to accept their place in society without question: 'Better servitude with safety than freedom with danger' (2003: xxviii). However, reading the fable literally, Harel (2009) considers, allows the reader to see not only how an ass is exploited by humans but also the situation from the individual animal other's point of view, which may go some way in maintaining his *wildness* and 'in

turn, might lead to sympathy for concrete asses in the real world' (12).

Harry Potter and 'Stereotypical' Nonhuman Animals

Harel's (2009) strategy of reading the fable literally has merit for reading the actual fables, but it has limited application for narratives that employ fable based stereotypes, such as the focus texts of this project. This is because Rowling often purposely employs a 'stereotypical' nonhuman animal to further her narrative. These conscious stereotypes require the reader to be complicit in such an understanding of the character/nature represented by the stereotype if the reader is to fully 'appreciate' the narrative. That some readers are more than happy to do so is evidenced from a search of the literature that reveals that the majority of (the very few) articles dealing with nonhuman animals in the *Harry Potter* series focus on their classical associations (Berman, 2008, Huey, 2005, Gibbons, 2005).

Any Critical Animal Studies approach to texts, although proposing alternative ways of reading the presence of the animal others, would be wise not to dismiss out of hand the pleasure that current ways of reading often provide the reader. This is because the pleasure that many readers gain from the recognition of stereotypes within the focus texts is not just that these stereotypes are considered to be 'the core of our personal tradition' (Lippmann, 2005, 95-156); it is also the *recognition* by the reader that Rowling *meant* the reader to understand that the representations of these stereotypes function on a number of levels. Those readers who 'discover' this can then feel a bond of mutual understanding with the author and know her as a 'friend'. This camaraderie allows readers to feel an affinity not only with Rowling but also with others who read these texts in a similar way

and, with technology such as the internet, this potentially includes millions of people. As well as this, recognizing culturally coded stereotypes offers strengthened cultural affiliations as they can represent an entrée into a broader community of understanding with an historical interconnectedness that links all those generations who have gone before and who have understood these fables in a similar way. If the stereotype is considered an ‘unchangeable truth’, this interconnectedness would then *naturally* extend into the future.

Rowling’s use of fable stereotypes, along with her frequent use of Latin, bring to mind Tyler’s (2007) observations on Barthe’s example of himself learning Latin through Aesop’s fables when considering how stereotypes are *naturalized* and become ‘mythical speech’: ‘How *obvious* that one should learn Latin, ... that Aesop is a worthy pedagogical text for pursuing these worthy scholarly goals’ (46) (emphasis in original). The inclusion of Latin names for beings, places and spells along with the fable stereotypes can also be seen to give the *Harry Potter* series a certain degree of ‘respectability’, it is no longer ‘just’ children’s literature and so, therefore, is now ‘worthy’ of academic attention, for as Peter Hunt observes, children’s books have ‘been marginalised’ by ‘intellectual and cultural gurus’ (2005: 1).

These mythic associations conjured by Rowling allow those who pursue an interest in the archaic roots of these stereotypes to feel an affinity with scholars of the past and also enables them to hold their heads up in present academic company, as opposed to suffering under the double burden of undertaking research into both children’s literature

and animals studies. For as Armstrong has noted, there exists ‘the prejudice – as common within literary studies as it is elsewhere – that research into the meaning and function of the animal in the human world involves a kind of self-indulgent taste for the trivial’ (2004: 20). This is no small thing for, by indulging such ‘trivial’ pursuits, ‘the fortress of our tradition’ (Lippmann, 2005: 95-156) may cease to offer safety through belonging. Advocating a nonhuman animal centred approach to the text may seem to some to entail a necessary abandonment of traditional scholarship and, consequentially, the human for the nonhuman, a turning of one’s back on belonging and the familiar in order to embrace the alien and *other*.

Such a view of a *Critical* Animal Studies approach to texts could be seen as even more problematic if this ‘new’ way of reading texts is through a *Critical* Discourse Analysis. While *critical* does, of course, refer to ‘critique [as] the mechanism for both explaining social phenomena and for changing them’ (Fairclough, et al, 2011: 358), too often initial reaction to the term envisages an attitude ‘inclined to criticize severely and unfavorably’ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). It is not the object of this project to interrogate the focus texts in order to find Rowling ‘guilty’ of perpetuating animal stereotypes that contribute to the continuation of nonhuman animal oppression. Rather, for projects such as this, it is suggested that in both the ‘animal’ studies and the discourse analysis, the term *critical* be extended to include its more medical meaning, that is, ‘of, relating to, or being a turning point or specially important juncture’ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary).

This new millennia can be understood as providing a ‘turning point’ and an especially ‘important juncture’ in our relationships with the animal others who share our world. Environmental concerns alone would necessitate such a change regardless of, the now more insistent, calls for a re-evaluation of the moral status of nonhuman animals. Couple this concept of careful analysis of discourse, produced at an especially ‘important juncture’, with the concept of foregrounding the nonhuman and a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts begins to become less threatening. For the Critical Animal Studies advocated by this project demands neither an abandonment of tradition nor a repudiation of the human. Rather, an understanding of past historical cultural and literary practices that have led to current discursive representations of both the human and nonhuman is mandatory but must also be accompanied by an appreciation that such representations are fluid and amenable to change. No choice needs to be made between human and nonhuman, for this way of reading texts seeks to be all inclusive, as both nonhumans and humans are considered as individuals, perhaps also both ‘*wild*’, and certainly both worthy of equal consideration.

Chapter Seven: The Bestiary

Taxonomies invite the question that is basic to the whole scientific enterprise: Why are some entities similar to one another but different from others? In short, why are things as they are? (Lenski, 1994: 2)

Introduction

This chapter describes the narrative strategies that position J. K. Rowling's bestiary *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* as the accepted authority on ontological concerns within the magical world of the *Harry Potter* series. By providing a space to examine the more explicit demonstration of what constitutes *natural* nonhuman/human animal relationships, this chapter also provides the foundation for an examination of how the underlying conceptual framework of these relationships is reproduced in the narrative and grammar within the *Harry Potter* series as a whole.

The chapter begins by outlining the relationship of the *Fantastic Beasts* to the *Harry Potter* series and a rationale as to its importance as an object of study. A number of the strategies used to establish the 'authority' of this text in relation to the *Harry Potter* series are then demonstrated. Attention is also paid to how the text encourages the reader to become complicit in acknowledging the 'veracity' of the text by accepting *Fantastic Beasts* as an 'authentic' artifact from the world of Harry Potter, the material existence of the text in turn 'proving' the 'reality' of that world. Understanding the textual processes involved is important for, if the reader accepts this 'authority' and 'veracity', the nonhuman/human animal relationships represented in the bestiary, that are reflected in the series as a whole, work 'to mould audience attitudes into "desirable" forms' (Stephen, 1992:3) that sees these representations as both legitimate and *natural*.

Further, this chapter explores ways in which the representation of relationships with nonhuman animals establishes qualities of ‘humanness’ through a discussion of the representation of the putative author of *Fantastic Beasts*, Newt Scamander and an analysis of creatures whose categorization as either ‘being’ or ‘beast’ is probematized by the bestiary: werewolves, trolls and centaurs. Through such an analysis it is possible to come to an understanding of what it means to be classed as ‘beast’ or ‘being’ in this fictive magical world and to consider a number of *naturalized* assumptions that may flow from such representations that could ‘attempt to perpetuate certain values’ (Stephens, 1992:3) with regard to nonhuman/human animal relations.

Fantastic Beasts and the Harry Potter Series

The seven books of the *Harry Potter* series along with the books associated with the series, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, *Quidditch Through the Ages* and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, work as parts of a cycle of representation with each text adding to, and building upon, the concept of the magical ‘other’ world of Harry Potter.

Fantastic Beasts was first published in 2001, along with *Quidditch Through the Ages*, after the first four installments of the series and before the final three or *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Within the *Harry Potter* series proper all three associated texts are referred to, therefore, the ‘lives’ of all these texts are intertwined, both projecting future happenings and revisiting the past.

The reader is introduced to *Fantastic Beasts* in the first book of the series, *The Philosopher’s Stone*, as one of the books included on the requirements list that

accompanies Harry Potter's acceptance letter from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (PS, 52-53). *Fantastic Beasts* was later published in mock textbook form (supposedly Harry Potter's own copy) in 2001 with sales to benefit the UK charity Comic Relief.

Creating 'Authority' through Genre

Rowling's choice to present information on the magical others who inhabit her fictive world as both textbook and bestiary taps into cultural perceptions of both these genres. As Olsen (1983) observes, 'the authority of written texts, school textbooks in particular, derive not only from the particular linguistic properties of the texts themselves ... but also from the social or institutional contexts in which those texts are owned, taught, and studied' (129). Thus, the authority of *Fantastic Beasts* is culturally understood as confirmed by its use at the institution of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, with its reputation as 'the very best school of witchcraft there is' (PS, 79), and also by the institution of the family, with most 'wizarding households' having 'well thumbed' (FB, vii) copies. This wide usage also reflects Rowling's positioning of *Fantastic Beasts* as aligned with the cultural understanding of a bestiary as 'a serious work of natural history' (White, 1954: 231). Therefore, *Fantastic Beasts* is effectively constructed as a textbook that contains the 'authorized version of society's valid knowledge' (Olsen, 1980: 192) on that which constitutes *natural* nonhuman/human animal relations within the magical world.

Within the superordinate categories of bestiary and school textbook, the text also utilizes the hyponyms of 'philosophical' exposition and celebrity endorsement to reinforce its

authority. The ‘philosophical’ exposition discusses the ontological ordering of the magical sub-culture and so positions this text as the ‘authority’ on the moral status of all those who live within the world of magic. This is further supported by the text assuming the form of an ‘historical’ document that has had, and continues to have, a role in the effective functioning of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for many years, evidenced by its supposed status as a set text at Hogwarts since its publication in 1927, now ‘in its fifty-second edition’ (ix). The usefulness of *Fantastic Beasts* is demonstrated by the text having been ‘well thumbed by the generations who have riffled its pages ...’ to find ‘the best way’ to deal with troublesome fantastic beasts (vii). This supposed usefulness and relevance beyond the school curriculum is represented as fundamental to its continued popularity, with: ‘*A copy of Fantastic Beasts & Where to Find Them resides in almost every wizarding household in the country*’ (back cover).

Representing *Fantastic Beasts* in this way builds up layers of textualization. To begin with, this representation of *Fantastic Beasts* embodies a contradiction. If ‘*[a] copy of Fantastic Beasts & Where to Find Them resides in almost every wizarding household in the country*’, surely most students, the majority of whom appear to come from a magical background, would already be familiar with the ‘beasts’ referenced, particularly if the edition in their ‘wizarding household’ has been ‘well thumbed’. This leads to an assumption that the inclusion of such a book in the requirements list is a narrative strategy that alerts the reader to the concept of a ‘special’ school for witches and wizards where ‘magical’ subjects are studied. This also signals to the reader that those who inhabit this magical sub-culture are not all exclusively human. Both of these assumptions

work to further indicate the importance Rowling places on the representation of nonhuman/human animal relationships to literally ‘flesh out’ her magical world.

Both the presentation of *Fantastic Beasts* as a reproduction of Harry Potter’s own textbook and the ‘Foreword by Albus Dumbledore’ (vii) function as celebrity endorsements that aid in establishing the veracity of the text. No background information is given for the character of Dumbledore in *Fantastic Beasts* with the text assuming the reader’s prior knowledge of his various narrative roles: as Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry; a ‘good’ character; and, most importantly, Harry Potter’s wise mentor. An ideal reader, in this case one who carries with them, and accepts, this intertextual understanding of Dumbledore’s character, should also accept as a given that, because Dumbledore twice refers to *Fantastic Beasts* as a ‘masterpiece’ (vii, viii), the text is the authority in the magical world on metaphysical thought dealing with the nature of being and existence and the scientific classification of ‘beasts’. Dumbledore’s endorsement can also be read as encouraging the reader to become complicit in acknowledging the ‘veracity’ of the text by their acceptance of *Fantastic Beasts* as an ‘authentic’ artifact from the world of Harry Potter, the material existence of which, in turn, ‘proves’ the ‘reality’ of that world.

The preface of the bestiary consists of an *Introduction by Newt Scamander* that addresses ontological concerns through a discussion of the magical community’s changing historical perceptions of what constitutes the categories of ‘being’ and ‘beast’. There is

also the endorsement in the *Foreword by Albus Dumbledore*, with *An A – Z of Fantastic Beasts* comprising the bulk of the text.

Though it is not strictly a taxonomy, the *A-Z* can be considered to be a system of classification as it is a list of ‘beasts’ in alphabetical order. That the creatures referred to in the text are designated ‘beasts’ and that they are classified as ‘fantastic’ means that the *A-Z* can also be regarded as belonging to the historical bestiary genre and so able to explain why things are as they are in the magical world.

The Bestiary and The Order of Things

Foucault’s (1994) response to Borges’ account of a taxonomy in a ‘certain Chinese encyclopaedia’ was ‘laughter that shattered’ and the realization that here:

[i]n the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing that we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*. (xv) (emphasis in original).

Through ‘the fable’ the arbitrary nature of all systems of classification is revealed. This oft quoted taxonomy from the *Celestial Empire of Benevolent Knowledge* presents a beguiling alternative to current codes of classification, with nonhuman animals divided into those:

(a) belonging to the emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies (Borges, 1993: 3).

Borges is said to be well known for the combination of ‘both horror (alienation) and fun’ (Hurley, 2005: 212) in his work. As such, the above list and the *Fantastic Beasts* index are similar in that they both have the capacity to amuse the reader. However, although they both inhabit the historical bestiary genre, they realize the form in different ways. *Celestial Empire* employs absurdity that alienates through the unfamiliar to inspire ‘laughter that shattered’ while it is the absurdity that promotes recognition of the familiar that underlies the humour in *Fantastic Beasts*. The *Celestial Empire* is amusing because the reasoning behind the ordering of the list is so *illogical* that such a list would be incapable of imposing any form of order on our experiential world, which, therefore, defeats the assumed purpose of compiling such a taxonomy in the first place. We smile precisely because we are puzzled and cannot recognize such a world, or our place in it. As Foucault (1994) observes, the *Celestial Empire*, because of this disruptive ability, allows for the creation of a space to consider the arbitrary nature of all classificatory systems. Rowling’s bestiary, on the other hand, appears to close such options off by grounding its humour in a *logical* reasoning behind the entries, which suggests that an experiential world ordered along the lines proposed by *Fantastic Beasts* would be a ‘workable’ world. We smile because we are reassured; we can recognize such a world and know our place in it. As such, while it is not impossible that *Fantastic Beasts* could (and for this researcher does) raise concerns as to how the experiential world is classified, for such concerns to be raised readers necessarily need to bring a critical and questioning approach to an active analysis of the silences around the lives of animal others within the text.

Fantastic Beasts as Bestiary

Assuming the generic form of a bestiary is a narrative device that allows *Fantastic Beasts* to position the narrative within a time period that supports as *natural* the presence of magic by appropriating the historical associations of that genre. The genre of ‘bestiary’ has a long history with the very popular twelfth century bestiaries based on much earlier Greek compilations, particularly those of Aristotle and Pliny (White, 1954: 231). While ancient texts, such as Aristotle’s *Historia Animalium*, sought to explain the natural world, sometime during the second to fifth centuries A. D. such works were rewritten by ‘the Physiologus’ to reflect Christian morality. In the twelfth century ‘the Bestiary proper’ first appeared, that is, bestiaries based on the Physiologus, the sole aim of which was to emphasize religious moral teachings (Aberdeen Bestiary Project, nd). Though *Fantastic Beasts* does not make explicit reference to religion, its format still effectively helps to discursively position the magical community within a pseudo-medieval environment that, in fantasy texts, often functions to *naturalize* a setting ‘where magic can happen’.

While religious concern about witchcraft in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries ‘lies in the province of theology’, having little to do with magic, and resulted in the ‘horror’ associated with the witch trials (Robbins, 1981: 1), this period in history, as a consequence, can be seen to be at odds with the tenor of the *Harry Potter* series’ unproblematic (by most characters) acceptance of magic as intrinsically neither morally good nor bad, merely one way of being in the world. The Middle Ages however, although the ‘Age of Belief’ (Grabois, 1980: 8), in fiction, is often viewed in a more romantic light, as Hunt (2001) observes, ‘there has been, since the days of the first real example of a “logically cohesive” alternative world ... a tendency to exploit pseudo-medieval

settings' (4). Intertextual resonances associated with the historical bestiary genre found in *Fantastic Beasts* aid in creating this pseudo-medieval setting that helps to reflect some of the supposed lustre of that period onto the series and create a coherent fictive world.

However, positioning the narrative within a medieval milieu can also imply an implicit acceptance of the legitimacy of the medieval view of the world that advocates 'man' as essentially separate from nature with the right, granted by God, to order 'nature' as 'he' saw fit, because the natural world had been created by God for 'man's' use. As Lynn White (1967) notes in his influential paper when discussing the 'Medieval View of Man and Nature':

God had created Adam and, as an afterthought, Eve to keep man from being lonely. Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes. And, although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image. (1205)

Though Harrison (1999), in response to White, takes issue with the contention that human dominion of the natural world was solely concerned with the exploitation of nature as a resource, he does acknowledge the anthropocentric nature of medieval ways of seeing the world:

Living things, it was assumed, had been designed in part to serve for the physical needs of human beings but equally to serve a spiritual function as well. In this latter role, natural objects symbolize eternal verities, or taught important moral lessons. (91)

Harrison goes on to state that '[n]o better work embodies this approach to nature than the *Physiologus*' (91). Adopting the bestiary genre unproblematically can also, therefore,

imply an unproblematic adoption of a worldview that continues to *naturalize* an understanding of nonhuman animals as only of value if useful to humans. This way of reading Rowling’s bestiary is strengthened by observing that *Fantastic Beasts* follows the format of Topsell’s 1607 *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes*, as it too lists various beast’s ‘vertues (both naturall and medicinall)’ as well as their ‘love and hate to Mankind’ (in Ritvo, 1985: 73).

This reflection of Topsell can be seen in the majority of entries having as an attribute properties of the ‘beast’ that are useful to witches and wizards, their ‘vertues (both naturall and medicinall)’ (in Ritvo, 1985: 73). Also the A-Z section of the text begins with the ‘Ministry of Magic Classification’ (xxii), which ‘offer[s] an at-a-glance guide to the perceived dangerousness of a creature’, or their ‘love and hate to Mankind’ (in Ritvo, 1985: 73).

Ministry of Magic Classifications	
<i>Ministry of Magic (M.O.M.) Classifications</i>	
	or anything Hagrid likes
XXXXX	Known wizard killer / impossible to train or domesticate
XXXX	Dangerous / requires specialist knowledge / skilled wizard may handle
XXX	Competent wizard should cope
XX	Harmless / may be domesticated
X	Boring

Ministry of Magic Classifications (FB, xxii)

The field the 'Ministry of Magic Classification' activates is 'scientific/official' categories, specifically degrees of danger/domestication. The tenor, which manifests on two levels, sees the role relationship between the narrator and the reader as the author adopting the role of humorist – projected through category choice, particularly through attitudinal elements such as 'boring', and the reader assigned a complimentary role of audience. As well, there are the assumed participants within the narrative, the compiler of classifications and a magical audience. The compiler of classifications is assigned the role of primary knower and giver of 'expert' knowledge and the magical community is audience and receiver of that knowledge.

In the 'About the Author' section, Newt Scamander is positioned within the membership classification of *respected scientist*. This works to locate the information on 'beasts' presented in his text within 'scientific' discourse. The, therefore, *scientific* classification of 'beasts' in the A-Z section of *Fantastic Beasts*, as a consequence, constitutes the proper ordering of the experiential magical world with regards to nonhuman animals.

The 'Ministry of Magic Classifications' is always the first mentioned attribute in all entries with other descriptors, such as habitat, geographical location, physical appearance and commercial value, mentioned in no particular order or omitted. As such, this results in the degree of possible danger or domestication of the 'beast' becoming the superordinate category for all entries. Halliday and Martin (1993) note that:

A 'taxonomy' is an ordered, systematic classification of some phenomena based on the fundamental principles of superordination (where something is a type or kind of something else) or composition (where something is a part of something else). (137).

Rather than the superordination of the Linnaean system of classification that maps *natural* relationships based on each species belonging to a genus, each genus belonging to a family, etcetera, down through order, class, phylum, and kingdom, the superordination revealed by the ‘Magical Classifications’ establishes taxonomical relationships based *only* on a ‘beasts’ classification as ‘a type or kind’ of danger or potential subject of domestication for the *human*. The *natural* hierarchy established through the Linnaean system is replaced in the ‘Magical Classifications’ by an implicit hierarchy that speaks to the value assumed by humans of each of the categories of ‘beast’. This hierarchy is initially evidenced through both the ordering of the list of categories and the number of ‘Xs’ assigned to each category, as well as the attitudinal element ‘boring’.

The ordering of the list of categories sees ‘known wizard killer/impossible to train or domesticate’ placed in first entry position. As with the subject of a sentence, being placed ‘at the top of the list’ acts as the initial focus of reader attention and so assumes more ‘importance’ than following entries. The arbitrary assigning of the number of ‘Xs’ can also be taken to reinforce a descending order of importance of categories on the list as they are progressively reduced from five for the first entry to one for the final, ‘boring’.

The first four categories are framed as ‘provable’, and therefore *scientific*, propositions. The first category in particular employs no modality and so there is no room for argument, these ‘beasts’ definitely do kill wizards and are ‘impossible to train or domesticate’. The modality in the next three categories concerns the degree of skill possessed by wizards to ‘handle’, ‘cope’ or ‘domesticate’ the ‘beast’. ‘Boring’, on the

other hand, is a qualitative adjective describing an emotional state and, as such, subjective and, therefore, not generally considered as a 'scientific' category. However, the list structure and the presence of the 'Xs' form a type of hypotactic relationship between the categories. This hypotactic relationship effectively includes 'boring' and reinforces an implicit hierarchy of value of the categorized 'beasts'. As Jasinski observes:

Hypotactic style allows syntax and structure to supply useful information. Instead of simple juxtaposition of elements by way of simple and compound sentences, hypotactic structures rely more on complex sentences to establish relationships among elements. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) observed, 'The hypotactic construction is the argumentative construction par excellence. . . . Hypotaxis creates frameworks [and] constitutes the adoption of a position'. (2001: 540)

Through the list structure and the progressive reduction of 'Xs' all entries demonstrate qualities of 'sameness', indicating to the reader that even though 'boring' is not generally a *scientific* category nevertheless it still *belongs* in this list. The list structure and the progressive reduction of 'Xs' also effectively positions each category as *subordinate* to the category that went before. This is because, along with the list structure, the 'Xs' can be seen to function as a subordinating conjunction. Even if our understanding of English vocabulary is limited, it is still possible to understand that the 'known wizard killer/impossible to train or domesticate' and 'boring' categories are not to be read as value equivalent *because* of their list structure and a perceived value assigned to each of the categories indicated by the number of 'Xs' decreasing from *first* to *last*.

The category 'boring' also augments the 'obvious' implied value of 'X', that is, the degree of danger to wizards or a 'beast's' potential to be domesticated. This is because 'boring' as a category can be read as a challenge to our understanding of what constitutes

scientific categories and, therefore, is capable of disrupting the *naturalness* of this categorizing system by suggesting a rational/emotional binary: ‘known wizard killer/impossible to train or domesticate’/‘boring’. This reading, however, does little to destabilize the human-centric focus of the ‘Magical Classifications’.

The presence of the category ‘boring’ does, however, also allow all five categories to be considered as attitudinal elements, rather than *scientific* categories. By doing so, reading the list as an ascending order of degrees of interest from the lowest (‘boring’), ‘known wizard killer/impossible to train or domesticate’ then becomes meaning equivalent of *most interesting*. Read in this way the human-centric focus may not shift markedly, however, it does help to reveal *naturalized* emotional attitudes to nonhuman animals in the ordering of the categories. Implicit in this reading is a higher value on ‘beasts’ who are beyond wizard control and capable of violence. Possibility of domestication appears to trigger borderline contempt, an attitude that can be seen as mirrored in many social practices around those animal others who fall into the category ‘domesticated’, for example, ‘battery’ hens and feedlot cattle.

