Blubbering On: Representations of Whale Identity in Literature, Film, and Science

by

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Abstract

Representation of nonhuman animals is a complex and multifaceted subject. Through the act of representation, it is important for us to consider the impact humans have on constructing the identity of nonhuman animals. Due to the variety of ways humans engage in the act of representation, this project looks at how three representative modes (literature, film, and science) shape our understanding of whales and construct a whale's identity in the process. The study is based on a human-animal studies framework and uses Vinciane Despret's notion of *agencement* to deal with the subject of nonhuman identity.

Keywords

Human-animal studies, nonhuman identity, whale identity, nonhuman representation, Moby-Dick, wildlife documentary, ethography, agencement.

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This work is dedicated to my father, Harold Turkington.

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Introduction

Representations of whales have become an increasingly common phenomenon in popular culture and media. Scores of Internet videos, children's stories, and even household decorations are dedicated to the large ocean dwelling mammals. Even before the publication of Herman Melville's literary classic, *Moby-Dick (1851),* whales appeared in myth and lore all around the world. Examples of this can be found in the early Judeo-Christian writings of Leviathan in Genesis and the great whale in the book of Jonah, in the Inuit stories of Sedna's severed fingers, and as the disguised wizard in the Norse saga *Heimskringla,* to name only a few. Because of their elusive and mysterious nature, whales have continued to be a source of fascination and terror for humans living on or off the water. Perhaps their prevalence in media today comes from a place of nostalgia; a mammalian dream of life back in the oceans.

Today, these mythic representations have been overlaid with graphic depictions of world whaling brought to us by authors like Melville, organizations like the International Whaling Commission (IWC), and campaigns from activist groups like Greenpeace and Sea Shepard. Instead of the elusive creatures spoken about in myth and legend, we are now presented with scientific reports and taxonomies, video footage and photographs of 'real' animals, and marine facilities where we can experience some of these animals firsthand. Popular documentary films like Gabriela Cowperthwaite's *Blackfish* (2013) and Greg MacGillivray's *Humpback Whales* (2015), are some of the more common sources of whale information we are exposed to today and these films base a good deal of their subject matter on a particular set of claims. Specifically, they advocate that whales and dolphins are highly intelligent, have a strong ability to feel and communicate with one another, have complex community and family structures, and they face the possibility of extinction. Although these claims have been laid out by well-intentioned

advocates like Dr. Robbins Barstow of the Cetacean Society International[1], it is important to recognize how thinking in this way homogenizes whales by placing them in a single category (Barstow 6). While it is true that many whales show signs of high intelligence, and that certain groups of whales like the Blue whale are indeed facing the threat of extinction, it is not the case for all whales. Employing this sort of homogenizing rhetoric in order to speak for different whale species is part of a recurring problem facing animal representation. French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, was one of the first people to address this issue of a totalizing animal category at the Cerisy-de-Salle conference, "The Autobiographical Animal". Looking critically at the human-animal binary that has existed for centuries in various discourses, Derrida questioned the binary's legitimacy altogether. For him, the fault came in the form of a totalizing animal category that lumped all nonhuman beings under one moniker: animal. As he pointed out, the usage of "animal" was only the rather arrogant distinction between human and animal that did not acknowledge the diverse array of complex lives of nonhuman species. Employing the expression 'the animal' for Derrida is at once an avowal and disavowal; an asinine presupposition of an understanding without knowing (Derrida 24). It is because of the nonhuman being's complexity, as emphasized by Derrida, that we should be cautious of, and critical towards, a rhetoric that tends to homogenize all living beings.

In regards to my work, the question of the animal and how we think of and think with nonhuman beings is always present. My purpose in this project is to explore the ways in which humans represent nonhuman identity and agency across descriptive modes. I believe that through the process of representation, the nonhuman animals that we choose to represent end up shaping our constructions of the nonhuman through a form of co-constitution. Considering the potential

[1] For more examples of these types of claims see "Brain Power" at uk.whales.org and "Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans: Whales and Dolphins" at http://www.cetaceanrights.org/

scope of such a project it has been necessary to limit my inquiry to a single order of animals. For the sake of my research, I have directed my focus towards whales and how humans have represented them in literature, film, and scientific writing. Although I mostly use the term "whales" or "whale" throughout my work, I do so with an understanding of the complexity and difference between and within species. For my purpose, there is no immediate need to refer directly to a particular species in each chapter because my aim is to talk about cetaceans as a whole without making species specific claims. While Chapter One deals primarily with representations of Sperm whales, Chapter Two focuses more broadly on whales as a collective group, and the third chapter deals with Humpbacks and Orcas, I do not believe it necessary to call attention to specific species when making my point. My objective is not to validate claims of intelligence, cognitive ability, or moral status which vary from whale species to whale species, but to understand how this group of animals is represented across different modes collectively. However, like anti-whaling activists and members of the IWC who use various whale characteristics to open discussion on animal rights, challenge and develop conservation practices, and address issues of human impact on species extinction, I believe bringing cetaceans into public discourse will prove to be useful. But *useful how* and *for whom* are important questions that still need to be answered. I believe that talking about and thinking with nonhuman animals is the necessary step in addressing the backwards anthropocentric logos that has dominated Western discourse since the time of Aristotle. It is important that we recognize the complex alterity of the nonhuman and learn *with* them, rather than perpetuate a cycle of theorizing *against* it.

In order to better understand how my work on representation of whales is framed, it is necessary to know how attitudes towards whales have changed over the centuries. Considering

that the international moratorium on industrial and commercial whaling was only established in 1986, almost three decades after the formation of the IWC, anti-whaling attitudes are a new phenomenon. Despite the reverence shown in myth and legend across cultures, people have hunted whales for their meat, fat, and oil for centuries. Along the western coasts of North America, "whalebones found in archaeological sites in Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth territories show that whales were significant to Native cultures as far back as 4,000 years" (Coté 20). Across the Atlantic, the Basques were among the first Europeans to hunt whales regularly beginning as early as the eleventh century and becoming what historical researcher Daniel Francis has referred to as "Europe's first commercial whalers" (19). Originally, whales were hunted as a local food source because of their size and the rich, fatty layer of blubber that covered their enormous bodies. For members of a small coastal community, one whale could provide enough food to last for weeks. The Basques, however, found markets for a number of other whale products that extended far beyond food. Oil was one of the most sought after resources of the Middle Ages and whales happened to house barrels of it in their transport sized bodies. Removing the fatty blubber from a dead whale and rendering it in a large pot over a fire, allows oil to separate from the skin and tissue. Further rendering of this oil in another pot refines the product and increases its quality. Although the refining process was very labour intensive and incredibly foul smelling, the oil was used throughout Europe "as a lubricant for machinery, to clean wool and soften leather, and in the preparation of soap, medicines and paint" (Francis 21). The Basques recognized the economic potential of whaling and soon took their hunts away from their original whaling grounds into deeper waters, earning them the title of the world's first pelagic whalers (Francis 8).

The English and the Dutch soon followed the Basques in their pursuit of whales onto the

open oceans. By the 17th century, four countries had begun to build sizeable whaling fleets and modify technologies to support longer whaling voyages. One of the most groundbreaking innovations of the time was the use of a tryworks system aboard whaling vessels. Initially, whalers were confined to land-based whaling stations to render the oil from whales they hunted which typically meant shorter voyages or frequent stops along the coast (Francis 48). The tryworks system, however, turned the deck of the ship into a makeshift whaling station where crewmembers could render their catches at sea. By eliminating the need to return to port or a land-based whaling station the tryworks allowed whaling fleets to undertake longer voyages, increase the number of whales they caught, and subsequently, bring home more oil.

In the pursuit of new oceanic trade routes and the desire to explore the unknown and undocumented longitudes and latitudes, the British and other European countries soon discovered new whaling territories that had yet to be exploited. One of the earliest pelagic whaling grounds, for example, was discovered in 1607 by Henry Hudson during a voyage in search of the Northwest Passage through the Canadian arctic. Reporting on the voyage, Hudson wrote "that the waters near Spitsbergen [were] teeming with whales," a comment that led the Basques, Dutch, and English to send their fleets North on the hunt (Francis 9). Whaling grounds like Spitsbergen often became places of conflict and political tension as each nation went after the same populations of animals. Arguments over who had the right to hunt in a given territory occurred often in the early years of Northern whaling, escalating at times to the point of naval warfare between the English Muscovy Company and the Dutch Noordsche Compagnie (Francis 35). In time, both companies agreed to share the rights to the area in order to avoid further conflict. However, this instance was only the beginning of a series of conflicts between nations over the right to hunt whales in the open oceans. Whale stocks and a nation's right to

access/harvest them eventually became the cause of wars and political tension. Yet despite their place at the center of these conflicts, Western European nations only recognized whales as resources. This way of thinking however, was not shared by many of the indigenous communities in the Pacific Northwest and the Canadian Arctic, who saw the animals as both animate agents and sources of food. Although whales were hunted for their meat and blubber by coastal communities, their populations were not exploited on the same scale as European whaling operations.

Questions of autonomy, agency, or intelligence in the nonhuman were not as common in literature of the 17th and 18th centuries as they are today. Philip Armstrong notes in his book *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, the idea of a whale exhibiting any kind of rational thought or premeditated behaviour was often dismissed as instinct or anomaly (114). The reasoning behind this dismissal of agency or purposive behaviour derives from the idea that a whale could not hold the status of moral agent because it was ipso facto a nonhuman. Philosophers and theologians from the Middle Ages and well into the 18th century maintained the idea that human dominion over nature was part of a natural order. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, written in the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas explained how God created a hierarchy or Chain of Being to help map out how beings in the universe interact with one another. By way of understanding this hierarchy, Aquinas divided the universe into two categories: principal agents (rational creatures) and instruments (all other things). A rational creature (i.e. human), according to him, "requires that the care of providence should be bestowed on it for its own sake: whereas the condition of other things that have not dominion over their actions shows that they are cared for, not for their own sake, but as being directed to other things" (63). From this, Aquinas asserted that the *nonhuman* instruments are to be used for the principal agent's benefit, "directed

to the perfection of the whole" (ibid). Steeped in its biblical context and the assertion that nonhuman beings are lacking moral agency and autonomy, Aquinas' work can be viewed as a justification of human exploitation of nature. Employing this type of thinking allowed humans to raise livestock, hunt whales, and grow food, without feeling guilty in the process because these nonhuman beings had been placed there by a divine power to help them.

In the 17th century, the question of an animal's status as a moral agent was picked up by French philosopher René Descartes. Like his predecessor, Descartes' renewal of the question presented a dualism that separated humans and animals based on the former's capacity for rational thought. Descartes conceded that animals have sensations similar to humans, but did not believe this enough of a justification for them to have thought ("Letter to Marquess" 60). From his observations there were only imitations and the motions of animals "could all originate from the corporeal and mechanical principle" ("Letter to More" 61). In essence, animals were only clever machines with base feelings, lacking altogether in rational thought and mind. But once more, the inability to present animals as having moral agency reinforced the attitude that whales and other animals could be exploited without any moral repercussions. William Scoresby's *Journal of a Voyage to the Northern Whale-Fishery* (1832), for example, is an artifact that offers a strikingly Aquinas-like tone and point of view. In his description of whaling, Scoresby remarks that, "like the rest of the lower animals, it was designed by Him who 'created great whales, and every living creature that moveth', to be subject to man" (134). Unfortunately for whales and other animals, accounts like Scoresby's were common at the time. An animal-as-resource mindset was the unquestioned norm.

Around the same time, Europe and North America opened some of the world's first public zoos. France's *Jardin des Plantes* opened its menagerie in 1794 showcasing hundreds of

different species. In Austria, Vienna's *Tiergarten Schonbrunn* became accessible to the public in 1779, offering audiences a sample of exotic nature (Macdonald, "History of Zoos"). At this point, animal bodies became resources twofold: they were harvested economic resources (oil, fur, meat, etc.,) and entertainment resources put on display to satisfy human curiosity. While the vast majority of whales were being killed for their oil, baleen, and bones, some were captured and sold to aquaria around the world. "In 1861 Phineas T. Barnum…imported a pair of belugas to his American Museum on Broadway," meanwhile in England, other live whales "were delivered to aquaria in Manchester and Blackpool" (Hoare 12). Zoos and aquaria took on the role of living museums; visitors paid an entry fee and the animals provided them with experiences of wildlife. In his essay "Why Look at Animals?", John Berger discusses the emergence of zoos and aquaria along with their function in society. According to Berger, "a zoo [or aquarium] is a place where as many species and varieties of animal as possible are collected in order that they can be seen, observed, studied. In principle, each cage is a frame around the animal inside it" (Berger 260). One of the differences, however, between cetaceans and other animals in captivity is the performative role associated with their captivity. Today, places like SeaWorld and Marineland offer crowds performances by trained whales, dolphins and porpoises. On any given day, visitors can expect to see animals perform underwater and aerial acrobatics, and follow verbal instruction and physical cues, furthering the notion that cetaceans (among other animals) are sources of entertainment.

Curiosity drove researchers to gather information about cetacean behaviour and habits, and more accurately understand how these animals lived in their aquatic environments. As new technologies and methods of scientific study emerged in the early 20th century, human attitudes began to change and take a positive turn. As Berger noted in his essay, zoos and aquaria allowed

us to see, observe and study animals closely, which is what marine scientists and behavioural psychologists began to do. In captivity, there was the chance to conduct controlled experiments and observe behaviour like intra/interspecies communication firsthand, which led to the conclusion that cetaceans were more than the resources we previously thought they were. Whales and dolphins were no longer simply "a spouting fish with a horizontal tale" (Melville 117). Following the publication of John C. Lilly's work on dolphins in 1967 and Roger Payne's recordings of humpback whale songs on vinyl[2], cetaceans took on a new cultural importance. Their intelligence became something to marvel at while their songs helped us fall asleep. This information made whales and dolphins relatable to humans, and consequently more worthy of compassion, sympathy and protection. Alongside these studies, a new regulative body emerged to monitor and protect whale populations in the wild. On 2nd December 1946, the IWC "was set up under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling," to regulate commercial whaling and manage whale stocks ("History Purpose"). Since its formation, the IWC has conducted its own scientific studies on cetaceans (lifestyles, behaviours, feeding habits, population stocks, etc.), and used this information to put an end to large scale whaling operations through its 1982 moratorium.

It was during this time that the anti-whaling campaigns of activist organizations like Greenpeace, Sea Shepard, and Project Jonah began to form. These organizations developed their mandates and mission statements from claims made by scientists like Gregory Bateson, Peter Warshall, and Paul Spong, and animal rights advocates like Peter Singer, Martha Nussbaum, and Tom Regan. Bateson, for example, observed and documented examples of complex social structures, complex behaviour, and human-like intelligence among whales (Bateson 146). In

[2] see Roger Payne, *Songs of the Humpback Whale*. This album released in the 1970s became a bestseller, selling over 100,000 copies worldwide. It is also the first "environmental" recording of its time.

terms of whale/animal welfare, Singer presented an ethical framework that built upon Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian or "greater happiness" principle. Singer presented a revised framework for the treatment of nonhuman life, advocating that "we extend to other species the basic principle of equality that…should be extended to all members of our own species" (Singer 169). Although Singer's idea of recognizing the nonhuman's interests and respecting them as equal to our own is shared by many scholars and animal rights activists today, it is still subject to criticism.

Currently, there is a variety of voices speaking out for, and at times on behalf of, nonhuman beings. Aside from the activist organizations mentioned above, the emerging work in the realms of human-animal studies and multispecies studies show a new branch of critical environmental thinking. From issues of conservation to extinction, zoos to cohabitation, anti-landscapes to the question of wilderness, individuals have been challenging traditional ways of thinking about and interacting with our environment. One way of doing this is by questioning how we think about nature outright; moving away from thinking *about* animals towards thinking *with* animals. With respect to my work in this project, my interest is the representation of animal lives, specifically representations of whales across different descriptive modes. While such a project could fit comfortably under a range of disciplinary categories, I am pursuing my questions and thesis from within the interdisciplinary narratives of human-animal studies, or environmental humanities more broadly.

My study is deeply informed by new and innovative ways of thinking with animals. In his book *Animal Rites*, Cary Wolfe problematizes one of Ludwig Wittgenstein's observations regarding communication across species lines. The quote of interest from Wittgenstein reads, "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him," which implies a muteness on behalf of the animal, a trait that is contested by Wolfe as well as Vicky Hearne further in the text (qtd. in

Wolfe 44). As both Hearne and Wolfe suggest, Wittgenstein's claim falls victim to its contingent humanism, neglecting to think outside or "beyond" the human. As someone interested in the lives and inner workings of cetaceans, this practice of thinking "beyond" the human is what has motivated this project and stands as one of the main objectives of my work.

This idea of moving beyond the human when discussing our relationship to nonhuman life has been developed by researchers in the humanities over the last four decades. Gilles Deleuze and his colleague Félix Guattari took up the idea in the early 1980s with *A Thousand Plateaus*, wherein they problematize the process of becoming. In their work, they discuss the various forces, boundaries, borders, and alliances at play in the process of becoming which lead to multiplicity and *becoming-with* (Deleuze & Guattari 38-39). From an ontological perspective, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that beings are entangled in messy ways; individual lives are shaped and affected by the lives and actions of others. As Derrida approached the idea by problematizing the human-animal binary and the use of "the animal" singular, offering up the word *animot* – a French neologism that sounds out "animaux" (animals) and "mot" (word) – as a substitute in order to account for nonhuman complexity and diversity (Derrida 41). His criticism of liberal humanism and the man or the "auto" of the "autobiographical animal" became a turning point for human-animal studies. Theorists like Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe, and Vinciane Despret however, were also working on these sorts of questions to challenge traditional ways of thinking about animals. Unlike Deleuze and Derrida, these scholars moved away from theorizing with literary animal tropes and instead focused on real animals. In her *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003), for example, Haraway *thinks with* her own dog in order to explore ideas of companion species and interspecies relationships. Despret on the other hand, uses Arabian babblers in her paper "Ethology between Empathy, Standpoint and Perspectivism: the

case for Arabian babblers", to work through questions of nonhuman agency.

