

University of Nevada, Reno

**Binding the Monstrous Animal in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau*
and Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl***

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Cameron J. Turner

Dr. Nadine Attewell/Thesis Advisor

May, 2009



University of Nevada, Reno
Statewide • Worldwide

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

We recommend that the thesis
prepared under our supervision by

CAMERON TURNER

entitled

**Binding the Monstrous Animal
in H. G. Wells's The Island of Dr. Moreau and Larissa Lai's Salt Fish Girl**

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Nadine Attewell, Ph.D., Advisor

Cheryll Glotfelty, Ph.D., Committee Member

Valerie Weinstein, Ph.D., Graduate School Representative

Marsha H. Read, Ph. D., Associate Dean, Graduate School

May, 2009

Abstract

In my thesis, I explore the nineteenth and twentieth century metaphors and material inflections of the idea of the “enclosure” and the neo/colonial and zoological practices it engenders: the cage, the laboratory, the zoo, and the corporate compound. Critics have usually construed the enclosure as a reproducible space of control, imperial reification, epistemological certainty, and spectacle. Building on these valuable accounts and partially locating myself in contradistinction to them, *Binding the Monstrous Animal* argues that the enclosure is, at heart, a permeable membrane for both imperial subject-object and human-animal interactions. I draw on a diverse chorus of critical methodologies, including postcolonial identity theory, ecocriticism, gender studies, and close formal readings of H. G. Wells’s 1896 novella *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, and Larissa Lai’s 2002 novel *Salt Fish Girl*, to ultimately suggest that the neo/colonial enclosure—whether it constrains a human or nonhuman species—is a space always in danger of collapse. I read the enclosure as a site where gazes are exchanged, hierarchical and taxonomic identities are hybridized and destabilized, and new reproductions of suppressed identities are covertly accomplished, precipitating into representational crisis the lingering projects of empire and global capital.

Acknowledgements

This thesis owes its realization to Nadine Attewell for her brilliant support and ceaseless encouragement. Her help was invaluable during the drafting and revision process, and the research I performed under her aegis in the summer of 2008 was a crucial foundation for this work's epilogue. She has made me think hard about my craft and my political responsibilities as a young writer, and I am better for it.

Heartfelt thanks also go to Cheryll Glotfelty and Valerie Weinstein in token of their sage advice, insights, and mentorship on my graduate committee. I remain indebted to Erin Somerville, Michael P. Branch, Scott Slovic, Dave Johnson, Dave Stentiford, Daniel Kim, Jeffrey DeShell, Suzanne Magnanini, Elizabeth Robinson, Tom Hertweck, Christine MacDonald, Jeffrey C. Robinson, Levi Teal, Carol Keeley, Nancy Hightower, and Priscilla Craven for their friendship and support over the course of my undergraduate and graduate studies. I am also thankful for the Literature and Environment community of scholars, graduate students, and writers. Without their intellectual commitment to “thinking through the non-human,” this would not have been possible.

My work is dedicated to James and Jeanne Turner. Language fails at their profound love. I am thankful to my father for teaching me the importance of wonder and reverence for the natural world from a young age, and to my mother for her tireless, energetic advocacy for the arts. This work is for them, too, because of a certain summer roadtrip in the early 1990s to the chaotic, spectacular enclosure at Bear Country, USA, a tourist trap in South Dakota, where, arguably, all of this began.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Framing a Fearful Symmetry: The Nature of Postcolonial Enclosures – 1
Chapter 2: Animals in the Ashes of Dr. Moreau’s Enclosure – 21
Chapter 3: Writing Bodies and Octopus Eyes: Evading (En)Closure in <i>Salt Fish Girl</i> – 51
Epilogue – 75
Notes – 81
Works Cited – 83

Chapter One: Framing a Fearful Symmetry: The Nature of Postcolonial Enclosures

I – Going After the Tiger

This long essay began with a haunting visit to the San Francisco Zoo in late May, 2008. I visited the zoo five months after its widely publicized Christmas Day tragedy, in which a three hundred pound Siberian tiger named Tatiana leaped the walls of her enclosure near closing time, mauling three teenagers who had been taunting her from above her grotto. Carlos Souza, a seventeen-year-old from San Jose, was already dead when police arrived on scene, reportedly yelling at the tiger to stop before shooting and killing the animal when it moved abruptly in their direction (Fagan *et al.*).

The attack sent shockwaves rippling through the Bay Area, as well as the international community of zookeepers, enclosure designers, and safety managers. The public was initially quick to pan Zoo officials, as inspectors in the wake of the incident found that the walls of the tiger enclosure fell short of heights required by international code. Outrage dissipated, however, when medical officials revealed that the survivors had been intoxicated at the time of the incident, and when one of them later admitted to provoking the animal by yelling while “standing atop the railing of the tiger’s exhibit” (Van Derbeken).

Five months after the incident, what was most striking about the San Francisco tiger maulings was not the arduous legal proceedings underway on behalf of the victims, or the vicious condemnation of their hubris on behalf of animal lovers, or the flurry of public sympathy for Tatiana in letters to the editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. What lingered most powerfully as I walked through the zoo was the sense that the attack had

upset the carefully planned space of the institution itself. The zoo's attendance had dropped considerably over the spring due to institutional funding cuts and a widespread negative public image after the incident. On a bright, uncharacteristically un-foggy Saturday in May, the San Francisco Zoo was nearly deserted, as well as clearly understaffed. The sense of the zoo's emptiness was particularly amplified in front of the tiger enclosure itself. The zoo had put up new walls. The grotto had been recently encircled with new layers of fifteen-foot-high chain link fence topped with barbed wire, Plexiglas viewing walls, and a newly dug moat. Actual tigers were noticeably absent.