Fantastic Beasts as Textbook

The physical presentation and layout of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* as a textbook, together with the representation of Harry Potter’s attitude in the series to the subject ‘Care of Magical Creatures’, which has *Fantastic Beasts* as a set textbook, work to create seemingly contradictory notions around ‘desirable’ relationships with nonhuman animals. With its sober red hardcover and ‘gilt’ lettering, *Fantastic Beasts* taps into a general understanding of both the bestiary and the school textbook genres by adopting a

format and a faux formal tone that echo their style, with lighter asides provided by ‘informative notes in the margins’ (xiv) attributed to Harry Potter and his friends.

This physical appearance of *Fantastic Beasts*, as a textbook, represents the study of ‘beasts’ as ‘worthy’ and, therefore, gives the subject a certain status. However, that the study of magical creatures is important appears, on reflection, to be merely part of a surface ideology. For while its material presentation creates a way of reading the text that would seem to construct the study of ‘fantastic beasts’ as a worthy pursuit, the attitudes of Harry Potter and his friends suggests an implicit assumption to the contrary. As the narrative unfolds the reader learns that Harry and his friends only study ‘Care of Magical Creatures’ for two years and discontinue after they have completed their O.W.L exams at the end of their fifth year at Hogwarts. In their final two years of schooling, students are required to choose subjects that will be prerequisites for their preferred professional occupations. All three friends discontinue studies in magical creatures and none of the three heroes are ever seen to consider a future that requires expertise in ‘Care of Magical Creatures’. Indeed, Harry has the ambition to be an Auror, ‘a member of an elite unit of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement of the Ministry of Magic trained to capture Dark wizards and witches’ (Harry Potter Wiki, nd), ‘and he couldn’t really think of anything else he would like to be’ (HBP, 102).

In this light, *Fantastic Beasts*, as Harry’s own textbook, together with his ambition can be seen to contribute to a metanarrative that activates historical discourses around child development, particularly those associated with ‘the untamed child’ (Myers, 1999: 123).

‘The untamed child’ moves from ‘the beastliness of youth’ and ‘antisocial impulses’, here evidenced by the ‘graffiti’ throughout the textbook, to become not only ‘tamed’ through ‘instruction and discipline’ (123) but also, in this instance, one who embraces the society of which he is a part to such a degree that he seeks to enforce its laws and restrictions. This way of reading the text implies a directionality that assumes that children *naturally* transcend any interest in nonhuman animals in order to ‘move forward’ to more important adult concerns.

Along with the text as a material object presenting animal others as both an important (hard cover, ‘gilt’ lettering, etc.) and unimportant (graffiti) area of study, even before the book is opened the reader is being coaxed into an understanding of what constitutes the definition of a ‘fantastic beast’ by the visual representation of three apparent claw marks on the lower left-hand section of the front cover. These three marks can be interpreted as evidence of defining attributes of a ‘beast’: they are not passive but capable of ‘dynamic action’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006: 181). Also, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, information on the left of an image fulfills the role of the Given: ‘For something to be Given means that it is presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message’ (181). Through this representation, the nature of a ‘beast’ is ‘self-evident’ (181) and *naturally* assumes a vicious/wild/untamed nature. Such a nature carries with it an implied threat as tearing at the fabric of the cover of the book can be read metaphorically as tearing at the fabric of the ‘civilized’ magical world represented by the institution of Hogwarts. Therefore, while *Fantastic Beasts* acknowledges the existence of these beings, who are unknown or

considered myths in the Muggle world, these claw marks demonstrate to Harry Potter, and the reader, that there is a *natural* and fundamental division between the ‘natures’ of humans and other than humans in the magical world. This view lends legitimacy to the magical community’s attempts to impose control over their world through their arbitrary categorizing of living (and some dead) creatures in an attempt to maintain ‘proper’ order.

***Fantastic Beasts* and ‘The Author’**

The ‘About The Author’ (vi) section is a recount of how the putative author, Newton (Newt) Artemis Fido Scamander, acquired an interest in ‘fabulous beasts’. The human/fantastic beast relationship presented here is premised on an assumption of a control over every aspect of the lives of these animal others, both in the domestic and public spheres, that is both long established and *natural*. Scamander’s interest is not only represented as lifelong but also as generational; his interest in ‘fabulous beasts’ was encouraged by his mother, ‘who was an enthusiastic breeder of fancy Hippogriffs’. His work history, (Ministry of Magic Department for the Regulation of Magical Creature, transferred to the Beast Division, worked with Dragon Research and Restraint Bureau), then helps to move his interest from the domestic sphere to the professional field of ‘fantastic beasts’. His approach to the field is that of an enthusiast and his ‘prodigious knowledge of bizarre magical animals ensured his rapid promotion’. This expertise, coupled with institutional power, saw him credited as ‘almost solely responsible for the creation of the Werewolf Register in 1947’ and also the ‘Ban on Experimental Breeding’, which is cited as his proudest moment as it ‘effectively prevented the creation of new untameable monsters within Britain’. Scamander is said to have achieved institutional

recognition of his expertise by being ‘awarded the Order of Merlin, Second Class, in 1979 in recognition of his services to the study of magical beasts, Magizoology’ (vi).

By positioning Scamander as a recognized expert in the field who legitimately occupies the role of ‘most-knowing’ when it comes to dealing with such creatures, adds to the authority of *Fantastic Beasts*. And because Scamander is positioned as ‘the voice of authority’ on the topic, his ways of interacting with ‘beasts’ can be read as both ‘desirable’ and *natural*. In this context, when Scamander goes on to give a first person recount of his childhood memories of himself as a ‘seven-year-old wizard who spent hours in his bedroom dismembering Horklumps’ (ix) in the *Introduction* section entitled ‘About This Book’, this behaviour is discursively positioned as a *natural* precursor to a life in the natural sciences:

from darkest jungle to brightest desert, from mountain peak to marshy bog, that grubby Horklump-encrusted boy would track, as he grew up, the beasts described in the following pages (xvii).

The generally culturally assumed ‘innocence’ of childhood (‘seven-year-old wizard’) works to offset the violence of the ‘dismembering’ of Horklumps and, along with ‘that grubby Horklump-encrusted boy’, these images work to form ‘fond’ reminiscences. The sequential ordering of the description also implies a cause and effect relationship; it is because Scamander ‘spent hours in his bedroom dismembering Horklumps’ that the once ‘grubby Horklump-encrusted boy’ was able to gain the knowledge needed to write about ‘the beasts described in the following pages’. Just as Charles Darwin was dedicated to dissecting barnacles for eight years (Stott, 2004) prior to publishing *The Origin of Species*, *Fantastic Beasts*, ‘Newt’s masterpiece’ can be understood to have evolved out of

Scamander's youthful cutting up of Horklumps. The Horklumps that Scamander dissects are described as 'a fleshy, pinkish mushroom covered in sparse, wiry black bristles' (21), and so also echo Darwin's barnacles. This way of reading the text reproduces understandings of nonhuman/human animal relationships that reflect the long held assumption of a nonhuman/human duality that encourages humans to 'not only use but also manipulate the nonhuman world to profit humankind and individual humans' (Rowe and Marsh, 2010: 187).

This reading, together with Scamander's background information in the 'About the Author' section accepts as *natural* the commodification of other than humans and the human right of complete control over owning, breeding or dismembering them as they see fit. The only caveat, a ban on 'experimental' breeding, stemming from a fear of a loss of that control through the production of the 'untameable', rather than concerns for nonhuman animal welfare. Human authority 'to protect and conceal magical beasts' extends to 'even those that are savage and untameable' (xx). The rationale for such actions is represented as *obvious* and *natural* through the use of the adverb 'of course' and centres only on the continuance of human pleasure:

The answer is, of course: to ensure that future generations of witches and wizards enjoy their strange beauty and powers as we have been privileged to do. (xxi)

What is a Beast?

The 'What is a Beast' segment of the *Introduction* recounts the 'historical' debates within the magical world around the development of the three divisions that are overseen by the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures in the Ministry of

Magic: Beast, Being and Spirit. This section represents discussions to establish the boundary for the ontological divide between ‘beast’ and ‘being’ within the magical world as of both great importance and concern. For how to define these categories has not only ‘caused controversy for centuries’, but is also seen as ‘the problem’ (*x*). That this ‘problem’ is not necessarily recognized by untrained wizards and witches is shown by the observation that ‘this might surprise some first-time students of Magizooology’. This observation indicates a number of assumptions.

Firstly, there is the assumption that all those who have experience in the study of Magizooology recognize and have an understanding of ‘the problem’. There is also the unexamined assumption that ‘some first-time students of Magizooology’ generally consider boundaries to be clear and simple. The ‘untutored’ view is being represented as assuming no ‘problem’ when it comes to *natural* characteristics that a ‘being’ possesses against which a ‘beast’ can be defined as the *other*. For just as many humans historically ‘see as the defining characteristics of humanity – intellectual reason, language, religion, a moral sense – those factors that, we believe, differentiate us from other species’ (Preece, 2005: 48), so the untrained witches and wizards in the wizarding community are represented here as believing that there is an obvious dividing line between ‘being’ and ‘beast’.

As this text is widely read within the magical world, it would appear that the ‘first-time students of Magizooology’ referred to are those Muggle-born witches and wizards who first come to the book through their enrolment at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and

Wizardry, such as Harry Potter and Hermione Granger. That the study of Magizoology is represented as capable of surprising such students can be read positively from an animal centred focus. The text could be read to indicate that rather than reflecting ‘Muggle’ philosophical attempts to limit the category of ‘human’ through historic efforts to impose certainty on how ‘human’ is to be defined, the magical world has long recognised the arbitrary nature of any attempt to impose ontological divides and on occasions has actively attempted to include other than human within the category of ‘being’.

Therefore, from an animal centred perspective, the representation of the boundary between ‘beast’ and ‘being’, by being acknowledged as so disturbingly porous and difficult to define by such a respected source as *Fantastic Beasts*, can be said to challenge ‘the ontological and ethical divide between humans and non-humans that is a linchpin of philosophical humanism’ (Wolfe, 2008: 8). To further this view there is a discussion of ‘three types of magical creatures’, namely werewolves, centaurs and trolls. These three ‘creatures’, that are represented as having liminal natures, are set up as examples to highlight ‘the problem’ which is revealed to be a question that ‘we must ask ourselves’, and that is, ‘which of these creatures is a “being” – that is to say, a creature worthy of legal rights and a voice in the governance of the magical world – and which is a “beast”?’

That ‘we must ask ourselves’ this question suggests that ‘we’ have the power to provide an answer. As stated above, this text is ‘an approved textbook’ (FB, vii) that ‘resides in almost every wizarding household’ (FB, back cover), and so the inclusive ‘we’ of the audience being addressed refers to witches and wizards, of all ages, who make up the

magical community. This, again, represents categories as arbitrary by placing the decision making power for drawing ontological divisions firmly within the hands of the human in the magical community. Witches and wizards, the text seems to suggest, can adopt a posthuman approach to the ontological divide by recognizing that ‘being’ is a construct and that if ‘the being’ is made then it can be made not just differently but more justly (paraphrase of Wolfe, 2006: 1).

‘The Problem’ of the Liminal

Unfortunately this reading begins to falter when the text reveals that the ‘being’ category is *naturally* understood to take as its starting point ‘human’ with the unexamined assumption that how a ‘beast’ is to be defined is as *other* than a ‘being’. Other species, it appears, can only prove themselves ‘worthy’ of being classified as ‘beings’ if they are suitably ‘human’ or ‘humanlike’. This is clearly evidenced by the discussion around ‘the problem’ of the ‘three types of magical creatures’: werewolves, centaurs and trolls.

Werewolves spend most of their time as humans (whether wizard or Muggle). Once a month, however, they transform into savage, four-legged beasts of murderous intent and no human conscience. (x)

That ‘[w]erewolves spend most of their time as humans (whether wizard or Muggle)’ is presented with an unexamined assumption that the extent of the time spent as human, ‘most of their time’, automatically marks a werewolf as ‘worthy’ to be considered as a ‘being’. This is grammatically realized through the transitivity process type of a *relational attributive* clause that helps to construe class-membership. In this case the class is the entity ‘human’. However, though there are no qualitative characterizations, which might therefore indicate a neutral evaluation of the class, ‘human’ also carries a

semantic load. This is because of the assumed positive understanding in the text of what it means to be 'human'. This, in effect, sees it also functioning as a qualitative attribute even without qualitative characterizations. For, from the humanist perspective of the bestiary, the word 'human' implicitly refers to Aristotle's hierarchical *Great Chain of Being* that assumes as *natural* an hierarchical view of the world that positions 'human' as superior to all other beings and thus renders further qualitative characterizations superfluous.

The werewolves' transformation once a month 'into savage four-legged beasts of murderous intent and no human conscience' (x) is flagged as the obvious 'problem' (x) by the linking adjunct 'however' which sets up this transformation as 'logically' rendering their status of 'being' as questionable. The *relational attributive* clause construction reinforces this view by seeing werewolves as carriers of a number of negative qualitative attributes: 'savage four-legged beasts of murderous intent and no human conscience'. The 'the problem', then, appears to be whether or not 'most of their time' belonging to the class of 'human' is enough to counteract these negative qualitative attributes that manifest 'once a month'.

Within the description of the negative qualitative attributes of their transformation into 'savage, four-legged beasts of murderous intent and no human conscience'(x), there are a number of unexamined assumptions. This nominal group indicates that, though deciding who belongs in the category of 'being' may be 'the problem', the category of 'human' is not only considered to be 'understood' as superior but also as stable. The stability of

‘human’ is evidenced through its use as an essential characteristic of ‘being-ness’. The entity ‘human’ is represented as unproblematic and so those born human are automatically ‘worthy’ of ‘being’ status. The characteristics that can assign a species to the ‘beast’ class are, therefore, represented as other than human.

While ‘four-legged’ in isolation could be read as a neutral classifying adjective, juxtaposed with the qualitative adjective ‘savage’ it forms a paratactic relationship resulting in ‘four-legged’ acquiring a negative connotation. This negative connotation ‘logically’ sets up ‘four-legged’ to be understood as being in opposition to ‘two-legged’, and so other than human. ‘Murderous intent’ also implicitly references the human, however, in this case ‘murderous intent’ can be read as assigning human-like agency to other than human. For while there have been murder trials of ‘animals’ throughout history, in current western law, nonhuman animals are not considered to possess the moral agency that would designate certain types of killing as ‘murder’. Therefore, legally only humans can possess ‘murderous intent’. Unless the magical community considers ‘beasts’ as moral agents, this seems to imply that a human who has ‘murderous intent’, for example the villain of the series Voldemort, can be classified as a ‘beast’. However, this implication is countered by the representation of the beast as a *‘four-legged beast of murderous intent’*. The ‘beast’, therefore, is other than human. Further, as the term ‘murder’ is usually reserved to refer to the killing of a human being, apart from the term implicitly assigning a higher value to a human life over that of other than human, a defining characteristic of ‘beast’ appears, again, to be their degree of danger to humans.

The concept of 'no human conscience' is stated as unproblematic. There is no definition of 'human conscious' and it is taken as a given in this construction that it is a negative trait to be without one. Again, the starting point for the definition of the category of 'beast' is dependant on its opposition to the entity 'human'. As witches and wizards are human and, therefore, 'beings', the text assumes a worldview that *naturalizes* witches and wizards as having the authority to order the magical world as they see fit. This aligns the magical world of the *Harry Potter* universe and their attempts to regulate the entities in their world with historical Western philosophical thought. That is, that there are *natural* divisions between species and that these divisions are hierarchical. Being human then, whether kind or cruel, automatically assigns 'being' status.

Although werewolves do demonstrate that humans who 'transform into savage, four-legged beasts' are in danger of losing their 'being' status, the status of Hags as 'beings' (xiii, footnote 3) also indicates that if the material body is consistently 'human' then any obvious 'murderous intent' while 'glid[ing] about the place in search of children to eat', (xi) will be overlooked.

The importance of the material body does not appear to be relevant in the case of the centaurs:

The centaur's habits are not humanlike; they live in the wild, refuse clothing, prefer to live apart from wizards and Muggles alike, and yet have intelligence equal to theirs. (x)

Rather than their half horse half human physical appearance being the reason centaurs are considered liminal, it is their habits that are represented as 'the problem'. The

construction of 'The centaur's habits' as Carrier in a *relational attributive* process, with 'not humanlike' as the attribute, *naturally* has the potential to assign them to the class of 'beast'. As with werewolves, 'human' is again positioned as the unexamined yardstick for 'being'. The semicolon indicates that the *behavioural process* 'live' in 'they live in the wild', together with the *material process* 'refuse' in 'refuse clothing', and the *mental process* 'prefer' in 'prefer to live apart from wizards and Muggles alike' constitute these 'not humanlike' habits. 'Refuse' and 'prefer' grant the centaur agency which is then problematized by the coordinating conjunction 'and yet'. This construction positions their refusal to wear clothes and preference to live apart from humans as *illogical*, perhaps *unnatural*, considering that centaurs 'have intelligence equal to' humans. Here an attribute of 'human', intelligence, is again a 'being' identifier. As centaurs are said to possess this attribute, their possible exclusion from the 'being' category is due to their failure to fully embrace the 'human'.

Trolls bear a humanoid appearance, walk upright, may be taught a few simple words, and yet are less intelligent than the dullest unicorn, and possess no magical powers in their own right except for their prodigious and unnatural strength. (x)

The material body is again of importance in the case of trolls. Their 'humanoid appearance', ability to 'walk upright' and learn language, even if only 'a few simple words', because they are seen as human attributes, grants them consideration to be included in the 'being' category. However, unlike the centaurs, the following 'and yet' problematizes the troll's inclusion due to their perceived lack of intelligence, as they are 'less intelligent than the dullest unicorn'. The unexamined assumption is that *naturally*

'beings' are more intelligent than 'beasts', even though intelligence and how it is evaluated are left unexplained. For trolls, their only attribute is considered to be their strength, which is not only 'prodigious' but also 'unnatural' (x). The unexamined assumption here is that human strength is the benchmark of 'natural' strength. Just as trolls are excluded due to their less than human intelligence, their strength, because it is 'more than human', is deemed to be 'unnatural'. The descriptions of all three magical creatures, werewolves, centaurs and trolls demonstrate the continuation of the human-centric focus of historical bestiaries.

Pennington (2002), comments that Rowling 'seems to purchase her marvelous assorted creatures from the Sears catalogue of fantasy clichés' and goes on to say that '[w]ith such a menagerie, Rowling is unable to develop any of the fantastical creatures; in fact, she seems to expect the readers to bring that magic to her creations', a strategy that Pennington describes as 'a dubious technique at best' (82). However, while Pennington considers that, '[q]uite simply, Rowling does not have a firm footing in fantasy' (82-83), whether consciously or not, Rowling does effectively employ this 'dubious technique' that allows the reader not only 'to bring that magic to her creations' but also to find delight in doing so. As previously observed, a number of commentators consider the uncovering of mythological allusions to be a major attraction of the series (Berman, 2008, Huey, 2005, Gibbons, 2005) and the plethora of websites devoted to giving background information on all aspects of the world of Harry Potter seems to suggest that expecting readers to supply their own understanding of the nature of these creatures is a strategy that many find very appealing.

Whether or not Rowling consciously employs this strategy as a shortcut, or an ‘economy of effort’ (Lippmann, 2005: 95), is beside the point. What appears obvious is the success of a strategy that allows the reader an active role in the construction of this magical world. This ‘dubious technique’ is basically sound if one of the purposes of the representation of these creatures is to situate the magical world within an ‘authentic’ historical context. It can even be argued that Rowling’s failure to develop her fantastic beasts results in the enhanced veracity of their existence. For many readers, a sketchy description of a werewolf allows for any knowledge of werewolves that they bring to the tale to be accommodated. And if a reader is still unsure they can do a general internet search and go beyond sites dedicated specifically to *Harry Potter*. The very popular Wikipedia site, often the first (and only) port of call for many general inquiries, includes this quote on its werewolf page that werewolves:

are certayne sorcerers, who having annoynted their bodies with an ointment which they make by the instinct of the devil, and putting on a certayne inchaunted girdle, does not only unto the view of others seem as wolves, but to their own thinking have both the shape and nature of wolves, so long as they wear the said girdle. And they do dispose themselves as very wolves, in worrying and killing, and most of humane creatures. (Richard Verstegan, *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, 1628)

This description not only draws a close association between witches, wizards and werewolves but also continues to situate the magical world within a medieval milieu.

Similarly, on Wikipedia the entry on Centaurs notes that:

This half-human and half-animal composition has led many writers to treat them as liminal beings, caught between the two natures, embodied in

contrasted myths, both as the embodiment of untamed nature, as in their battle with the Lapiths, or conversely as teachers, like Chiron. (2010: npn)

Such a description not only supports but also enhances Rowling's representation of the centaurs. For not only can *Fantastic Beasts* be seen to be part of an 'authentic' ongoing debate as to the true nature of these 'liminal beings', as the use by Wikipedia of *being* reinforces the legitimacy of Rowling's use of the term as a category, but also helps to explain the centaur Firenze's suitability as a Divination teacher after he is violently expelled from his herd in the Forbidden Forrest.

This strategy also effectively ties Rowling's bestiary firmly into traditional humanist ways of defining 'human' as in opposition to the 'other'. This is further evidenced by noting that, though 'being' has as its starting point 'human' in *Fantastic Beasts*, as with Renaissance humanism, in the magical world not all humans *naturally* belong within the category. That it is 'witches' and 'wizards' who are automatically 'beings' and not humans in general is seen by the definition of 'being' as 'a creature worthy of legal rights and a voice in the governance of the magical world'. As the magical world is purposely kept secret from the Muggle world, non-magical humans have limited access to 'legal rights' and have no 'voice in the governance of the magical world'. That the status of Muggles is not altogether fixed is also demonstrated by the fact that there have been moves to have Muggles defined as 'beasts', although the perpetrators of these campaigns have been labelled as 'extremists' (xii).

The categories of 'being' and 'beast' also carry over heavy intertextual loads from western philosophy. As Ketchum (1998) observes, '[i]t is an understatement to claim that

“being” is one of the central concepts of ancient Greek metaphysics’ (321), and that, as Kahn (1973) points out:

insofar as the notions expressed by *on*, *einai*, and *ousia* in Greek underlie the doctrines of Being, substance, essence, and existence in Latin, in Arabic, and in modern philosophy from Descartes to Heidegger and perhaps to Quine, we may say that the usage of the Greek verb being studied here forms the historical basis for the ontological tradition of the West, as the very term “ontology” suggests. (1)

Beast, on the other hand, historically implies entities of ‘inferior reason and lack of intentionality’ (Roberts, 2008). *Fantastic Beasts* also follows historical Western taxonomies in that ‘beast’ is a species category. Within the *Harry Potter* series humans are represented with individual characters, either good, bad or, indeed, as with the young Scamander, brutal while other than human are in general represented as biologically determined to share species characteristics.

This ideological assumption that there are those who are ‘worthy of legal rights and a voice in the magical world’, and those who are not, semantically positions ‘being’ in opposition to ‘beast’. Therefore, the inability to define ‘beast’ is indeed ‘the problem’ (x) that needs the consideration of those who wish to secure their status as ‘beings’. Within *Fantastic Beast* the acknowledgement of the difficulty in reaching a consensus on the definitions of terms: ‘The definition of a “beast” has caused controversy for centuries’ (x), speaks to a *natural* assumption that there must be a division made and maintained as only ‘beings’ are understood to have the capacity to constitute the body politic:

We must now ask ourselves: which of these creatures is a ‘being’ - that is to say, a creature worthy of legal rights and a voice in the magical world – and which is a ‘beast’? (x).

More disturbing than the lack of ‘a voice in the magical world’ is the *natural* assumption that those classified as ‘beasts’ are *unworthy* of legal rights. There is a strong implication here that a ‘being’ has a *natural* right to treat those classed as ‘beasts’ in any way they choose, without fear of legal, or indeed moral, constraints. And by engaging in this ‘philosophical’ debate regarding the ‘scientific’ ordering of species, ‘What is a Beast’ reflects Goodale and Black’s observation that ‘[s]cience and philosophy, with their purportedly “natural” hierarchies, enable the use, exploitation, and killing of nonhuman animals with little moral quandary’ (2010: 2).