My other reason for engaging with representations of whales using a human-animal studies perspective is the opportunity it affords me to widen the scope of my study and establish new ways of thinking about the environment. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of this field, I am able to draw from more than one disciplinary perspective to help frame my research. When it comes to broader concerns regarding the environment today, no single viewpoint or framework will be adequate. Instead, what is becoming increasingly clear from the work of Thom van Dooren, Wolfe, and Despret, is that we need multiple perspectives, insights, and discourses to help us solve complex environmental problems. Situating my work within the domain of human-animal studies, and drawing from authors like those mentioned above, my goal is to engage with three different representative modes in order to determine how we develop our understanding of whale identity through representation and further determine whether this process has an impact on our treatment of them. An animal's identity is often problematized with issues of agency. For my purpose, I will draw heavily from Despret's idea of *agencement* in her work "From Secret Agents to Interagency". Building on Deleuze and Guattari's work on becoming-animal in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Despret's re-presentation of agency as *agencement* focuses on "a rapport of forces that makes some beings capable of making other beings capable, in a plurivocal manner, in such a way that the *agencement* resists being dismembered, resists clear-cut distribution" (Despret 38). Using *agencement* in place of agency will help me establish my claim that a nonhuman subject's identity is co-constituted through creative, scientific, dramatic, and spiritual representation. This co-constitution is a continual process, a *being-towards-becoming* that manifests itself throughout human-nonhuman interactions and entangled engagements. Here my work aligns with other thinkers like Jakob von Uexküll whose book, *A Foray into the Worlds of*

Animals and Humans, focused on demonstrating that nonhuman animals are not simply passing objects in the world devoid of subjectivity. For Uexküll, it is important for us to consider the lived and perceived worlds of nonhumans and recognize how the nature of a variety of perceptions and sensations are not uniquely human (Uexküll 3). As many human-animal studies scholars maintain, a variety of nonhuman animals do in fact lead complex lives. In *Thinking Through Animals*, Matthew Calarco lists a few examples which speak to this complexity:

> primates passing along novel behaviors through cultural means; elephants grieving and mourning for dead companions; cross-species altruism among various animal species; birds creating elaborate ruses to deceive other animals; squirrels with precise long-term memories… (Calarco 6)

As these examples suggest, nonhuman animals are not as different or far removed from humans as many once believed. Many actions or characteristics that were once considered strictly human are now being observed across species lines. Perhaps we are finally beginning to recognize the nonhuman animal for who it is.

Scope and nature of the project

Although many scholars have written about the whale in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, the majority have often viewed the animal as a type of figurative screen for human projection. To be sure, the whale stands out as the novel's nonhuman antagonist, pitted against the monomaniacal captain Ahab in a battle to the death, but the whale, as Ahab's foil, never quite becomes an acting agent in many academic readings. Based on my reading of Armstrong's chapter "Rendering the Whale" in *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, I argue that Melville's representation of whales in *Moby-Dick* is a uniquely progressive approach to establishing a whale narrative. Because of its progressive approach to nonhuman agency as well as being one of the most

celebrated works of the 19th century, my analysis of whale representation will begin here.

The complexity of Melville's novel offers a rich terrain for innovative analysis and insights. For my work, I have focused on specific passages for close reading to explore how Melville engages with the process of whale representation. Many of the ideas at play in the novel shaped the way people understood whales during his era and as I intend to show, continue to shape our understanding today. One of the main observations in this chapter is the wide range of language and imagery used to describe and represent whales in the text. Melville's descriptions vary throughout the text from the scientific and taxonomic to the poetic and fantastical. Subsequently, these descriptions will be discussed and compared with descriptions of Moby-Dick, who, as I will show, is situated in a category apart from other whales in several unique ways. Kept apart from the other whales in the text through description, Moby-Dick disrupts the idea of "whale" and becomes a prime example of nonhuman complexity. Regardless of the novel's progressive nature, I believe that the divisive representation or categorization of "whales" and "Moby-Dick" is both a fascinating and troublesome one. For instance, one of the reasons other scholars may have overlooked Moby-Dick's animality or disregarded his potential as an active agent may be due in part to Melville's treatment of Moby-Dick as anomalous. In this way, my analysis of Melville's representation of Moby-Dick will focus on the idea of whale as anomaly. Engaging the novel from this perspective, I use Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "becoming-animal", and Despret's idea of *agencement* to help show how the anomalous character of Moby-Dick resonates on a cultural level that subverts traditional understandings of animal being and co-constitutes identity.

Moving away from literary representations of whales, my second chapter focuses on wildlife documentary films and Hollywood blockbusters. Today visual media is perhaps the most

commonly used platform for disseminating information. Film, television, and photography provide easily digestible packets of information used to educate and entertain. A number of documentary films and photo collections have been dedicated to capturing animal life—think BBC's Planet Earth or National Geographic— for audiences that would not normally have the chance to see them otherwise. In this chapter, I look at MacGillivray-Freeman's documentary film *Humpback Whales* (2015) and Michael Anderson's adventure horror, *Orca* (1977). Because of their genre difference, each film has its own unique methods of representing whales. In MacGillivray-Freeman's film, my analysis is directed more towards the anthropomorphic story arc presented by the filmmakers. When creating a documentary film using wild animals, there is a concentrated effort to orchestrate each shot and scene in order to have a unified end result, often to produce what Deleuze refers to as a "closed-system, making clichéd or static images" (Colman 18). The film is an amalgam of pieced together time-sequences often combined with narration to create the illusion of a whole for the audience despite the temporal gaps between scenes and the finite run time of the film. My analysis of the film also engages with how the use of perspective, observer and observed, works against any notion of rendering animals knowable by keeping them at a distance.

Where Anderson's film is concerned, I am less interested in story arc and perspective as I am with the portrayal of the whale as its own autonomous agent. Like Spielberg's cult classic *Jaws* that debuted just a few years before it, "Orca" attempts to capture our fear of wild animals that act without explanation. Where MacGillivray-Freeman's documentary attempts to reinforce certain attitudes or ideas about whales by showing audiences examples of "normal" behaviour, Anderson's film presents a picture more akin to Melville's Moby-Dick. Mourning the death of its pregnant mate, the main killer whale in "Orca" wages a personal guerrilla war against the human

hunters. His behaviour, compared to other whales in the film who seem relatively unaffected by his mate's death, is anomalous in the same way that Moby-Dick's was. Here again I maintain that the representation of whales as anomalous through their intentional and autonomous actions co-constitute the whale's agency in Anderson's film while also realizing the agency of the other characters. Throughout the film, the whale's actions are entangled with those of the humans in turn working to establish and realize the agency of both parties.

Having worked through literary and filmic representations of whales, my third and final chapter engages with a more traditional form of representation. Some of the most common animal representations have been made available to us through the natural sciences, most notably biology, ecology, and ethology. For years, scientists have engaged in meticulous studies of humans, animals, plants, and minerals, to broaden our understanding and help make sense of the myriad worlds around us. Their work presents us with taxonomies and detailed categorical lists which have shaped the way we interact with others and have become part of the foundation for conservation policies and environmental sustainability initiatives. However, the curiosity that drives scientific investigation never lets our questioning stop, and never lets us believe that we have arrived at an absolute truth. Early "scientific" portrayals of whales by writers like Pliny and Beale, for example, have proven to be either misconstrued, false, or conflated. But our curiosity and desire to understand the unknown fuels research and experimentation of all kinds, especially when it comes to animals.

In my third chapter I discuss how taxonomic classification, fieldwork, and critical anthropomorphism, for example, structure scientific representations of nonhuman life. Beginning with a brief section on the process of categorization, I discuss how the work of Aristotle and later, Carolus Linnaeus, shaped the way scientists see and document the natural world. To follow,

I discuss how early scientific whaling expeditions attempted to classify and understand the animals they pursued. From these sections I enter into a discussion of a more complicated issue, namely the use of anthropomorphism in scientific discourse. Using examples from Frans de Waal, Lynda Birke, and Marc Bekoff to name only a few, I look at how critical anthropomorphism helps us rethink our relationship to the nonhuman by allowing space for commonality, likeness, and understanding. A close reading of a chapter of Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell's scientific work, *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins*, helps highlight some of the challenges scientists face when attempting to represent nonhuman worlds. As a recent and somewhat controversial contribution to marine mammal studies written in a popular and accessible way for non-scientist readers, Whitehead and Rendell's book sets out to prove that whales and dolphins live cultural lives similar to humans. What is striking about this work is its move away from traditional scientific thinking by employing anthropological, sociological, and psychological theories to advocate whale autonomy and agency. Similar to Melville in *Moby-Dick*, Whitehead and Rendell use their experiences of/with whales along with strong descriptive language to validate their claims and also shed light on some of the obstacles scientists continue to face. The chapter concludes by addressing the kinds of spaces and environments where human researchers and whales meet. Using Traci Warkentin and Leesa Fawcett's work along with insights from other fieldworkers, I explore how environments promote as well as limit the nonhuman's ability to respond and resist human efforts of representation. My aim in this chapter is to explore how authors like Whitehead and Rendell for example, intentionally use scientific findings to influence cultural, political, and environmental thought. In this way, I identify how certain instances of scientific writing works to co-constitute the whale's identity by drawing from a traditional scientific understanding of whales and then turning this on its head.

Outcomes—Towards a Contribution

I have always had a fond appreciation for science. As a child I dreamed about growing up to be a paleontologist, digging up prehistoric dinosaur remains in Drumheller, Alberta. Later, I changed my mind after watching a documentary with my grandfather about the Mariana's Trench and decided to become a marine biologist so I could explore the oceans in one of Cousteau's submarines. These plans changed a few years later when I found out what a zoologist was and learned that I could work with and study all kinds of living animals. Oh, and I could spend my days in a zoo which 11-year-old Emmett thought was the coolest thing ever. Despite my fondness for scientific discovery and my childhood aspirations, my studies eventually led me down the path of literature and philosophy. When discussing the early stages of this project with family, friends, and my colleagues at the university, the idea of studying representations of animals led to many confused looks and more than a few questions about what I expected to achieve with my work. A lot of the people I spoke to found the idea of a humanities student engaging with an animal subject matter incomprehensible. What could I contribute that science hadn't already established through quantitative analysis and extensive experimentation? How could I even begin to talk about animals without first having a background in biology or ecology? After a month long place-based learning course at a marine sciences center on the coast of Vancouver Island, the questions eventually distilled down into one: So, are you doing science?

The simple answer to this question is no. Although parts of this project deal with scientific issues, subject matter and methods of study, I do not claim my work to be scientific, nor do I claim to speak as a scientist. As Derrida pointed out in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, questions concerning animals are complex and complicated, which is why no one method is best suited for addressing animal lives. It is important for science to continue its inquiry into the lives,

habits, and inner workings of animals, but it is also necessary for philosophers, literary theorists, anthropologists, and other members of the humanities and social sciences to do the same. My work on representation of whales in literature, film, and science offers another perspective by which to approach questions of animal life. Moving away from the more traditional ways of seeing animals as objects of study or economic resources, this project explores the potential of thinking *with* animals as subjects and beings with their own lifestyles, intentions, and desires. Using Despret's theory of *agencement* in addition to van Dooren and Rose' practice of lively ethography (or lively storytelling) to engage with my chosen texts and films, I show how different narrative modes constitute a nonhuman's identity, and, in turn, may very well co-constitute our own as well.

Chapter 1

Literary Animals

"First, we must ask, does it have to be a whale?"

Peter J. Bentley, *Correspondence with Herman Melville*

Animals in literature are not a new phenomenon. As far back as the 6th century we can find mischievous foxes, liberated wolves, boastful mules, and mournful swans in *Aesop's Fables*. Aesop even has a fable about warring whale and dolphin kingdoms ("Fable 220" 110). In the medieval period, allegorical animal stories like Reynard the fox sought to entertain and educate listeners. Flashing forward to present day, many middle school students will find themselves reading George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, as part of their English curriculum. Susan McHugh comments on this long history of animals in human storytelling, writing that "[a]nimals abound in literature across all ages and cultures" (487). But she is also quick to point out that "…only rarely have they been the focal point of systematic literary study" (ibid). As McHugh and other thinkers have noted, animals in literature have been repeatedly studied as metaphor for as long as Western literary history has been concerned. Animals, as they have traditionally been understood in literature and the arts, help readers and audiences actualize their own humanity by teaching them how *to be* human. Philosopher Kelly Oliver explores this issue, albeit in relation to Western philosophy, in detail in her book, *Animal Lessons*. As part of her engagement with the philosophical question of the animal, Oliver examines the dimensions in which animals have come to teach humans. Her thesis, formed by looking at the animal in relation to some of philosophy and literary theory's big names like Heidegger, Lacan, and Kristeva, maintains that in the process of understanding what it means to be human, animals have always been used in juxtaposition to highlight the ways we are not like 'them'. For example, over the centuries

humans have studied animals alongside humans and asserted that the former is without mind, language, culture, etc., in order to establish difference and distinction. Ideas like these put forth by Oliver highlight some of the key issues of the human/animal divide mentioned earlier in my introduction. The construction of animals as beings that lack specific qualities and characteristics possessed by humans has for a long time been the dominant narrative. Animals fall victim to substitutive logics where readers and critics fill them with meaning without recognizing them as beings in their own right and, as Derrida and others have pointed out, erase any trace of the animal in the text and elsewhere in the world.

More recently, human-animal studies theorists have begun the process of shifting the focus towards animal subjectivity and representations of identity and agency. Part of this process has been identifying nonhuman subjectivity in texts and moving past the idea of animals as only metaphor, screen, or symbol. In reference to literary animals, McHugh asserts that "animals are being reconceptualized as active participants in all sorts of cultural production, and that participation has material and methodological consequences for literary scholarship" ("Literary Animal Agents" 490). Upon close analysis, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* stands a key example of this assertion. With its complex array of historical, literary, and religious allusions, its detailed representation of industrial whaling, and its varied descriptions of cetaceans, Melville's novel has sparked considerable and lengthy discussion amongst scholars throughout the 20th century. Elizabeth Schultz discusses *Moby-Dick* as a piece of environmental literature, Milton R. Stern proposes that the novel was an example of Melville's rejection of cosmic and aesthetic idealism, and Betsy Hilbert emphasizes the importance of the novel's nonfiction components[3]. Despite the extensive amount of Melville scholarship that has taken place over the last century, it is only

[3] See Schultz, "Melville's Environmental Vision in *Moby-Dick*"; Milton, *The Fine Tempered Steel of Herman Melville*; Hilbert, "The Truth of the Thing: Nonfiction in *Moby-Dick*".

within recent years that scholars have begun to seriously focus on the whale(s) in the novel and really talk about the animal narrative in its own right. Notably, literary scholar Philip Armstrong, has written in considerable detail on issues of animal agency and the material and representational co-constitution of humans and nature in *Moby-Dick.*

Throughout this chapter I will critically engage with some of Melville's representations of whales and present my analysis of these in relation to the construction of a 'whale identity'. Melville's novel, I argue, goes beyond typical examples of maritime literature and other animal-oriented narratives of the early 19th century by presenting the nonhuman as a dynamic and complex subject as opposed to a mechanistic object. One major way in which my work diverges from the writings of Armstrong and other critics is in my assertion that Melville distinguishes Moby Dick in terms of representation from other whales in his novel. As I outline in the examples that follow, Melville's representations of whales oscillate between a number of dichotomous descriptions – from passivity to action, natural to mechanistic, instinctual to intentional – and thus leaves the reader with no static or one-dimensional version of *being whale*. Despite the many possibilities these dichotomous descriptions afford a reader to critique, Melville's almost deferential representation of Moby Dick, his treatment of him as something profoundly *other,* or as Deleuze and Guattari say, as an anomaly, is what demands further exploration.

At the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's book *A Thousand Plateaus*, lies a rhizome. "A rhizome," they write, "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (25). The authors explore the idea of rhizomes in different ways throughout their work, applying it to music, logic, and even *Moby-Dick.* In their chapter "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible", Deleuze and Guattari use

Moby Dick, Ishmael and captain Ahab as examples of becoming-animal to expand pre-conceived boundaries of animality and humanity. Becoming, as they maintain in their work, "produces nothing other than itself…it is not an evolution…it concerns alliance" and becoming-animal "always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity" (Deleuze & Guattari 239). Additionally, they explain that not every animal is necessarily a part of a pack, but rather they *are* the pack. For them, Moby Dick and his human counterparts act on one another in ways that clearly exemplify multiplicities, a key feature associated with becoming-animal. One of the points they raise in their chapter refers to Moby-Dick as anomalous, as an outlier from the pack (species), emphasizing his process of *becoming-whale* "as a position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity" (Deleuze & Guattari 244). Yet in developing these ideas, Deleuze and Guattari are critical of what agency is and how it works for an individual. In their understanding of Nature for example, which includes human and the nonhuman, any notion of fixed identities is replaced by "assemblages, alliances, passages, and becomings between both beings and things" (Beaulieu 74). There is a move away from identity and in that same instant, a move away from agency in that becoming is a spontaneous occurrence outside of the production of new or different identities. It is for this reason, I use Despret's reworking of the term *agencement* to help address the issue of whale agency in the novel. Based on my understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's interpretation of Melville's text and their description of Moby Dick's rhizomatic nature, I believe that a connection can be made between literary and literal whales. Applying the idea of becoming-animal and anomaly, in addition to Despret's re-worked notion of *agencement*, I argue that *Moby-Dick* is an example of literature co-constituting nonhuman identity and further, that the novel is a form of ethography.

Moby-Dick, Historically Regarded

Although it is perhaps his most well-known and celebrated work, *Moby-Dick* was Herman Melville's sixth novel. Prior to *Moby-Dick*, Melville's time spent aboard the *Achusnet* and other ships provided the groundwork for him to publish his first two novels, *Typee* and *Omoo*, based loosely off of his and friend Toby Greene's experiences of deserting their ship and living among the natives of the Marquesas Islands. "*Typee*… was a sensation among the men of an American renaissance keen to distinguish itself from British literature" which kick started Melville's literary career and "turned [him] into America's first literary sex symbol" (Hoare 161-62). Following this theme of semi-autobiographical fiction Melville continued to write from experience, publishing "*Redburn*, a fictionalized account of his first sea voyage to Liverpool; and *White-Jacket*, another slice of his life story whose subtitle proclaims 'The World in a Man-o-War'" (Hoare 136). *Moby-Dick*, however, builds on the author's time at sea while breaking away from personal experience to deal with more complex philosophical ideas, religious teachings, and societal conflict. Oh, and an albino Sperm whale.

At the time of its publication in 1851, *Moby-Dick* was far from the success that we consider it to be today. Its release was met with mixed feelings and, as author Philip Hoare notes, it "confused and confounded the critics" (187). One anonymous reviewer from London's *Athenaeum* wrote that it was "an ill-compounded mixture of romance and matter-of-fact," and another reviewer, agreeing with the *Athenaeum*, added that the novel "[was] not worth the money asked for it, either as literary work or as a mass of printed paper" ("Ill-Compounded Mixture" 597; "Not Worth Money" 604). Hoare explains that "in order to register its copyright, [the novel] was first published in London under the title *The Whale*, in three volumes…with bright blue boards and a handsomely embossed gilt whale swimming down each spine" (188). The book's

lavish design, combined with publisher Richard Bentley's decision to "excise the epilogue in which Ishmael survives to tell his tale (as well as sections considered blasphemous or obscene)" led to its unfortunate failure in the UK (ibid). In much the same way, the American version of the novel met a similar fate. Despite remaining relatively unchanged from the original manuscript, the novel was sold as a single volume and priced at £1.50 which most readers found too expensive. Finally, as if to rub salt on a fresh wound, a warehouse fire burned the bulk of printed copies in storage at the publishing house (Hoare 189).

Yet despite falling short of its mark on publication, *Moby-Dick*—along with Melville's other writings— experienced a revival in the 1920s thanks to American literary scholar Raymond Weaver. Often referred to as the "Leader of the Melville Revival", Weaver's publications on Melville's work renewed an interest in the late author who had fallen into obscurity after his death in 1891. Out of the abyss *Moby-Dick* loomed from the presses and into the hands of curious new audiences who, unlike their predecessors in the mid 19th century, found an imaginative and poetic epic. During Melville's time, whales were seen "as a commodity, its fats and oils and other bodily products were intimately familiar…" to people in England and the United States (*What Animals Mean* 111). Considering the whale's function as an economic resource – especially the Sperm whale – at the time, it is not hard to see why a story about a vengeful Sperm whale ran against the grain. To present an intentional animal, one with a sense of moral agency, was to undermine the longstanding belief that humans were superior to nonhuman others, even if the animal was fictional. But Armstrong argues that Melville's representation of the whale (Moby Dick) as an intentional actor/agent in the text is there for a reason. As a writer who critiqued religion, politics, society, and science, it can also be argued that Melville's work

set out to challenge the dominant anthropocentric thinking of the time. On this point, Armstrong explains that:

> …*Moby-Dick* fractures the orthodox nineteenth-century model of agency into a profusion of agentive effects. This radical redefinition of the relation between human and animal proved illegible to his contemporaries, and to twentieth-century critics, insofar as both retained their investment in a humanist valorization of coherence and singularity. (*What Animals Mean* 119)

Moby-Dick challenges preconceived ideas of who and what whales are by providing a dynamic multi-layered narrative for readers to follow.

Because of its renaissance in the American literary scene and the many references that appear in pop culture/media today, many people seem to have at least a moderate understanding of *Moby-Dick*'s plot. A cursory explanation would most likely amount to: The perilous journey of a young man on a boat accompanying a crazy captain hell-bent on killing an albino whale, followed by the person giving the explanation proclaiming that you should "call them Ishmael." While this explanation is not entirely far off –captain Ahab *is* technically driven mad by his desire to kill Moby Dick—it doesn't do justice to the complex literary epic Melville created. On its surface *Moby-Dick* is the story of captain Ahab's monomaniacal hunt for the albino Sperm whale, Moby Dick; the whale responsible for the loss of one of his legs. A colourful crew set sail aboard *The Pequod*, an American whaler, to hunt whales and bring home oil. Over the course of the voyage, Ahab's desire for vengeance replaces the crew's initial purpose of whaling; his objective of finding and killing the white whale becomes the most important reason for being at sea. Although this is the central plot that drives the action of the novel, critics have argued that there is more than one narrative at work. Armstrong for example, calls attention to the competing

whale narrative that runs parallel to Ishmael's own which makes us question whether the novel is only about Ishmael and Ahab, contending that the whale has just as important a role as a character. J. A. Ward on the other hand, looks at the cetological digressions that surface within the novel as a method of explanation that helps orient and contextualize whaling for the reader (Ward 168). What has been made clear by these critics along with many others is that *Moby-Dick* is not simply a story about hunting whales. It is a novel about relationships: between technology and nature, human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate, reality and spirituality, art and science.

Cetology: How Whales Take Shape

Rereading *Moby-Dick* with the intention of being attentive to the nonhumans therein, I endeavoured to think of whales as subjects rather than objects. In order to effectively engage in a human-animal studies critique it is necessary to recognize the presence of a nonhuman as more than object, screen, or textual symbol. Searching for subjectivity in the nonhuman, I found myself face to face with the pale visage of Moby Dick. Not every whale is like Moby Dick and as Ahab and Ishmael would have us believe, Moby Dick is definitely not like every other whale. But why the difference and to what end does representing Moby Dick in such a way serve? The more I searched for answers in the text, the more I came to assume that Moby Dick represented something that expands our understanding of whales as a whole. This observation, elaborated further on in its own respective section, expands our understanding of *being whale* by stressing Moby Dick's outlier and renegade character. No matter how different he is from the other whales in the novel, Moby Dick will always remain a large bull Sperm whale. For now, let me present what I have learned of Melville's other whales and provide some insight into *who* they might be based on their varied representations.

Throughout *Moby-Dick* it is not uncommon to see whales represented in many different and sometimes disparate ways. As scholars like Howard P. Vincent and J. A. Ward have noted, "Melville [discusses] the whale in almost every aspect: biological, sociological, phrenological, paleontological, historical, anatomical, and economical" (Vincent qtd. in Ward 171). While the varied modes of representation are used to elaborate specific contextual examples, I believe that they are all working pieces in an assemblage of whale identity. Armstrong and T. Hugh Crawford approach *Moby-Dick* and its nonhuman characters in a similar manner. In their respective analyses, both draw upon cultural critic Bruno Latour's notion of networks and material/social assemblages[4], to engage in a critical reading of Melville's whales. To briefly summarize the guiding principle of Latour's actor-network-theory, in any socio-technological assemblage, things/nonhumans must also be included and regarded as actors. As Crawford explains, *Moby Dick* "questions the stability of language, its ability "to 'capture' or 'grasp' the thing itself,"" but Melville does not dwell on the inadequacy of words to articulate and represent things/nonhuman (Crawford 15). Instead, Melville:

> focuses on the construction of networks that enable things to emerge as things... The point then becomes, not whether the things are "really" there or whether they are adequately represented, but rather what state of affairs (a socio-technical set of practices) exists or can be produced to know and use the things that *both* predate and are produced by a particular network. (ibid)

Armstrong's work provides a similar perspective, echoing Latour's theory by showing that "at certain moments [the whales] act as screens for the projection of models for human society; at others they are called upon to shape that society, or are shaped by it" ("Leviathan is a Network"

[4] See Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* and *We Have Never Been Modern*

1041). It is the latter part of Armstrong's claim in which the whales "are called upon to shape society" that bears the most weight in establishing the complex network of forces at work for both literary and literal animals. Bearing this in mind and using Crawford and Armstrong's application of Latour's actor-network-theory to *Moby-Dick* as a starting point, what follows are more detailed explanations of certain examples of whale representation in the novel.

Arguably one of the most off-putting elements of *Moby-Dick* for many first-time readers is the amount of technical scientific writing Melville engages in. Scientific representations in the form of taxonomies and descriptions of biological characteristics abound within *Moby-Dick*. For example, the observations of 18th century naturalists are often used and cited by Melville to validate Ishmael's claims regarding various cetological subjects. Scholarly editions of the novel like the one presented by Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford, have identified primary source material for the novel like Thomas Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* and Frederick Debell Bennett's *Narrative of a Whaling Voyage Round the Globe, from the Year 1833 to 1836*. Each of these texts, among the many others Melville drew inspiration from, shaped the scientific representation of whales throughout the novel and provided the basis for chapters like "Cetology" and "The Tail". An important and interesting observation to be made in regard to Ishmael's taxonomies and physiological descriptions of whales is that they are all pre-Darwinian. But what does the novel being pre-Darwinian have to do with Melville's representation of whales?

In short, this revelation helps us understand the struggle Ishmael faced in trying to understand the diversity and complexity of these animals without knowledge of evolution. For example, echoing the views of his time, Ishmael plainly asserts that "… a whale is a *spouting fish with a horizontal tail*" (Melville 117). Of course, this claim and others like it have since been

debunked, but it is indicative of the knowledge available among naturalists writing these animal histories. These were the scientific 'facts' that established what people considered a whale to be; these claims defined the whale's identity as an ahistorical being. In her article "From Secret Agents to Interagency", Vinciane Despret argues that Darwin's discovery of evolution and study of species interaction opens up a new way of engaging with the world—a way that didn't exist when Melville was writing *Moby-Dick*. Using Darwin's study of Orchids and their insect pollinators as her example, she explains that:

> Darwin enters the historical game of co-evolution, a game that undoes and redoes, a game that *re-members* the creatures that actively involve themselves in the process. He enacts as well as being enacted by new narratives, new assemblages, which in turn activate each of the beings involved, and involve more beings in a cascade of practices. (Despret 36-37)

In effect, Darwin's work changed the way scientists and other scholars look, interact, engage with the world by establishing a connection across species lines. Returning to *Moby-Dick*, this revelation is incredibly fascinating. Although Melville's scientific passages elicit pre-Darwinian perspectives and attitudes towards the natural world, the representation of Moby Dick and whales on a larger scale in the novel, seems to engage in the kind of enacting and being enacted by new assemblages in the way that Despret attributes to Darwin. Although it is hard to say if this was intentional on his part, Melville's novel reveals a complex mode of scientific thinking that is very much ahead of its time.

Moving beyond the pre-Darwinian aspect of *Moby-Dick*, the novel's many cetological chapters reinforce a specific reading of whales. As Ward explains in his work "The Function of Cetological Chapters in *Moby-Dick*", the expository scientific writing of chapters concerned with

whales and whaling processes are used to better acquaint the reader with the novel's subject matter. Without a working understanding of a whale's physiology, behaviour, etc., the action at the center of the novel's plot would not have the same effect. Ward argues that "the narrative sections of the novel would be nearly incomprehensible without the extensive descriptions of the whale and whaling process" (168). Additionally, these chapters and their scientific descriptions help establish a tangible idea that make whales knowable to some degree. *Moby-Dick*'s chapter "Cetology" is perhaps the novel's most well-known example of cetological scientific writing. Within this chapter Ishmael endeavours to "project a draught of a systematization of cetology", and provide some "classification of the constituents of a chaos" (Melville 115, 116). Yet in spite of his detailed systematization of cetaceans, Ishmael states outright that he "promises nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty" (Melville 116). This concession is first and foremost a small jab at 18th and 19th century naturalists and also an expression of understanding, describing and relating to different species that is in many ways ahead of its time.

From his own experiences sailing aboard the *Achusnet*, Melville understood that whales and other cetaceans were very difficult to study in the wild. Therefore, having Ishmael doubt his ability to arrive at a complete and total understanding of cetaceans is both justifiable and earnest. There are always more questions to ask and more observations and discoveries to be made especially when your subject lives in a place that is inaccessible to humans—at least at the time this book was published. But be that as it may, Melville's incorporation of cetological chapters is still an attempt to establish whales, especially Moby Dick, in a realistic way by approaching the animals in a manner that people understand, especially considering that many people at the time had never seen a whale. The chapter "The Great Heidelburgh Tun," for example, has Ishmael

launch into a description of the "curious internal structure" of a Sperm whale's head, establishing the whaler in this context as "the operator" and the whale as "the thing operated upon" (Melville 268). Ishmael begins:

> Regarding the Sperm Whale's head as a solid oblong, you may, on an inclined plane, sideways divide it into two quoins, whereof the lower is the bony structure forming the cranium and jaws, and the upper an unexpanded vertical apparent forehead of the whale. (Melville 269)

From here, he continues to describe the operator's surgical actions that allow for further subdivision of the whale's head into various compartments. Likening the whole of the fleshy mass to the Heidelburgh Tun – an enormous German wine cask—he emphasizes the sheer size of the whale's head through association. Following this, the retrieval of spermaceti oil from the internal compartment in the whale's head is intentionally described in the proceeding chapter, "Cistern and Buckets". As Ward and others have commented, Melville's cetological chapters are used to contextualize the whales physiologically, anatomically, and also establish an understanding of whaling processes themselves. Therefore, reading a description of the whale's head in one chapter and then reading of the process by which a whaler retrieves the oil in the next prepares readers for future encounters with whales in the text. A Sperm whale, something that was once ultimately inaccessible and unknowable in most contexts, becomes available for study and understanding through physical description.

Another chapter that exemplifies this sort of physical description is "The Tail". Here Ishmael describes the form and functions of the Sperm whale's tail, employing a scientific tone and vocabulary to do so. He begins by outlining the size, thickness, and placement of the tail in relation to the whale's body and explains that "the entire member seems a dense webbed bed of

welded sinews; but cut into it, and you find that three distinct strata compose it: upper, middle, and lower" (Melville 293). Further on he outlines the "five great motions" of the tail: as a fin for progression, as a mace in battle, in sweeping, in lobtailing, and in peaking flukes (Melville 294). Ishmael describes this appendage in much the same way as the preceding chapter regarding the whale's head. Here we are made to understand the function and dimensions of the Sperm whale's tail; we are given physical characteristics of a physical being that are accessible and make sense to us. However, in the final paragraph of this chapter Ishmael realizes that regardless of all the descriptions of the tail, he is still faced with an "inability to express it" (Melville 296). "Dissect him how I may, then," Ishmael proclaims, "I but go skin deep; I know him not, and never will" (ibid). What's striking about this proclamation is the acknowledgment that for all of his research and scientific observation, he (Ishmael) will only ever have a moderate understanding of his complex subject. The whale, despite being categorized, analyzed, and studied, still remains a mystery to humankind. In this instance, Ishmael points towards the distinction between what it means to know whales and how humans come to interpret this knowledge and represent it.

As I noted earlier in brief, Melville devotes a great deal of attention to whaling processes and whale products. In chapters like "The Try-Works" and "A Squeeze of the Hand", Melville engages with whales by using the methods and practices of the whaling industry as his examples. Incorporating these seemingly banal and relatively dry passages he further develops a representation of whales based on physical characteristics, although there is a slight but noticeable shift. The whales in these passages are not only living physical beings, but living commodities as we see for instance when Ishmael refers to large male Sperm whales as "Forty-barrel-bulls" (Melville 307). Considering that the whaling industry brought humans in direct contact with living whales, it would not be unwarranted to say that this sort of contact influenced

human-whale interactions. The primary forms of engagement between whales and whalers were the violent hunts, followed by the processing and rendering of the dead animal's body for future consumption. These industrial acts remove the nonhuman's subjectivity and replace it with a cold anthropocentric objectivity. Unlike representations in other chapters that focus on the physiological, Melville's whaling passages show the whale in economic terms: oil, meat, blubber, and money.

However, these chapters provide Melville with the opportunity to question and challenge the human-whale dynamic of the whaling industry by having Ishmael become affected and changed by it. For example, in "A Squeeze of the Hand", the whale's oil elicits both a physical and emotional response in Ishmael as he manipulates the raw spermaceti with some fellow crewmembers. Working the oil, he is able to forget about his "horrible oath" to Ahab and begins to feel "divinely free from all ill-will, or petulance, or malice, of any sort…" (Melville 322). At the same time, Ishmael accidently squeezes the fingers of his fellow crewmembers, mistaking them for "the gentle globules" of fleshy sperm. These accidental finger squeezes elicit "an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling," that gets Ishmael squeezing hands and fingers purposely and "looking up into [the crewmembers'] eyes sentimentally" (Melville 323). What starts off as a common industrial task quickly turns into a moment of passion and introspection for Ishmael. He is changed by the oil, by its aroma, its texture; he is connected to others by means of the whale.

An example from "The Pequod Meets the Virgin" shows Ishmael being affected by whales in a similar way. Encountering an old and sickly bull Sperm whale with "blind bulbs" for eyes, a missing fin and a large infected sore on its body, Ishmael describes a "terrific, most pitiable, and maddening sight" (Melville 279). Flask, the *Pequod*'s cruel third mate, repeatedly

stabs the sick whale, causing it "more than sufferable anguish" (Melville 282). The tormenting of the whale evokes in Ishmael a sense of pity and sympathy towards the nonhuman that is new in the novel. These passages call whaling into question for Ishmael and problematize its function and purpose based on the perceived suffering of whales by whalers. It would also appear in this section, that as Ishmael humanizes the whale, he also begins to recognize it as an agent.

Representations of whales vary from chapter to chapter in *Moby-Dick*. At times, Melville offers a scientific representation of whales in which the reader is informed of their anatomical features or their behaviour. Other times, whales are represented in artistic, mythical, and literary terms. Embedded in these representations are *real* whales, ones that Melville and his sources encountered during their travels at sea. In their own particular and unique ways, the animals affected, inspired, and provoked authors, naturalists, and other artists to *re*-create them. Referring to Etienne Souriau's idea of the artist responding to "the requirements and demands" of the "*oeuvre à faire,"* to help develop her idea of nonhuman agency, Despret writes that, "the *oeuvre*… appeals for its fulfillment in anther mode of existence" (40). In this context, she argues that there is a co-constitution of subjects brought about by *agencements*, that is to say, a rapport of forces[5]. Through *agencements*, the whales affect their observers, inspiring or provoking them through the acts of whaling or observing. During these moments, crewmembers, naturalists, novelists, are called to respond to the whales. The ambiguity of whales during this time and their inaccessibility to humans, for example, instigated a response from Melville in the form of a novel about whales. Within this response, the whales "achieve their existence and acquire agency in turn" (ibid). This is in part brought on by the whales' resistance, resistance to be hunted, resistance to be killed, resistance to be turned into resources, etc. As Despret maintains,

[5] Despret maintains that "Force" in this context is "to be understood in terms of its power to affect other forces to which it is related, and to be affected by other forces in turn" (38).

"resisting is not reacting, but open responding embedded in a cascade of "faire faire," "making do," which is open to surprise which testifies to the active involvement of the beings in (and creating) the *agencement*" (Despret 44). There is also the dependency upon other beings, waiting for those who inspire new ways of becoming agents and *vice versa*. All this talk of agency, *agencement* and affective forces now directs us to Moby Dick, the primary whale agent in the novel.