Texts such as *Fantastic Beasts* whose narrative and grammar maintain a Cartesian view of nonhuman/human animal relationships which reproduces, and so reinforces current social contradictions around those relationships, because they attempt to constitute the world with a rigid hierarchy, effectively miss the opportunity to deal with current notions of an ‘other-directed’ concern for nonhumans. Stewart (1999) describes rights movements as *other-directed* when:

- (1) they are created, led, and populated primarily by those who do not perceive themselves to be disposed and
- (2) they are struggling for the freedom, equality, justice, and rights of others rather than themselves. (91-92)

Rather than an ‘other-directed’ focus, *Fantastic Beasts* is firmly human-centred. As Field (1993) observes in his examination of introductory psychology textbooks that ‘[t]he introductory textbook is a good source for discovering the underlying and implicit attitudes about animals, since it plays a major and persuasive role in socializing students in scientific psychology’ (193). In the case of the introductory text for *Care of Magical*

Creatures, *Fantastic Beasts* can be seen as playing ‘a major and persuasive role in socializing’ readers to accept its ‘underlying and implicit attitudes about animals’ as *natural* in the magical world of *Harry Potter*. The nonhuman/human relationships *normalized* through the representation of this text, as both bestiary and school textbook, include the *natural* assumption that nonhuman animals are subject to humans and that there is a fundamental difference between human and nonhuman (even if it is hard to define) that must be recognized and maintained. How Harry Potter interacts with the text further indicates that there is also a *natural* directionality in children’s relationships with animal others; children *naturally* ‘grow out’ of ‘animals’. How these assumptions are expressed through the narrative and grammar in the series proper is examined in the following three chapters.

Chapter Eight: Nonhuman Animals as Food

Meat's significance, ... principally relates to environmental control, and it has long held an unrivalled status amongst major foods on account of this meaning. But meat's stature is not inherent in its substance, but has been invested in it by successive generations who highly valued its meaning: who *liked* the notion of power of nature that it embodies. (Fiddes, 1991: 45)

Introduction

This chapter investigates what constitutes the values and ideological assumptions underlying the representation of nonhuman animals as 'food' in children's literature and the boarding school story, two of the many genres that the *Harry Potter* series is said to inhabit. Also considered are the possible consequences of these values and assumptions for animal others, not just those who inhabit the 'moral and social world' (Tudor, 1974: 180) constituted by these genres.

Children's Literature, Boarding School Stories and Food

Though nonhuman animals inhabit the 'overwhelming majority' of literary genres identified with children's literature (Serpell, 1999: 87) there are certain sub-genres within children's literature that are assumed to have a more particular association with nonhuman animals as they have had an historical reliance on animal others to aid in their establishment. Alton (2009) argues that J. K. Rowling's 'incorporation of a vast number of genres' in the *Harry Potter* series, including 'pulp fiction, mystery, gothic and horror stories, detective fiction, the school story and closely related sports story, and series books' is 'one of the major reasons for its appeal' (199). And although Alton considers that 'no single genre can claim top place in the hierarchy' (221), this chapter focuses on two of those that are conventionally most associated with nonhuman animals, particularly

animal others as food. They are the superordinate category of ‘children’s literature’ and the hyponym of the ‘boarding school story’ genre, which both have an emphasis on food.

Children’s Literature and Food

Nodelman (2008) observes that ‘children’s literature’ as a literary category ‘defines an audience rather than a time or a place or a specific type of writing like romance or tragedy...’ (3). Such texts, Nodelman continues, are purchased by adults ‘on the basis of their ideas about what the children they purchase for like to and need to read’ (5). For as Nikolajeva (1996) notes ‘children’s literature has from the very beginning been related to pedagogies’ (3), with the result, Nodelman points out, that ‘[i]n terms of success in production, what children actually want to read or do end up reading is of less significance than what teachers, librarians, and parents will be willing to purchase for them to read’ (4-5). The ‘significance’ of children’s literature, therefore, from a Critical Animal Studies perspective, lies in how fictive nonhuman/human animal relationships reflect the judgements of producers as to ‘what they believe adult consumers believe they know will appeal to children (or perhaps, what should appeal to them, or what they need to be taught)’ (5). This means that interrogating children’s literature from a nonhuman animal centred focus creates the opportunity to consider any traces of attempts ‘to mould audience attitudes into ‘desirable’ forms’, evidenced by *naturalized* assumptions that accompany the representation of fictive nonhuman animals. In this way it is possible to examine how such representations ‘attempt to perpetuate certain values’ or be seen to ‘resist socially dominant values’ with regard to nonhuman/human animal relations.

Hunt (1994) notes the importance of food as a component of children’s literature when he

cites an historical survey of the genre as revealing some ‘obvious recurrent features’, including:

strong nostalgic/nature images; a sense of place or territory, egocentricity; testing and initiation; outsider/insider relationships; mutual respect between adults and children; closure; warmth/security – and food. (184)

J. K. Rowling is also quoted as positioning food as an important ingredient in both her remembrance of her favourite book as a child, *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge, and the *Harry Potter* series: ‘The author always included details of what her characters were eating and I remember liking that. You may have noticed that I always list the food being eaten at Hogwarts’ (Rowling in Fraser, 2002: npn). From this it can be argued that many of the food-related choices within the *Harry Potter* series that Rowling describes are intended to perform a similar function to those of her childhood memory of *The Little White Horse*: to give pleasure to the reader. Therefore, by examining the *Harry Potter* series as both an example of children’s literature, as well as the sub-genre of the boarding school story, it is possible to explore how children are socialized into their relationship with food. Such an examination is able not only to reveal the culture that constitutes the world of the *Harry Potter* series but also that of the extratextual world. For as Counihan (1999) observes, ‘[i]n every culture foodways constitute an organized system, a language that – through its structure and components – conveys meaning and contributes to the organization of the natural and social world’ (19). Keeling and Pollard (2009) go further and state that ‘[f]ood is fundamental to literature’:

If food is fundamental to life and a substance upon which civilizations and cultures have built themselves, then food is also fundamental to the imagination and the imaginary arts. Food is fundamental to the imagination, because food is fundamental to culture. (5)

With regard to children's literature, while Katz notes that '[c]hildren's literature is filled with food-related images, notions, and values: hospitality, gluttony, celebration, tradition, appetite, obesity' (1980: 192), Daniel (2006) assigns the literary representation of food a far more fundamental socializing role:

Children must also learn all sorts of rules about food and eating. Most important—they must know *who eats whom*. Food events in children's literature are clearly intended to teach children how to be human. (12) (emphasis in original)

For Daniel, being 'human' involves children eating 'correctly' through learning the 'vital' lesson of 'what they can and cannot eat according to prevailing cultural rules' (5).

The representation of food in literature is not only seen as a method to socialize the child. As Burgan (1991) observes, in the novels of Charles Dickens, the representation of everyday social practices around the feeding of children often holds 'symbolic signification' as 'nurture, or the lack thereof, inspires key episodes in the childhoods of *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Pip*' (69). Adult control of food that threatens a child's physical growth and psychological security is also used as a major narrative device in the *Harry Potter* series. Not only can the reader draw conclusions as to the moral worth of certain human characters through episodes involving food, but nurture, expressed through food 'or the lack thereof', first alerts the reader to the state of the relationship Harry Potter has with his relatives, the Dursleys, and his exclusion by them from the heart of their family. This can be contrasted with the meal of sausages that Harry is given when he first learns that he is a wizard. This meal, described as warm and comforting, can be seen as a symbolic welcome to his true 'home', the world of magic.

In the first book of the series, *The Philosopher's Stone*, Harry Potter is described as 'small and skinny for his age' (20) while his cousin Dudley, who is the same age, has 'a large, pink face, not much neck, small, watery blue eyes and thick, blond hair that lay smoothly on his thick, fat head. ... Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig' (21). Harry's lack of parental nurturing is indicated by his 'small and skinny' physique which is further emphasized via a direct comparison with Dudley: 'He [Harry] looked even smaller and skinnier than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley's and Dudley was about four times bigger than he was' (PS, 20).

While Harry's physical appearance functions as an indication of physical and emotional neglect, Dudley's weight is represented as an indicator of parental over indulgence that is confirmed when, threatening a tantrum because he has only received thirty-six birthday presents, Dudley is placated by his mother who promises that 'we'll buy you another *two* presents while we're out today' (21) (emphasis in original). As Webb (2009) observes, Vernon and Petunia Dursley's 'parental lack of the exercise of discipline and social and moral training are symbolized by their child's greed' (114). Not only is the Dursley's lack of parental discipline and 'social and moral training' of Dudley represented through the superabundance of food they provide for him, Harry's apparent lack of food, indicated by his skinniness, works to signify Vernon and Petunia Dursley's broader failings. Contrasting Harry's lack of food with Dudley's overindulgence strongly indicates a conscious neglect of Harry on the part of the Dursleys. This conscious neglect, in turn, points to the Dursleys' moral character: they can be seen as mean spirited and

utterly intolerant of any one who differs from their concept of 'perfectly normal', as they are very aware of Harry Potter's magical heritage and make no secret of their hostility towards the magical world.

While the representation of food in the Dursley household alerts the reader to interpersonal relationships, what is actually eaten appears to provide no joy for Harry Potter, nor apparently is it meant to for the reader. For example, in the second chapter of the first book, *The Philosopher's Stone*, when the reader first meets Harry Potter as a ten year old, he is tasked with cooking breakfast for his cousin. Although his actions are described there are no accompanying descriptions of sight, sound or smell as Harry 'look[s] after the bacon' (19), or as he was 'turning over the bacon' (20) and 'frying the eggs' (21) nor when he 'put the plates of egg and bacon on the table' (21). The reader is not privy to his attitude toward the food and there can be assumed to be little pleasure or leisure in the actual consumption of the food as Harry 'began wolfing down his bacon as fast as possible in case Dudley turned the table over' (21).

The very paucity of sensory details in this representation of the cooking and consumption of animal others within the Dursley household does in fact function to perform a number of narrative tasks, especially when contrasted with later descriptions of the food served to Harry and his classmates at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Firstly, it is used to indicate lack; Harry lacks power in his relationship with his aunt that goes beyond that of traditional adult/child relationships, and Aunt Petunia lacks the will/ability to provide the orphaned Harry with 'proper' maternal care. As Daniel (2006) points out,

'part of the good mother paradigm is food provisioning ... it suits authors of children's stories who need a shortcut to representing the mother' (114). In this instance it is Aunt Petunia's lack of 'food provisioning' for Harry that is the initial shortcut that alerts the reader that Aunt Petunia is not acting as a 'good' mother to Harry. This is indicated textually initially by her brusque command that wakes Harry, 'Up! Get up! Now!', that is issued in 'her shrill voice' (19), with '*her*' shrill voice, rather than '*a*' shrill voice, alerting the reader that her shrillness is to be read as habitual. Harry is then ungraciously directed by his aunt to help prepare breakfast: 'Well, get a move on, I want you to look after the bacon. And don't you dare let it burn, I want everything perfect on Dudley's birthday' (19-20). Harry's powerless state is seemingly confirmed when he fails to elaborate on his initial response of a groan:

'What did you say?' his aunt snapped through the door.
'Nothing, nothing ...' (20)

As Lisa Rowe Fraustino (2009) also notes, one reoccurring function that food fulfils in children's literature is its representation of a mother's love. Therefore, Harry's neglected state is emphasized when, rather than having his breakfast prepared for him by a 'good' mother, Harry must serve in the kitchen with this servitude appearing more onerous because he must cook, rather than merely fill a bowl with breakfast cereal. Read this way, that it is bacon and eggs that Harry must cook becomes immaterial; it is the process of cooking rather than the substance produced, with the process used to illustrate the relationship between Harry and his aunt and cousin. The food therefore is unimportant; it is Harry's situation that is important. Generically, experienced readers of fairy tales,

especially Cinderella, should recognize Harry's role here as kitchen drudge in hand-me-down clothes and also be able to anticipate his eventual liberation.

Bacon and eggs for breakfast does become more of an issue when considering Daniel's (2006) contention that '[f]ood events in children's literature are clearly intended to teach children how to be human' (12). Interestingly, it is not Harry's lack of food that is treated as the major danger for 'proper' human development. Harry may be 'small and skinny for his age' but he is still represented as having enough energy to get himself out of trouble: 'Dudley's favourite punch-bag was Harry, but he couldn't often catch him. Harry didn't look it, but he was very fast' (20). Rather, it is Dudley's over consumption of food that appears to jeopardize his 'humanness'. Harry is seen to observe that 'Dudley looked like a pig in a wig' (21). Glucksberg and McGlone (1999) make the point that people make sense of 'ordinary conversational metaphors such as *Sam is a pig*', which '[t]he traditional view in psychology, linguistics, and the philosophy of language treats [...] as false and uninterpretable', by recasting them 'explicitly or implicitly into similes'. The example that they cite 'Sam is a pig', is, they observe, 'literally false' but able to demonstrate a truth value if 'transformed into the simile *Sam is like a pig...*': 'After all, any two things can be similar in any number of ways' (1541).

The description of Dudley looking 'like a pig in a wig', then, can be understood to work on a number of levels. As Glucksberg and McGlone (1999) state, '[w]ith extensive use, a metaphor's meaning can become conventional. [...] Eventually, originally metaphoric meanings are listed as conventional word senses in dictionaries.' This is the case with

'pig' for, among the several senses of the word 'pig', the Macquarie Essential Dictionary lists 'a person or animal of piggish character or habit' (1999: 592). Therefore, readers could assume that along with Dudley's physical description, 'a large, pink face, not much neck, small, watery blue eyes and thick, blond hair that lay smoothly on his thick, fat head', that is seen to remind Harry Potter of Dudley's supposed physical similarity with a pig, attention is also drawn to Dudley's moral character. It appears that the reader is being invited to come to the conclusion that *naturally* Dudley is not a sympathetic or morally 'good' character because of his too obvious 'animal' nature, exemplified by his 'pig-like' appearance and love of food. As Stibbe (2003) observes, there are 'presuppositions, taken-for-granted facts about the world that lie behind' such expressions. Stibbe goes on to say that for such similes as 'You are as fat as a pig' (or 'Dudley looked like a pig in a wig') to be effective there must be a presupposition that it is common knowledge that 'pigs are (very) fat animals.' An exploration of such presuppositions, Stibbe maintains, 'is an effective way of revealing the cultural model, or in Barthes' [...] terms, the mythology underlying linguistic usage' for:

[p]resuppositions are a particularly powerful way of building and sustaining the models on which a culture is based. The expression 'as selfish as a pig' presupposes that pigs are (very) selfish, without any kind of overt statement, such as 'pigs are selfish,' which could be proved wrong. As expressions are repeated in the general currency of society, the mythology of pigs as selfish creatures is perpetuated. (377)

The repeated use of such an expression, therefore, not only allows the culturally attuned reader short cuts to understanding Dudley's physical and moral character: he is fat, he is greedy and he is selfish, it also trains young readers into a culturally mediated negative understanding of pigs. For such conventional metaphors as this, Goatly (2006) observes,

are so naturalized that they ‘do not unsettle our modes of perception, feeling, or action, since they have achieved currency as an acceptable way of constructing, conceptualizing, and interacting with reality’ (16).

While Dudley may be represented as in need of learning the finer ‘rules about food and eating’ that ‘are clearly intended to teach [him] how to be human’, he, Harry Potter and the implied reader, are all assumed to have learnt the ‘most important’ rule: ‘*who eats whom*’ (Daniel, 2006: 12). It is clear that the eating of animal others is from the first *normalized* in the series by the representation of Mr and Mrs Dursley, in the very first sentence of *The Philosopher’s Stone*, as being ‘proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much’ (7). There is, therefore, an assumption that all the social practices of the Dursleys will reflect the ‘perfectly normal’. As a result, the implied reader is also constructed as one who accepts that eating bacon and eggs for breakfast constitutes a ‘perfectly normal’ social practice.

While the cooking of bacon and eggs constitutes a *naturalized* ‘perfectly normal’ social practice in the Dursley household, its narrative function is to indicate Harry Potter’s neglected, outsider status within the family. The use of cooked meat as a narrative device to create a comforting atmosphere in the series appears later and is only ever an attribute of the magical world, as seen when Harry Potter first meets Rubeus Hagrid, the half giant who enlightens Harry as to his magical heritage in book one. Previous to this meeting, Vernon Dursley had transported his family to an isolated spot in order to avoid receiving

any more letters addressed to Harry Potter from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry:

It was freezing in the boat. Icy sea spray and rain crept down their necks and a chilly wind whipped their faces. After what seemed like hours they reached the rock, where Uncle Vernon, slipping and sliding, led the way to the broken-down house.

The inside was horrible; it smelled strongly of seaweed, the wind whistled through the gaps in the wooden walls and the fireplace was damp and empty. There were only two rooms.

Uncle Vernon's rations turned out to be a packet of crisps each and four bananas. He tried to start a fire but the empty crisp packets just smoked and shrivelled up. (PS, 37)

Descriptions of the weather and the elements, beginning with the meteorological process, 'It was freezing', as well as the journey seeming to be very long, represent the *discomfort* suffered by the Dursleys and Harry Potter. To compound this discomfort their destination is 'horrible'. The food mentioned within the context of this unpleasantness, 'a packet of crisps each and four bananas', acquires a negative connotative value due to its association with the dreary weather, elements and location. Here fruit, 'four bananas', is coupled with junk food, 'a packet of crisps each' which effectively devalues fruit as being either nutritious or filling. Both 'a packet of crisps each' and 'four bananas' are here represented to be as cold and as cheerless as the situation in which the characters find themselves. This failure of the bananas and crisps to provide any form of comfort is further 'proven' when 'the empty crisp packets just smoked and shrivelled up' when Mr Dursley attempts to use them as fuel to light a fire for warmth. Opposed to this is the description of Hagrid cooking sausages that is represented as *naturally* being able to provide the warmth and comfort that has been lacking in the hut:

Soon the hut was full of the sound and smell of sizzling sausage. Nobody said a thing while the giant was working, but as he slid the first six fat, juicy, slightly burnt sausages from the poker, Dudley fidgeted a little. ...

He passed the sausages to Harry, who was so hungry he had never tasted anything so wonderful, ... (PS, 40-41)

In contrast to the cooked bacon of the earlier breakfast, the extended use of the alliterative sibilants, 'soon', 'sound', 'smell', 'sausage', 'said', 'slid', 'six', 'slightly' and 'sausages', emphasizes the onomatopoeic representation of the 'sizzling sausage' cooking in the fire, the warmth from which Harry had felt 'wash over him as though he'd sunk into a hot bath' (40). This description of the cooking and eating of these sausages represents a multi-sensory experience: The *sight* of Hagrid cooking the sausages engrossed Harry Potter and the Dursleys to such a degree that '[n]obody said a thing', the *sound* and *smell* of the sizzling sausage filled the hut, and their *taste* is 'wonderful'. To complete the experience, Harry *felt* the warmth from the cooking fire 'wash over him as though he'd sunk into a hot bath' (40). Just as the bananas and crisps had earlier been aligned with the *discomfort* of their cold and cheerless situation, here the 'sizzling sausage' is associated with the positive connotative value of the complete gratification of all the senses.

This representation of the inadequacy of bananas and crisps to provide comfort while the cooked sausages are 'wonderful' reflects observations made by the anthropologist Mary Douglas in her influential essay 'Deciphering a Meal' first published in 1972. Douglas states that the food that we value in our meals reflects a taxonomy of classification that both constitutes and is constituted by the culture in which we live:

The meaning of a meal is found in a system of repeated analogies. Each meal carries something of the meaning of other meals; each meal is a structured social event which structures others in its own image. (2008: 44)

Understanding the representation of bananas and crisps in this way strongly suggests that the eating habits of the fictive world of the *Harry Potter* series reflects that of the world beyond the books. Read this way, the bananas and crisps lack the ability to provide comfort because the ‘repeated analogies’ that they echo situate them culturally as not constituent parts of a ‘proper’ meal, whereas ‘sizzling sausages’, in the grammar of a meal, are *naturally* seen as the ‘stressed’ (Douglas, 2008: 42), or main, components.

Hagrid’s provision of a hot meal for Harry also, according to Douglas, ‘expresses close friendship’ (2008: 41): a view that is seemingly confirmed by Hagrid’s failure to make an offer of food to any of the Dursleys. The actions of Hagrid, when taking it upon himself to provide something to eat for Harry, imply a *natural* assumption that Harry eats meat, as he cooks the sausages without first inquiring if Harry will in fact eat them. As well as this, the narrative can also be seen to grammatically represent Harry’s acceptance of ‘six fat, juicy, slightly burnt sausages’ (40) as a certainty when Hagrid ‘*passed* the sausages to Harry’ (41), an action that can be seen to *naturally* assume acceptance, rather than *offered* the sausages to Harry, an action that has a potential for rejection.

The apparent *naturalness* of these assumptions can also be said to reflect Adams’ (2007) observations on meat and gender. Following Adams, Hagrid’s choice of meat as an appropriate food to share with a new friend goes to the construction of his character as one belonging to the class of ‘stereotypical strong and hearty, rough and ready, able

males' (177). Harry's acceptance of the sausages also contributes to the construction of his character, as being a meat-eater *naturally* places Harry in the class of proactive hero. For as Adams notes, there is a cultural understanding that 'active men need animal meat' (179).

From these examples it is apparent that these representations of food in the *Harry Potter* series, particularly cooked meat, fulfil a number of narrative tasks that help to reveal the 'moral and social world' (Tudor, 1974: 180) that constitutes the series. Not only does the cooking of bacon and eggs signal plot development by flagging the fairytale genre through the representation of Harry Potter as a kitchen drudge who must reluctantly cook for his cousin, but food also works to construct character. By contrasting Harry's lack of food with Dudley's superabundance, Vernon and Petunia Dursley are positioned as both neglectful guardians and overindulgent parents which goes to help establish them as people intolerant of any opinions or ways of being in the world that differ from their 'perfectly normal' view of the world. Further, sharing a meal of cooked meat is represented as a *natural* beginning for the close friendship that Hagrid and Harry Potter will also share. As well as this, the meal of sausages can be seen as aligning both Hagrid and Harry Potter with the 'masculine' attributes of strength and activity. All these narrative strategies, however, rest on the taken-for-granted premise within the text that cooking and eating animal others is *natural* not only in the world of the book but also in the world of the reader.

This taken-for-granted premise helps in the early construction of the fictive world of the *Harry Potter* series and establishes the 'vital' lesson for children as to 'what they can and cannot eat according to prevailing cultural rules' (Daniel, 2006: 5) that exist in the series. Those rules reflect mainstream social practices of the extratextual world by regarding the eating of meat as 'perfectly normal'. Further, there is a warning concerning 'correct' eating, which cautions that, to be truly human, one must not be a glutton, for in gluttony there lurks the danger of becoming an 'animal', evidenced by 'Dudley look[ing] like a pig in a wig' (21). This danger is repeatedly flagged throughout most of the series via this continuing motif of comparing Dudley to a pig. In chapter five of *The Philosopher's Stone*, when Hagrid becomes angry with Vernon Dursley and, as a result, inflicts 'a curly pig's tail' on Dudley, Hagrid observes, 'Shouldn'ta lost me temper' ... 'but it didn't work anyway. Meant ter turn him into a pig, but I suppose he was so much like a pig anyway there wasn't much left ter do' (48).

Continuing the theme, in the second book, *The Chamber of Secrets*, Dudley is described as 'pink and porky' (9) and in both the third book, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, and the fourth, *The Goblet of Fire*, we read of 'his piggy little eyes' (PA, 18), (GF, 31), while in the fifth book, *The Order of the Phoenix*, Harry taunts Dudley with the query 'Did he say you look like a pig that's been taught to walk on its hind legs? 'Cause that's not cheek, Dud, that's true' (17). And because this supposed physical resemblance of Dudley to a pig is used as a narrative device to elucidate his want of 'good' moral character, this disruption of the nonhuman/human animal binary reproduces and reaffirms a cultural understanding of a *natural* abhorrence of not only pigs but also of being classed as a

‘animal’ through ‘presuppositions, [and] taken-for-granted facts about the world that lie behind’ (Stibbe, 2003: 377) such a comparison.

The *naturally* assumed effectiveness of employing such a narrative strategy to indicate moral character is demonstrated by the absence of any pig metaphors from descriptions of Dudley in both the sixth book, *The Half-Blood Prince*, and the final instalment of the series, *The Deathly Hallows*. In *The Half-Blood Prince* Dudley is merely observed to have a ‘large blond head’ (49) while his description in *The Deathly Hallows* is as ‘Dudley, Harry’s large, blond, muscular cousin’ (31). The reason for this change is revealed in *The Deathly Hallows* when it becomes obvious to Harry, and the reader, that Dudley has achieved some level of redemption through his appreciation of his rescue by Harry from the Dementors in the fifth book, *The Order of the Phoenix*. Interestingly, it appears that the lure of the pig metaphor has been too strong for Rowling to completely discard as the attributes of ‘small piggy eyes’ (53) in *The Half-Blood Prince* and ‘piggy little eyes’ (32) in *The Deathly Hallows* have been transferred to the still loathsome Vernon Dursley.