Moby Dick: Outlier and Renegade

Unlike the other whales that only surface in the text long enough for Ishmael to make a remark or aside before jumping straight on to another thought, Moby Dick reappears consistently again and again. Of course, this reappearance is not unwarranted considering that he is the novel's primary agonist, the Holy Grail at the end of Ahab's mad quest. But through Ishmael's descriptions of Moby Dick, the whale takes on an identity and story of his own making. We are introduced to the "special individualizing tidings concerning Moby Dick" in the chapter bearing his name through a historical account in which Ishmael describes the whale's features, exploits, and legacy (Melville 152). Pieced together fragments picked up from other whalers and fellow crew imbue the whale with "suggestions of supernatural agencies, which eventually [invest him] with new terrors unborrowed from anything that visibly appears" (Melville 153). At first glance we are presented with a supernatural creature, one that seems to defy all common conceptions and human understanding of other whales. Then Ishmael puts forth "the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick [is] ubiquitous, that he had actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time," reinforcing a sort of transcendent animal (Melville 154). Finally, the animal's history culminates with sailors and whalemen "declaring Moby Dick not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time)" (ibid).

What do we make of this historical description that is more mystical and fabulous than the claims developed in more objective scientific chapters? What should we think about an animal that seems to transcend space and time, existing as an omnipresent force in the world? Furthermore, how does this impact our understanding of whales in real life? One way of approaching this idea would be to understand Moby Dick as manifestation of the nonhuman's inaccessibility. The technical scientific writing in *Moby-Dick* discussed earlier was a means of making whales accessible to readers through physical descriptions and popular scientific language, but Moby Dick pushes this boundary because he is more than just a depiction of something real.

But it was not the supernatural qualities that made Moby Dick so terrifying to Ishmael and other sailors. It was the animal's execution of premeditated behaviour that caused so much concern; it was "…that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults" (Melville 155). This intelligence is what destabilizes the 18th and 19th century scientific conceptions of whales and mobilizes Moby Dick as an actor or agent in the text. Ishmael also calls attention to this saying: "such seemed the White Whale's infernal aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent" (Melville 155-56). A whale acting with intention disrupts and destabilizes earlier conceptions in that it implies a sense of moral agency. And whales behaving in such a manner were not unknown to scientists and sailors.

Recently, critics have begun to call attention to Melville's knowledge of "fighting whales." Philip Hoare, for example, writes that "in his years at sea, Melville heard tales of lethal encounters between man and whale," learning of whales that attacked ships like the *Coral* and

the *Union* (Hoare 166-67). Perhaps the most famous of these accounts would have been Owen Chase's account of the whaleship *Essex*, a boat stove in by a rogue whale in the South Pacific. Chase, one of the *Essex*'s only surviving crewmembers, published his account of the large bull Sperm whale and its battle with the *Essex* in 1821. In his account, Chase explains that the assault on the *Essex* was premeditated, showing signs of "decided, calculating mischief, on the part of the whale," further adding that it "was any thing but chance" (Chase 40). Nathaniel Philbrick, a leading authority on the history of Nantucket, provides a detailed history of the *Essex* and the events surrounding its demise in his book, *In the Heart of the Sea*, which highlights some examples of behavior similar to that described in Chase's account.

> In 1835 the crew of the English whaleship *Pusie Hall* were forced into full retreat by what they termed a "fighting whale." ... In 1836, the *Lydia*, a Nantucket whaleship, was struck and sunk by a sperm whale, as was the *Two Generals* a few years later. In 1850, the *Pocahontas*, out of Martha's Vineyard, was rammed by a whale but was able to reach port for repairs. Then, in 1851, the year that *Moby-Dick* was published, a whaleship was attacked by a sperm whale in the same waters where the *Essex* had been sunk thirty-one years before. (Philbrick 224).

As Philbrick's passage shows, whales with a temperament similar to Moby Dick's were rare but not altogether unheard of. The possibility of whales attacking after being struck by a harpoon was quite common and was considered by whalers to be little more than a reflex or reaction to their pain. However, as more accounts like the one Chase published in 1821 started to appear, people began to question whether or not these attacks were happening by chance. But as Armstrong notes, "the imputation to whales of agency of any kind was among the most contested of notions for writers of the time," highlighting his claim using examples from Scoresby, Bennett

and Beale who each advocate that whale action is either instinct, reflex, or accident (*What Animals Mean* 114). Admitting that whales have agency and the ability for premeditated behavior would then place them within the human sphere and make killing them a political issue. This was something the whaling industry of the time did not want people to believe, but it was also something Melville thought necessary to address by having Ishmael become affected by the whales in the novel.

What naturalists in the 18th and 19th centuries attempted to do, and I believe Melville was critical of this, was offer a taxonomical representation of the natural world based on observation. However, these representations, these taxonomies and classifications only provide us with a two-dimensional image of living beings. In effect, they fall short of conveying the complexity of nonhuman life and render it vague and opaque instead. Melville, on the other hand, represents this complexity by having Moby Dick push the boundaries of whale identity; presenting him, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, rhizomatically and anomalously as a type of borderline. As a rhizome, Moby Dick is the *and* or the *between* of things, perpetually engaged in the process of becoming and becoming-*with* other whales, his environment, the whaling industry, Ahab, etc. Deleuze and Guattari explain that "the rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots," and Moby-Dick exhibits this sort of operation (21). The notion of becoming-animal in Deleuze and Guattari's work consists of two principles: first, the pack and contagion; second, an alliance. Within the pack there exists renegades, loners, and anomalies that form parts of an assemblage of multiplicities. Now, in the process of becoming-animal there is always an alliance that connects the anomalous to the Other; for example, "Captain Ahab has an irresistible becoming-whale… operating directly through a monstrous alliance with the Unique, the

Leviathan, Moby Dick" (Deleuze & Guattari 243). But in terms of the anomaly, that is to say, Moby Dick, the authors explain that it is not

> the bearer of a species…nor is it a model or unique specimen; nor is it the perfection of a type incarnate; nor is it the eminent term of a series; nor is it the basis of an absolutely harmonious correspondence. (Deleuze & Guattari 244)

Although Deleuze and Guattari make the case for Moby Dick and Ahab engaging in the multi-layered process of becoming-whale, the idea of a singular (nonhuman) agency is something they are critical of. Despret, as I have discussed earlier, puts forth an argument for nonhuman agency by means of *agencement*. Through the various entangled engagements between Moby Dick and other characters in the text, the whale inspires and provokes responses from other agents. His existence as an agent or actor, for example, is made manifest by Ahab's desire for revenge. Furthermore, his behavior and actions are examples of a complexity that is either ignored or entirely missing from early scientific accounts of whales.

Moby-Dick as Ethography

Moby-Dick is nothing short of being an incredibly strange and confusing novel. In many ways, the book's structure, Melville's complicated use of language, his (seemingly) random incorporation of poetic, dramatic, and technical passages, and the unreliability of his narrator all make for a unique reading experience. However, in its complicated strangeness, *Moby-Dick* achieves something spectacular that other novels back then and today have continuously failed to do. Ishmael's attention and interest in all things whale provide readers with a dynamic and complicated web of associations. As I've shown throughout this chapter, a whale in *Moby-Dick* is more than just a living, breathing, swimming animal. Instead, a whale's identity is bound up in a series of entangled representations that work with and against one another to establish a

complex relational being. Furthermore, this depiction or presentation of whale identity within its literary context challenges the ways in which we engage with whales and other species in real life by allowing us to see them as diverse ways of knowing the world. Susan McHugh reaffirms this idea explaining that "[s]pecies forms, approached as ways of knowing, indicate the limits of comparable human ways of being as well as insist on more open-ended potentials…" ("Literary Animal Agents" 488).

In their self-reflective work on the thinking and writing practices of multispecies studies, scholars Thom van Dooren and Deborah Bird Rose discuss the role of storytelling in addressing the diverse lifeways of nonhuman others. Although they write in response to ethno/ethographic accounts of nonhuman life, that is, work dealing with *real* animals, I believe their claims hold true for the literary animals in *Moby-Dick.* The turning point in our writing about and thinking *with* animals demands a shift in perspective, a more inclusive approach that does not simply repeat a cyclical anthropocentric narrative. An approach like this asks us to extend the scope of our storytelling to tell the stories of others. As they explain their views on future ethographies, van Dooren and Bird Rose write, it "is not to slip into the hubris of claiming to tell another's stories but, rather, to develop and tell our own stories in ways that are open to other ways of constituting, of responding to and in a living world" (85). From my reading of *Moby-Dick*, the novel maintains this idea of an "open storytelling" in the way that it represents whales in varying degrees. Inasmuch as the main narrative deals with the exploits of the *Pequod* and her crew, a prominent "whale narrative" runs parallel in which whale identity, agency, subjectivity are explored. Both narratives respond to one another; both are constituted, shaped, and actualized by the other.

What van Dooren and Rose aim to do in their article is lay out the building blocks and establish the preliminary foundation for multispecies studies scholars to use going forward. In doing so, they challenge us to push our limits of interaction, reception, recognition, and understanding to encompass a broader set of lifeways that take shape through stories and storytelling. As I have said already, these scholars focus primarily on ethno/ethographic modes of storytelling, but their work as well as the work of authors like Anna Tsing, Eben Kirksey, and Ursula Münster, all stress the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to effectively deal with these stories. As I have come to understand during my analysis of *Moby-Dick*, Melville employs many of the techniques and ideas described here. His work is an example of how to think *with* whales, how to philosophize with them, how to know ourselves through them.

Chapter Two

Looking at Animals

> "The animals of the mind, instead of being dispersed, have been co-opted into other categories so that the category *animal* has lost its central importance. Mostly they have been co-opted into the *family* and into the *spectacle*"
>
> John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?"

The process of looking and being looked at has a deep history among theorists of the 20th century. Psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, referred to this process as 'the gaze' (in French, *le regard*), and it has been studied in many different ways across disciplines. Michel Foucault for example, used the "medical gaze" and the panopticon to explore systems of power, while Edward Said used the "postcolonial gaze" to explore the relationship between colonizer and colonized in times of imperial expansion and colonization[6]. For Lacan and other psychoanalysts, "practices of looking [are] important processes in the formation of the subject" (Sturken & Cartwright 76). The gaze of a white colonial male, for example, defines what he sees based upon a pre-established set of values and beliefs. The colonized subject under the colonial male's gaze would be seen as different, lacking, or 'other' depending on these values and beliefs, which leads the observer to form conclusions about their own identity. There is an affirmation through negation. Louis Althusser and Judith Butler engage this idea of subject-making or subjectification in their respective work, incorporating the added dimension of interpellation to help flesh out the process of identity making.

For Althusser, ideology acts a mediating force between the individual and various power structures. Additionally, there is a form of calling out that happens, what Althusser refers to as interpellation, in which the subject of the call or the gaze is made complicit in the ideological

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[6] See Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Said, *Orientalism*.

systems of the individual. He writes, "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: individuals are always-already subjects" (Althusser 176). Butler picks up Althusser's idea of subject-making in her work, *Excitable Speech*, explaining that when an object is called to or given a name they are "given the possibility of social existence, initiated into a temporal life that exceeds the prior purposes that animate that call" (Butler 2). Interpellation in this context, is important in bringing the subject into being. But what has this got to do with animals?

To be sure, many of the theorists writing about the gaze were exclusively directing their efforts towards human subjects, but with the increasing number of captive animals in places like zoos, sanctuaries, and aquaria, perspectives gradually began to shift. Derrida called attention to the anthropocentric efforts of other theorists in *The Animal That Therefore I am*, beginning his commentary by challenging the idea of the subject with the question: "can we say that the animal has been looking at us?" (3). What follows in the text is Derrida's acknowledgment of feeling embarrassment, nakedness, and shame in the eyes of his little cat. His acknowledgment of the animal's gaze, the real cat in front of him, stands as a subversion of anthropocentric subjectivity. As Derrida explains, one of the main issues that arises out of the human-animal binary, an idea that was already discussed briefly in my introduction, is that animals are lacking in regards to their being. Historically, animals were excluded from having subjectivity, agency, autonomy, language; all of which were reserved for humans to distinguish themselves and their superiority. The animal suffered from an inability to respond to the human call or gaze. However, as Derrida and others have advocated, this flawed logic fails to acknowledge the difference and complexity of nonhuman beings by reducing

> this differentiated and multiple difference… to one between the human subject, on the one hand, and the nonsubject that is the animal in general, on the other, where the latter comes to be, in another sense, the nonsubject that is subjected to the human subject. (Derrida 126).

Clearly, there is more at stake for the nonhuman than there is for us humans in the scenario Derrida describes. Animals were reduced, isolated, excluded from becoming subjects while humans were privileged by way of some anthropocentric exceptionalism.

John Berger, an art critic whose quote opens this chapter, also deals with the gaze of the animal in an essay dedicated to the representation of animals in art and their transition from living beings into spectacles. For Berger, the gaze of the animal has an arresting and affective power over humans caught in it. He explains that:

> The eyes of an animal when they consider man are attentive and wary. The same animal may well look at other species in the same way. He does not reserve a special look for man. But by no other species except man will an animal's look be recognized as familiar. Other animals are held by the look. Man becomes aware of himself returning the look. (Berger 252)

Our awareness – at least, the human awareness that Berger writes about in his work – is manifested through our engagements with and experiences of nonhuman animals. Perhaps this is why we are so fascinated with animals and one of the underlying reasons for keeping them in captivity. Whatever the reason may be, the gaze of the animal has continued to stimulate discussion in regards to art, visual media, and entertainment mediums like circuses and zoos.

Up until this point I have looked at how Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* represents whales and, in effect, works to co-constitute whale identity. In the preceding section, Deleuze and

Guattari's notion of becoming-animal and the entangled web of becomings Vinciane Despret describes as *agencement*, were used to help make sense of the construction of nonhuman identity. With this in mind, I believe that exploring how whales are represented in visual media is a necessary step in understanding how a medium can shape or influence how we see nonhuman animals. I build on several claims established earlier but with a focus on how visual media has a unique dimension that is sometimes used in literature (i.e. using pictures of real animals in literature). Film and photography, as I will explain, allow for audiences to engage with subject matter in a specular way, which creates an enriched experience/connection between the audience/viewer and the nonhuman. Considering the basic representative quality of visual media, that is, the fact that it is always a representation of something, the question of how whales are represented leads to some very interesting and problematic conclusions. While film is a popular and effective tool for educating audiences on environmental issues such as climate change, extinction, and conservation, filmmakers are sometimes motivated to simply entertain us. This is most notable in regards to Hollywood blockbusters and high budget films, and also something that both of the films discussed in this chapter fall victim to in their own respective ways. However, it is important to note that there are filmmakers who produce films with the intention of challenging and shocking audiences rather than simply trying to entertain. As with any art form, there are different ways in which people choose to explore ideas and concepts in their work. That being said, the more experimental side of filmmaking, or filmmaking as a means of creating art, is not something that I have space to address in this this chapter, but is something that would benefit from further research.

Throughout this chapter, I focus on the role visual media plays in co-constituting whale identity by looking at ideas expressed by human-animal studies theorists such as Jonathan Burt,

Akira Mitzuta Lippit, and Katarina Gregersdotter along with film theorists like Gregory Currie and Noël Carroll. The ideas proposed by these theorists, along with several others, frame my discussion of identity construction and are followed by an analysis of Greg McGillivray's documentary film, *Humpback Whales* (2015) and Michael Anderson's eco-horror, *Orca* (1977) to conclude the chapter. One of the elements addressed within this section is the role of human spectatorship in the consumption of visual media, namely questions regarding *how* we see nonhuman animals in film and *who* is being seen/represented in these productions. Our gaze and our understanding of the animal's gaze both play a part in the construction of animal identities. To be sure, the effect of the gaze is compounded by the eye-like technology at work in visual media. But as Berger and others have noted, while our gaze has the power to hold, cage, and frame the animal in front of it, the animal

> scrutinises [the human] across a narrow abyss of non-comprehension. [...] The man too is looking across a similar, but not identical, abyss of non-comprehension. And this is so wherever he looks. He is always looking across ignorance and fear. And so, when he is being seen by the animal, he is being seen as his surroundings are being seen by him. His recognition of this is what makes the look of the animal familiar. And yet the animal is distinct, and can never be confused with man. Thus, a power is ascribed to the animal, comparable with human power but never coinciding with it. The animal has secrets which, unlike the secrets of caves, mountains, seas, are specifically addressed to man. (Berger 254)

Animals in film, as I will explore throughout this chapter, have the power to refuse our gaze, challenge it and lead us to question our own identities in relation to theirs.

Electric Menagerie: Film Technologies and the Invisible Animal

At the end of the 19th century, Eadweard Muybridge produced one of the first moving-image sequences of a horse and rider. Following this initial production, Muybridge went on to produce the collection, *Animals in Motion*, which focused on representing the movement of animals through film (Lippit 185). As Jonathan Burt explains, Muybridge along with fellow photographers like Étienne-Jules Marey, and Ottomar Anschütz,

> depicted all manner of living creatures and explored techniques important to the development of moving film; namely, increasingly refined timing mechanisms, fast film, and precision in camera design to capture the rapid movement of animal and human bodies. (Burt 210)

As filming and photographic technologies developed, more photographers and filmmakers began to capture and reproduce nature in ways that audiences had never seen before. Burt, along with Akira Mizuta Lippit, explores the relationship between animal/nonhuman representation and (film) technology in their work, maintaining that the relationship arises out of the nonhumans' disappearance from everyday life. For Burt, the history of the animal's disappearance is twofold: first, in the form of species extinction and loss of global biodiversity; second, as an "effacement" where animals and other nonhumans are depicted as if they were quasi-human (203-204). Explaining this idea of disappearance, Burt borrows from the work of John Berger, who writes about the increasing invisibility of animals in 18th and 19th century art and culture. As these authors contend, the relationship between humans and animals changed dramatically as humans moved from rural pastoral living towards more industrialized urban living. As the divide between nature and human culture widened, the nonhuman slowly faded into the background, replaced

instead by representation in art and other media. Lippit also argues this thesis – a correlation between the idea of disappearance followed by representation – in his book *Electric Animal*, writing that "as animals began to disappear from the phenomenal world, they became increasingly the subjects of nineteenth and twentieth-century reproductive media" (Lippit 184-85). However, Lippit also claims in a way similar to Derrida, that the nonhuman's presence in the phenomenal world is supplemental considering that animals have "been excluded from the essential categories that constitute being" (184). To clarify, animals have supplemented these categories by defining their limits and borders, while at the same time being excluded from these same categories.