These representations of meat eating as natural and the continued use of the pejorative pig metaphor work together to reinforce and reproduce a humanist world-view that privileges the human. Negative nonhuman animal metaphors serve a very important social purpose as they essentially embody an understanding that there is a need for strict boundaries between human and nonhuman animals. Goatly (2006) observes that, ‘[t]he most common animal metaphors for humans are pejorative, suggesting that it is

desirable to distance ourselves from animals, both conceptually and emotionally’ (34). Establishing this distance functions to help maintain the unproblematic continuation of many current social practices. As Serpell (1996) points out, there is a tendency for humans to cultivate a detached attitude to those animal others whom we wish to kill and eat in order to avoid any ‘ethical considerations’ (188). Pejorative nonhuman animal metaphors contribute to this tendency, as does the continued acceptance of Aristotle’s *Great Chain of Being* and Descartes’ view of nonhuman animals as insentient machines which, Serpell observes, ‘were both myths that aided the process of detachment by creating an absolute rather than a relative distinction between humans and non-humans’ (189). Serpell notes that:

The whole idea of human moral supremacy was a myth contrived from an odd mixture of biblical and classical sources which achieved formal expression in the writings of Thomas Aquinas during the thirteenth century. (169)

By the time of the Renaissance there was an emphasis on ‘the uniqueness of human beings, their free will, their potential, and their dignity; and they contrasted all this with the limited nature of the “lower animals”’ (Singer, 2002: 198). Descartes acknowledges, in a letter to Henry More, that the proposition of a mechanistic universe, wherein only human’s possess a soul, has ‘practical advantages’:

My opinion is not so much cruel to animals as indulgent to men – at least to those who are not given to the superstitions of Pythagoras – since it absolves them from the suspicion of crime when they eat or kill animals. (1649, 2007: 62)

As Stibbe (2001) states, ‘it is not surprising to find that discourse evolving in a predominantly meat-eating culture reflects negative attitudes towards animals’ (152). And indeed, these ‘negative attitudes towards animals’ are evidenced within the *Harry*

Potter series through both the pejorative nonhuman animal metaphors and also a detached attitude to nonhuman animals demonstrated by the complete absence of any mention of ‘ethical considerations’ (Serpell, 1996: 188) with regard to the killing and eating of animal others. In this series eating meat is not only represented as *natural* it is also positioned, both narratively and textually, as essentially *enjoyable*, particularly once Harry Potter enters the magical community, most notably when he arrives at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This is demonstrated most clearly from an exploration of how the narrative mobilizes discourses around meat eating within the generic structure of the ‘boarding school’ genre.

The Boarding School Genre and Food

The *Harry Potter* series activates the boarding school genre not merely because most of the action occurs at Harry Potter’s boarding school, Hogwarts School of witchcraft and Wizardry. Smith (2003) notes that the series conforms to the ‘rule of three’ as the hero, Harry Potter, has a best friend, Ron Weasley, and they are joined by a third companion, Hermione Granger. This grouping mirrors the historical practice of many actual boarding schools that required students ‘to travel in groups of three’ for safety reasons as well as ‘to discourage “unnatural” closeness’, and it is observed to be a common feature of traditional examples of the genre (74). As in traditional school stories, the time frame of each instalment of the *Harry Potter* series, with the exception of the final book, is the academic school year, with Harry Potter typically travelling to and from Hogwarts at the start and end of each book. Other common features of the genre that appear in the *Harry Potter* series are ‘[t]he rule-structure, the punishments, the point system, and the ever-present threat of expulsion’ that result in the series being ‘absolutely typical of the

traditional boarding school story' (80). Smith also considers that 'Rowling is keeping faith with the school-story genre in spotlighting the significance of the sport for the school and for the hero' by including detailed descriptions of the magical game of Quidditch (81).

Of all the features of the genre, food, Smith (2003) observes, might be said to constitute 'the most important – almost obsessive – part of boarding school life and stories' (81); a notion that is reflected in the prominent role that food plays within the *Harry Potter* series. Armistead (1999) also has no difficulty classifying the *Harry Potter* series as an example of 'a classic boarding school fantasy' due to the inclusion of 'dodgy food, sadistic teachers, bullies and unshakable loyalties' (n.p.). While vegans would be in agreement with her description of the food served at Hogwarts as 'dodgy', Armistead's reference to 'dodgy food' as a generic marker of 'a classic boarding school fantasy' misrepresents the narrative role that the descriptions of the food served plays in providing pleasure for Harry Potter and his friends. And though, as Lacoss (2002) has noted, '[w]izard food, with the exception of children's treats, does not differ considerably from its Muggle counterpart' (76), the textual representation of the food at Hogwarts leaves little doubt that readers are being encouraged to regard the food served at the school as infinitely more desirable than the food served in the Dursley household.

The importance placed on food as a narrative strategy that helps to construct both Hogwarts and the magical community as not only welcoming but also as *naturally* more preferable than the Muggle world is demonstrated by the representation of Harry Potter's

very first meal at the school. A sense of drama and opulence is initially created by, what could be termed, the *mise-en-scène* of Harry's journey from London to Hogwarts on a dedicated school steam train, followed by his and the other first year students' crossing of 'a great black lake' in little boats to get to 'a vast castle' with 'windows sparkling in the starry sky' (83). To add to the atmosphere, once in the castle they are taken to the Great Hall to be magically sorted into their houses before they are served a 'start-of-term banquet' (85). After such a narrative build up, the reader can be excused for anticipating that the meal served to the students will be 'special', not the least because it is served in a Great Hall, the medieval term for the main room of a castle, with the food being designated a 'banquet', which implies a large celebratory meal of many courses.

Whereas Hagrid's cooking of sizzling sausages in chapter four is represented as a sensory delight, the impact of the banquet depends more on a representation of excess, demonstrated both by an enumeration of the different dishes and the description of the food as being 'piled' onto the dishes:

Harry's mouth fell open. The dishes in front of him were now piled with food. He had never seen so many things he liked to eat on one table: roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamb chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, chips, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup and, for some strange reason, mint humbugs.

[...] Harry piled his plate with a bit of everything except the humbugs and began to eat. It was all delicious.

"That does look good," said the ghost in the ruff sadly, watching Harry cut up his steak. 92

Harry is shown to express amazement at the sight of the food via the conventionally understood paralinguistic gesture of his mouth falling open. Though this gesture can be linked to either pleasure or horror, any ambiguity is quickly dispelled when the food is categorized as ‘things he liked to eat’. After ‘Harry piled his plate with a bit of everything except the humbugs’, an action that indicates an enthusiastic response to the food, both character focalisation and narrator focalisation merge, which adds to the certainty of the assessment that ‘[i]t was all delicious’.

The listing of the ‘things [Harry] liked to eat’ imposes an apparent hierarchical ordering as the meat dishes gain significance both through being mentioned first as well as their profusion, with seven described. Interestingly, this list reflects Fiddes’ (1991) observation that ‘red meat (which intrinsically implies the death of a highly evolved animal) has conventionally been our most prestigious food, roughly followed in terms of value by other flesh foods, then dairy products, with vegetables bringing up the rear’ (110). As well as this, this banquet can also be seen as a very generous version of the British Sunday roast that traditionally includes roasted meats and potatoes along with Yorkshire pudding, vegetables and gravy.

Hill (2007), commenting on the decline of the British social practice of ‘the once familiar Sunday ritual of a weekly family lunch’ (npn), states that:

In the Fifties, the British Sunday lunch became second only to the Christmas dinner as a symbol of the perfect nuclear family and its cosy, domestic rituals. More recently, the meal has become increasingly politicised, with its decline seen as a metaphor for the break-up of family life. The government has even suggested that bringing back the tradition could help combat childhood obesity. (npn)

Mobilizing such discourses around this banquet renders it capable of creating an atmosphere of longing and nostalgia for both the medieval grandeur of castles and feasts and, at the same time, the comfort of family and ‘cosy, domestic rituals’. As Wansink, Cheney, and Chan, (2003: 739) found in their study on comfort foods, ‘childhood experiences can be critical in forming life-long food consumption preferences and habits’. Such fictive representations of food as in this banquet have the ability to entice the reader to experience the same implicit promise that is offered to Harry; that such food is capable of nurturing more than the physical body as it is also intrinsically bound up in concepts of family and belonging.

The presence of a positive psychological component to the descriptions of Hogwarts’ food is accepted as *natural* by many fans. As one named Susanna remarks, ‘[f]ood descriptions create atmosphere in JKR’s books [...] definitely unhealthy, but emanating cosiness and comfort, things that Harry has sorely missed until he finally enters the world of magic’ (2001: npn). Such a reading makes an assumption that the description of Hogwarts’ predominately meat based diet is *naturally* meant to perform more than one narrative function. The basic task of informing the reader of the diet of witches and wizards is effectively subordinated to a *natural* understanding that this food’s main function is to act as ‘comfort food’ for both Harry and the reader, that is, ‘foods whose consumption evokes a psychologically comfortable and pleasurable state for a person’ (Wansink, Cheney & Chan, 2003: 739). This *natural* interpretation can be seen to encourage readers, particularly those who wish to identify with Harry Potter and his friends, to see the eating of nonhuman animals as providing more than mere sustenance,

here the eating of the flesh of animal others *naturally* ‘evokes a psychologically comfortable and pleasurable state’, by functioning as ‘a symbol of the perfect [magical] family and its cosy, domestic rituals’ (Hill, 2007, npn).

This view of meat consumption at Hogwarts as representing family, comfort and belonging is never seen to be contested at any time during the series by the presence of students or staff who choose to eat more humanely. As Morris (2009) notes, in spite of the growing popularity in recent years of the vegetarian movement in Britain, particularly amongst the young, food in the series fails to reflect this growing social practice. This is despite surveys that indicate that ‘[c]hoosing vegetarian dishes and meals is now regarded as a “mass option” and is no longer a radical stance’ (348). The absence of vegetarian or vegan students or staff avoids the need to address any ‘ethical consideration’ (Serpell, 1996: 188) and allows for the continuation of a detached attitude with regard to who it is being served up at the many start-of-term welcoming feasts, end-of-term farewell feasts, Christmas feasts and Halloween feasts that are described throughout the series.

Not only is concern for the animal others whose destiny is the dinner table never expressed within the series, neither is the economic structure of the magical world’s food supply examined in any detail. There are only scant details as to how and under what conditions these ‘domestic’ animal others live in the magical world. This means that the opportunity to discuss or reflect upon how the human characters actually deal with ‘the question of the animal’ as economic resource does not present itself in the series. While there is a chicken-coop mentioned in the second book, *The Chamber of Secrets*, its

purpose is to account for the presence of roosters whose narrative role is to provide a clue to the existence of the Basilisk:

'The crowing of the rooster is fatal to it!' he read aloud. 'Hagrid's roosters were killed! The Heir of Slytherin didn't want one anywhere near the castle once the Chamber was opened!' (CS, 216).

As well as no mention of where all the pigs, cows, sheep and the 'hundred fat, roast, turkeys' (PS, 149), whose bodies end up on the diner table, come from, the series also does not mention whether or not one of Hagrid's jobs as Hogwarts' gamekeeper and general caretaker is to look after specially kept flocks of geese in order to maintain the supply of the vast numbers of quills that would be needed by students and staff. Neither is it mentioned if herds of sheep, goats or calves are kept ready to be slaughtered for their skins, in order to provide parchment for the students' essays, as well as their flesh for the table.

It is conventionally understood that authors will avoid issues such as these in order 'to keep the story moving'. However, as Hollindale (1988) observes, the effects of such strategies, that either completely ignore or 'downgrade' certain types of characters, can also be read as 'curtailments of humanity embedded in an ideology'. The effects of such 'omission and invisibility', from a Critical Animal Studies perspective, are applicable equally to nonhuman animals. While the invisibility of the lives of animal others is generally accepted as 'mere story conventions', if they effectively 'do not exist' within the narrative (19-21), this is a potent signal to the reader that the lives of nonhuman animals are in fact unworthy of consideration.

The overwhelming predominance of meat dishes in the diet of Hogwarts' students (figure 1, page 162) can also be seen to reflect a reading of meat as the meaning equivalent of 'food'. Fiddes (1991) observes that being deprived of meat is regarded by many as tantamount to starvation and quotes one woman who, when asked if she could kill an 'animal' for meat, responded, 'I don't think I could. I think I'd probably starve' (14). In the *Harry Potter* series the space for such questions is scrupulously avoided, as there is no obvious connection between slaughterhouse and plate to disturb either characters or readers. The curriculum at Hogwarts aids in the fostering of this 'process of detachment' (Serpell, 1996: 189). For if, along with the subject Care of Magical Creatures, Harry and his friends attended a course on 'Animal Husbandry', where the students learnt the best way to approach a cow, in a similar fashion to the lesson on Hippogriffs in book three, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, arguably not only Harry and his friends, but also the reader, may have found it harder to view the piles of flesh dished up at every Hogwarts' mealtime with equanimity. At the very least there would be a narrative space created that could make it *natural* to ponder 'ethical considerations' (188). One such consideration being the processes employed by western culture that result in the nonhuman animals whom we eat being regarded as abstract objects rather than individual subjects.

While narratives such as the *Harry Potter* series, that avoid any reference to the living source of the beef casseroles, black puddings, lamb and pork chops, roast beef and roast chickens that are said to grace their tables, contribute to an emotional detachment from those whose bodies supply our food, the surfeit of flesh products is also a discursive

strategy that speaks to historical attitudes around the consumption of meat. As Adams (2007) notes:

people in power have always eaten meat. The aristocracy of Europe consumed large courses filled with every kind of meat while the labourer consumed the complex carbohydrates. Dietary habits proclaim class distinctions, but they proclaim patriarchal distinctions as well. (172)

The extent to which the magical/Muggle dichotomy essentially reflects traditional class distinctions is made more explicit in the sixth book, *The Half Blood Prince*, when the Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge, visits the new Muggle Prime Minister. Fudge explains the separation between the two communities by informing the Prime Minister that he ‘was not to bother his head about them as the Minister for Magic took responsibility for the whole magical community and prevented the non-magical population from getting wind of them’ (HBP: 11). In other words, the magical community is positioned as above the governance of the mundane world. The dietary habits of witches and wizards then functions as an historical allusion that further reflects this class distinction as they embody the notion of an ‘aristocracy [who] consume large courses filled with every kind of meat’. By ignoring recent extratextual cultural changes in diet that have seen a reduction in meat consumption, the magical world is more firmly positioned as a culture separate and apart from the Muggle world and, as such, one that also *naturally* embraces ‘patriarchal distinctions’. Indeed, on the release of the final instalment of the series, Heilman and Donaldson (2009) observed that, in the series as a whole ‘[t]he overall message related to power and gender still conforms to the stereotypical, hackneyed, and sexist patterns of the first four books, which reflect rather than challenge the worst elements of patriarchy’ (140).

Marti Kheel (2005) considers that ‘a major factor that buttresses meat eating in the Western world [...] is its intimate tie to masculine self-identity. Meat eating is both an expression of a patriarchal worldview and one of its central supports, a symbol of dominance over the natural world that has been intimately tied to the domination of women’ (17-18). Kheel speaks from an ecofeminism perspective and urges an interrogation of ‘the factors that support the practice of meat eating and give it its compelling force’ (17) in order to ‘open a space in which to plant the seeds of a new relationship to food and a new practice of care’ (18). The development of a Critical Animal Studies focus on contemporary children’s literature is an important contribution to research into the social constructs and discursive formations that *currently* serve, from a very young age, to *naturalize* our relationships with, attitudes to and treatment of nonhuman animals. A nonhuman animal centred approach to texts can aid in the ‘critical scrutiny’ (18) of social practices such as meat eating that Kheel urges and, ideally, assist in the taking up of her ‘invitational approach to vegetarianism’ (17) that situates ‘[t]he appeal of vegetarian foods [as flowing] at once from an urge to resist patriarchal forms of dominance and control, and from positive feelings of empathy and care for the other animals with whom we share the Earth’. Along with Kheel, those of us with a Critical Animal Studies perspective must surely hope that ‘[i]t is an invitation that many cannot refuse’ (18).

FOOD SERVED AT HOGWARTS

	Meat	Vegetables	Fruit	Dairy/Eggs	Other
Breakfast	bacon kippers sausages			eggs milk	corn flakes porridge rolls toast orange juice
Lunch and Dinner	bacon and steak beef casserole black pudding bouillabaisse Cornish pasties lamb chops pork chops roast beef roast chicken sandwiches (chicken and ham) sausages shepherd's pie steak steak and kidney pudding stew tripe Yorkshire Pudding casserole steak and kidney pie fried sausages	carrots peas potatoes: chips boiled jacket mashed roast sprouts pumpkin fried tomatoes	strawberries	butter	gravy jam ketchup pumpkin juice
Desserts, snacks, & sweets	apple pies chocolate éclairs chocolate gateau crumpets custard tart ice cream jam doughnuts jelly		marshmallows mint humbugs rice pudding spotted dick (contains suet) treacle tart trifle		

Figure: 1 - Food Served at Hogwarths School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Chapter Nine: Companion Animals and Others

In stories, television, movies, video games, and ads, ... animals are a ready cast of characters through which children explore facets of themselves – the wild beast, the cunning fox, the faithful dog, the huge and toothsome dinosaur. Because adults create them, these symbolic images are also a window into a culture's ideas about children and animals and how they are related. (Melson, 2001: 18)

It is because adults create such representations that they can also provide 'a window' into how children are interpollated into 'proper' relationships between humans and other animals within a given culture. Therefore, by examining how nonhuman/human animal relationships are represented in popular texts it is possible to observe how both grammar and narrative often work to encode as *natural* the nonhuman/human interactions depicted. This chapter begins by first considering the narrative and grammatical representation of the relationship that the 'animal lover' in the series, Rubeus Hagrid, has with other beings before examining the relationships Harry Potter's cousin, Dudley Dursley, both a Muggle and an unsympathetic character, has with nonhuman animals. This will be followed by a comparison with the representation of Harry Potter's ways of interacting with animal others, particularly those designated as companion animals or 'pets'. For, as the hero of the story, Harry Potter's relationships with nonhuman animals can be seen as constituting the 'ideal'.

Hagrid the 'Animal Lover'

Rubeus Hagrid is considered an important character within the series as he not only acts as Harry Potter's introductory guide to the magical world but he is also involved in major

plot developments and story arcs across the whole series. Throughout he is represented as a consistently ‘good’ character who is a very loyal friend and supporter of Harry Potter.

When first met in chapter one of the *Philosopher’s Stone*, Hagrid is introduced as:

almost twice as tall as a normal man, at least five times as wide. He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so wild (16)

The adjectival groupings that form the description of the physical presence of Hagrid construct him as a member of a class of those far beyond the ‘normal’: ‘twice as tall’, ‘at least five times as wide’. His other-than-normal status is then emphasised and problematized, by his being ‘simply too big to be allowed’. This description works to help establish the ‘magical-other’ narrative of the series for the reader, as it is this ‘giant of a man’ (39), the literal embodiment of the magical world, who is to reveal to Harry Potter the latter’s wizarding ability. Apart from helping to construct the presence of the magical world, however, this description begins to position Hagrid as other-than-human, for he is not only ‘simply too big to be allowed’ he is also ‘so wild’, with ‘wild’ often seen as forming an adjective/noun collocation with ‘beast’.

One of Hagrid’s defining characteristics is his ‘animal-loving’ nature. This is continually ‘evidenced’ through both his desire to acquire numerous magical ‘beasts’, ‘Crikey, I’d like a dragon’ (PS, 52), and statements by other characters in the series, such as Firenze the centaur who observes that Hagrid ‘has long since earned my respect for the care he shows all living creatures’ (OP: 533). Dendle (2009) considers that ‘[e]mpathy for animals is one of the moral signposts Rowling employs ... to direct the reader’s sympathy for various characters’ (164) and that ‘one of the principal reason we like

Hagrid ... is his limitless empathy for animals and creatures of all sorts' (164-165). This chapter examines part of the 'animal-lover' narrative associated with Hagrid, not only through an analysis of Hagrid's relationships with a number of animal others but also through the representation of the narrative construction of Hagrid's character, both physical and moral, in order to come to some understanding of what relationships 'animal-lovers' are *naturally* seen to have with, and to, other animals in the world of magic.

Hagrid as Liminal

Physical description

A dash is used to indicate what constitutes Hagrid's 'so wild-ness' and to further help establish his other-than-human 'wild' state:

He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so wild – long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face, he had hands the size of dustbin lids and his feet in their leather boots were like baby dolphins. (16)

With his hair in 'tangles' and his hands compared to 'dustbin lids', Hagrid is not only being positioned as other-than-normal, as being unkempt and associated with garbage, he is also being placed on the margins of the civilized world, both magical and Muggle. This representation of Hagrid's character begins to resemble Bernheimer's (1952) observations on the representation of 'wild men' in medieval culture: 'a hairy man curiously compounded of human and animal traits' (1). This narrative strategy can be further seen when Hagrid's 'animal traits' are emphasized by 'his feet in their leather boots [that] were like baby dolphins' (16). Hagrid's other-than-human appearance is then seen to be at one with his actions when:

He bent his great, shaggy head over Harry and gave him what must have been a very scratchy, whiskery kiss. Then, suddenly, Hagrid let out a howl like a wounded dog. (17)

Once again there is the suggestion of a visual adjective/noun collocation between 'shaggy' and 'dog' that supports the *naturalness* of Hagrid's action of letting out a sudden 'howl'. Later in the same book, when Hagrid bursts into the hut-by-the-sea on Harry Potter's eleventh birthday, the 'wild man' descriptions and 'animal' metaphors continue:

A giant of a man was standing in the doorway. His face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hair. (PS, 39)

Hagrid's marginal status as social edge-dweller can be seen to be reinforced by the physical location of his hut in the grounds of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, 'on the edge of the forbidden forest' (PS, 104). Positioned between the school and the forest, as with the contemporary understanding of medieval wild men (Yamamoto, 2000: 150), Hagrid can be seen to occupy the liminal space between civilization and untamed nature. Further adding to Hagrid's 'outsider' status is his parentage, while Hagrid's father was a wizard, his mother was a giantess. This is revealed to be a problem in book four when Hagrid's half-giant heritage, something he had kept secret, is made public. As a consequence Hagrid goes into hiding and even his friend Ron Weasley observes that 'no wonder he keeps it quiet' as giants are 'vicious' and that 'it's in their natures, they're like trolls ... they just like killing, everyone knows that' (GF, 374). Giants are not classified in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* as either 'beast' or 'being'. Therefore, drawing a comparison between giants and trolls, ('they're like trolls') who are included in the 'beast' category with a 'XXXX Dangerous/requires

specialist knowledge/skilled wizard may handle' rating, has the effect of also classifying giants, by association, as dangerous 'beasts'. Hagrid, then, because of his wizard/giant background, can be seen as occupying a space somewhere between 'being' and 'beast'. Hagrid's physical description, his parentage and his place of abode all can be seen to position him as an outsider who may be almost as 'beast-like' as the dragons and hippogriffs that he keeps as 'pets'.

Moral Character

While Ron Weasley found the news that Hagrid was a half-giant 'shocking' (GF, 377), he acknowledges to Harry Potter that he thinks Hagrid is 'not dangerous' (GF, 374). Harry Potter and Hermione Granger are unconcerned by the revelation and it is implied that this is because of their Muggle backgrounds:

He [Harry] knew immediately from the look Ron was giving him, that he was once again revealing his ignorance of the wizarding world. ... Now, however, he could tell that most wizards would not have said 'So what?' upon finding out that one of their friends had a giantess for a mother. (GF, 373)

Although Harry Potter, the hero of the narrative, supports Hagrid, this support is situated within a discourse that highlights his naïvety due to his lack of experience or knowledge of the wizarding world. However, Hagrid's 'good' moral character can be seen as being secured for the reader because he also has the support of Professor Dumbledore, who is often positioned as 'all knowing'. As Harry Potter is seen to observe, 'He's a funny man, Dumbledore. ... I think he knows more or less everything that goes on here, you know' (PS, 219). To further secure his 'good' status, Hagrid is offered support from all the major 'good' characters, while those most against him are 'bad' characters: Draco Malfoy, a school bully, and enemy of Harry Potter, and Rita Skeeter, the scandal writer

for the *Daily Prophet* newspaper. With such supporters and detractors, the ideal reader should consider that Hagrid's moral character is not to be seen to be as 'innately' vicious as those of his giant ancestors.