The idea of disappearing animals may seem odd considering the prevalence of wildlife photography, documentaries and other media involving nonhuman animals in circulation today, but it is real in both a literal and figurative sense. As Burt mentions in his work, the first kind of disappearance comes in the form of an actual loss of biodiversity. This type of loss can be understood in terms of extinction, either natural or human-caused. In this case, the nonhuman animals mentioned or portrayed in film are literally dying out and disappearing from the phenomenal world. While at one moment, film and photography render whales and other nonhuman animals visible, accessible, relatable to human audiences, it also effectually makes their disappearance real. The lives of whales presented in documentary films, for example, can often be framed using a conservationist narrative which points towards the potential extinction of a given species, an idea I will return to later on during my analysis of MacGillivray Freeman's film. The figurative disappearance, on the other hand, is less straight forward and slightly more ambiguous. As opposed to an actual disappearance of species or loss of biodiversity, a figurative disappearance arises out of the representative mode's relationship to animal being itself.

As mentioned earlier, Muybridge and others relied on animal subjects to help them understand physical movement. Commenting on the contributions of these early photographic pioneers, Lippit remarks that "animals can be seen as predecessors of photography, the two joined by the ecstatic feature of their look. Animals expose an unnamable aspect of fascination" (183). While the animal look or gaze is of central importance for this chapter on visual media, film and photographic technologies also play a very important role in further developing and explaining the ideas that follow. Susan Sontag comments on the rise of visual culture and visual technologies in her essay "The Image-World". While her work does not specifically address animals or other forms of wildlife directly, it points towards some of the key ideas and issues involved in representation through visual media. For example, Sontag believes that the photographic image is something co-substantial to its subject, that "it is part of, an extension of that subject" (Sontag 81). When we look at a picture of a whale, a tree, a dung beetle, it is a copy of the subject; it is the captured reflection of light and shadow on the thing itself. But in capturing this extension of the subject, Sontag also recognizes a form of acquisition explaining that it is "a potent means of acquiring it [the subject]," and more importantly, "of gaining control over it" (ibid). In a sense, photographs or video footage of animals contain them in a sort of technological cage. They are imprisoned in the medium and simultaneously erased from the living world. One issue involved in visual technology's acquisition of its subjects is that it renders all things captured into information and subsequently precludes firsthand experience. Is this a big issue for those of us watching wildlife films? Yes and no.

Where my work is concerned, the rendering of subjects into information is useful in helping viewers make sense of environmental issues in a broad sort of way. They can break down what they see into parts that are easier to digest and understand. For example, a humpback

covered in fishing line and tackle becomes an image associated with the state of the whale's environment, or a whale covered in old fishing line is akin to fisheries as a threat to oceanic mammals. However, as viewers begin to increasingly perceive nonhuman animals in this way, the filmic or photographic image moves them further away from genuine sensory experiences of their own. As Sontag explains, "the importance of the photographic image as the medium through which more and more events enter our experience is, finally, only a by-product of their effectiveness in furnishing knowledge dissociated from and independent of experience" (81). In many ways, visual media keeps us at a distance by creating a temporal and physical gap between us and the subject. In another way, the distance also includes the dimension of film or image as entertainment and information. At times film can incorporate both of these qualities, but the experience of viewing greatly impacts the way we come to process the whole. Sontag explains further on that:

> Like a pair of binoculars with no right or wrong end, the camera makes exotic things near, intimate; and familiar things small, abstract, strange, much farther away. It offers, in one easy, habit-forming activity, both participation and alienation in our own lives and those of others – allowing us to participate, while confirming alienation. (Sontag 87)

Alienation occurs as a byproduct of viewership due to the distancing and abstracting of subjects in visual media. But what becomes clear from Sontag and other critics' discussion on this process of alienation is that the nonhuman can be viewed as having their own form of subjectivity. This, however, may only amount to a small concession if we represent animals in ways that encourages treating them in ethically justifiable ways. For example, wildlife documentaries may attempt to encourage us to be more aware of our natural environments and

the animals that live therein, but can they truly convince us that these animals on screen are more than just filmic objects? That they are living breathing beings in time with identity, personality, culture, and agency?

Representations of the Real: Wildlife Documentary Films

MacGillivray Freeman's film, *Humpback Whales* (2015), offers audiences an in-depth look into the lives of one of our planet's largest mammals. Presented by the Pacific Life Foundation and narrated by the well-known actor, Ewan McGregor, the film takes audiences around the world on a cinematic journey following different groups of Humpback whales. As a wildlife documentary, *Humpback Whales* champions the idea of whale conservation by presenting a counter-extinction narrative in the form of a success story (i.e. Humpbacks were endangered because of world whaling, but their populations are recovering thanks to our efforts). As someone who is excited by all whale related things, I naturally gravitated towards this film as it arrived in theatres. Whales breaching on the big screen? Count me in! In its own way, the cinema may be the only comparable and satisfying way to see cetaceans without directly going to find them in the wild. Obviously, there is a difference between seeing something in real life and seeing a representation of it via film or photography. However, at least whales on screen in a theatre are more life-sized than television or computer screen miniatures. Big screens for big animal bodies make the most sense, right?

For what the film sets out to do, I believe MacGillivray and Freeman and their crew do a commendable job. The film's counter-extinction narrative is well thought out and carefully executed. But as with most wildlife documentary films, there are still elements that affect the ways in which humans see animals and subsequently identify who and what they are. Before getting into the heart of my discussion on wildlife films, it is important to first address what

makes a documentary film a documentary. In his essay, "Visible Traces: Documentary and the Contents of Photographs," Gregory Currie succinctly lays out a reworked definition of documentary designed to clarify some of the term's ambiguity. For Currie, one defining feature of a documentary is the presence of traces, or physical imprints "left on the [film] by [its] subjects" (142). The images in a documentary are visual representations of actual things captured by the director or camera operator via the camera. What we see, with animation being the only exception, is what is in front of the camera, not what the camera operator thinks is in front of it. As Currie explains, "the documentary film cannot present us with a record of events the filmmaker thinks occurred but which did not in fact occur, though the events can be recorded and presented to us in a way that misleads us about, say, their antecedents and consequences" (144). In other words, a documentary "may not represent things and events other than the things and events they are traces of" (Currie 145).

In regards to wildlife documentaries and other visual media, this idea most certainly holds true. What we see in these films and photographs are real animals. But as Lippit in his reading of Roland Barthes maintains, we see animals condemned, "both dead and alive, suspended in the photograph" with the medium becoming a type of techno-cultural crypt for the nonhuman (183). The Thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger is a poignant example of this idea; an animal that is alive in the photograph but also suspended in the photographic image. In reality, the Tasmanian Tiger is extinct because of poaching but still lives on because of a visual medium. The ways in which the filmmakers present the animals to the audience directly structures how we see and experience them. This process of structuring the viewing experience has been discussed by film theorists since the inception of visual media. More recently, Jamie Lorimer has added to the discussion, focusing on the ways filmmakers frame wildlife in their documentaries. He

writes:

> The sincerity of the respect for nonhuman difference summoned forth in much awe-some wildlife imagery is often open to question. There is a tendency to drift toward the pornographic in these evocations — we are presented with an improbable feast of expansive and unpopulated locations inhabited by exotic animals, which are forever fighting, fucking, eating, migrating, and dying for their impatient channel-surfing audiences. Rooted in the linear temporal logic of the movement-image, these images seek closure in the presentation of gory excess and a romantic affirmation of a pure and thrusting nature. (Lorimer 132)

For Lorimer, the idea of wildlife films being used as a method to advance or promote conservationist ideologies is at times incredibly problematic. What is wild is often framed as something untouched, untainted, and in many ways exotic for the films' audiences. The pornographic element at play in these films comes out in the excess of shots/scenes wherein a carnal and wild nature of nonhuman animals is the only thing on display. Framing the scenes in this way, filmmakers may undermine a film's goal (championing conservation, for example) by rendering the nonhuman to a set of simple sensory experiences for the viewer.

Looking at MacGillivray Freeman's film, this idea of a pornographic or meticulously framed representation of nature becomes apparent. The use of aerial shot sequences keep the viewer at a distance, fitting the whales within the limits of the screen while underwater film technologies help us penetrate and explore their subaquatic world. The camera crews now have the ability to access the hidden and mysterious life-worlds of whales and other water dwelling animals in ways that Melville and other writers of the 19th century simply couldn't. According to wildlife filmmaker, Chris Palmer, audiences watching a wildlife documentary often come to

expect authenticity and truth from what they're seeing. Authenticity in this respect would be understood as presenting the animals captured on film as wild and untamed, savage and unpredictable, which satisfies our romantic notion that the nonhuman other is exotic and different from ourselves. However, as Palmer explains during a TEDx talk at American University, filmmakers have a full repertoire of techniques and tricks at their disposal to increase the audience's interest in their work. To help defend his claim, Palmer provides examples from his own work in which he and his film crew committed what he describes as acts of "fakery" which include "[making] up fake stories, [renting] captive animals and [pretending] they're wild, and [using] computer generated imagery to spice up the footage" (Palmer, "Confessions"). Despite the best intentions of many filmmakers like Palmer, to educate audiences or advocate for causes they consider in need of more immediate attention and representation, there is still the need to engage, entertain, and captivate the public. Regarding his 1995 documentary on whale migration, Palmer explains that he and his crew worked hard to champion whale conservation, adhered to the science of the whales' migratory facts and patterns, but in the end "the need for a dramatic story trumped truth" (ibid). This idea is also echoed in Lorimer's work, where he recognizes that the image sequences are ordered in such a way that the narrative always reaches meaning and resolution (Lorimer 128).

Earlier I mentioned that overall, *Humpback Whales* as a documentary, does a fairly commendable job at offering a counter-extinction narrative. However, there are some points that open up the film for criticism that highlight some of the shortcomings of wildlife documentary filmmaking. First, as the film opens the narrator helps familiarize the audience with the film's subject matter by providing a number of whale facts, such as size, diving ability, etc. While this in itself is not problematic, one of the narrator's comments certainly is. As footage of humpbacks

swimming and breaching the water's surface fills the screen, the narrator states that "the song of the humpback helped us begin to understand, finally, that whales are magnificent complex beings worthy of protection, worthy of life." The song of the humpback is perhaps the most recognizable of the entire cetacean order, however, claiming that it is the reason we understand whales as "complex beings worthy of protection" and "worthy of life" is a troubling one. To explain, in putting forth this sort of broad and totalizing claim alongside general whale facts, the film sets the audiences up to absorb this information as truth. To be sure the humpback whale's song is beautiful to many human listeners, however, claiming that it is the reason we have recently started advocating for whales disparages the diversity of all other forms of whale life.

As this example goes to show, one problem facing wildlife filmmaking is the use of an invisible and omnipotent narrator. Karla Armbruster addresses this issue in her work, "Creating the World We Must Save: The paradox of television nature documentaries." As Armbruster understands it, the narrators in these films structure the viewing experience in a way that allows viewers to overlook issues associated with the films' production. Additionally, in identifying with the narrator "and with the perspective of the camera that so often appears to be the narrator's eye, the viewer is constructed as omniscient and capable of penetrating the most inaccessible reaches of the natural world" (Armbruster 232). One reason why this sort of identification with a narrator is problematic comes from the alienated perspective of the viewer, an idea touched upon earlier in regards to Sontag. To explain, in aligning themselves with the narrator, viewers are able to distance or disassociate themselves from the issues affecting the nature onscreen. Armbruster maintains this idea explaining that "identification with the narrator produces a sense of unobtrusiveness, an assurance of innocence of involvement in the forces affecting the natural world the camera reveals" (ibid). We are able to watch but are given the

sense that we are not complicit in acts of violence, destruction, exploitation, etc., of anything we bear witness to. In his analysis of wildlife filmmaking, Greg Garrard points out that:

> …the way the relationship of the viewer to wildlife is constructed may be highly problematic, narrowing our experience of nature from full sensory, intellectual and political engagement to a purely visual relation that is further distorted by overemphasis on violence and sex. (Garrard 174)

To be sure, the film emphasizes the humpbacks' family structure, their ability to reproduce and rear their young, and the competitive 'battles' associated with mating. While these are important aspects of the humpback's social life, they are definitely exploited to tell a more compelling and action-packed story.

This then brings us to the structuring of shots and sequences in order to convey a compelling, relatable, and complete story to the viewer. While it may be hard for us to connect with a jellyfish floating on an ocean current, it is not impossible for us to see ourselves as a mother or calf humpback whale. However, the film as a whole is not an unbroken shot of one specific place, nor is it an unedited work focusing on certain animals. Rather, *Humpback Whales* uses a variety of locations and whales to tell a unified story that attempts to frame the story of an entire species. While some films can in fact be made in one single shot sequence without incorporating cuts or breaks in the film, the majority of wildlife filmmaking requires multiple days of filming, location changes, and often times, different animals. An issue is that the viewers are not aware of the difficulty of finding and capturing wild animals on film. Throughout the 40 minutes of runtime, there is no mention of the crew's efforts at filming the documentary. We are never told how long the crew waited on the water looking for whales, or how their boats were forced on to shore because of poor weather conditions. In this way, the film fails to recognize the

ways in which animals resist our encounters with them. What we are presented with are waters apparently teeming with breaching whales, lob-tailing in the water and swimming freely in both large and small groups, while at the same time we are told by the narrator that the whales have been decimated by pelagic whaling. Regardless of the counter-extinction narrative running throughout the film, showing continuous footage of whales does not accurately demonstrate how these populations have been affected. If anything, this sort of filmmaking has the potential to lull us into thinking that the animals are doing fine because we see them onscreen.

While I recognize the accuracy of Armbruster's assessment of wildlife documentary filmmaking mentioned earlier, I also see the connection to Despret's notion of *agencement*. When we think about the whales in these documentary films, it is important to see them as agents or actors that elude and resist our desire to capture and immortalize them using visual media. However, this mode of representation, although usually framed with a specific narrative, works in a way similar to *Moby-Dick*. The films are a response, a calling out to the nonhuman, that work to help us think through questions of environment, extinction, natural disaster, and ground us in that world. Although there are ways in which wildlife documentary filmmaking may fall short of this intended mark, it is still one of the most effective means of connecting humanity with nature and the nonhuman.

Hybrid Horrors and Cinematic Fictions

Unlike documentary films, commercial Hollywood productions have a bit more room to play with their subject matter. Although the stories that drive the plots of thriller and action movies may base themselves on real subject matter like a terrorist attack or serial killer for example, the filmmakers provide audiences with a work of fiction as opposed to fact. At times this line between what is real and what isn't becomes difficult to navigate, especially when we

consider genres like “found footage” which make us question if what we’re seeing is scripted or not. The same can be said for films that claim to be based on true events where the film is a work of fiction but the events and characters can in fact be grounded in reality which has us take what we see as a kind of truth. As a genre, horror films tend to push the boundary between reality and fiction and truly play on our suspension of disbelief. Audiences know that zombie hordes and floating sentient alien brains are not actually real, but we still enjoy watching these types of films. We suspend our belief but hold on to the possibility that these beings and things could potentially exist. This possibility is perhaps what frightens us the most. Moreover, the genre tends to use and exploit some of the pre-established ideas surrounding the nonhuman animal, namely the animal as something unknown, something frightening, and something that mirrors and challenges our own humanity. Examples of this sort of human-animal challenge can be found in films about vampires and werewolves such as F. W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922), an adaptation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and John Fawcett’s chilling teenage werewolf horror, *Gingersnaps* (2001). As with most genres, subgenres develop over time as filmmakers look for new ways to captivate audiences. The emergence of eco-horror as a subgenre to the traditional horror film is an interesting and rich ground for studying the way visual fiction comes to represent nonhuman identities; a way that is different than the wildlife documentaries addressed in the previous section. My reason for choosing eco-horror as a genre for this section is twofold. First, eco-horror often plays on human fears that are either directly or indirectly connected to the environment. These fears are manifested by the events in the films and by their nonhuman actors. Second, using the nonhuman as well as elements of the natural world to evoke negative feelings (fear, anger, suspicion, etc.) and provoke audiences is what seems to be lacking from other Hollywood films like *Free Willy* (1993) and *Flipper* (1996). This is not to say that *Free Willy* as

a film is less noteworthy than the film I've chosen to critique in this section. I simply believe that eco-horror, especially films that deal explicitly with whales as antagonists rather than companions offer much in the way of critique.

In the collection *Animal Horror Cinema*, Katarina Gregersdotter, Nicklas Hållén and Johan Höglund, attempt to map out the various ways that animals have been incorporated into the horror genre. As they explain in their introduction, "animal horror cinema tells the story of how a particular animal or an animal species commits a transgression against humanity and then recounts the punishment the animal must suffer as a consequence" (Gregersdotter et al 3). But, as the authors note further on, this definition does not apply to all animal horror films. While this definition establishes a basis for the subgenre, Gregersdotter et al explain that some other films focus less on animals themselves and more on their environment, with natural forces like earthquakes and tornadoes being responses to humanity's exploitation of nature. In these eco-horror films as well as those that fall into the general category of animal horror cinema, the human-animal binary that concerned Derrida seems to repeat and reinforce itself. As I explain throughout this chapter, the anthropomorphization of the nonhuman works to reinforce the human-animal binary but also blur the lines and close the divide.

Following the success of Steven Spielberg's cult film, *Jaws* (1975), Michael Anderson created his own animal oriented eco-horror, *Orca* (1977). After attending a lecture by biologist Rachel Bedford (Charlotte Rampling), Captain Nolan (Richard Harris), decides to start targeting killer whales to capture and sell into captivity. In an effort to capture a bull killer whale, Nolan accidentally harpoons and kills his pregnant mate. Mourning the death of the other whale, the male seeks revenge against Captain Nolan and the crew of the *Bumpo*. What follows in the film is a battle between man and animal where Captain Nolan is forced to confront his past and pay

for his transgressions against nature. Anderson's film, however, did not have the intended impact on audiences that he had hoped for. While *Jaws* managed to bring in an astounding 470.7 million USD at the box office, *Orca* comparatively made around 14 million USD. The difference in gross box office earnings is telling, showing that although audiences were interested in *Orca*, they were more interested in Spielberg's man-eating shark. One reason for this may be that the prevailing mythos around sharks at the time established them as apex predators with the desire to attack and kill humans. Conversely, Anderson's nonhuman antagonist (protagonist?) was motivated to kill and wreak havoc by his need for retribution.