However, this does not necessarily secure a stable 'being' status for Hagrid as even his 'good' qualities, such as his unquestioning loyalty to both Harry Potter and Professor Dumbledore, within the context of his 'great shaggy head' and his ability to 'howl like a wounded dog' (PS 17), work to mobilize discourses around the notion of a loyal and protective hound. Dendle's (2009) opinion that Hagrid's loyalty to Harry Potter is 'one of the principal reasons we like Hagrid' (164-165), reflects Belk's (1996) findings regarding relationships respondents had with their 'pets'. There was 'the perception that a pet's love is uncritical and unconditional' and that this 'personal loyalty is an especially valued trait in pets', particularly by dog 'owners' (126).

Hagrid's 'dog-like' loyalty to (his master) Professor Dumbledore can be seen when he takes exception to Harry Potter's Uncle Vernon referring to Dumbledore as 'some crackpot old fool' (PS, 48). The authority of the narrative voice states that Vernon Dursley 'had finally gone too far' with the result that:

Hagrid seized his umbrella and whirled it over his head. "NEVER –" he thundered, "– INSULT – ALBUS – DUMBLEDORE – IN – FRONT – OF – ME!"

He brought the umbrella swishing down through the air to point at Dudley – there was a flash of violet light, a sound like a firecracker, a sharp squeal and next second, Dudley was dancing on the spot with his hands clasped over his fat bottom, howling in pain. When he turned his back on them, Harry saw a curly pig's tail poking through a hole in his trousers. (48)

Attacking the child of the person who has offended you could be seen as evidence of Hagrid's 'vicious' giant nature that would emphasize his 'beastliness'. However, Rowling uses a narrative strategy that represents the attack within a discourse of 'loyalty', 'moral outrage' and 'justifiable retribution'. Hagrid's actions are constructed as 'justifiable retribution' after much provocation. Vernon Dursley and Dudley are unsympathetic characters and Vernon must carry the blame for his son's misfortune as he 'had *finally* gone too far'. Hagrid's violent physical retribution is positioned as a demonstration of his 'good' attributes of unwavering 'loyalty' to Dumbledore and his 'moral outrage' at the insult levelled at him. While the character of Dumbledore has previously only appeared briefly, the ideal reader is expected to agree with Hagrid's actions as they should also remember Harry Potter's suffering and therefore have no sympathy for either Vernon or Dudley Dursley, as his tormentors. This incident then can be seen as comic retribution for the hero's past mistreatment. This narrative strategy, that positions Hagrid's attack as a *reasonable* response to provocation or as a humorous incident, rather than a giant's 'biological imperative' is, unfortunately for Hagrid's shifting 'beast'/'being' status, also employed by 'owners' of pit bulls. These dogs are commonly portrayed in the popular media 'as demonic animals - unpredictable and savage in their behavior toward humans' (Twining, Arluke and Patronek, 2000: 2). Twining, Arluke and Patronek note that 'owners' of pit bulls, manage the stigma of the breed through a number of strategies: 'passing them as a breed other than pit bull, denying that their behavior is biologically predetermined ... using humor, emphasizing counter-stereotypical behavior...' (2).

Whether intentional or not, this way of constructing the character of Hagrid sees the author beginning to position his ‘animal-lover’ status as a condition of his own liminal nature. Being part ‘beast’, Hagrid is represented as empathizing with other ‘beasts’, with the result that his loyalty is to both ‘being’ and ‘beast, as can be seen in the final battle; Hagrid is captured by Death-eaters as he attempts to protect the attacking giant spiders, who are the offspring of his former ‘pet’: ‘Don’t hurt ‘em, don’t hurt ‘em!’ he yelled’ (DH, 520).

Empathy and the ‘Animal Lover’

Dendle (2009) contends that Hagrid’s possession of ‘limitless empathy for animals and creatures of all sorts’ (164-165) *naturally* creates a fondness for his character with the reader. While Dendle may be representing Rowling’s authorial intent to position the character of Rubeus Hagrid as an ‘animal lover’ accurately, an examination of this character reveals a number of ambiguities that remain unexplored by Dendle.

Hagrid is represented as a consistently ‘good’ character, therefore, his social identity as an ‘animal lover’ can be assumed to offer a pattern of social practice for those who wish to adopt an ‘animal lover’ social identity within the magical world. However, that it is Hagrid who is the acknowledged ‘animal lover’ in the series is problematic on a number of levels when reading the text from a Critical Animal Studies perspective. For upon examination, the ‘empathy for animals’ (164) that Dendle attributes to Hagrid appears to refer to a rather conventional ‘taken-for-granted’ empathy that is generally assumed all ‘good’ social subjects possess, which is in fact neither ‘limitless’ nor extended to ‘all’. This conventional empathy is usually characterised by a concern for nonhuman animals

that is limited to a sentimental attachment to those designated as ‘pets’ and a ‘proper’ concern for humane treatment before slaughter of those designated as ‘food’.

Taking Hagrid as a model, it is evident that within the magical world the definition of an ‘animal lover’ need not include vegetarianism, let alone veganism, as an attribute, as Hagrid produces ‘a squashy package of sausages’ from his coat pocket when he first meets Harry (PS, 40) and ‘[h]ams and pheasants were hanging from the ceiling’ of his hut (104). On various occasions Hagrid also wears ‘leather boots’ (16), ‘rabbit-fur gloves and enormous beaverskin boots’ (133) which, again, signals that wearing animal others is not considered as necessarily negating a ‘love’ for them. While any concerns Hagrid has for the humane treatment of those destined to be ‘food’ must be assumed, as they are never expressed, on a number of occasions Hagrid does demonstrate a sentimental attachment to those nonhuman animals designated as ‘pets’. That it is a *sentimental* attachment can be seen when his desire to possess these creatures outweighs any consideration as to whether or not he can provide them with the opportunity to experience their ‘species-typical way of living in the world’ (Shapiro & Copeland, 2005: 345). The dragon Norbert is a case in point as, despite his supposed empathy, Hagrid’s action in acquiring Norbert places his own *wants* ahead of the *needs* of the dragon. To qualify as an ‘animal lover’ in the magical world, it appears that there is no necessity to abstain from either eating or wearing nonhuman animals, nor does it preclude placing personal desire ahead of the welfare of any chosen ‘pet’. Such a representation works forcefully to reaffirm Aristotle’s hierarchical *Great Chain of Being* and reinforce the idea that animal others are given by God for the use of ‘man’.

Moreover, because Hagrid's *wants* in relation to Norbert the dragon are represented as having their beginnings in childhood, 'Wanted [a dragon] ever since I was a kid' (PS, 52), the temporal circumstance 'ever since I was a kid' works to help position the moral character of Hagrid as still 'childlike'. Paraphrasing Dendle (164), Hagrid's 'empathy for animals', together with his physical description can, in fact, actually be seen to work as 'one of the moral signposts Rowling employs ... to direct the reader's sympathy for' Hagrid as an ambiguous character, one who, in effect, occupies a liminal space between the human and nonhuman, between the child and the adult. Read this way, being an 'animal lover' in the magical world becomes somewhat problematic. This is because Hagrid's form of 'animal-lover' can be understood to demonstrate his failure to completely reject his vicious giant 'beast' nature and to fully identify as an *adult human*.

'Pets' in Australia

Australians are also considered 'animal-lovers' and, as will be shown, our relationships with those nonhumans with whom we share our lives reflects the contradictions present in the previous description of Hagrid the 'animal-lover'. The incidence of 'pet' ownership in Australia is one of the highest in the world with a reported 33 million 'pets' in the country (ACAC, 2010: 7) easily outnumbering the human population. This means that how the relationships between 'pets' and humans are represented within the Harry Potter series should be of considerable interest for, as has often been observed (Franklin, 2006, 2007, O'Haire, 2009, ACAC, 2010 and others), at least one companion animal lives in the majority of homes in Australia. These relationships are generally seen in a positive light with studies finding that living with a companion animal is beneficial to

both mental and physical human health (O’Haire, 2009, Walsh, 2009). Recent media reports highlighted a study that found that a high percentage of ‘pet’ owners in Australia ‘would go to extraordinary lengths for their animals’ (Yahoo!7 News, 2012). This, along with the growth of an Australian ‘pet’ care industry that the Australian Companion Animal Council (ACAC) valued at \$6.02 billion in 2009 (8), would also seem to indicate that in Australia, as found in American studies, ‘the vast majority of pet owners regard their companion animals as family members’ (Walsh, 2009: 481).

However, although they contribute to the economy and are acknowledged as having a positive effect on both our mental and physical health, in Australia, it is estimated that over 500,000 companion animals are abandoned in animal shelters in any given year (Wirth, 2008: 4). And though Wirth finds this state of affairs ‘simply shameful’ (4), abandoning unwanted ‘pets’ can be seen as an accepted social practice, evidenced by the existence of animal shelters to house them and the lack of legal sanctions if an owner simply changes their mind and no longer wants the ‘burden’ of caring for a companion animal. As Wirth observes:

In 2007 in the Queensland and Victorian large shelters where statistics are kept, on average 72% of surrendered companion animals was for owner reasons, 12% for economic reasons and 15% for behavioural reasons. It is not unreasonable to suggest that these same statistics drive the abandoned companion animal figures. (3)

As previously observed in chapter four, it is generally accepted that the *Harry Potter* series is capable of teaching young readers a wide range of ‘life lessons’. This chapter, therefore, examines the series from a Critical Animal Studies perspective in order to identify the ‘life lessons’ present regarding human/nonhuman animal relationships,

particularly those of human and 'pet'. The aim in this chapter is to explore a narrative strategy often employed in fiction that acts as an indicator of whether or not a human character should be considered 'good' or 'bad' by the reader, that is, their treatment of nonhuman animals. Of particular interest is how the grammar that realizes this strategy can also effectively work to maintain and so perpetuate the inherent contradictions within the current social construction of 'pet' that positions them as both 'family member' and 'disposable commodity' in the representation of both unsympathetic *and* sympathetic human characters.

Companion Animals and Representation of Human Character

O'Haire observes that 'pet' owners are generally seen to be friendlier and happier people (1: 2009). The *Harry Potter* series uses this conventional understanding as a strategy to set up the positive representation of witch and wizard children and the magical world, where '*Students may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad*' to school (PS, 52), in opposition to the Muggle world where the Dursleys, Harry Potter's unsympathetic uncle and aunt, have no companion animals and, indeed, it is stated by the narrator that 'Aunt Petunia hated animals' (PA, 23). This strategy becomes more obvious when the seemingly positive attitude of Harry Potter to animal others is read in opposition to the exemplar Muggle child, Harry Potter's cousin Dudley Dursley. For, though the narrative makes only brief mention of Dudley and 'pets', when they are mentioned in relation to Dudley, each incident has a negative outcome for the animal other involved, as can be seen in the following example:

Nearly everything in here was broken. The month-old cine-camera was lying on top of *a small, working tank Dudley had once driven over next door's dog*; in the corner was Dudley's first-ever television set, which he'd put his foot

through when his favourite programme had been cancelled; there was *a large birdcage which had once held a parrot that Dudley had swapped at school for a real air-rifle*, (PS, 32) (emphasis added)

That Dudley is to be regarded as an unpleasant character is established early in the narrative through the use of irony with the narrator observing that, in the opinion of his parents, 'there was no finer boy anywhere' (PS, 7). This works to illuminate their deluded understanding of their child rather than as an accurate reflection of Dudley's character when the narrative quickly constructs a representation of baby Dudley's behaviour that is far from pleasant:

At half past eight, Mr Dursley picked up his briefcase, pecked Mrs Dursley on the cheek and tried to kiss Dudley goodbye but missed, because Dudley was now having a tantrum and throwing his cereal at the walls. 'Little tyke,' chortled Mr Dursley as he left the house. (PS, 8)

This initial social construction of baby Dudley as spoilt and disagreeable through both his tantrum and his parents' indulgence of such behaviour is later, in the same book, reinforced through the narrative use of a parallel construction. Though now eleven, Dudley essentially repeats this unpleasant scene with the addition of a companion animal that effectively helps to provide the 'evidence' for readers to regard Dudley as a truly unsympathetic character. For while Dudley's tantrum when a baby involved 'throwing his cereal at the walls', the older displeased Dudley replaces the inanimate cereal bowl with his animate tortoise who he had thrown 'through the greenhouse roof...' (PS, 33).

Tense, Mimesis and Diegesis

There have been a number of reviews of research into the relationship between childhood cruelty as a predictor of future violence towards humans, including Ascione (1993),

Dadds, Turner and McAloon (2002), and Gleyzer, Felthous and Holzer (2002). Gleyzer et. al. consider that they have demonstrated ‘a statistically significant correlation between [a] history of cruelty to animals in childhood and a diagnosis of APD [antisocial personality disorder] in adulthood’ (262). Therefore, the representation of Dudley’s unpleasant character through the depiction of Dudley as, at the very least, unfeeling towards nonhuman animals, is a strategy that taps into this now almost conventionally accepted evidence of a deeply flawed social subject whose disorder will only become more manifest as they grow older. From a nonhuman animal centred reading of the text this is a positive representation, as unkindness to nonhuman animals is here being equated with social dysfunction.

However, while the narrative appears to characterize those who mistreat animal others as potentially socially dysfunctional, within the grammar there is an interesting shift in tense between the two ‘throwing’ incidents that creates a site of ambiguity. In the first incident, with the immediacy of present tense mimesis the reader is able to ‘witness’ the incident, ‘Dudley was now having a tantrum and throwing his cereal at the walls’, and also note the immediate reaction of Dudley’s father. The ‘Little tyke’ that is ‘chortled’ by Mr Dursley, has the effect of allowing this scene to help demonstrate the characters of both Dudley and Vernon Dursley: Dudley as spoilt child, Mr Dursley as overindulgent parent.

In the second incident, however, although ‘thrown his tortoise through the greenhouse roof’ is placed as the final act of desperation on the part of a frustrated Dudley and, therefore, possibly the most desperate, there is a change in tense from mimesis to diegesis

that consequently reduces the importance of his actions to the narrative:

Next morning at breakfast, everyone was rather quiet. Dudley was in shock. He'd screamed, whacked his father with his Smeltings stick, been sick on purpose, kicked his mother and thrown his tortoise through the greenhouse roof and he still didn't have his room back. (PS, 33)

Two strategies are employed here to reduce the need for concern on the part of the narrative, and the reader. To begin with, the reader is absolved from the need to worry by the choice of a tortoise, rather than a dog or a guinea pig or other soft bodied being, as the reader can choose to assume that the tortoise withdrew into their shell and so sustained no injuries. The use of past tense also effectively reduces the immediacy of the action and so distances the reader. Therefore, by employing past tense recount the narrative can make the main point that, in spite of Dudley's appalling behaviour, 'he still didn't have his room back' without necessarily recording the reactions of his parents to that appalling behaviour. In this way the narrative can continue without getting 'bogged down' or 'side tracked' by having to address any of the issues raised by such an outburst, including the ultimate fate of the tortoise.

Consequentially, the representation of this incident is inherently contradictory, for though the surface message may represent the mistreatment of animal others as an indication of a flawed social subject, at the same time, the grammar of representation effectively minimizes the importance of that mistreatment.

Constructing The 'Hero'

As will be shown, such contradictions are also often present in the representation of the hero of the narrative, Harry Potter. In the first book of the series the construction of Harry

Potter as 'hero' is conventionally established through both the representation of his social position, his character and his actions. As with other typical folktale heroes, Harry Potter is initially represented as 'a nondescript youth of apparently lowly origin who emerges as the true hero with special skills and powers' (Stephens, 1992b: 56). The narrative also closely follows the 'invariable pattern' of the hero story (Hourihan, 1997: 9). As such, Harry Potter is 'white, male, British [and] young' (9) and in his adventures he is also 'accompanied by a single male companion' (9), in this case Ron Weasley. Following the archetypal hero, Harry Potter 'leaves the civilized order' (9) of number four, Privet Drive, 'to venture into the wilderness' (9) and so arrives at the 'mountains and forests under a deep purple sky' (PS, 83) that surround Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. And, indeed, following Hourihan, 'Dangerous and magical things happen there' (9).

As a typical hero, Harry also 'encounters a series of difficulties and is threatened by dangerous opponents' (Hourihan, 1997: 9) in each instalment of the series, including the usual fantasy fare of 'dragons or other fantastic creatures, wild animals, witches, [and] giants' (9), to name but a few. Inevitably, in the final book, as ultimate confirmation of his hero status, Harry overcomes Voldemort, and so, 'he achieves his goal' (9). However, Harry's 'return home' is not to number four Privet Drive, but to his original home that he has now made safe by his triumph over Voldemort, the magical world from which he had been forced to flee when he was a baby.

The Hero, Nonhuman Animals and Naturalizing Interactions

The above reading positions Harry Potter as the archetypal hero and the *Harry Potter* series can, therefore, be read as activating the heroic adventure story genre. Rather than

plot the generic features of this genre and map them onto the *Harry Potter* series, this chapter examines some of the representations of the relationships Harry Potter, as the established hero of the narrative, has with a number of nonhuman animals. In this way it is possible to come to an understanding of how certain relationships with, attitudes to and treatment of nonhuman animals are *naturalized* within the text to be associated with a character position that is to be understood as essentially ‘heroic’ and ‘good’.

Firstly, the interaction that Harry has with the boa constrictor in the first book of the series will be discussed. This is considered an important incident as it not only functions to help confirm Harry’s ‘hero’ status but it also invites further scrutiny as it is one of the few places in the series where Harry Potter reflects on the care and rights of nonhuman animals. As such, it provides an obvious opportunity to apply Shapiro and Copeland’s suggestions for deconstructing literary texts employing a nonhuman animal centred approach. This discussion will be followed by an examination of the representation of the beginning and end of Harry’s relationship with his companion animal, Hedwig the owl, arguably the most important representation of a nonhuman/human animal relationship in the whole series.

Nonhuman Animals and ‘Proving’ the Hero

Until Harry Potter’s interaction with the snake at the zoo in ‘The Vanishing Glass’, chapter two of *The Philosopher’s Stone*, readers have only been given a narrative recount of Harry’s ability to perform ‘accidental’ magic, as when Aunt Petunia had given Harry a disastrous haircut: ‘Next morning, however, he had got up to find his hair exactly as it had been before Aunt Petunia had sheared it off’ (PS, 23). Contrary to the

use of diegesis to downplay Dudley's tortoise incident, in this instance, the change is from diegesis to mimesis, from telling to showing, that has the effect of making the encounter with a nonhuman animal, the snake, more immediate and therefore has the effect of heightening its importance to the narrative.

Here Harry's interaction with the snake functions as a narrative device that not only goes to 'prove' his magical ability but also illustrates 'good' qualities in Harry's character, reinforcing his suitability to be classed as the 'hero'. The apparent empathetic understanding of the snake's circumstances is the first of these qualities displayed by Harry:

Harry moved in front of the tank and looked intently at the snake. He wouldn't have been surprised if it had died of boredom itself – no company except stupid people drumming their fingers on the glass trying to disturb it all day long. It was worse than having a cupboard as a bedroom, where the only visitor was Aunt Petunia hammering on the door to wake you up – at least he got to visit the rest of the house. (25)

Harry's 'empathy' is recognized and rewarded by the snake who:

suddenly opened its beady eyes. Slowly, very slowly, it raised its head until its eyes were on a level with Harry's.

It winked. (25)

Apart from indicating Harry's 'special' magical qualities, as previously observed, this incident also sees Harry begin to more fully embody his identity as a traditional literary 'hero'. The reader is already aware that Harry is young and there is an assumption that he is also white, two of the qualities Hourihan (1997) lists as typical of the hero in western literature. Here Harry's politeness, revealed when he separates himself from

people he considers ‘stupid’ for attempting to disturb the snake by ‘drumming on the glass’, along with his apparent compassionate understanding of the snake’s situation, can also be seen to mark him as a *gentleman*, a notion Hourihan considers of specific importance to British literature. At this point in the story Harry, from a nonhuman animal centred perspective, could be considered to be a character with whom the reader should be encouraged to identify.

The character focalisation of Harry Potter then represents the snake as bored, with ‘no company’ and constantly disturbed by ‘stupid people’. Harry then compares the snake’s situation to his own and although Harry considers that the snake’s life is worse than his, by this comparison, the representation of the snake is in effect reduced to drawing the reader’s attention back to Harry’s circumstances. This is because the concerns Harry raises regarding the snake’s welfare do not take into account the actual life world of a boa constrictor, they do not ‘present the animal “in itself”’ (Shapiro and Copeland, 2005: 345).

Nonhuman Animal as assumed Metaphors in Humanist Discourse

While it can be assumed that boa constrictors would prefer not to be constantly disturbed, as a species, they are understood to be solitary nocturnal creatures. Therefore, being alone can be assumed to be the snake’s preferred situation and, as the zoo visit is during the day, the snake is in fact exhibiting natural boa constrictor behaviour as it (sic) is said to be ‘fast asleep’ and ‘snoozing’ (PS, 25). Such an examination of the representation of this relationship between the boa constrictor and Harry Potter, following Shapiro and Copeland, reveals that Harry’s concern for the snake is situated

within a humanist discourse that assumes a reading as a metaphor for the human condition. As such, this effectively limits any ethical considerations with regard to the boa constrictor. In effect the actual snake has become discursively absent and it is in fact Harry who is bored, lonely and lacks power in his dealings with ‘stupid people’. For Harry has already aligned Petunia Dursley with ‘stupid people’ when he directly compares the attempts of people to wake the snake up to ‘Aunt Petunia hammering on the door to wake [him] up’ (25). Vernon Dursley has also previously ‘rapped the glass smartly with his knuckles’ (25) at Dudley’s request, with the result that all members of the Dursley family have effectively been included in the ‘stupid people’ category.

However, there is also another metaphorical reading of Harry’s encounter with this snake that is, perhaps, more promising from a Critical Animal Studies approach. After Harry is pushed out of the way by his cousin Dudley, he accidentally causes the glass front of the boa constrictor’s tank to vanish, which allows the snake to escape. The presence of such a large ‘exotic’ creature at such close quarters is represented as being beyond the experience, and tolerance, of the Muggle zoo-goers as ‘people throughout the reptile house screamed and started running for the exits’ (26). Harry Potter, on the other hand, is positioned as identifying more with the snake than the surrounding humans. To begin with, Harry’s conversation with the snake opens with an exchange of conspiratorial winks:

The snake suddenly opened its beady eyes. Slowly, very slowly, it raised its head until its eyes were on a level with Harry’s.

It winked.

Harry stared. Then he looked quickly around to see if anyone was watching. They weren’t. He looked back at the snake and winked too. (25)

When the glass disappears and ‘the snake slid swiftly past him’ (26) Harry is not one of those who ‘screamed and started running for the exits’. Harry’s apparent unconcern at the snake’s escape is placed in direct contrast to the reactions of the Dursleys and Dudley’s friend Piers. Aunt Petunia is given ‘a cup of strong sweet tea’ (a common remedy for shock) by ‘[t]he zoo director himself’, the ‘himself’ having the effect of emphasising the zoo director’s importance and thus the seriousness of the event, while ‘Piers and Dudley could only gibber’. However, ‘[a]s far as Harry had seen, the snake hadn’t done anything except snap playfully at their heels as it [sic] passed’ (26). This once again can be seen to signal an empathic understanding between Harry and the snake. Harry (even though unaware) is a symbol of the magical world and so demonstrates that community’s *natural* closeness to animal others, which is reinforced when the snake acknowledges Harry’s role in the proceedings by hissing ‘Brazil, here I come ... Thanksss, amigo’ (26).

This event could be read as a metaphorical plea for the removal of the barriers that generally mediate interactions between human and nonhuman animals by suggesting that, while the freeing of nonhuman animals from human control and domination may at first be frightening, such a fear is an over reaction. Such a reading position suggests that there is a need to recognize that nonhuman animals are capable of possessing a desire to be free and a longing for ‘home’ that should be respected.