Unlike *Jaws* and other films of the genre like *The White Buffalo* (1977) and *Grizzly* (1976), whose nonhuman antagonists are portrayed as mindless killers devoid of emotion, the orca in Anderson's film comes to occupy a different role. The film exploits the killer whale mythos, that is, the whale's strong familial or group relationships, and its capacity for complex and premeditated thought and action. Anderson plays up the idea that killer whales are highly intelligent beings in order to establish what I consider to be an even more terrifying nonhuman antagonist than the white shark in Spielberg's film. As Gregersdotter and Hållén remark in their essay, "Anthropomorphism and the Representation of Animals as Adversaries," the killer whale in Anderson's film is "in many respects a human adversary that takes the shape of an animal" (210). According to the authors, in order for the whale in *Orca* to be acknowledged as an adversary or antagonist it must first be given a number of recognizable human qualities. They explain that

> the collapse of the boundaries between the animal and human worlds coincides with the collapse of the structures that uphold the otherness of the animal in relation to the human being when the animal enters the human world in cinema, it normally takes on

> human qualities and thus loses its status as an other in the strict sense of a being that remains beyond our capacity to comprehend in a phenomenological sense. (Gregersdotter & Hållén 209)

Therefore, in order for the whale to be seen as an agent, it must first be understood as more than a mindless predator seeking out prey. It must be recognized as human-like. The distinction is somewhat ambiguous at first, but as the film develops and the whale's need for retribution continues there is an emphasis on the whale becoming-human. I would argue that is paralleled by Nolan's own experience becoming-whale.

On the one hand, Gregersdotter and Hållén propose that the anthropomorphizing of the bull orca allows Nolan to see and recognize the whale as a human. One justification for this is the association between the death of Nolan's own child and wife to that of the bull's pregnant mate at the beginning of the film. Nolan comes to relate to the whale as more than just a nonhuman other, he sympathizes with him and in turn inwardly reflects on his own transgressions as a man. Another justification that Gregersdotter and Hållén provide comes in the form of repeated close up shots of the bull orca's eye. They note that:

> when the human gaze meets the bull orca's gaze across the 'narrow abyss' between man and animal, it makes it impossible for the viewer and for Nolan to convincingly think that 'it is just an animal', precisely because its gaze demands that it be recognised as an individual who in turn recognises a fatal connection to the captain (Gregersdotter & Hållén 220).

The observation that the bull orca's gaze demands recognition is not surprising. The eyes of animals stand as metaphoric windows into the psychic realities of the nonhuman; the gaze is one way of representing the consciousness of nonhuman animals. In the context of the film it forces

Nolan and the viewer to recognize the whale as an agent, as a being with intentions, complicating the idea that it is not 'just an animal' which Gregersdotter and Hållén believe is an important step for establishing any form nonhuman agency in film. Berger, however, would caution us in regards to our use of anthropomorphism and the nonhuman gaze in film's like *Orca*. Unlike Gregersdotter and Hållén, Berger believes that anthropomorphic language/attributions are the "residue of the continuous use of animal metaphor," which fails to reveal or expose real animals (Berger 255). In film, the real animals "have gradually disappeared" (ibid). Although I understand where Berger's reservation comes from with respect to anthropomorphism, I would argue that the boundary between human and animal is incredibly porous. In films like *Orca*, the nonhuman animal penetrates into the human sphere (and vice versa) highlighting the fluidity of our distinctions. Despite being given human qualities, the whale in *Orca* forces us to reconsider how we recognize and respond to the nonhuman other. The whale in the film, for example, had a family network which was taken away by Nolan. This dissolution or destruction of the family is mirrored by Nolan's own relation to the death of his wife and child. Through this mirroring, the audience is able to see how the two characters, one human and the other whale, are not as different as they first appeared. They share an experience that extends across species lines.

Conclusion

Visual media have an important role in the circulation of information and ideas. As a subsequent byproduct of visual media's proliferation in everyday consumer culture, nonhuman animals are used to entertain, educate, and captivate audiences. As the use of nonhuman animals as the subject matter of film and television programs continues, we must be mindful as informed viewers that we are not outside or removed from the environmental/ecological issues facing the natural world. It is important to understand, as Armbruster and others explain, how visual media

and filmic technologies can distance humanity from other-than-human worlds by reinforcing binary relationships of us and them, viewer and viewed, subject and object. However, film can help us acknowledge these issues and allow nonhuman animals to penetrate or crossover into our own worlds, cultures, etc., by creating a space for them to respond and resist. Literature, along with visual media, provide us with the opportunity to tell stories across species lines. Based on the two films discussed in this chapter, I see that our visual representations of whale agency are impacted by how accessible the animals are, how we depict them, and our inability to respond to their gaze. Although film allows us to peak into the worlds of elusive marine mammals, we are still kept at a distance as spectators. In a way, this distance is an obstacle similar to the one faced by whale-watchers. We only see whales when they want to be seen. Therefore, while film helps make elusive beings more accessible, it is not a full sensory experience. Additionally, imbuing whales with anthropomorphic qualities in a film can shape how we relate to them in real life. While some scholars believe that anthropomorphizing animals has the ability to make us more compassionate and empathetic, others like Berger warn that the absence of animals from everyday life (proximity between humans and nature) is reinforced through anthropomorphization. From my analysis, I believe that both points of view are accurate in their own ways. Although our proximity to the natural world widens through industrialization/urbanization, I think it necessary that we reconnect with the nonhuman in whatever ways we can. As van Dooren and Rose maintain, acknowledging that nonhuman animals are real fleshy beings with their own stories and histories is an important step in developing ethically concerned and caring relationships with them (van Dooren & Rose 89).

The stories we tell, how we go about telling them, and who we tell them about, all matter. The films discussed within this chapter are two different examples of how whales have been

used to tell stories and challenge how we respond to the nonhuman on screen. While there are a number of films that could have been used to explore this subject matter, I decided to use *Humpback Whales* and *Orca* for several reasons. Although MacGillivray-Freeman's film is similar in many ways to other whale documentaries, it happened to be available for viewing in theatres. This was my main motivation for choosing this film for the wildlife documentary portion of this chapter. *Orca*, on the other hand, is a rather unique film in and of itself. Where dozens of films have been made staging whales (especially Orca) and dolphins as friendly marine companions, Anderson's film is the only one which does the opposite. While *Free Willy* (1993) would have allowed for a similar analysis, *Orca* offered the possibility of exploring the darker side of the nonhuman in film.

Chapter Three

Science and Whale Representation

In an opening address to the public of Wellington, New Zealand, the inaugural Chief Science Advisor to the New Zealand Prime Minister, Peter Gluckman, speaks on the engagement of indigenous and Western science knowledge systems. As part of his address, Gluckman presents science as an epistemology; a knowledge system that, as he explains, affects culture and societies as much as it is affected and influenced by them. While this information is not novel in any major way, Gluckman continues by cautioning against scientific knowledge becoming the dominant mode of establishing truth. He explains that

> our human values and personal ethics will inevitably inform the many choices that we make in the practice of science: what we choose to research; how we research it, how we interpret it; and most importantly, how we use the knowledge produced through science. But in the past 200 years, the techniques of science have crystalized into formal processes explicitly designed to ensure the collection of data is robust and analysis follows protocols that can be replicated and thus tested and validated by anyone. This submission to testing and retesting – across borders, generations and cultures – is what gives scientific knowledge its generally accepted reliability and universality. (Gluckman 2)

What Gluckman moves towards in his address is not a condemnation of science but rather a meeting point for the diverse forms of knowledge and knowledge systems at play within societies at large. This comes as a response to the idea that science (as an epistemology) stands in opposition to different knowledge systems leading to potential contradictions or impasses. In explanation of this, Gluckman writes that "while science tries to remove values from its

collection and interpretation of data, other sources of knowledge, by their very nature, do not" (3). Therefore, the epistemological division created between scientific and other knowledge systems (indigenous, religious, moral, etc.) is often based on the inclusion or exclusion of values, or so Gluckman believes.

In relation to my work and the work of fellow multispecies studies scholars like Bruno Latour for example, establishing a common ground or meeting point between science and society/culture rather than keeping them separate and distinct is an important step in helping achieve realistic outcomes for pressing environmental issues. As I understand and will attempt to show throughout this chapter, science without subjectivity and the inclusion of personal values can fall short in terms of answering complex issues regarding the natural world. To borrow from Aristotle's method of inquiry in *The Parts of Animals* as a means of clarifying my point, there is no "one" way of understanding the world. Up until this point, science or scientific writing in some form or fashion has crept into each of my chapters. For example, the early naturalists of the 18th and 19th centuries provided important source material for Melville's *Moby-Dick*, while the incorporation of scientific experts in wildlife documentaries lent the films a degree of legitimacy and authenticity. In a similar fashion, science is also impacted by film and fiction in novel ways. As Susan McHugh notes in her book *Animal Stories*, the relationship between science and more artistic mediums like film and literature is not one sided, that is to say, that science does not remain unaffected by the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Using an interview with primatologist Jane Goodall as an example, McHugh emphasizes the influence of Goodall's childhood fascination with Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan* novels in determining her future career and studies. According to McHugh and Goodall herself, the stories inspired the primatologist to become "a better Jane" than the one Burroughs had established. But there is still

much to be said about the role of science in constructing nonhuman identity. As I have emphasized in the two previous chapters, describing nonhuman identity is a two-way street. When we use a particular medium to establish agency for the nonhuman, we also shape our own in the process. Scientific investigation and scientific writing are two additional ways in which we attempt to map out and understand nonhuman identity.

The focus of this final chapter addresses the question of how scientific representations of whales are framed by looking at scientific taxonomies and how systems of classification come to influence the identity of nonhuman beings, followed by a brief look at 18th and 19th century scientific whaling. In these first sections, emphasis is placed on how science as an epistemology structures knowledge in specific ways that allow for certain representations of whales to become normalized (the idea that whales are great parents, for example). Following this, I move on to discuss some of the issues surrounding the use of critical anthropomorphism in animal sciences. A major issue or criticism that some biologists, among other scientists, face when conducting work on nonhuman animals is their use of anthropomorphic representation. Looking at the work of Marc Bekoff, Brian Keeley and others, I advocate that critical anthropomorphism is not something to be afraid of, but rather, a beneficial means of helping us think about and *with* whales. This discussion is followed by an analysis of Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell's chapter "Songs of the Whale" from their book, *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins* (2015). As an attempt to prove that whales and dolphins do in fact have culture, the authors do a commendable job of engaging with their subject matter and opening up a conversation between science and other fields of study. However, it appears that Whitehead and Rendell run into problems of whale accessibility and like other scientists, are forced to make only general claims towards cetacean culture based on their study of a handful of species. Finally, the chapter concludes by

looking at the spaces in which scientific research takes place. Unlike smaller mammals that can be easily housed in laboratories and research facilities, an intimate study of whales is much easier said than done. Once more the issue of accessibility is discussed but this time with emphasis on nonhuman resistance to methods of representation.

Establishing a System

Looking back at science historically, one thing is clear: humans have continuously attempted to divide and subdivide the natural world in order to understand it. Systems of classification and identification have been used to comprehend complex systems (biospheres, physical bodies, forces of nature, etc.) and understand how these systems function. In terms of the Western philosophical tradition, Aristotle's philosophy of science stands as a starting point for modern theories of biology and the natural sciences. In its simplest form, Aristotle's object was to divide the natural world into categories of similarity and difference in order to proceed with deeper philosophical/scientific inquiry. In *The Progression of Animals*, for example, Aristotle employed "species", "genus", and "differentia" as a basis for a system of classification. Although he recognized that certain beings shared properties with members of different species, Aristotle maintained that it was necessary to determine what differentiated one from the other in order to reach a more complete understanding. For example, humans and dogs share many of the same attributes (we breathe air, we require nourishment, etc.) but our defining attributes or *differentia* would be our use of rational thought, moral reasoning and ability to speak. As Aristotle explains, "the real difference between man and other animals is that humans alone have perception of good and evil, just and unjust, etc." (*Pol*. I.2, 1253a15-17). As Michael Boyun points out, Aristotle's system of classification described in his various works is not complete, nor is it comprehensive. However, it is a form of meta-systematics which, as Boyun explains,

> also acts as an independent principle that permits Aristotle to examine animals together that are functionally similar. Such a move enhances the reliability of analogy as a tool of explanation. ("Aristotle: Biology")

By the mid 18th century, Carl Linnaeus established a more comprehensive means of classifying the natural world and nonhuman life. As a botanist, Linnaeus' work led him to spend most of his time researching out in the field. As such, his pursuits identifying and documenting the flora and fauna of the Swedish countryside required him to employ a method of classification. Unfortunately, the method of classifying plants (Tournefort's system) that he had been taught at Lund university did not work as well as he would have liked, leading him to develop a system of his own. Tournefort's system of classification, although it was the first to establish a clear definition of genus for plants, only provided a foundation for classification. His work, *Flora Lapponica* (1737), was the first of its kind to contain this newly developed system. As such, the Linnaean taxonomic system can be recognized and understood by its five main parts: kingdom, class, order, genus, and species. Over time Linnaeus' system for documenting the natural world became the basis for natural sciences.

In regard to my current project, these ideas of classification or systematics of the natural world are incredibly important for understanding the role of science in constructing nonhuman identity. The implementation of a system like the one Linnaeus established in the 18th century has an impact on our relationship to whale and other nonhuman life. It is important, in this context, to consider the colonial undertones associated with classifying, documenting, and naming beings of any order. As Linnaeus proclaims in the opening to his *Systema naturae* (1735):

> the first step in wisdom is to know the things themselves…this notion consists in having a true idea of the objects; objects are distinguished and known by classifying them methodically and giving them appropriate names. Therefore, classification and name-giving will be the foundation of our science. (qtd. in Farber 8-9)

Prior to Linnaeus, the process of naming as a means of establishing order can be traced back to early religious writings like *Genesis*. Shortly after creating the earth and filling it with life, God created Adam whom he gave "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Gen. 1.26). And soon thereafter, Adam was picked up and placed in the garden of Eden, but he wasn't left there alone. Before Eve, his female counterpart, came into the picture, God brought "every animal of the field, and every bird of the air" to Adam in order "to see what he would call them; and whatever [Adam] called every living creature, that was its name" (Gen. 2.19). Adam can be seen as history's first scientist in a way, if we consider the act of naming part of the process of classification. By naming the animals, Adam was given mastery over them. Derrida voices a similar opinion of Adam's actions in the story of *Genesis* writing that God

> "created man in his likeness *so that* man will *subject, tame, dominate, train,* or *domesticate* the animals born before [Adam] and assert his authority over them. God destines the animals to an experience of the power of man, *in order to see* the power of man in action, in order to see the power of man at work, in order to see man take power over all the other living beings. (Derrida 16)

It is, as Derrida highlights at the end of this passage, very much about exerting power over the nonhuman other; a process which eventually widened its scope to include people of colour,

women, and other marginalized groups throughout history. There is a power dynamic in naming. It is important to note that the act of naming as a means of developing knowledge or understanding of an object/subject runs throughout the course of human history and can be found across narrative forms.

Early Scientific Whale Studies

While many cultures have connections to a whaling past, the scientific study of whale life as we understand it today in the West did not begin until the 19th century with individuals like Thomas Beale. Prior to this time period, the majority of what humans knew about whales was based on myth and stories found in religious texts. However, as I explained in Chapter One, early studies like Beale's were ill-equipped for the task at hand. Spending the entirety of their lives underwater, whales and other cetaceans are incredibly difficult to study in the wild. Even today with advancements in technology, researchers are only beginning to scratch the surface of cetacean life. Although Beale's *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1838) stands as one of the most complete and detailed accounts of the Sperm whale from that time period, Beale acknowledges in his introductory remarks that the majority of naturalists preceding him often misrepresented the whales they were studying. In regards to the Sperm whale, Beale writes that:

> although many thousands of persons have been from time to time engaged in the pursuit, and must have possessed the best opportunities of observing the habits and manners of this immense animal, yet not one has stepped forward to vindicate its history from the absurd and fabulous accounts which it has been loaded… (Beale 3)

Beale continues by pointing out the contradicting accounts of Georges Cuvier, Abbe Lecoz and John Anderson, all of whom describe the Sperm whale in varying ways that he finds questionable and misleading. Following a dismissal of Cuvier's writings on the Sperm whale,

Beale asserts that "from these accounts it is evident, that both Anderson and the Abbe Lecoz, have been mistaken in the kind of whale which they saw, and which they heard emit sounds of which they have written" (Beale 4). If anything, Beale's remarks highlight the questionable nature of early scientific studies—including his own! —of cetaceans in the wild.

Historian of science, Graham Burnett, echoes Beale's criticism in his book *The Sounding of the Whale*. Writing in detail about the English *Discovery Investigations,* Burnett comments on how things developed after the British Museum became invested in studying whales in response to the rise of the whaling industry. Prior to the *Discovery Investigations*,

> Nineteenth-century naturalists with an interest in whales were limited to work with a few unwieldy bones; a stranding or two afforded a rare and career-defining glimpse of the object of inquiry, and as a rule, such glimpses were caught through a miasma of stink and decay. (Burnett, loc. 1179-1181).

If these excerpts from Beale and Burnett's work tell us anything, it is that early forms of whale research were pieced together accounts that painted a relatively vague picture of whales and their lives at best. Detailed studies were incredibly difficult as well as costly to pursue and as Burnett notes, a great deal of the information used in these studies came secondhand from whalemen working at distant whaling stations. Despite the varying credibility of these accounts, it is possible to map out two distinct forms of early scientific whale representation.

First, there is the representation of whales as mystical or monstrous beings that we find in Medieval bestiaries and early religious texts. Stories of Leviathan found in biblical scripture combined with folktales from sailors helped contribute to these mystical representations. One of the most common folktales about the whale came from Guillaume Le Clerc's in which the whale is depicted as resting motionless for long periods of time on the ocean's surface. According to Le

Clerc, the whale remains this way for so long that his body eventually becomes covered with sand and debris, and sailors seeking refuge from restless seas once stopped to take refuge on this mysterious floating island. But, as the sailors began to cook their supper over a fire lit on the whale's back, the whale quickly plunged down into the depths dragging the sailors and ship along with it (Kuhns 3). Stories like these shaped the narrative around whales and influenced popular cultural understanding of the animals.

Second, there is the representation of whales taxonomically of the kind Beale and other naturalists of the time were engaged with. These individuals sought to identify whales in ways that would eventually lead to an organized form of classification. This meant identifying the various species of whales and their differing physical and behavioural characteristics, a process Melville refers to in *Moby-Dick*'s "Cetology" chapter, albeit sardonically. Part of this process, as Beale endeavoured to show in his own work, was to correct instances of misrepresentation (attributing characteristics to the wrong species) and accurately identify each individual species of whale. This occurred through both observation and the anatomical study of whale bodies by naturalists either aboard whaling vessels or land based whaling stations.

Mechanic Bodies // Minded Bodies

How scientists conduct experiments and engage with nonhuman subjects has a direct impact on our understanding of the natural world. Unlike literature, there is a direct physicality associated with science and the study of natural phenomena. Animal bodies are sites of interest that fill us with feelings of awe and wonderment, while eliciting questions about our environment and our own human nature. We dedicate spaces to the nonhuman— zoos, conservation areas, aquaria, etc.— to help us better understand and question the nonhuman other. The earlier work of natural scientists sought to map out the inner workings of animal bodies;

they endeavoured to understand form and function, and determine (in a way similar to Aristotle) what made animals different from one another as well as from us. In Descartes' writings, for example, we are presented with the opinion that animals were similar to machines. Meditating on what moves various beings he

> came to realize…that there are two different principles causing our motions: one is purely mechanical and corporeal and depends solely on the force of the spirits and the construction of our organs, and can be called the corporeal soul; the other is the incorporeal mind, the soul which [he] defined as thinking substance… (Descartes 61).

While this view of motion lends itself to Descartes's writings on the human, it does not seem to apply to nonhuman animals. As Peter Harrison and other critics have pointed out, Descartes insisted that "animals were automata, and denied them thought, and *self*-consciousness" but they were still able to feel things like pain and hunger (Harrison 220). Greg Garrard describes Descartes's view of nonhuman animals as mechanomorphic, that is, that animals were understood as mechanistic objects like clocks rather than sentient subjects (Garrard 157).

Descartes' mechanomorphism, which was challenged by his contemporaries but nevertheless persisted as a dominant narrative, eventually led to questions concerning questions concerning animal consciousness, their ability to reason, and their potential for moral behaviour began to become more common among those studying animal life. Ethology, zoology, and behavioural psychology to name only a few disciplines, began to focus on the internal mental abilities/faculties of the nonhuman to glean insight into our own human behaviours and actions. However, as interest in animal cognition continues to grow, a figurative line has been used to separate scholars into two respective camps. For some, questions concerning the mental states

and capabilities of nonhuman animals are more easily understood by using anthropomorphism as a type of tool. Marc Bekoff writes,

> the way we describe and explain the behaviour of other animals is influenced and limited by the language we use to talk about things in general. By engaging in anthropomorphism we make the world of other animals accessible to ourselves and to other human beings. ("Wild Justice" 73)

Making these life-worlds accessible is a key point for Bekoff and other scholars. Since the mid-twentieth century, anthropomorphic attributions (empathy, communication, forgiveness, etc.) to nonhuman behaviour has been a hotly debated topic within the scientific community. For some, anthropomorphizing animals is something which ought to be avoided at all costs. Nonhuman animals need to remain *other* and any kind of anthropomorphizing works against that. This sort of animal as other position goes back to what Derrida addresses in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, specifically that all things nonhuman must remain specifically *as such*. There could be no direct relation between animals and humans because that diminishes the humanist idea of humanity as sacred, distinct, superior, etc.

To follow this kind of thinking, proponents against anthropomorphism believe that anthropomorphic attributions to nonhuman animals are for the most part anecdotal and not objective science. Brian L. Keeley sheds light on the debate between those for and against these kinds of attributions in his essay, "Anthropomorphism, Primatomorphism, Mammalomorphism: Understanding Cross-Species Comparison". For Keeley, who positions himself as a defender – or at least a soft advocate – for anthropomorphism, problems arise when we start looking closely at charges against anthropomorphism. Perhaps the most pressing issue in relation to these charges is how they tend to focus solely on cognitive attributes and abilities. It is also worth

noting that many of the examples Keeley uses throughout his paper focus on cognitive ethology and comparative biology, two of the disciplines that receive the most criticism for anthropomorphic attributions.

When dealing with members of different species, physical comparisons are not necessarily considered as questionable as those that fall under the category of mental/behavioural comparisons. Actions in nonhuman animals that some cognitive ethologists like Frans de Waal perceive as sympathetic seem to cross a line that should not be crossed. Devoting the majority of his time to studying primates, de Waal, who has written about animal behaviour in the wild and in captivity, emphasizes that "using anthropomorphic assumptions to frame hypotheses for testing in field observation has proven scientific value" (Garrard 172). Commenting on ethologists and behavioural zoologists who study animals in the wild, de Waal highlights the fact that "they try and meet the animal on its own terms, comparing behavioural characteristics along phylogenetic lines" (de Waal 257). But those opposed to seeing ourselves in animals or vice versa, end up reinforcing the human-animal binary that Derrida and others critically evaluate and deconstruct. For some reason, perhaps the human fear of losing our place at the center of things, there is a desire to remain at a distance from the nonhuman. In response to critiques of anthropomorphic language in the study of animals, Frans de Waal writes:

> Thus, while we should be reluctant to postulate capacities for which there is no evidence anywhere in a species' behavior, charges of anthropomorphism are meaningless without a precise critique of the hypotheses under consideration. In a Darwinian framework, there is no good reason to avoid concepts merely because they derive from the behaviors of the species to which we belong. Application of these concepts to animals not only enriches the range of hypotheses to be considered, but it

> also changes the view of ourselves: the more human-like we permit animals to become the more animal-like we become in the process. (de Waal 272)

A criticism facing cognitive ethologists and comparative biologists is that their work may be influenced by their feelings and emotions in ways that obstruct their judgement. But is it possible for individuals working within these disciplines to speak about agency, personhood, tool use, and other forms of behaviour in nonhuman animals without relating to their subjects? In her essay, "Into the Laboratory", feminist biologist Lynda Birke comments on the relationship between researcher and object of study, addressing the place of emotions in scientific inquiry. Writing about her own experiences as a woman studying science within an academic institution, Birke claims that "to identify with your animals...is to cease to be objective" (Birke 326). Here, Birke is mainly referring to those animals used in laboratories for experimentation. But, as she points out further on, the learned behaviour of scientists to treat animals as objects of study rather than beings with emotion, feeling, etc., is what matters here. To become a scientist, Birke writes,

> means learning to speak and write in ways that gloss over some of the deep ambivalence that many scientists –male and female—often experience. This is how we learn in science to speak of 'sacrifices,' or learn to make (unnecessarily) complex sentences in written papers that omit any reference to agency. Part of that learning process is to acquire the social skills of appearing not to be affected by emotions. (ibid)

But Birke does not agree with this sort of practice or of conducting scientific research in these ways. For her, there is much to be gained in science if we open ourselves up to the nonhuman subjects we engage with. Part of the issue that Birke raises, and one that Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell address in *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins*, is the rigid and mechanical nature of scientific writing and its ability to gloss over or exclude important elements of

nonhuman lives (agency, emotions, etc.). As other scientists like George Schaller suggest, there is a place for emotion in scientific research. As a field biologist who dedicates a great deal of time and effort studying animals in the wild, Schaller explains that

> When you're isolated in a different culture, a different country, you have to have an emotional attachment to what you do. You have to like the people, the country, and the animals. Without emotion you have a dead study. How can you possibly sit for months and look at something you don't particularly like, that you see simply as an object? You're dealing with individual beings who have their own feelings, desires, fears. To understand them is very difficult and you cannot do it unless you try to have some emotional contact and intuition. Some scientists will say they are wholly objective, but I think that's impossible. Laboratory scientists wasted years putting rats in mazes to show they were learning. They never got close enough to a rat to realize that they were not going by sight and learning, they were following scent trails of previous rats. By overlooking this simple fact they wasted years of science. (qtd. in *Animal Manifesto* 68-69)

Schaller's perspective on scientific research is important here. First, it raises a good point in regards to how we engage in studies of nonhuman life. We must be invested, albeit up to a point, in the various dimensions of our subjects of study. We must be able to feel something in order to be receptive to emergent forms of being; to open up spaces for the nonhuman to be itself, to learn from it, become affected by it. Second, attempting to remain wholly objective can lead us down the wrong path to understanding animals. It seemingly excludes the potential to think with or alongside animals. The possibility for understanding who animals are or how they see the world is inherently limited when we develop elaborate ways of testing such and such a behaviour. Is an

Orca's behaviour in a marine park indicative of its natural behaviour in the wild, for example? Does this animal have agency or has it been stripped of who/what it is through the process of experimentation?

In an essay on nonhuman agency, Vinciane Despret writes about what it means for the nonhuman to become an acting agent. Looking at Darwin as one of her examples, Despret comments on how the naturalist explained the showy behaviours of a peacock. According to her understanding of his observation, Darwin maintains the notion that male peacocks "delight to display their beauty" even in situations where there is no possibility of mating. While Darwin in this case advocates that other naturalists will also attest to having observed similar behaviours in birds, Despret notes that this belief in the exhibitionist displays of the "peacock's finery" was not shared by ethologists of the mid-twentieth century. A notable shift occurred as scientific study continued; the enchantment of nature and intentional behaviour found in Darwin's writings were replaced by calculated stimuli response. Eileen Crist, who Despret calls on in her work, notes that the exhibitionist behaviour of the peacock could be understood as the response to external stimulus elicited by other beings according to classical ethological depictions. In essence, the peacock's behaviour was understood as something that happened as a response to something else, a typical behaviorist point of view. This thinking removes the notion of intentional action and the possibility of the peacock being the agent of its own actions. However, this is only one way of *see*ing things. In her reading of Darwin's portrayal of the peacock, Crist views the animal as "the inhabitant of an aesthetic and exhibitionist world" which as Despret notes, makes it the "author of his action" (Crist 89, Despret 33).

As Despret continues in regard to the peacock showing off its fan to other animals, "why not imagine these two beings liberated from pure reproductive motives, and enjoying together an

unprecedented, creative, improvised, and queer 'becoming together'?" (Despret 33). Is it strange to think of animals performing or acting for themselves out of enjoyment? Comparatively, the exhibitionist behaviour of Darwin's peacock is not unlike the tail-slapping behaviour observed in various species of whales. Humpbacks are well-known for their aquatic performances in which they lob-tail, breach, and slap the water's surface with their tails and pectoral fins. Like Darwin's peacock, this exhibitionist behaviour raises questions about what it is the whales are doing and why. Near the end of the film *Humpback Whales*, discussed in the previous chapter, there is a montage of Humpbacks breaching while the narrator comments "we're not exactly sure why they do it, but we're glad they do". Although scientists have hypothesized why the whales exhibit these behaviours, the film portrays them as acts *for* human spectators, an idea that whale-watching tours seem to take full advantage of. In a way, it would seem that Humpbacks breach only for our enjoyment although I would consider this wishful thinking. However, critical anthropomorphism can be used to help us restructure how we think about nonhuman agency. Looking at the breaching whales with this in mind allows us to see them as other-than-human beings enjoying themselves, being playful, and perhaps, teaching one another rather than a behaviour that is a response to some form of stimuli. It is social behaviour that may potentially even be cultural as Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell suggest.

Although many behaviorists wish to keep animals and humans separate for the sake of objectivity, for example, there is more at risk of being lost or overlooked by proceeding in this way. Opening ourselves up and being receptive to other forms of being in the world is enhanced by employing critical anthropomorphism in future studies. In defense of this sort of thinking, Bekoff claims that

> What it basically comes down to is that as humans studying other animals, we cannot totally lose our anthropocentric perspective. But we can try as hard as possible to combine the animals' viewpoints to the ways in which we study, describe, interpret, and explain their behaviour. ("Wild Justice" 74)

But our task is not an easy one. Although we must try and work with nonhuman animals rather than against them, there is the possibility that they do not have any interest in participating in our research. While I would like to believe that humans will be able to look forward, eye to eye, with the nonhuman, it is important to consider how we go about negotiating the nonhuman's involvement in scientific or other disciplinary studies. Simply because I believe that the whales will benefit from a certain study or research project, doesn't mean that I have the whale's consent, if consent can in fact be given. It would appear that the more we probe into the lifeworlds of the nonhuman, the more questions and issues seem to arise.

The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins

Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell, two cetacean biologists, devote an entire book to establishing the case for cetacean culture. As they explain in their important book, *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins*, their pursuit to map out cetacean culture meets a fair amount of resistance. Some of the pushback when it comes to making the case for culture (nonhuman or human) is that culture by definition is hard to pin down. Depending on which discipline or background you approach the subject from, the meaning of culture can have different implications, definitions, or applications. As the authors note,

> There are several long-standing academic disciplines involving hundreds of thousands of academics devoted to studying human culture. But we still do not understand, or agree on, how human culture operates. (Whitehead & Rendell Loc. 5845-5848)

Despite the challenges, Whitehead and Rendell still believe that each species of cetacean has its own culture – if only by degree. Before going into detail about instances of whale culture, and acts they consider 'cultural', they devote an entire chapter to clarifying how they've chosen to define nonhuman culture and their reasons why. Both biologists assert that the most applicable definition of culture is a broad one allowing for inclusivity. Therefore, as far as Whitehead and Rendell's research is concerned, culture "is behavior or information with two primary attributes: it is socially learned and it is shared within a social community" (Whitehead & Rendell Loc. 280-281). Establishing the basis for their study, the biologists then present their case for cetacean culture emphasizing aspects such as communication, tool use, social behaviour, and foraging.

One chapter of Whitehead and Rendell's book that stands out to me is "Song of the Whale". In relation to the rest of their book, this portion establishes many of the main points explored later on in different contexts. The chapter is broken down into five subsections: The Lives of Baleen Whales; Baleen Whale Communities; The Song of the Humpback; The Songs of Other Baleen Whales; and Nonvocal Cultures of the Baleen Whales. As the subsections show, vocalization or whale song, is a key component of the cetacean way of life. Because they spend their lives in environments that often have poor conditions for visibility, whales and other cetaceans rely on their echolocation abilities to navigate their watery world. However, vocalization is a complex element of whale life used for an array of purposes such as communication, navigation, foraging, mating, and perhaps even enjoyment. As Whitehead and Rendell show explicitly throughout this chapter – and elsewhere in their book— when we hear someone talking about whale vocalization, they are, more often than not, talking about Humpback whales. Initially captured by U.S. Navy hydrophones in the 1960s, the vocalizations or songs of the Humpback were recorded and studied by American scientist Roger Payne. Trying

to make sense of the recordings, Payne and his colleague, Scott McVay, published a paper in the influential journal *Science* in which they describe the Humpback's sounds as beautiful. For Whitehead and Rendell, along with philosopher and musician David Rothenberg, equating the Humpback's song with beauty in a scientific journal was a first. Following the publication of their article and the release of *Songs of the Humpback* on vinyl in the 1970s, the popularity of this species began to grow.

What is fascinating about this chapter and its subsections is the amount of emphasis placed on Humpback whale culture, especially in regards to vocalization. Although there are a large number of baleen whales, they are lumped into a single section while the Humpback receives a section of its own. While this seems odd and somewhat unfair to other whales like the Blue or the Sei, Whitehead and Rendell explain that:

> Humpbacks are generally both more visible and more available than other baleen whales— the whaler Ingebrigtsen believed them "far more intelligent than other species of whale"— and their attractiveness to whale watchers gives scientists opportunities that would be hard to come by otherwise. (Whitehead & Rendell Loc. 2078-2081).

As it would appear, availability and accessibility become the cornerstones for Whitehead and Rendell in their search for whale culture. In a following chapter, the authors make another similar claim about the accessibility of cetacean subjects to scientific studies. As they put it, scientists like themselves find it much easier to study whales and provide a basis for cetacean culture by focusing on matrilineal social environments such as those formed by species like Orca and Sperm whales. They write:

> much of our best information on whale culture comes from these matrilineal species

> and, especially, their sounds. The vocalizations of the matrilineal whales are in some respects our clearest route into the cultures of whales and dolphins. (Whitehead & Rendell Loc. 2767-2769)

And finally, that "we also know more about these animals than almost any other cetaceans—only the humpbacks and bottlenose dolphins are as well known" (Whitehead & Rendell Loc. 2770-2771). Based on their work and the information they present, it would appear that much of the time and effort that goes into studying whales from a scientific point of view is dedicated to nonhuman animals that are most readily accessible to us. In depth accounts of dogs and cats are plentiful, but detailed accounts on the behaviour of the False Killer Whale are few and far between. With this in mind, I find that Whitehead and Rendell's work is well-intentioned and truly novel in that they chose to explore what many consider to be a taboo theme in the realm of animal science. However, while I would like to believe that all members of the cetacean order have their own respective cultures, it is hard to make this claim based on the observations of only a few species.

I consider one of the more important aspects of Whitehead and Rendell's work on whale culture to be their honesty as they speak on the current status of whale science. Both authors admit the limitations of their studies and speak openly about the gaps in scientific data that pose obstacles to themselves and other researchers in their field. It is true that most of the data and examples of whale and dolphin culture come from a handful of species rather than the entirety of cetacean order, but that does not diminish the value of what scientists have uncovered thus far. It is a starting point, the beginning of a much larger conversation between science and other fields of study. This goes back to what Gluckman mentions in his address to the people of New Zealand, and something the two biologists put forth in their own way. Whitehead and Rendell

continuously concede that there is a lot scientists, and science generally, just don't know. Clearly, more work is required before we begin to comprehend the complexity of whale life. However, the open and almost defiant stance the authors take up in order to put forth their claims for cetacean culture is admirable. *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins* is a prime example of science holding the door open for other disciplines to join and share in the discussion of nonhuman beings. Incorporating a range of multi-disciplinary topics such as animal welfare, cognition, and empathy, to name only a few, allows other scholars to engage with perspectives from different disciplinary communities. In my view, Whitehead and Rendell encourage scholars like myself to engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration as a way to both make research more inclusive while extending its scope to other forms of knowing the world.