However, while appearing to raise the need for a reappraisal of human/nonhuman relationships, this incident also hints at the failure inherent in the proposition. The

snake's longing for Brazil and home is ultimately positioned as naïve, with the implied reader being able to appreciate the 'joke' of the impossibility of the snake's desire due to the many impediments it [sic] would face on such a journey, not the least being geographical. As with Dudley's tortoise, the text also keeps the question open by not offering any closure as to the snake's fate. As a consequence, the avoidance of closure in the snake's story allows the narrative to also avoid addressing Hollindale's second question. This question asks readers to consider whether or not the conclusion of a story is 'imaginatively coherent, or does it depend on implicit assumptions which are at odds with the surface ideology?' (1988: 20). The surface ideology in this case appears to posit that the snake's bid for freedom is to be read as represented by Harry Potter, in other words, as mildly amusing, with the snake 'snap[ping] playfully at their heels', and non threatening.

The implicit assumption regarding the situation that is avoided, however, relies on the reader understanding that the escape of such a snake will not be tolerated and that every effort will be taken by the authorities to recapture or destroy such a 'dangerous' creature. In this case, a 'happy ending' for the snake, freedom and a safe arrival in Brazil, could have been seen to offer some form of protest to the surface ideology. However, not only is there no 'happy ending' written in for the snake, there is also no 'unhappy ending', nor indication as to whether or not the zoo keepers were able to recapture a creature who 'could have wrapped its [sic] body twice around Uncle Vernon's car and crushed it into a dustbin' (25) without resorting to violence. The result is a narrative gap that can be seen to 'depend on implicit assumptions' to effectively

reinforce dominant ideologies of the 'proper' place for boa constrictors, that is, securely confined under lock and key in a zoo.

Just as it is important for the narrative that readers have a common understanding that a tortoise has a hard shell in order to lessen concern when one is thrown through a glasshouse roof, it is also important for the narrative that the reader appreciates that boa constrictors are large, powerful and potentially dangerous beings. For such an appreciation of the representation of the snake as big and powerful and the use of the present tense work together to construct a dramatic affirmation of Harry Potter's *natural* magical ability that the reader is able to 'witness'; the 'Thanksss, amigo' demonstrating the snake's understanding of Harry's magical power, even if Harry is himself unaware. It is not the snake as an individual who is of importance, nor its (sic) bid for freedom, rather, the snake functions merely as a narrative device that confirms Harry's magical ability and hero status and once this has been achieved, the snake conveniently slithers out the narrative. This view is strengthened by Harry's earlier apparent empathy not extending to a curiosity as to the snake's fate. As with the case of the representation of Dudley's past tense interactions with 'pets', the narrative does not appear to encourage contemplation of the fate of any of these animal others.

Companion Animals and 'The Hero'

The relationship Harry Potter enjoys with Hedwig the owl is the most important that he has with a nonhuman animal within the series. Harry acquires Hedwig in chapter five of *The Philosopher's Stone* and descriptions of their relationship are most detailed in this first book. For this reason the main focus of the analysis will be the representation of the

Harry Potter/Hedwig relationship in book one, particularly the discourses mobilized at her purchase. Harry Potter's response to the death of Hedwig in the fourth chapter of the final book, *The Deathly Hallows* will also be examined to consider the representation of the 'hero's' reaction to the loss of an avowedly valued 'pet'.

The prelude to the acquisition of Hedwig is a direct speech exchange between new acquaintances, the gamekeeper at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Rubeus Hagrid, and Harry Potter, that helps to establish the subject positions of both the human characters, as well as the three species of nonhuman animals mentioned: toads, cats and owls:

'Just yer wand left – oh yeah, an' I still haven't got yeh birthday present.'

Harry felt himself go red.

'You don't have to-'

'I know I don't have to. Tell yeh what, I'll get yeh animal. Not a toad, toads went outta fashion years ago, yeh'd be laughed at – an' I don't like cats they make me sneeze. I'll get yeh an owl. All the kids want owls, they're dead useful, carry yer post an' everythin'.' (PS, 62)

This exchange demonstrates how this representation of nonhuman animals reduces them to possessions through their unproblematic commodification. Hagrid employs a material process, 'haven't got', followed by the class of object, 'yer birthday present', as goal along with the timing adjunct, 'still', that signals a future-directed obligation. The social act that forms the content of this section of the text concerns the field of discourse that has the theme: offer of friendship, projected through the self imposed, 'I know I don't have to', perceived obligation of a 'friend' to demonstrate that friendship by the giving of a birthday gift. As Camerer (1988) notes 'gifts serve as "signals" of a person's

intentions about future investment in a relationship' (180) while Carmichael and MacLeod observe that 'the social custom of giving gifts at the beginning of a relationship can lead to trust and cooperation' (1997: 485). In this exchange Hedwig becomes, via the lexical chain 'yer birthday present', 'yeh animal', 'an owl', a semiotic sign of a symbolic offer of friendship from Hagrid to Harry Potter.

Naturalizing the Commodification of Nonhuman Animals

The character focalisation of Harry Potter, channelled through narrator focalisation, 'Harry felt himself go red', indicates modesty or embarrassment, which is reinforced by Harry's response 'You don't have to-'. This self-effacement builds on the positive representation of his subject position as a traditional literary 'hero' that the incident with the snake at the zoo has previously begun to establish. The goal, 'yeh animal', of the material process 'I'll get' then becomes a meaning equivalent of 'yeh birthday present'. The tenor of the proposition 'I'll get yer animal', on both levels, that embodied in the narrative between the writer and the reader and that embodied in the dialogue between the participants in the narrative, begins a representation of nonhuman animals as possessions through their unproblematized commodification. Read in this way, the narrative can be seen here as primarily valuing the concept of a 'birthday present' as an indicator of the strong friendship that will develop between Hagrid and Harry, rather than as an introduction to the character of Hedwig the owl.

This way of representing nonhuman animals effectively mirrors the extratextual context of the narrative, for as Beatson and Halloran note:

[I]legally, animals are possessions or chattels of their owners; and hence it is

that animals are tamed, hunted, experimented upon and slaughtered for our own purpose. Indeed, Freud claimed that culture allows humans not only the assumed dominance over the animal kingdom, but also to ‘annihilate the bond of community between him [sic] and the animal kingdom’. (2007: 622)

One consequence of this dominance and bond ‘annihilation’ with regard to those nonhuman animals whom we designate as ‘pets’ in this way is that ‘[e]ach day in Australia, around 550 dogs and cats are put down in pounds and animal shelters. This situation has arisen because, unfortunately, many people regard companion animals as “commodities”’ (Lawyers For Animals, 2006: 1).

Another extratextual parallel is the narrative’s reproduction of a *natural* hierarchical valuing of nonhuman animals. At this stage of his initiation into the world of magic, Harry Potter is unaware of the hierarchical system of social value attached to nonhuman animals within the community. However, Hagrid alerts him, and the reader, to this by demonstrating an understanding of the importance of conforming to established systems of social value when he discusses his reasoning behind his choice of Harry’s companion animal.

The Primary Knower and the Production of Certainty

Hagrid is seen to reject the idea of a toad or a cat and determines to buy Harry an owl, justifying his choice by highlighting the social desirability of owls by positioning them as the phenomenon of the mental process ‘want’ with ‘[a]ll the kids’ as senser. Hagrid then goes on to expand on his reasoning by making ‘dead useful’ the desirable attribute of a relational process with ‘carry yer post an’ everythin’ an elaboration of the quality of their usefulness. By so doing, through his language use, Hagrid makes plain his role of

‘primary knower’. Linguistically a ‘primary knower’ is the one who has the knowledge to provide the information that is required and Hagrid’s use of declarative sentences, expressing opinions as statements of fact, results in his subject position being that of ‘a giver’ of information (Fairclough, 2001: 104). Hagrid’s statements employ modality with a high degree of certainty thus giving his opinion the stamp of the authority of one who *knows*. Harry’s acceptance without question of Hagrid’s opinions acts to further confirm Hagrid’s status as a primary knower for the reader, thus *naturalizing* the concept that nonhuman animals can be possessions, as well as commodities to be bought and sold, and able to confer social status. Harry’s possession of an owl, who ‘All the kids want’ (PS, 62) thus reflects Serpell’s observation that, as in the nonmagical world, in the magical world, ‘[r]are and unusual pets serve this purpose [‘emblems of lofty status’] admirably ... The well-groomed and elegant Afghan hound can fulfil the same roll as a mink coat or a Rolls-Royce; an outward expression of its owner’s status and prestige’ (1986: 51).

The *natural* effect of representing nonhuman animals as per Hagrid’s reasoning is that it positions them as members of species rather than as individuals and also indicates that these species are to be ranked in an order of value. It can be further understood through this form of representation that the highest value and prestige is reserved for those species who demonstrate a direct usefulness for humans. This perceived usefulness and the traditional understanding of their dependence *naturally* places ‘pets’ in a position of servitude. Serpell, (1986) observes that, ‘[t]he domestic animal is dependent for survival on its human owner. The human becomes the overlord and master, the animals his servants and slaves’ (5). This representation, in turn, reinforces the *naturalness* of the

concept of the ‘Great Chain of Being’ that regards all ‘lesser’ life forms as being created for human use.

Fictive Nonhuman Animals and the ‘101 Dalmatians syndrome’

Whether perceived as slaves or highly valued status symbols, often the outcome for the nonhuman animal is the same. For example, one real-life consequence for actual owls of a narrative strategy that constructs the fictive owl as highly desirable and, therefore, a status symbol, is that it can be seen as contributing to owls falling victim to what ‘pet’ rescuers often term ‘101 Dalmatians syndrome’. This syndrome is said to result when consumers ‘see a cute and charming animal actor ... they are [then] more likely to bring a pet of the same breed or species home – only to find out that the real-life animal doesn’t fit in with their lifestyle. End result: The pet is dumped at the animal shelter’ (Barnett, 2010: npn). The name of the syndrome is derived from the 1985 release of the Disney film *101 Dalmatians*. Herzog notes that:

In the eight years following the 1985 re-release of the film, the annual number of new Dalmatian registrations increased spectacularly, from 8,170 puppies to 42,816 puppies. The peak in 1993 was followed by the steepest descent in popularity of any breed in AKC history—a decline of 97% within a decade. (2006: 390)

This ‘syndrome’ has been negatively associated with a number of screen representations of animal others. The usually socially despised rats found themselves the focus of increased interest following the release of *Ratatouille* (Reuters, 2007) and Herzog cites as ‘an even more dramatic example’ than the effect of *101 Dalmatian* in ‘the 100-fold increase in Old English Sheepdog registrations over the 14 years following the 1959 Disney movie, *The Shaggy Dog* (2006: 390). However, the most disturbing example of

thoughtless acquisition due to this ‘syndrome’ is the contribution made by the 2003 release of *Finding Nemo* to the near extinction of clown fish (Daily Mail, 2008).

Similarly, due to the phenomenal popularity of the *Harry Potter* series concerns have been expressed for the wellbeing of owls in news articles and by a number of websites, particularly those associated with owl sanctuaries in Britain. These sources cite the *Harry Potter* books and films as directly responsible for an upsurge of interest in owls as ‘pets’. When opening an owl sanctuary on the Isle of Wight, reportedly to specifically cater for owls who have been ‘dumped’ by their owners, Don Walser (Telegraph, 2009), is quoted as saying that, ‘[t]hey might look great in the Harry Potter films, but it takes years to train them. Children read books and see films and say to their mums and dads they want one and parents don’t realise how much care it takes to look after them’ (npn).

The web page entitled ‘Extra Stuff’, subtitled ‘Owls’ on J. K. Rowling’s official website discusses traditional cultural constructions of owls before linking those representations to Rowling’s literary use of owls. After which, Rowling responds in part to the concerns raised regarding the often-supposed connection between the series and an increase of interest in the acquisition of an owl as a ‘pet’:

Owls feature in many superstitions across the world. To the Greeks, the owl was emblematic of Athena, goddess of wisdom and war, and if an owl was sighted flying over the Greek army prior to battle it was considered an omen of victory. To the Romans, on the other hand, the owl was an unlucky creature that predicted death and disaster. In Britain there is a superstition that it is unlucky to see an owl by daylight, a superstition I had fun with in the first chapter of ‘Philosopher’s Stone’ where, of course, the sudden explosion of owls flying by daylight represented something very lucky indeed, though the Muggles did not know it. (nd, npn)

The above first paragraph of this short section begins by establishing the field of global superstitious beliefs around owls as main topic by first positioning ‘owls’ as Carrier in a relational attributive circumstantial process, ‘feature’, with ‘in many superstitions across the world’ as Attribute: Circumstance: ‘Owls feature in many superstitions across the world’. This field is then narrowed to the sub-field of British folk beliefs through the existential process in ‘In Britain there is a superstition that it is unlucky to see an owl by daylight’. The embedded proposition, ‘that it is unlucky to see an owl by daylight’, functions as an impersonally projected fact that is represented as being both engaged with and subverted by the author in the *Harry Potter* series: ‘a superstition I had fun with in the first chapter of “Philosopher’s Stone”’:

My wizards' owls reflect their personality to a certain extent. Poor Ron gets Pigwidgeon, who is a Scops (these are very small owls with ears – cute, but distinctly unshowy). Poor exhausted Errol is a Great Gray, which in my opinion is the most comical-looking owl in the world – just Google the Great Gray to see what I mean. Naturally I gave my hero what I consider to be the most beautiful owl of the lot: the Snowy Owl, which also goes by the name of Ghost Owl. These are not native to Britain, so I felt that she would give Harry kudos at Hogwarts (there is no other snowy owl there, as I trust you have noticed). However, any owl expert would tell you that Hedwig is strangely atypical of her breed. Only after *Philosopher’s Stone* had been accepted for publication did I realise that Snowy Owls are diurnal. I think it was during the writing of ‘Chamber of Secrets’ that I discovered that Snowy Owls are also virtually silent, the females being even quieter than the males. So all of Hedwig's night-time jaunts and her many reproving hoots may be taken as signs of her great magical ability or my pitiful lack of research, whichever you prefer. (nd, npn)

This second paragraph seeks to establish as *natural* a reading of the text that sees the possession of nonhuman animals as a specific narrative device: ‘My wizards' owls’ as Carrier in a relational attributive process, ‘reflect’, with ‘their personality’ as attribute, followed by the circumstance of degree, ‘to a certain extent’. This reading reinforces the

view that nonhuman animals who are owned by humans, in other words ‘pets’, necessarily possess a ‘projective function’. Veevers (1985) states that ‘[t]he *projective function* concerns the extent to which the selection of a pet is interpreted as making a statement about the owner’ (12) and that ‘[a] person publicly identified with a companion animal makes a symbolic statement of their personality and self-image’ (13).

As previously discussed, Harry Potter’s acquisition of an owl in *The Philosopher’s Stone* is represented in language that reflects as *natural* a consideration of this ‘projective function’. Owls are socially desirable: ‘All the kids want owls’ (PS, 62), therefore, Harry Potter’s social identity within the world of magic is enhanced due to his ownership of an owl. Beyond the narrative, an understanding of the assumed positive projective function of possessing a Snowy Owl, together with the *natural* suitability of a Snowy Owl for the ‘hero’ of the series is represented as self-evident by the use of ‘Naturally’ in the observation: ‘Naturally I gave my hero what I consider to be the most beautiful owl of the lot: the Snowy Owl’ (Rowling, nd: npn). Authorial intent can be seen as continually flagged by the repeated use of the first person singular: ‘I gave’, ‘I consider’, ‘I felt’ in ‘I felt that she would give Harry kudos at Hogwarts, and ‘I trust’ in the parenthetical indicated aside ‘(there is no other snowy owl there, as I trust you have noticed)’.

With the two preceding paragraphs representing owls as both *naturally* evoking myth and superstition and as eminently desirable possessions who are able to enhance an owner’s self-image and social standing, the final paragraph then refers to the field of

concerns regarding the increased interest in owls as ‘pets’ since the publication of the series:

(Incidentally: there has been a spate of stories in the press recently concerning the upswing in popularity of keeping owls as pets, allegedly as a result of the Harry Potter books. If it is true that anybody has been influenced by my books to think that an owl would be happiest shut in a small cage and kept in a house, I would like to take this opportunity to say as forcefully as I can: please don’t.) (nd: npn)

This paragraph textually downplays the topic in a number of ways. First, by placing the concern for the welfare of owls after the discussion of their cultural associations and their use as a narrative device. Next, by representing this concern as a digression, in fact doubly so, through the use of both parenthesis and the parenthetical sentence modifier ‘incidentally’ that is generally employed to introduce a subordinate or unconnected topic. The validity of a cause and effect relationship between the popularity of the *Harry Potter* series and ‘the upswing in popularity of keeping owls as pets’ is then called into question by the use of ‘allegedly’ that positions the link as supposed rather than proven. Reinforcing the reading of this proposition as a possibility that lacks certainty is the use of the conditional clause ‘If it is true’ that appears to treat with scepticism the possibility of the *Harry Potter* series exercising any influence over its readership. Continuing the textual minimising of responsibility, the subsequent proffered advice involves a mood element that produces a softened version of a command by ‘a shift in the realizational domain of commands from “imperative” to an “indicative” clause[]’ (Halliday: 2004): ‘I would like to take this opportunity to say as forcefully as I can: **please don’t**’. Following Halliday, ‘[t]he fact that the “indicative” clause realizes a kind of command can be seen in the way the addressee treats it in the exchange, complying with it (or

refusing to comply)’ (632). In this case, a weak command following a downplaying of the topic reinforces the abrogation of any responsibility on the part of the *Harry Potter* series for the increase in owls as ‘pets’ and leaves the choice of compliance, or refusal to comply, with the request ‘please don’t’, solely at the discretion of the reader. The textual representation of the three paragraphs in ‘Extra Stuff: Owls’, implies a metanarrative that considers the fictive representation of nonhuman animals, whether it be their mythic associations or their ability to make symbolic statements about human personalities, as having no bearing on the lives of actual nonhuman animals.

Arguably, if the series had represented at least some of the owls ‘as a member of a species with a nature that has certain typical capabilities and limitations’ (Shapiro and Copeland, 2005: 344) the issue of the welfare of owls may not have arisen. Pet Rescue (2006) reports that after the release of the remake of *101 Dalmatians* in 1996 there was actually a decline in popularity of the breed in the United States:

Surprisingly – and contrary to popular belief – the release of the movie coincided with one of the most stunning declines in breed popularity in the history of dogdom.

Before the movie came out at the end of 1996, Dalmatians were America's ninth-favorite breed, with nearly 43,000 AKC registrations in 1995. After the movie, the decline in registrations was dizzying: 33,000 in 1996; only 9,700 in 1998. Last year, the breed had barely more than 1,000 dogs registered and ranked 77th in popularity. Dalmatians sustained an incredible 98 percent decline in registrations in a decade. (npr)

This decline is attributed to a campaign to prevent a repeat of the 1985 experience. However, breeders considered the campaign to have been ‘too-effective’ as it highlighted ‘the negative aspects of Dalmatians without explaining the good sides of the breed’ (Pet

Rescue, 2006: npn). While the breeders may regard this as a negative outcome, it does indicate that consumers are willing to heed cautionary advice. A representation of an owl's 'species-typical way of living in the world' (Shapiro and Copeland, 2005: 345) would have made it very clear to the majority of readers that captive owls are a high maintenance and demanding responsibility who also have sharp talons and beaks that they do not hesitate to use on their human care-giver (Owls As Pets, nd).

Narrative Presence and Absence

As previously discussed, avoiding representing characters, or incidents within the narrative that involve those characters, can be seen as a downgrading of the importance of those characters and those incidents. When Harry first acquires Hedwig the process of selecting and purchasing the owl is narratively elided. And although Harry 'couldn't stop stammering his thanks', indicating extreme gratefulness on his part, how Harry first meets the owl who would become 'his one great link with the magical world whenever he had been forced to return to the Dursleys' (DH, 61) is subsumed within the time phrase, 'Twenty minutes later', that represents the process as a quickly effected fait accompli:

Twenty minutes later, they left Eeylops Owl Emporium, which had been dark and full of rustling and flickering jewel-bright eyes. Harry now carried a large cage which held a beautiful snowy owl, fast asleep with her head under her wing.

He couldn't stop stammering his thanks, ... (PS, 63)

How the 'beautiful snowy owl' came to be chosen is left undescribed in this short section of text, indicating that the process of acquisition, both narratively and textually,

is of little significance. This is in contrast to what follows directly after the buying of Hedwig, that is, the buying of Harry's wand:

“Don’ mention it,” said Hagrid gruffly. “Don’ expect you’ve had a lotta presents from them Dursleys. Just Ollivanders left now – only place fer wands, Ollivanders, and yeh gotta have the best wand.”

A magic wand ... this was what Harry had been really looking forward to.(63)

While Harry expresses pleasure and gratitude for his present of a snowy owl, the textual representation of his thought, channelled through narrator focalisation, regarding the acquisition of a wand demonstrates that it is the desire to possess a wand that is of paramount importance for Harry. This is seen through the use of the adjective ‘magic’ as an enhancer that explicitly links the wand, and thus Harry through his possession of it, to the magical world, followed by points of ellipsis that indicate a pause to consider the object of his desire and create a suspension point that adds emphasis to ‘this was what Harry had been really looking forward to’. Here the specific determiner ‘this’ and the intensifier ‘really’ are used to emphasise the importance of the wand to Harry, distinguishing it from all the other items on his list of school requirements, including owls, cats and toads. In direct comparison with the description of the acquisition of Hedwig, the amount of space devoted to describing the buying of the wand, almost three full pages of detail, along with the representation of the wand as the *naturally assumed* active agent, indicated by ‘of course’ in ‘it’s really the wand that chooses the wizard, of course’ (63), function to indicate that, both narratively and textually, the process of acquisition of the wand is of far greater significance than that of acquiring an owl.

Harry’s subsequent stewardship of Hedwig is as undemanding as her purchase:

Harry kept to his room, with his new owl for company. He had decided to call her Hedwig, a name he had found in *A History of Magic*. His school books were very interesting. He lay on his bed reading late into the night, Hedwig swooping in and out of the open window as she pleased. It was lucky that Aunt Petunia didn't come in to Hoover any more, because Hedwig kept bringing back dead mice. (67)

By representing Hedwig as actor in the material process of 'swooping' as well as the material process of 'bringing', she is positioning as the perfect low care 'pet' who sees to their own needs. However, she is not only being represented as an active agent, independently living her own life. She is also represented as senser of the mental process 'pleased', which constructs her as a sentient being with a mental capacity. The text represents as *natural* that this independent, thinking being should accept her subject position as Harry's 'new owl'. This is shown by Harry displaying no anxiety that Hedwig will not simply fly away as 'he lay on his bed reading late into the night'. To add to this understanding 'Hedwig kept bringing back dead mice', the 'kept bring back' indicating that it is her choice to be subject to Harry's control, as it has already been established that she has the ability to come and go 'as she pleased'.

Textually, Hedwig's presence is equally accommodating as she swoops in and out of the narrative as is required. For instance, on the morning that Harry is to first catch the train to Hogwarts, his preparations include shutting Hedwig 'safely in her cage'. However, her presence is not mentioned when '[t]wo hours later, Harry's huge, heavy trunk had been loaded into the Dursleys' car', nor when 'Uncle Vernon dumped Harry's trunk on to a trolley and wheeled it into the station for him' (68). Hedwig then reappears to function as a narrative device that works to further problematizes Harry's situation: 'What on earth was he going to do? He was starting to attract a lot of funny looks, because of Hedwig'

(69). Her presence then changes from that of an individual, signified by the use of her name, to that of her species with ‘a large owl’ working to emphasize her narrative role as an obvious and very visible sign of Harry Potter’s difference:

Harry was now trying hard not to panic. ... he was stranded in the middle of a station with a trunk he could hardly lift, a pocket full of wizard money and a large owl. ... (69)

Hedwig is represented as present in the text in order for her to function as an obvious narrative device that distances Harry from the ‘ordinary’ Muggle world. However, even when it can be understood that her presence is vital to the narrative, the reader is left to assume her presence and her importance in allowing Harry access to the magical world. For it appears that having an owl is ‘dead useful’ (62) for more than just carrying Harry’s post when Harry is welcomed as a friend by the Weasleys. This incident demonstrates that nonhuman animals are employed as important symbolic markers of inclusion within the magical world. For while each of the four Weasley boys are ‘pushing a trunk just like Harry’s’, it is the fact that Harry also observes that ‘they had an *owl*’ (69)(emphasis in the original) that appears to be the determining factor in his decision to follow them. This understanding is supported by the use of italics, which adds emphasis, and therefore importance, to ‘owl’ and also by the fact that Mrs Weasley accepts Harry as belonging to her social space without question or need for explanation seemingly because he, too, is accompanied by an owl, though Hedwig’s presence is not remarked upon by the Weasleys, nor Harry Potter, nor indeed by the narrator.

Hedwig next appears when Harry ‘found an empty compartment near the end of the train’ and ‘put Hedwig inside first’ (71). Therefore, she is present, but not mentioned by either

Harry Potter or Ron Weasley, when they discuss Ron's rat, Scabbers, nor when 'Harry didn't think there was anything wrong with not being able to afford an owl ... and he told Ron so' (75). In effect, Hedwig, although 'a large owl', disappears from the text during the train journey to Hogwarts, both narratively and textually. This positions her character as primarily a narrative device, one whose sole purpose is to serve the needs of the hero, Harry Potter. Hedwig will swoop into the story when the need arrives but will also conveniently disappear from the text by becoming discursively absent, if required.

Embedded Ideology and 'Natural' Servitude

This narrative and textual treatment of the character of Hedwig effectively 'downgrades' her character. While the downgrading of a nonhuman animal is conventionally understood to be 'mere story convention', from a nonhuman animal centred perspective, it is better understood by paraphrasing Hollindale (1988) as 'curtailments [by] humanity' resulting from an 'embedded' ideology' (19-21). Such an embedded ideology posits that the role of nonhuman animals is only and always to serve, just as Hedwig serves Harry Potter by obediently delivering his letters and also serving the narrative by obediently making her presence scarce when not required.

Hedwig's final service to the narrative is to aid in the 'coming of age' of the character of Harry Potter through her death in chapter four of the final book, *The Deathly Hallows*. Here author intent positions her as a metaphor that functions as 'the death of innocence' (Rowling, (2007a). Hedwig is killed by Death Eaters as Harry Potter attempts to escape with Hagrid on a flying motorbike. In order to confuse the enemy, members of the Order of the Phoenix had all disguised themselves as 'fake' Harry Potters. While previously

throughout the series Hedwig, when present, is most often positioned as intelligent, capable and agentive, in this episode she is represented as equivalent to an inanimate object as '[o]nce dressed, the fake Harrys took rucksacks and owl cages, each containing a stuffed snowy owl' (49). This reduction of previous understandings of her individuality continues with the textual representation of her presence as an individual being progressively elided after her death:

A second's relief, and then another burst of green light. The owl screeched and fell to the floor of the cage. ...

'Hedwig – Hedwig –'

But the owl lay motionless and pathetic as a toy on the floor of her cage.' (52)

This narrator focalisation represents Hedwig as species while 'Hedwig – Hedwig –' refers to her as an individual and is presumably uttered by Harry Potter. Later, Hagrid refers to Hedwig by name when questioning her whereabouts:

'Wait a moment,' said Hagrid, looking around. 'Harry, where's Hedwig?'

'She ... she got hit,' said Harry.

The realisation crashed over him: he felt ashamed of himself as tears stung his eyes. *The owl* had been his companion, his one great link with the magical world whenever he had been forced to return to the Dursleys. (DH, 61) (emphasis added)

In this instance, character focalisation is channelled through narrator focalisation, implying Harry's thought process. Later still, when Harry is thinking about all those he has known who have died, Hedwig is also mentioned only as a category of species: '... but Dumbledore, like Mad-Eye, like Sirius, like his parents, like *his poor owl*, all were gone where Harry could never talk to them again' (74) (emphasis added). While this is still character focalisation via narrator focalisation, the high affect reference to Hedwig

as ‘his *poor* owl’ seems to express Harry’s feelings directly. However, the reference to her only as a species member and the lack of the mention of Hedwig’s name anywhere in this section, combined with positioning her last in the list, can be seen as creating an accumulative effect that works to lessen her death’s importance when compared to human deaths.

Discourse of ‘Only a Pet’

Even though seemingly contradictory, these two attitudes could also be seen as a representation of how Harry as hero and, therefore role model, works through his grief at her loss ‘appropriately’; first by acknowledging the sadness, ‘his poor owl’, but not ‘overreacting’ as she was ‘only a pet’. Read in this way, Rowling situates Harry’s response to Hedwig’s death within discourses associated with both ‘rational restraint’ and masculinity. As Yarden (1987, in Allen) observes, ‘[f]rom childhood we are taught that crying is a show of weakness – and in the case of boys and men this attitude is even more rigid. We often do not allow our children to mourn or feel a loss, let alone show it’ (npn).

Stearns (2004), in noting changing cultural attitudes to death and expressions of grief, reflects on the twentieth century view that children needed to be shielded from death: ‘Expert advice began to warn of the dangers of children’s fears, including those of death, and parents were urged to use caution in their discussions of death with children. ... Euphemisms began to replace direct references to death, and some purists even urged sidestepping confrontations with the death of pets’ (402). From the previous historical *natural* assumption that grief and death would be experienced by adults and children

alike, 'excessive emotion' not only became 'a sign of psychological weakness and indicative of a need for therapy' in adults, but there were also 'beliefs that grief was particularly hazardous to children's psychological well-being'. With the result that parents were advised to exercise restraint in expressing their own grief 'in order to minimize childish grief' (402). Stearns observes that:

Fictional representations also reflected this avoidance of grief; in contrast to nineteenth-century children's fiction, contemporary children's media presented death as graphic and gory but emotionless, with no pause for grief. (403)

The death of Hedwig essentially follows this pattern. Hedwig is killed violently by a 'burst of green light' and lay 'motionless and pathetic as a toy on the floor of her cage' (DH, 52). However, Harry is not seen to react emotionally to her death as '[h]e could not take it in, and his terror for the others was paramount' (52). Here the horror of her death is textually subordinate to the 'paramount' concern for Harry's human companions. In this way, how Hedwig's death is represented acts as a narrative device to highlight the danger faced by those human characters, while also functioning as a metanarrative that demonstrates an 'appropriate' response to the death of a 'pet', that is, that the fate of nonhuman animals must always take second place to the 'paramount' concern for humans.

Hedwig may have been Harry's constant companion for over six years but it is the death during the same encounter with the Death Eaters of the human, Mad-Eye Moody, who Harry has known only briefly, that leaves Harry bereft: 'Harry felt as though something inside him was falling, falling through the earth, leaving him forever' (DH, 69). 'Harry

could not quite comprehend it. Mad-Eye dead; it could not be ... Mad-Eye, so tough, so brave, the consummate survivor ...' (70). The nominal group, 'Mad-Eye, so tough, so brave, the consummate survivor ...' has the effect of valorising the qualities, 'so tough, so brave, the consummate survivor ...', and therefore constructs Mad-Eye Moody as an individual who possessed attributes that are highly valued in themselves, without reference to their usefulness to others. Mad-Eye Moody, then, is being represented as an individual autonomous subject, who will be sorely missed because he was an *individual*.

The attributes that identify Hedwig in her valorisation, on the other hand, are not those of an independent autonomous subject. Rather, her identity is constructed through a relational identifying process that positions her as dependant on her relationship with Harry Potter and her usefulness to him: 'The owl had been his companion, his one great link with the magical world...' (61). It appears that Hedwig will be sorely missed because she was *useful*. This finding reflects Goatly's (2004) conclusion after subjecting word frequency and concordance data on owls in general in the series to transitivity analysis; they were found to be 'most mentioned or significant when they were of use to humans – an anthropocentric attitude' (123).

Read metaphorically as 'the death of innocence' (Rowling, 2007a), Hedwig's death can be seen to imply that it is this dependence on Hedwig as 'his one great link with the magical world' that Harry Potter needs to transcend if he is to forge his own 'rightful' place within the magical world, as an individual no longer dependant on others, in the same vein as Mad-Eye Moody: 'so tough, so brave, the consummate survivor ...'. Harry

Potter's reaction to, and the narrative's representation of, Hedwig's death demonstrates that the death of an animal other is not to be seen as of such importance as that of a human animal. Through his differing reactions to the deaths of Hedwig and Mad-Eye, Harry Potter is represented as understanding that there is a clear division between nonhuman and human animals that must be recognized and maintained. That he is represented as *naturally* appreciating this division positions Harry Potter as beginning to fully inhabit his social identity as an *adult*.

This essentially hierarchical division of nonhuman and human animals within the magical society can be seen as recognisable and familiar to the world of the reader. For, while Rowling's magical world depends on nonhuman animals to help create a distance between magical and Muggle, at the same time, their treatment by magical humans as subordinates can be understood as working to create a point of entry for the general reader into this magical world. As observed by Hollindale (1988), in order to lure the reader in, an author must be able to construct 'a shared understanding of the present, and an actuality which the young reader believes in' (51).

Fictive Nonhuman Animals and Extratextual 'Reality'

Fictional worlds must provide some form of alignment with a potential reader's 'real' world in order to facilitate their easy transition into the implied reader, that is, one who unquestioningly accepts the *reality* of that fictional world. If some aspects of the reader's world are mirrored in the narrative then the reader, theoretically, finds it easier to identify with, and empathise with, the fictional characters. In this way, readers who accept the magical world's hierarchical treatment of nonhuman animals as *natural* can be seen as

recognizing an alignment with the 'real' world and possess 'a shared understanding of the present' with the author which then allows a view of Harry Potter's world as not completely alien and, therefore, more accessible.

The narrative representations of Hedwig the owl, the boa constrictor at the zoo and Dudley's tortoise, effectively offer this alignment with the 'real' world of the reader. Hedwig is present in the narrative only as she is needed to move the plot along while in the case of the snake at the zoo and Dudley's tortoise, the narrative does not place any importance on any form of closure for their stories. All are only mentioned in the story for as long as they function to highlight some aspect of the character of Harry Potter and once they have performed that task they become marginal. Harry may keep Hedwig until her death, however, the narrative use by the author of the character of Hedwig demonstrates a tendency to simply abandon nonhuman animal characters when they are no longer useful to the narrative – when not convenient, they simply 'disappear'; this narrative fate is also shared by Hermione's cat Crookshanks and Ron's owl Pigwidgeon. In other words, no longer useful to humans, their presence is no longer required and so they conveniently vanish. One 'real' world demonstration that this attitude to animal others is widespread is the abandonment of an estimated 500,000 nonhuman animals who find themselves in animal shelters every year in Australia. Just as the disappearance of Hedwig, the snake, the tortoise and others from the text is due to a lack of ongoing narrative interest in their presence, as previously stated, the major reason given (72%) for the abandonment or disappearance of 'pets' from the lives of their owners is reported to be a change in 'personal circumstances' (Wirth, 2008: npn). These animal others are no

longer seen as necessary or required to participate in their owner's ongoing personal life narrative and are, therefore, disposable.

Wirth (2008) suggests that 'all those who acquire a companion animal, regardless of source, should be encouraged to attend a local education program' (npn). This thesis argues that unexamined ideological assumptions concerning the *natural* contradictions regarding nonhuman animals present in the narrative and grammatical construction of both 'good' and 'bad' human characters in children's texts, such as the taken-for-granted disposable nature of animal others found in the *Harry Potter* series, are also of concern as they are already functioning to educate young readers to accept that 'pets' are *naturally* ultimately disposable members of the family.

The Critical Animal Studies approach adopted in this thesis supports the proposition that '[h]ow animals are socially constructed influences how they are treated by human society' (Stibbe, 2001:147). Therefore, from a pro nonhuman animal perspective, all popular contemporary texts demand examination of both the grammatical and narrative representation of nonhuman/human relationships in order to expose the inherent contradictions often embedded within those representations. Anderson and Henderson's (2005) contention that the way young children relate to fictional nonhuman animals has a bearing on adult attitudes to issues around 'nonhuman animals' similarity to humans and their moral status' and that these issues 'often form the basis of a debate on controversial social practices involving animals' necessarily positions children's literature as meriting particular attention. As Anderson and Henderson point out, 'expectations engendered by

childhood stories are one reason these issues play a key role in determining what social practices are acceptable' (298). How we are socialized to view nonhuman animals when we are young, therefore, often becomes naturalized as the 'right' way to interact with animal others that we carry with us throughout our lives (301) and that we pass on to our children.

Chapter Ten: Companion Animals as Metaphor

The most important claim we have made so far is that metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words. We shall argue that, on the contrary, human thought processes are largely metaphorical. ... Metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person's conceptual system. (Larkoff & Johnson, 1980: 6)

Introduction

Chapter nine explored the narrative strategy of representing an individual's treatment of nonhuman animals as an indicator of whether or not a reader should consider a human character 'good' or 'bad'. In particular the chapter examined how the grammar that realizes this strategy also effectively works to maintain and so perpetuate the inherent contradictions within the current social construction of 'pets' that positions them as both 'family member' and 'disposable commodity' in the representation of both unsympathetic *and* sympathetic human characters. This chapter continues to explore 'pet'/human relationships in the *Harry Potter* series via the series' use of metaphor and the representation of cross-species intersubjectivity. Three nonhuman/human animal relationships in the series are examined in order to demonstrate how the text constructs a paradigm that sets up moderation in the degree of interspecies intimacy as being both *natural* and 'desirable': Hedwig and Harry Potter, Mrs. Norris and Argus Filch, and Nagini and Voldemort.

The initial positive understanding of the benefits of 'pets' reflected in the *Harry Potter* series through the list of student requirements for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, that states that '[s]tudents may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad' (PS, 53), in fact functions as a narrative device that activates an intertextual understanding of

genres associated with magic and witchcraft. This is because this official sanctioning of a nonhuman companion speaks to the *natural* association of witches and wizards with certain nonhuman animals who are designated as ‘familiars’, the disguised demons who are traditionally understood to be a witch’s constant companion and who assist them in the production of magic. This understanding is reinforced by the choice of a nonhuman companion being limited to ‘an owl OR a cat OR a toad’. These three species, particularly when mentioned as a lexical set, are *naturally* identifiable as discourse markers of ‘magic’, being regarded as ‘traditional’ witches’ companions. Therefore, the main narrative function of this list is as an aid in the construction of the magical world by tapping into this long established preconception of ‘familiars’ who *naturally* denote the magical world.

Merely noting that certain nonhuman animals *naturally* belong in the world of magic, however, does not reveal their moral status within that world. Dendle (2009) observes that, ‘[t]he wizarding world’s attitude towards animals and animal welfare, much like our own Muggle attitude, is riddled with ambiguity and hypocrisy’ (166). While there is no argument with this assessment, a careful examination of any ‘ambiguity and hypocrisy’ in relation to the textual representation of companion animals when read as metaphors does make it possible to reveal a number of ideological assumptions concerning what best constitutes a *natural* ‘desirable’ nonhuman/human animal relationship.

Human and ‘Animal’

Harry Potter, as the hero of the series, is represented as an essentially ‘good’ character.

He is given Hedwig the owl as a birthday present and their relationship is generally understood to be close. Hedwig is positioned as a very independent sentient being who possesses agency: ‘Hedwig swooping in and out of the open window as she pleased’ (PS, 67). However, she also fetches and carries for Harry without question and is always aware, through some unexplained sense, where to deliver his messages: ‘Harry’s owl had never yet failed to deliver a letter to anyone, even without an address’ (24). As well as this, Hedwig also always knows where Harry is or will be, as can be seen in the third book, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, when Harry abruptly leaves the Dursley’s while she is away. In this instance, Hedwig is considered a ‘[v]ery smart owl’ by the landlord as she arrives at the *Leaky Cauldron* ‘about five minutes’ after Harry steps off the Knight Bus (PA, 40).

Hedwig is not only capable of delivering messages, she is also able to carry out other instructions, such as in book five, *The Order of the Phoenix*, when Harry instructs her to ‘[t]ake these [letters] straight to Sirius, Ron and Hermione and don’t come back here without good long replies. Keep pecking them till they’ve written decent-length answers if you’ve got to. Understand?’ (44). That she does understand is evidenced when Ron later tells Harry that ‘[Hedwig]’s been in a right state’ ... ‘Pecked us half to death when she brought your last letters’. Ron then proceeds to show Harry ‘the index finger of his right hand, which sported a half-healed but clearly deep cut’ (61).

This representation of Hedwig can in part be seen to disrupt the concept of an absolute nonhuman/human animal binary and begin to posit an understanding of Hedwig as

‘human-like’ because of her intelligence and understanding. However, although Hedwig seems to have some form of psychic connection with Harry, this understanding is not represented as being reciprocal; for while Hedwig may always know where to find Harry, on occasions throughout the series, Harry does not always know the whereabouts of Hedwig. Neither does he always understand what message she is trying to communicate to him. However, Harry never questions Hedwig’s talents and possibly attributes them to instinctual ‘magical’ behaviours, rather than expressions of her subjectivity.

The narrative draws no essentialist link between Harry and Hedwig, apart from Rowling’s (2006) narrative strategy of representing a snowy owl as a desirable commodity and, therefore, a suitable companion for her hero. For unlike the Mrs Norris/Filch relationship and the Nagini/Voldemort pairing, when describing them, the text makes no allusions to any physical similarities in the appearance of either Hedwig or Harry Potter. In his relationship with Hedwig, the reader is encouraged to regard Harry Potter as never anything other than human, while Hedwig, though a ‘[v]ery smart owl’, remains ‘animal’.

Although attention has been drawn to a number of contradictions within Donna Haraway’s discussions on human/nonhuman animal relations in *When Species Meet* (Weisberg, 2009), Haraway’s (2008) idealized concept of companion species as an incidence of ‘*becoming with*’, where ‘species of all kinds, living or not, are consequent on a subject- and object-shaping dance of encounters’ (4), still has value from Critical

Animal Studies perspective and reflects a potentially desirable understanding of nonhuman/human animal relations. Disturbingly though, examples in the *Harry Potter* series of relationships that better reflect this ‘*becoming with*’ than the previously mentioned Hedwig and Harry Potter pairing would be those of Hogwarts’ despised caretaker Argus Filch and the cat Mrs Norris, along with the villain Voldemort and the snake Nagini. Both of these relationships have at their heart the concept of ‘*becoming with*’ (23) that Haraway proposes.

‘Animal’ Becoming Human

Mrs Norris and Filch, as well as Nagini and Voldemort, textually construct and are constructed by their pairings. Within the Mrs Norris/Filch pair, Mrs Norris is said to have ‘patrolled the corridors alone’ (99) when she is first introduced to the reader in *The Philosopher’s Stone*. As Actor in a material clause, Mrs Norris is being grammatically represented as possessing agency. The circumstance ‘alone’ and the connotation of the verb ‘patrolled’ indicate that she has the authority to inspect the said corridors as an individual. That her authority is acknowledged by others is then confirmed when the narrative voice reveals that being caught breaking school rules by Mrs Norris is the equivalent to being caught by Filch: ‘Break a rule in front of her, put just one toe out of line, and she’d whisk off for Filch’. Mrs Norris’ understanding of Filch’s directions to her, as well as Filch’s equal understanding of her reports back to him, are strongly indicated by the fact that Filch is said to then ‘appear, wheezing, two seconds later’ (99).

As a result of her possession of qualities that would be considered distinctly human, this representation of Mrs Norris can be seen to destabilize the categories of the ‘nonhuman’

and 'human' animal. And because Filch and Mrs Norris share an apparently symbiotic relationship as they seek to impose order on the student body, the subjectivity of Mrs Norris is seen to be acknowledged not only by Filch but also by the many students whose 'dearest ambition' was 'to give Mrs Norris a good kick' (99).

This 'human' representation of Mrs Norris is continued through her physical description, as this too blurs the qualities that conventionally distinguish nonhuman from human animal. Mrs Norris is described as 'a scrawny, dust-coloured creature' who also possesses the attribute of 'bulging, lamp-like eyes just like Filch's' (99). This description does more than draw similarities between Filch and Mrs Norris; it establishes a 'family resemblance' through the attribute of a nominal grouping, 'just like Filch's', that helps to further confer on Mrs Norris a 'human' identity.

The '*becoming with*' exhibited by the Filch/Mrs Norris relationship, at both the level of the narrative and the level of the grammar, involves Mrs Norris *becoming* more *human*: her physical description and her behaviour both reflect her 'humanness'. As both the description of her eyes and her patrolling of the corridors are 'just like' Filch, she is seen to be agentic by performing human 'caretaker' functions rather than to behave as a 'real' cat. Her 'humanness' is further emphasized through her ability to, at the very least, understand English. For while they appear to understand each other completely, it is never suggested in the text that Filch converses with Mrs Norris in any language other than English, therefore the assumption can be drawn that Mrs Norris not only understands English but that she is also capable of making herself understood.

Filch also appears to confer 'personhood' on Mrs Norris, evidenced by the cat being named *Mrs* Norris and Filch addressing her as 'my sweet' (117), as well as his demonstrated strong emotional attachment to her. The narrative can be seen as supporting this view not only by representing Mrs Norris as a character possessing agency but also because Mrs Norris and Filch resemble not so much a hybridized family as possibly related individuals. The relationship between Mrs Norris and Filch can be seen as destabilizing the categories of 'nonhuman' and 'human' animal by representing Mrs Norris as 'becoming *human*'.

Human Becoming 'Animal'

The relationship between Nagini and Voldemort works in a similar fashion, however, in this instance Voldemort is represented as 'becoming *animal*' by taking on snake-like aspects. In book four, *The Goblet of Fire*, before Voldemort has regained his physical form, his relationship with Nagini is one of dependence, as he relies on her venom 'every few hours' (GF, 14) to maintain his life. His physical description in this book, pre-transformation, is 'scaly-looking' with a face that 'was flat and snake-like' (555-556). Once he regains his corporeal form Voldemort still has 'a nose that was as flat as a snake's, with slits for nostrils...' (558). And because Nagini is a Horcrux of Voldemort, that is a keeper of a fragment of Voldemort's soul, Voldemort can also still be seen as dependent on Nagini for his continued existence even after his return to a physical form. Subsequently, in both *The Order of the Phoenix* and *The Deathly Hallows* the physical aspect of the snake that he exhibits is linked to the abhorrent: 'his terrible snakelike face' (OP, 716); 'the red eyes, the flattened, serpentine face, the pallor of him gleaming slightly in the semi-darkness' (DH, 524).

To add to Voldemort's affinity with the snake, and further cement the understanding of his character as 'evil', is the revelation that he is also a Parselmouth, which means that he can converse with snakes in their own language. Representing snakes as possessing a language does effectively position them as more than the 'Cartesian conception of animals as insentient machines' (Preece, 2005: 2). It also can be seen to jeopardize the certainty around language as one of the 'defining characteristics of humanity, [one of] those factors that, we believe, differentiate us from other species' (48). However, the narrative is shown to consider this blurring of the borders between human and nonhuman as deviant and dangerous when this ability to speak to snakes in their own language, which is said to be innate rather than learnt, is positioned as a self-evident universally identifiable attribute of a 'dark' wizard.

As such, one result of this self-evident truth is that Harry Potter is *naturally* suspected of being responsible for the attacks on students in *The Chamber of Secrets* when it is revealed that he also has this ability: 'he's a Parselmouth. Everyone knows that's the mark of a dark wizard' (CS, 148). To reinforce this observation, and leave no doubt that this ability is morally suspect, the question then immediately follows: 'Have you ever heard of a decent one who could talk to snakes?' (148). And of course, it is not just the blurring of boundaries alone that creates this supposed horror as there is also an historical precedent on the dangers of conversing with snakes. This representation of talking to snakes as a sign of a 'dark' wizard can be seen to mobilize western religious discourses around Eve's conversations with the serpent in the Tree of Knowledge of

Good and Evil that is considered to be responsible for the Fall and Adam and Eve's resultant expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Luckily for Harry, his ability to speak Parseltongue is a result of his being an accidental Horcrux of Voldemort, rather than being *naturally* evil. In an online chat, Rowling replied to a fan's query of whether or not Harry could still speak Parseltongue after Voldemort's death by saying: 'he loses the ability, and is very glad to do so' (2007c). This reply not only reinforces the *naturally* assumed undesirability of conversing with a snake but also the 'very glad to do so' continues to feed into religious discourses that link the snake with the power to corrupt and the related concept of original sin that was the direct consequence of Eve's ability to converse with a snake.

Within this discourse, the corruption of Voldemort is thus 'proven' through his affinity with Nagini, both in his physical resemblance to a snake and his ability to converse in Parseltongue. However, Voldemort's corruption goes deeper than this, for as previously noted, he has consciously made Nagini into a Horcrux and so is able to literally *be at one* with her on a number of occasions, such as when she attacks Arthur Weasley in *The Order of the Phoenix*. On that occasion, because Harry Potter is also a Horcrux of Voldemort, this information comes to the reader in the form of a 'vision' to Harry Potter. That Voldemort actually becomes Nagini, seeing through her eyes, tasting the air with her forked tongue and attacking the victim, is confirmed when Dumbledore later in the same book explains that Voldemort also has a dangerous connection with Harry Potter:

On those rare occasions when we had close contact, I thought I saw a shadow of [Voldemort] stir behind your eyes...'