Study Spaces

One important factor to consider when discussing the impact of scientific writing on the construction of whale identity is the environment in which studies and observations take place. Hal Whitehead, whose research is focused on Sperm whale clans, spends most of his time around the coast of the Galápagos islands. As Whitehead and Rendell note in *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins*, many researchers are forced to conduct field studies because certain species "are large and many cannot be held captive" (Loc. 5842). In regard to studies of cetaceans in the wild, the authors emphasize that "humans face important barriers when trying to understand the nature and scope of cetacean culture," further explaining that "the habitat of whales and dolphins is inhospitable for us" (Loc. 5841-5842). While this barrier is real in relation to the study of whales and dolphins in the wild, it prompts us to question the barriers of captive environments. On the other side of cetacean research, there are a handful of species (Beluga, Bottlenose dolphin, Orca) that we have managed to remove from the wild and place in

spaces designed for purposes of education and entertainment. When we consider marine parks like Marine Land in Niagara Falls, Ontario, or Sea World San Diego, we must be aware that these constructed environments allow researchers to conduct hands-on cetacean research. Another dimension of this would be that it allows the average person (or paying customer) direct access to these animals. But let us return to studies in the field before discussing aquaria and marine parks in more detail.

In the wild, whales often remain at a distance for the reasons Whitehead and Rendell address in their work. The whale's inaccessible ocean habitat challenges researchers to come up with novel ways of observing whale behaviour and collecting useful data. In her book *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway writes about the use of cameras or 'crittercams' as a means of data acquisition. As she explains, the use of cameras placed on nonhuman animals' bodies allows scientists (or viewers at home) to get a sense of what it's like to be a certain animal (Haraway 253). In a way, we're given privileged access to the lifeworlds of different species, or taken along for the ride as Haraway puts it. For researchers attaching suction cup cameras on Humpback whales off the coast of Alaska, their task required a great deal of patience and effort. Using this story as an example of the physical limits and difficulties humans face when applying these technologies in research situations, Haraway explains how

> Many weeks of unsuccessful attempts to attach a camera to a whale (almost a whole research season) were reduced to a couple of minutes of TV time showing one failed attempt after another to plant a camera hanging off a long pole onto a giant moving whale from a boat. (Haraway 257)

As Haraway's example highlights, scientists are often hard pressed when collecting data from whales in the wild and in those rare instances when they are successful, the results can be

disappointing. Whitehead and Rendell touch on a similar issue in their book explaining that some species of whales are just plain hard to find. Even at times when researchers are successfully able to track certain species of whales or dolphins, gathering enough useful information can be difficult or even impossible. While human technologies seek entry into the mysterious worlds of whales, they reach a point where subjects and objects become inaccessible. While this points towards the limits of our current technologies and methods of data acquisition, it also highlights how we are denied entrance into whale lives. Perhaps, the shortcomings of our technologies will be worked out over time and our future studies will yield more rewarding results. But will the information we retrieve be worthwhile? Will it help us more accurately represent the lives of cetaceans and other nonhuman animals? The possibility is exciting, especially considering that whale life is shrouded in mystery, but simply because we gather more detailed information does not mean we will overcome the barriers of representation. We might consider the elusive nature of most whales and dolphins to be a form of passive resistance to the scientific pursuit towards understanding whale behaviour, culture, life, etc. They might not cooperate with us despite our best intentions. Perhaps they choose to leave us at the surface, alone with our questions and our desire to know more. In captivity, however, whale resistance is more overt and recognizable.

To be sure, whales and dolphins are more accessible to humans in aquaria and marine parks than in the open ocean. So how do these spaces afford whales the opportunity to resist and refuse access to humans? In their article, “Whale and Human Agency in World-Making”, Leesa Fawcett and Traci Warkentin address forms of whale-human engagement in different environments, one of which is the marine park. As the authors explain, whale-human interactions in captivity are multi-dimensional as well as highly relational. As part of their example, Warkentin and Fawcett raise the issue of tissue sampling for gene banks. Tissue samples from

captive whales, Orca in their case, can be stored and catalogued for future use and analysis by researchers. A potential issue that arises in this sort of scenario is that if (or perhaps when) the Orca as a species were to go extinct, they would live on as a digital memory. As Fawcett and Warkentin explain, this raises issues in terms of how we come to understand the animals themselves:

> In effect, the species is conceptualized as a machine which can be divided up into smaller and smaller parts. A pod of orcas, for instance, can be seen as a collective machine, isolated first from complex relations with habitat and other beings. Multiple layers of context are stripped away conceptually and physically as an orca is taken from the pod and isolated in captivity, tissue is taken from the orca and isolated in a lab, cells are isolated from the tissue and so on down to the smallest unit of genetic material, which is what is actually "preserved." (Fawcett & Warkentin 107)

From this quote, the relationship between human and whale is reduced to an interaction that is one-sided. The scientists capture and preserve the genetic code of the whale, but in the process the nonhuman is reduced to nothing more than techno-scientific data. At the same time, this data prompts us to ask the question, '*is the nonhuman animal nothing more than a string of DNA?*' In an example such as this, the whale's agency is simply excluded from the equation. The complexity of its being is negated through the scientific processes of reduction and cataloguing. But it is important to note that this is only one of the ways in which whales and humans interact in a setting such as this.

On a more positive note, whales do seem to have the ability to resist humans even when held in tanks and put on display. One of the more uplifting cases Warkentin notes is a dolphin squirting water at trainers to get their attention, while another, perhaps more curious instance was

documented by Paul Spong at the Vancouver aquarium.

> One day, Skana, whose job was to choose the correct card from the two that Spong repeatedly put in front of her, chose the wrong card 99 times in a row. To Spong it was clear that Skana was bored with his experiments and was deliberately choosing the wrong card as a sign of her displeasure. (Zelko 100-101)

In both of these situations, the animals make themselves known in their encounter with trainer and researcher respectively; both animals assert their agency, intentions, desire (or lack thereof). The dolphin's water hitting the trainer in the face shows the trainer that he's being acknowledged and that the dolphin is consciously acting out. The same can be said for Skana and her encounter with Spong. In both encounters, the animal resists by doing the opposite of what the humans expect them to do, similar to Darwin's peacock. Skana confronts Spong's attempt to construct agency by showing her displeasure and deliberately subverting the researcher's own experiment. In her own unique way, Skana asserted herself as acting agent by showing Spong that she had interest in things other than his experiment. At that moment, Spong began to see Skana in the way that Despret and Crist saw Darwin's peacock. Although the behaviour is irregular and unpredictable, it is an example of how the whale chooses to act contrary to how we expect it to. While these are two positive examples of cetaceans resisting humans, there are also some more negative ones to accompany them. As documentaries like Gabriela Cowperthwaite's *Blackfish* (2013) have shown, whales can resist through violence. The intentional death of trainers by captive Orca are some of the more chilling examples of whales resisting their captivity and our rigorous and repetitive training and research programs.

What Has Science Shaped?

Scholars like Warkentin and Whitehead, among others, have suggested that there are forms of emergent whale culture(s), modes of being, and agency that we are slowly beginning to notice and recognize. As more studies take place and technologies advance, we are becoming more attuned to these emergent properties and life-worlds. However, referring to these aspects of whale life as 'emergent' does not seem to do justice to the complexity of these beings. What we refer to as emergent is only novel, or so it seems, to the human. The idea of an emergent Humpback whale culture is nothing new to the Humpback; it is already a fundamental part of its being. It is hard not to get caught up in the discovery of behavioural patterns and examples of intentional acts in whales and dolphins. Of course, it is exciting to find evidence that Sperm whales have dialects, or that whales form diverse groups or colonies with different feeding behaviours in the same territory. But what cost do the whales pay for us to access this knowledge? Are there ways to study nonhuman animals that are less invasive and less stressful? Following my reading of Bekoff and others, we may find some answers by engaging our projects from a critical anthropomorphism perspective. Although it may not be possible at all times, opening ourselves up to nonhuman lifeworlds and limiting our desire to think about them objectively could help us begin to see whales and other nonhuman animals as the complex agents that they are.

What this chapter has forced us to consider is how we carry out research on nonhuman animals. As science shifts its attention from animal bodies to animal minds, have we been receptive to new and diverse ways of being? Despret and others would argue that our attitudes are changing, slowly but surely, and becoming more inclusive. While I believe Despret is right, I still maintain that we have a long way to go. Scientists still continue to meticulously classify the

natural world and fit its various parts into organized systems, hierarchies, and webs of being. We continue to reach our hands out into the world looking for new things to help us understand who and what we are. Whitehead and Rendell, however, give me hope that we are beginning a conversation across disciplines that will have a better chance at addressing the complexity of nonhuman life. Their pursuit of cetacean culture opens new pathways for future scholars like myself to follow, allowing us to reshape scientific discourse about whales and other nonhuman animals.

Conclusion

Storying Worlds

Humans spend their lives populating the world with stories. These stories take many forms and often weave in and out of one another. Throughout this project, I have come to realize that there is no grand narrative by which all others come to be told. In other words, there is no singular way to speak about the world and tell its stories. This has everything to do with how complex our world is (or worlds are), and who tells the stories. In July 2016, I participated in a place-based literature course in Bamfield, British Columbia where we focused completely on whale-related stories. I considered the course a unique opportunity, one in which I would be able to orient myself with my thesis project's subject matter and better understand how humans tell the nonhuman animal's story for themselves. The idea behind the course was to have students read and engage with cetacean literature in an immersive setting while using ecocritical and animal studies perspectives to direct our readings and class trips. A major difference between this course and one typically delivered at a university was that it took place in what could be considered a traditional scientific facility. The Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre (BMSC) is home to marine scientists and researchers devoted to studying marine ecology and environmental conservation. With that being the primary focus of the institution, the facilities are designed specifically for scientific research. Students and staff have access to wet labs, a scientific library, watercrafts and diving equipment, and other laboratory instruments, to help them carry out their work. In most respects, it is not the typical environment for a student studying English literature and philosophy. However, the facility provided me and my classmates with the opportunity to work alongside scientists.

In the early stages of the course, our instructors asked us to think about how humanities students like ourselves could conduct "fieldwork" at a place like BMSC. It was a strange idea to consider. How would English students do fieldwork? We weren't collecting data samples and running experiments in the labs, we were reading novels and discussing issues related to text and culture. Was that fieldwork? In a way, it was. Part of what we were exposed to were the incredible natural environments/landscapes/seascapes that helped writers, like the ones we were reading, develop their ideas about their cetacean subject matter. Living in close proximity to the Pacific Ocean, I felt compelled to scan the horizon for flukes and spouts. Each time I visited the nearby Pachena Bay, I would walk slowly along the shoreline and think about the Grey whales dredging the bottom with their powerful jaws in search of a hearty invertebrate meal. This to me seemed like fieldwork, although its use or application had yet to be determined.

Another aspect of our fieldwork stemmed from the company that was kept throughout the duration of the course. Although it seemed like a strange pairing at first, the different groups of students soon began to coalesce into one larger pod. In addition to our time spent in the classroom or out in the field, science and humanities students comingled at meal times, studied in the shared common spaces and spent *temps libre* exploring the surrounding areas together (hiking, kayaking, swimming, and camping). It was during these times where the so-called boundary or division between humanities and sciences seemed to breakdown and disappear. Students in the crustacean biology course openly discussed ideas of sustainable conservation with the English students, while the latter attended lectures held by the students studying marine life in the intertidal. In many ways, the discourse that flowed from these dynamic group settings helped me begin to understand the sort of work that Thom van Dooren and Deborah Bird Rose advocate in their article "Lively Ethography". Our work and academic pursuits overlapped,

borrowed from one another and extended in different directions. In a way, I felt as though we had begun to "participate in the world in its relational becoming" (91). More importantly perhaps, I began to understand what it meant to bear witness to the lives and stories of others, be they individual or shared, or those stories that cross species lines. As van Dooren and Rose write, bearing witness and becoming responsive to the stories that populate our world

> is grounded in the conviction that making others fleshy and thick on the page, exposing readers to their lives and deaths, may give rise to proximity and ethical entanglement, care and concern. At the core of this notion of storytelling as an ethical practice is the understanding that the stories we tell are powerful contributors to the becoming of our shared world. (van Dooren & Rose 89).

In Bamfield, this way of thinking and experiencing the world made sense. My environment and the individuals (human and nonhuman) showed me how stories converge and grow together in their own unique ways.

The crossover stories between the people working and living in Bamfield and the nonhuman animals that coexisted with them is a telling example of this. Working through the literature for my project made me question my involvement in the act of whale-watching. I had seen whales from shore in Pachena Bay and at those times I was filled with awe and excitement. The distance between myself and the feeding whales was enough for me to believe that they were unaware of my presence, and if on the off chance they were, I was not causing any harm. Out on the water, however, it seemed as though our group of eager whale-watchers were trying to force an intimate encounter between the whales. Although we only managed to briefly spy a solitary Humpback, it made me wonder what the whale thought of us and if the whale wanted us there to begin with. But through my engagement with classmates, researchers, boat operators,

and members of the local Huu-ay-aht First Nations, it became clear how stories were connected. For me, the whales belonged in the ocean, free of bother and human interference. However, for the boat operators who ran the whale-watching tours, the whales were a source of income. For many of my classmates and the visitors participating in these tours, the whales were a source of wonder and fascination, who excited their imaginations. For the Huu-ay-aht who are indigenous to the Western coast of Vancouver Island where we were living and studying, the whales were a significant part of their cultural memory. As a Pacific whaling tribe, the Huu-ay-aht's history is shared and interwoven with the histories of the animals themselves. But what about the whales? How do humans factor into their perspectives, or into their stories? It is a complicated question and not one that I could answer with any degree of certainty. What I did know, however, was that the human and nonhuman beings in the area were affecting and being affected by one another in different ways. The whales were influencing our stories by challenging them, by forcing us to acknowledge them as complex living beings with their own stories and histories. After finishing the course and returning home to Ontario where there were no whales to distract me, I realized that I had taken this idea of interconnected beings/becomings with me. Reflecting on my experience in Bamfield, perhaps I can begin to articulate a reason for why this idea has stayed with me. Earlier I mentioned how our instructors encouraged us to think about how humanities students could conduct fieldwork. In short, I believe that my time spent among these diverse groups of living beings allowed me to think and see the world in a different way. I was certainly not a scientist when I arrived in Bamfield and I am quite certain that I am not a scientist now. However, I developed a sense of urgency and need to tell stories. My work was only a small part of this process, allowing me to draw attention to the many ways humans and nonhuman animals create narratives together. More importantly, my work and the experiences

that have accompanied this project have brought different narratives together in a way that enabled me to become what van Dooren and Rose refer to as a witness to the lives, bodies, minds of others "which include both attention to others and expression of that experience: to stand as witness and actively to bear witness" (van Dooren & Rose 89).

As the chapters and their material show, I have attempted to cover a lot of ground and map out the various ways in which humans represent whale agency across three representative modes. Representation in whatever context it is being studied or discussed, is a difficult subject to unpack. In terms of my work, my engagement with representation has revealed comparisons along with serious differences between literature, film, and science. This idea along with those developed throughout my chapters, have been an important step in laying a groundwork for how we come to construct nonhuman agency through narrative processes.

From a Derridean point of view, for example, Melville used fiction as a way to open up and create a space for the nonhuman to respond and break free of its historical silence. The whale narrative that runs parallel to those of Ishmael and Ahab shapes and provides meaning to the novel and its plot as a whole. In many ways, Melville's use of the whale as a central character worked to co-constitute the identities of the human characters aboard the *Pequod*. This is only one example of how literature opens a space for the nonhuman to respond and challenge humanist ways of knowing the world. Moby Dick along with all other whales in the novel disrupt an attempt at an anthropocentric narrative by subverting the authority of such narratives with their own agency.

In a similar fashion, my second chapter on visual media challenged us to reconsider our relationship with the nonhuman and confront the fact that we are not bystanders removed from the pressing environmental/ecological issues that face our world. Where Melville's focus in

Moby-Dick was directed towards the importance of a whale narrative (or, whale as acting agent) as a way to question how we identify ourselves and others in processes of relational becomings, films like MacGillivray-Freeman's *Humpback Whales* and Anderson's *Orca* bring us face to face with the nonhuman. While some critics like Armbruster warn of the potential harm visual media can cause in reinforcing binary relationships, it is important to acknowledge that film and other forms of visual media open a space for whales to resist. For example, whales may not always behave in ways filmmakers want them to. In many instances, whales often choose not to participate and do the opposite of what the camera operator or director intends of them. This subtle act reminds us that whales participate in how we represent them, revealing themselves to eager human viewers or choosing to remain a mystery.

My final chapter on science writing built on the ideas established in the two preceding chapters. What became clear in this section was that our cultural understanding of whales and other nonhuman animals is woven into traditional scientific ways of knowing the world. However, after studying the work of authors like de Waal, Whitehead, Rendell, and Keeley for example, it would appear that there is no purely objective or subjective stance for scientific representations. At its core, science has been and will continue to be affected by social, cultural, and personal histories. Furthermore, these histories are shared by members of other species. Applying a critical anthropomorphic perspective to scientific research can help us begin to think *with* the nonhuman rather than keep thinking *about* them. Understanding, for example, that a whale can feel depressed, disappointed, or bored forces us to acknowledge that these animals are in fact agents while also allowing them to be relatable. This thinking moves us beyond the idea that whales, along with other nonhuman animals, are merely fleshy data for human collection,

classification, and dominion, but complex creatures who question, respond, and participate in their own unique ways.

While this project has shed light on some of the questions I initially had about how humans represent nonhuman animals, and whales in particular, it has definitely forced me to consider many more issues and raised even more questions for me to continue to pursue. These three chapters are only the beginning of a much larger project. I have managed to connect my ideas with the work and views of individuals from a variety of disciplines for two particular reasons. First, I wanted to show that a study of nonhuman animals, whether concerned with habitat, agency, or extinction, is not isolated to one disciplinary perspective. What I've attempted to prove throughout this project is that no one specific approach is the most effective for understanding or answering complex human-animal issues. There are many ways that whales have been represented in literature, film, and science, and whales are themselves active contributors to these representations. Second, connecting these various disciplines within my project emphasizes the potential (and also the need) for cross-disciplinary collaboration. Whale-human narratives are understandably multifaceted things. I have learned a lot about the way narratives converge and meet with one another in sometimes strange and unexpected ways. The stories we tell emerge from who we are and how we relate to the world around us. Every living thing communicates in its own way, and as I have shown through my work, it is necessary for us to be receptive to these stories—even when they're more-than-human. Clearly more can, and should, be said on the topic of nonhuman representation. My work addresses only a fraction of the questions we should be asking, but hopefully it inspires more scholastic research.

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