Harry remembered the feeling that a dormant snake had arisen in him, ready to strike, ... (OP, 730)

This connection with Nagini also allows the snake and Voldemort to communicate over vast distances telepathically, as when she corners Harry Potter at Godric's Hollow in *The Deathly Hallows*:

Once we were up in the room, the snake sent a message to You-Know-Who, I heard it happen inside my head, I felt him get excited, he said to keep me here... (284)

Voldemort's way of interacting with Nagini can be seen to best reflect Donna Haraway's *becoming with* as exemplified by the bioanthropologist Barbara Smuts' observation of a baboon colony:

I... changed everything about me, including ... the way I used my eyes and voice. I was learning a whole new way of being in the world – the way of the baboon (cited in Haraway, 2008: 24)

Voldemort also changes everything about himself after his regeneration, not only his features: 'the red eyes, the flattened, serpentine face' (DH, 524), but also his voice: 'Voldemort hissed' (591). For Voldemort, this 'whole new way of being in the world' can be seen as *the way of the snake*.

Adverse Outcomes

All three of the nonhuman animals in these relationships suffer, what can be termed, an adverse outcome. By reading these incidents of cross-species intersubjectivity as metaphors it is possible to demonstrate how the text constructs a paradigm that promotes moderation in the degree of interspecies intimacy as both *normal* and 'ideal'.

When Hedwig is killed by Death Eaters in the final book, *The Deathly Hallows*, Harry is very distressed, although when ‘the realisation of her death crashed over him: he felt ashamed of himself as the tears stung his eyes’. He is then comforted by Hagrid saying ‘gruffly’, ‘[n]ever mind... Never mind. She had a great old life-’ (61). Filch, on the other hand is inconsolable when Mrs Norris is petrified in the second book, *The Chamber of Secrets*. He reacts with ‘dry, racking sobs’ and ‘was slumped in a chair by the desk, unable to look at Mrs Norris, his face in his hands’ (108). He shows no embarrassment at his ‘blotched and tear stained face’ as he swears revenge on the perpetrator. He also keeps vigil on the spot where she was attacked. In the case of Voldemort, he has invested a part of his soul in Nagini and takes especial care to guard her against harm, which also protects his own life. When she is killed in the Battle of Hogwarts in the final book, Voldemort is rendered mortal and Harry Potter is able to kill him.

All three of these outcomes, read as metaphors, demonstrate the degree of interspecies intimacy that ‘should’ be considered as being both *natural* and ‘desirable’ and the negative consequences of transgressing the limits of a ‘proper’ degree of cross-species intersubjectivity.

From ‘Child’ to ‘Adult’

As is typical of many texts defined as children’s literature, the *Harry Potter* series has at its core the notion of a *Bildungsroman*, a tale of ‘coming of age’. The series conforms to the ‘historical discourses’ that ‘associate animality with immaturity and growing up with

the transcendence of this condition' (Myers, 1999: 121) when, in an online interview, Rowling stated, 'Voldemort killing her marked the end of childhood' (2007a: npn). Such a metaphorical reading indicates not only that Rowling uses the death of Hedwig to directly relate to historical discourses that align growing up with the transcendence of 'animality' but also that she, in line with Stephens (1992a), considers that the fantasy genre is 'a metaphoric mode' (287).

Although the death of Hedwig is a sad moment, Harry Potter is represented as reacting in a socially appropriate way as he is shown to *naturally* understand 'that there is something emblematically sentimental about loving animals' and 'that there is something essentially suspect about sentimentality' (Menely, 2007: 244-247), for 'he felt ashamed of himself as the tears stung his eyes' (DH, 61). Therefore, in this light, Hedwig's death, though represented as very sad, could actually be seen as not only *natural* for this stage of Harry's development, but also as a desirable outcome as it facilitates Harry's transition from his social identity of *child* to that of *adult*.

'Habitual Failure'

Rowling's comments indicate that this should be the *natural* reading of Hedwig's death, therefore, it is not unreasonable to also read the attack on Mrs Norris and the death of Nagini metaphorically.

When the reader first meets Hogwarts' caretaker Argus Filch in *The Philosopher's Stone*, he is described as '[e]ven worse than [the poltergeist] Peeves' (PS, 99) and is represented as universally despised: 'The students all hated him' (99). That Harry and

his friend Ron are to be included in the 'all' is made plain when, 'Harry and Ron were delighted to hear Hagrid call Filch "That old git"' (105). As the series unfolds it becomes increasingly clear that this initial negative representation of Filch's character will not change. Filch is not only positioned as a decidedly unpleasant character but also a failure who, as a result, is 'bitter' (CS, 111) and it is his reaction to the attack on Mrs Norris that effectively reveals his multiple 'failures'.

As Carol Adams (2009) observes, part of the social construct of 'masculinity' involves the suppression of empathy. Filch's compassion and concern for Mrs Norris can, therefore, be read as evidence of his failed masculinity. The failed nature of Filch's character is further reinforced by the knowledge that he is also a 'Squib', that is, a member of a magical family who has failed to inherit any magical ability. That being a Squib is to be considered a failure is hinted at in *The Philosopher's Stone*, when Ron first meets Harry Potter. Ron tells Harry that not all his family are magical as his mother has a 'second cousin who's an accountant, but we never talk about him' (PS, 75). In *The Chamber of Secrets* Ron confirms the social prejudice against Squibs in the magical world when, in response to Harry Potter's request for information on Squibs after the attack on Mrs Norris, 'Ron stifled a snigger'. Although Ron goes on to observe that 'it's not funny really', after explaining the term to Harry, 'Ron gave a satisfied smile' (110-111). That Filch has kept his condition a secret is also a strong indicator that he too considers it to be not only shameful but also that it marks him as a potential target for discrimination and persecution. This is revealed when Filch accuses Harry Potter of petrifying Mrs Norris and puts forward the fact that he, Filch, is a

Squib as the motive. The degree of shame and anguish Filch feels when admitting to being a Squib is also expressed grammatically via lexical choice, incomplete sentences and repetition in ‘He found – in my office – he knows I’m a – I’m a –’ Filch’s face worked horribly. ‘He knows I’m a Squib!’ he finished’ (CS, 109).

Just as Harry Potter’s magical ability was ‘proven’ for the reader by his interaction with a nonhuman animal, that is, the snake at the zoo, so Argus Filch’s lack of magical ability is shown through this incident with Mrs Norris. Further, Filch also reveals at this time that he has failed to come to terms with his lack of magical ability, demonstrated by his attempting to learn magic through a Kwikspell course. Added to this is the fact that Filch’s grief for Mrs Norris is ongoing: ‘Filch kept it fresh in everyone’s minds by pacing the spot where she had been attacked, as though he thought the attacker might come back’ (CS, 111). The ‘as though he thought’ indicates that his actions should be read as futile and perhaps childish for, unlike Harry Potter at the death of Hedwig, it appears that Filch has not been able to ‘never mind’. Therefore, Filch’s inability to cope with the situation strongly hints at his failure to successfully achieve the social transition from *child* to *adult*. In this light, Filch’s grief for Mrs Norris is, as a consequence, reduced to yet more evidence of his seemingly habitual failure to perform any of the socially valued identities within the magical world that he seeks to inhabit: wizard, adult, male.

The representation of the Mrs Norris/ Filch relationship can be seen to mobilize discourses that constructs ‘pets’ as constituting ‘part of the family’, a not uncommon

extratextual attitude and as Cowles (1985) observes, '[t]he loss of a pet, whether due to the death of the animal or any other cause of separation, can be the impetus for acute grief responses in individuals of all ages' (135). However, it appears that Rowling adheres to Veevers' view that the relationship between human/nonhuman family members is not to be seen as being on an equal par with those of human/human family members: 'When interactions with animals too closely approximates interactions with humans ... we consider the animals to have become substitutes for humans' (Veevers, 1985: 19). Here, through the use of '*we say*', Veevers positions herself as belonging to the category of 'ones who know'. As a professor of sociology at a Canadian university, Veevers is self-representing as the embodiment of the authority of a *primary knower*. As such, she asserts a discourse that constructs 'proper' nonhuman/human animal relations as those that reject as *unnatural* a relationship wherein nonhuman animals are highly valued in their own right. Within this discourse, it is always an indication of failure if the human in such a relationship is not seen to keep nonhuman animals at a 'proper' distance.

Read this way, Filch 'substitutes' his relationship with Mrs Norris for human-to-human contact and so fails to recognize that he is interacting 'with animals too closely' by refusing to maintain a clear division between nonhuman and human animals. However, from a nonhuman animal centred perspective, Filch's care and concern for Mrs Norris can also be seen as a positive representation of a nonhuman/human animal relationship. Unfortunately, because the character of Filch has no redeeming features (apart from his care and concern for Mrs Norris), an ideal reader would not recognize merit in any of

Filch's described qualities. As Filch's care and concern for Mrs Norris is represented within a paradigm of his otherwise mean spiritedness, that care and concern can actually be seen as being transformed into an embodiment of Filch's unpleasant character traits, rather than a quality to be emulated. As a result, what should be a positive attribute, care and concern for an animal other, is positioned as *unnatural* and reduced to just another piece of evidence that supports Filch's 'failed' status.

While the close relationship of Filch and Mrs Norris, that 'substitutes [her] for humans', indicates that Filch, unlike Harry Potter, fails to understand that there is a clear division between nonhuman and human animals that must be recognized and maintained, this failing is narratively constructed as more pathetic than threatening. Filch is only ever represented as an annoyance to Harry Potter and his friends rather than a danger. For while a human 'encouraging' a nonhuman to transgress boundaries to 'become human' is seen as undesirable, the real danger, to themselves and others, is represented as occurring when the human 'becomes animal'.

'Manifest Evil'

Voldemort, the villain of the series, has 'committed acts of unspeakable evil' (DH, 568) and 'does not love' (577). However, Dumbledore considers that Voldemort 'is perhaps as fond of [Nagini] as he can be of anything' (HBP, 473). For Dumbledore, Voldemort's 'fondness' for Nagini is exhibited by his liking 'to keep her close' (473). Within the text it is unclear whether this 'fondness' merely reflects the physical care and protection Voldemort takes of Nagini in order to protect his own existence or whether it is to be

understood that there is also, for Voldemort, an emotional ‘caring’ component to their relationship as well.

Voldemort is not represented as attempting to construct a relationship with Nagini that sees her become a substitute for humans. Indeed, it often appears that Voldemort delights in Nagini’s ‘animal’ nature, as demonstrated in *The Deathly Hallows* when he feeds one of his victims to her: “‘Dinner Nagini,’” said Voldemort softly, and the great snake swayed and slithered from his shoulders on to the polished wood’ (18). Unlike the Mrs Norris/Filch relationship, there appear to be no redeeming aspects to this relationship as the narrative representation of Voldemort’s ability to adopt ‘the way of the snake’ is positioned as positive evidence of his ‘evil’ nature. As such, the Nagini/Voldemort relationship can be read as a cautionary tale against any disruption to nonhuman/human animal binaries that leaves little doubt that doing so would definitely constitute a transgression.

The death of Nagini, along with the death of Hedwig and the petrifying of Mrs Norris, read metaphorically, can all be seen to demonstrate the need for moderation in the degree of interspecies intimacy within ‘pet’/human relationships. Cross-species intersubjectivity, that is both *normal* and ‘desirable’, requires humans not to identify too closely with a nonhuman other and works against the very ‘*becoming with*’ that Haraway urges. If we invest too much of ourselves in our relationships with other animals, the text seems to say, if we become companion species and if, like Voldemort, we embrace a concept that sees the transferring of even a part of our soul across, what

Haraway terms, 'the Great Divide' (2008: 15) between humans and other animals, then we need to be aware that this could, in fact, be the death of our 'humanity'. A loss of 'humanity', the reader is given to understand, would prevent them from being a hero like Harry Potter, for they would be in grave danger of becoming, at the very least, a failure like Argus Filch or, worse still, 'a raging psychopath, devoid of normal human responses to other people's suffering' (Rowling in Jensen, 2000), like Voldemort.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

The animals themselves are incapable of demanding their own liberation, or of protesting against their condition with votes, demonstrations, or boycotts. Human beings have power to continue to oppress other species forever, or until we make this planet unsuitable for living beings. Will our tyranny continue, proving that morality counts for nothing when it clashes with self interest, as the most cynical of poets and philosophers have said? Or will we rise to the challenge and prove our capacity for genuine altruism by ending our ruthless exploitation of the species in our power, not because we are forced to do so by rebels and terrorists, but because we recognize that our position is morally indefensible? (Singer, 2002: 248)

As a contribution to the field of Critical Animal Studies, this thesis responded to Shapiro and Copeland's (2005) call for the development of 'a critical theory of animal issues in fiction' (343). It set out to demonstrate an approach to texts that actively creates ways of reading the presence of nonhuman animals *into* literary texts. The methodology chosen, Critical Discourse Analysis and aspects of narrative theory, has the ability not only to reveal naturalized/embedded discourses particularly, as in this case, those *currently active* within contemporary texts, but also has the capacity to create spaces in which to consider how these discourses relate to the all too often oppressive social practices beyond the text. This, then, encourages an active evaluation of these discourses along with the historical and social contexts that produce them. The desired aim of this approach to texts is to foster a general appreciation that through 'careful analytical interrogation of the ideological categories, and the roles and institutions and so on, through which society constitutes and maintains itself and the consciousness of its members' it becomes apparent that '[a]ll knowledge, all objects, are constructs' and that critical analysis allows for an interrogation of 'the processes of construction and, acknowledging the artificial

quality of the categories concerned, offers the possibility that we might profitably conceive the world in some alternate way' (Fowler, 1981: 25). Such an understanding makes it very clear that, while '[h]uman beings have power to continue to oppress other species forever' (Singer, 2002: 248), we also have a choice, for it is within our power to 'conceive the world in some alternate way' (Fowler, 1981: 25) by constructing ways of interacting with animal others that are no longer 'morally indefensible' (Singer, 248).

McHugh (2006) queries Shapiro and Copeland's call, asking 'are there one or several ways of reading animals?' adding that '[n]ew research in the field indicates that this kind of critical work comprises many methods, let alone perspectives...' (npn). Therefore, chapter one began by first situating the thesis within a Critical Animal Studies paradigm to establish the perspective on 'ways of reading animals' undertaken in the thesis. Critical Animal Studies requires that analysts are not neutral, examining 'human/animal relations as an intellectual exercise undertaken without social, ethical, and political contexts or consequences' (Best, 2009: npn). Rather, adopting a Critical Animal Studies approach signals that this project has as its aim an agenda for change for the better in our ways of interacting with animal others.

Chapter two then provided an overview of how nonhuman animals have been represented historically and how the theory of 'The Great Chain of Being', along with the concept of 'Natural Theology', together with Humanism work to encode as *natural* many oppressive cultural practices involving nonhuman animals. This contextualized Critical Animal Studies within an historical framework and advanced the argument that the language of

representation plays an essential role in *normalizing* our relationships with nonhuman animals. The more recent theory of Posthumanism was also discussed and found to offer potential for a positive re-evaluation of nonhuman/human relationships. This is due to its ability to extend humanist concerns that limit the ‘meaning’ of literary nonhuman animals *to the human condition*. This ability is seen as vital to a Critical Animal Studies approach to texts as CAS must necessarily examine possible consequences of those ‘meanings’ for *nonhuman animals* by evaluating their potential impact on the lives of actual animal others.

In chapter three the case was then made for the need for a re-evaluation of the presence of nonhuman animals in children’s literature. This is considered an important endeavour, as the Critical Animal Studies approach to analysis advocated in this thesis recognises the culturally assumed importance of children’s literature as a site of enculturation and therefore, its role in interpollating children into their relationships with nonhuman animals. As a result, children’s literature is positioned as a vital site of concern for those interested in how cultural norms regarding human/nonhuman relationships are constructed, maintained and perpetuated. For how we are socialized to view nonhuman animals when we are children often becomes *naturalized* as the ‘right’ way to interact with animal others that we carry with us throughout our lives (Anderson & Henderson, 2005: 301) and continue by passing on to our own children.

Chapter four set out the reasons for choosing the *Harry Potter* series and the bestiary associated with the series, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, as focus texts. As a

contemporary series it allowed for the interrogation of *currently active* discursive practices that *naturalize* the treatment and representation of animal others, while the phenomenal popularity of the series is a strong indication that these narrative and textual devices have been accepted as *natural* and unproblematic by the readership. Therefore, the *Harry Potter* series, along with the bestiary, provide an opportunity to examine strategies of representing nonhuman/human animal relationships that are both current and effective.

In chapter five it was argued that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lends itself readily to projects such as this that seek to facilitate social change through an interrogation of ideologies present in texts. This is because CDA not only allows for investigations into the role of discourse in regulating and normalizing social practice but also, implicit in adopting this approach, is the examination of language and power. However, it was acknowledged that the close textual analysis demanded by CDA required an extra element when dealing with literary texts. In order to supply this necessary ‘literary’ component, the compatibility with CDA of the approaches advocated by Hollindale (1988) and, more particularly, Stephens (1992a, 1992b, 2005) was then demonstrated.

While the *Harry Potter* series is an important contemporary cultural text it does not exist in a vacuum, as no text is free of intertextual influences. Therefore, in chapter six it was considered relevant to contextualize the focus text within an historical discourse around nonhuman animals that stretches back millennia by acknowledging the continuing importance of the role of fables in perpetuating a number of pervasive nonhuman animal

stereotypes. This chapter demonstrated the ubiquitous nature of fables in contemporary texts, including the *Harry Potter* series, and urged the need for a *conscious* reappraisal of them.

Chapter seven examined *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* as the accepted authority on ontological concerns within the magical world of the series. It was argued that an examination of nonhuman/human relations in *Fantastic Beasts*, with its more explicit focus on ‘desirable’ nonhuman/human animal relations, provided a valuable opportunity to consider the underlying ideology of such relationships within the *Harry Potter* series as a whole. This chapter provided a space to examine the more explicit assumptions of the *natural* place of nonhuman animals within the magical society. It was demonstrated that the narrative and grammar of *Fantastic Beasts* maintain a Cartesian view of nonhuman/human animal relationships, which constitutes the world hierarchically and reproduces, and so reinforces, current social contradictions around those relationships. In this chapter the foundation was laid for an exploration of how these assumptions are expressed through the narrative and grammar in the series proper.

The narrative and textual representations of nonhuman animals that most concerned this project were those of nonhuman animals as food and ‘pets’. These two categories are considered of most interest as it is generally assumed that child readers would find them of most relevance in their lives. Therefore, chapter eight began with a discussion of food in the genres of children’s literature and the boarding school story. This chapter demonstrated how the rules of certain genres can constrain representation and contain

within them certain *natural* ways of seeing the world and our relationships with animal others. It also found that the *Harry Potter* series avoided any reference to the living source of the beef casseroles, black puddings, lamb and pork chops, roast beef and roast chickens that are said to grace the tables at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It is considered that this ‘distancing’ essentially contributes to creating an emotional detachment for readers from those whose bodies supply our food.

Chapter nine discussed how the representation of human/nonhuman relationships is often used as a narrative device to position human characters as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’. This chapter began by first considering how the character of Hagrid as an ‘animal lover’ is constructed. Then an examination of the representation of Harry Potter’s cousin Dudley Dursley, an acknowledged unpleasant character, was contrasted with that of Harry Potter, as the hero. The findings show that, in fact, the narrative and grammar in *both* representations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ characters, as well as the ‘animal lover’, reproduce the contradictory relationships humans have with nonhuman animals in the world beyond the book. In particular it was demonstrated how the text simultaneously constructed ‘pets’ as both ‘family member’ and ‘disposable commodity’.

Chapter ten continued to explore ‘pet’/human relationships via the series’ use of metaphor and the representation of cross-species intersubjectivity. Three nonhuman/human animal relationships were examined in order to demonstrate how the text constructs a paradigm that sets up moderation in the degree of interspecies intimacy as being both *natural* and ‘desirable’: Hedwig and Harry Potter, Mrs. Norris and Argus

Filch, and Nagini and Voldemort. Transgressing ‘acceptable’ limits of intimacy was shown to have dire consequences with a loss of humanity being presented as the ‘ultimate’ penalty.

The contribution of this thesis to the development of ‘a critical theory of animal issues in fiction’ (343) lies in its demonstration of the effectiveness of coupling a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to texts with aspects of narrative theory advocated by Hollandale (1988) and Stephens (1992a, 1992b, 2005) in order to foster an ‘altered reading attentiveness’ (Evans, 1992: 151) to the presence of nonhuman animals in literary texts. By combining close textual analysis with a more traditional approach to narratives it was demonstrated that the *Harry Potter* series reproduced as *natural*, and so maintains, a speciesist world-view that continues to regard nonhuman animals as ‘less than’ humans. More than this, however, it was shown that the representation of nonhuman/human relationships, rather than merely passively reproducing existing extratextual oppressive relationships as *natural*, can be read as employing both the narrative and grammar to *actively* work to effectively construct a warning against attempts to disrupt this state of affairs. The *Harry Potter* series, therefore, can be seen to create a magical world where oppression is not only *natural*, but also highly ‘desirable’ in order to protect inhabitants from becoming ‘animal’. To become ‘animal’ in the series was represented as entailing the undermining, and eventual death, of a very highly valued concept of ‘humanity’ that necessitates a continuation of the complete separation of humans from other animals.

The Critical Animal Studies approach to literature advocated by this thesis not only

encourages questions about the representation of nonhuman/human animal relationships as a *natural* part of literary studies it also calls for an informed evaluation of the historical and social contexts that produce them. Such an approach to texts has as its aim the desire for a general realization that, as Donald Broom (2009) has stated, there is a need to recognize the moral obligation we owe to those animal others who we include in the *us* of our community.

The potential exists for criticism of re-reading texts such as this from a Critical Animal Studies perspective. As with other social justice movements, undertaking research through the analysis of literary texts in the hope of contributing to social change can lead to accusations of a ‘humourless’ researcher, particularly, as in this case, if the focus text is *only* a children’s book and therefore, *obviously* only meant to be ‘fun’ or ‘entertaining’ and, as Hunt (2005) notes ironically, ‘(apparently) blissfully free of the “oughts”: what we ought to think and say about them’ (1). Such concerns have also attended investigations into more ‘serious’ authors by researchers who adopt an other-than-traditional approach to the text, as can be seen from Booth’s comments in his critique of Rabelais from a feminist perspective in the early 1980s: ‘It is not hard to predict what some will want to say to *that*: I’ve lost my sense of humor or I don’t know how to read “aesthetically”’ (1982: 68). Booth goes on to observe that ‘[a]ny critic, male or female, who tries to break through the hegemony of male voices is going to sound, [...] a bit marginal, perhaps greatly so. Everyone who has attempted feminist criticism can tell you stories of how that kind of marginality feels’ (69). Such an observation, unfortunately, can be seen to be equally applicable to the current state of Human Animal Studies (HAS),

as Shapiro and DeMello (2010) note, ‘many people, both within and outside the university environment, view HAS either as a threat to human interests or as a misuse of human capital in the study of phenomena of secondary, if not trivial, importance’ (314).

Booth’s (1982) optimism with regard to the eventual acceptance of the legitimacy of feminist literary criticism: ‘what was extremely daring fifteen years ago is now only slightly marginal and tomorrow may be mainstream’ (69), was well founded and allows for hope that in time a Critical Animal Studies approach to literature will also come to be regarded not only as legitimate but also as a *natural* approach to examining texts. Particularly as the acceptance of feminist literary criticism was gained in spite of some ‘men’ expressing the opinion ‘that the feminist critique is absurd, because if you took it seriously you would have to repudiate almost the whole of Western literature and most of the rest of the world’s literature too’ (74). As Booth points out, rather than to ‘repudiate’, such an approach means that ‘most of the world’s classics are indeed placed into a controversy that will never be easily resolved. Not thrown out, not censored, not burned, but thrown into controversy’ (74). The purpose of this thesis is to further encourage a Critical Animal Studies approach to literary criticism that throws all texts, not only ‘most of the world’s classics’, into controversy. For this then allows for spirited discussions around how we represent animal others to ourselves, which is a worthy aim as such discussions create opportunities to evaluate the repercussions of their fictive representations on the lives of actual nonhuman animals.

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