While their obvious purpose was to reassure zoo visitors of their safety from maulings, the new walls served an additional, symbolic—even neurotically reactive—purpose: ensuring the continuation of a clear differentiation between the animals within the cage and those without. This categorical imperative, the desire to slot species into a taxonomy of the caged and cageless, had been abruptly put into question on Christmas Day by a man standing atop the tiger's walls, symbolically straddling two worlds. It is this image that stayed with me while I looked into the vacant enclosure.

If the trick of the zoo is to artificially separate “authentic” nature from self-conscious culture (when, in fact, the zoo's habitats are as much a trick of artifice as are its souvenir shops), Tatiana—and the teenagers who baited her—tipped the zoo's hand by turning the concrete tiger plaza into an arena for predation, where patterns of natural and cultural behavior were impossible to tease apart. The incident revealed our species' basic identity as glorified meat when we meet a creature like a tiger face-to-face. This dangerous knowledge required an institutional response—the rebuilding of walls—in order to keep intact the categories of power upon which the zoo depends: the viewing

human and the viewed, docile, complacent animal. And the tiger attacks, much like the history of zoos itself,¹ unwittingly continued a neocolonial legacy of a myopic American public that reacted sensationally to a single tiger killing. The blizzard of news coverage indicates that, to the average American zoogoer, tiger predation is a remarkably “unnatural” occurrence. Elsewhere, the picture looks quite different. For example, population pressures between humans and Royal Bengal tigers in the Sundarbans of India have resulted in the deaths of several hundred Bangladeshi fishermen over the past decades.² The friction between these two cultural attitudes toward tiger attacks (the San Francisco Zoo and the Sundarbans) indicates the degree to which nature’s “naturalness”—its ability to pass before our eyes without remark—is socially and historically specific. A big cat mauling can be relatively commonplace in one place of the world, yet instigate a public outcry elsewhere when bodies (whether tiger or human) act out in ways that break common cultural expectations.

Like other institutions of Western modernity—the school, the prison, the laboratory, and the factory, among others—the architecture of the zoo is predicated on the assurance that orderly bodies will act in orderly ways. Both spectators and animals alike follow codes of conduct and expected behavior (they certainly both seem to queue up as expected at feeding time). And the natural climate of wherever the zoo is located can be conveniently written over for the habitat needs of individual animals, one parcel of land after another, which is why the exotic spectacle of Californian polar bears is one of the hottest attractions at the San Diego Zoo.

This thesis is an exploration into the ecocritical and postcolonial business of the enclosure itself. I am returning (with an emphasis on the productive “turning” required in

any critical revisitation) to the enclosure as it has already been claimed by critics in an attempt to defamiliarize it. Every wall has its weak joints, and every door its vulnerable hinges. If the enclosure is the logical en-place-ment of the categorical imperatives of colonialism—its insistence on reproducing power and segregating identities according to arbitrary inequalities—how might we see its walls as also bearing transgressive opportunities? How does the enclosure's mania for the purity and separation of identities carry the potential for its own destruction? I argue that the enclosure can be read as a permeable membrane for both imperial subject-object and human-animal interactions. Through readings of H. G. Wells's novella *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), and Larissa Lai's novel *Salt Fish Girl* (2002), I suggest that—whether it constrains a human or nonhuman species—the colonial/neocolonial enclosure is a space always in danger of collapse and contamination. These texts imagine the enclosure as a site where gazes are exchanged, hierarchical and taxonomic identities are hybridized or destabilized, and new reproductions of suppressed identities are covertly accomplished, precipitating into representational crisis the lingering projects of empire and global capital.

These chapters follow a trajectory from H. G. Wells's dark colonialist musings over the place of European subjects in (or over) the animal kingdom in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), to *Salt Fish Girl's* (2002) marshalling of hybrid, historicized bodies and the narratives they tell. The historical transition between the late nineteenth and early twenty-first centuries is without a doubt an abrupt one, but it is also productive. The juxtaposition of these two texts intimates that central features of spatial colonization, especially acts of enclosure, have remained at the core of neo/colonial place-making across over a century of dramatic geopolitical and economic changes. This has remained

true from the heyday of European colonialism in the nineteenth century to the new constellations of neo/colonial power, bound up with practices of globalization and Westernization in the twenty-first century. Both Lai and Wells are fixated on a central, antagonistic binary between monstrous hybridities and the purity demanded enclosure.

In the remainder of this first chapter, I briefly sketch some historical, political, and theoretical conceptualizations of the enclosure and monstrosity. I dovetail this discussion with a survey of the ways in which postcolonialism and ecocriticism (the two main fields in which I locate my inquiry) come into productive, occasionally dissonant dialogue. In the second chapter, I examine *The Island of Dr. Moreau* from ecocritical and postcolonial perspectives, arguing that Wells's interests in bodily suffering and communalism advocate a sly anti-anthropomorphism that also—if to a lesser extent—indicts colonial systems of racial and geographical representation via his obsession with Englishness and purity. In my third chapter, I contrast this politics of “half-liberation” with a “liberation of the half-breed” in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*. I argue that Lai envisions the neocolonial enclosure (here, the walled corporate city-state as a paradoxical symbol for globalization) as a space that can be exuberantly disrupted by heteroglossic narratives that find their bearing in transgressive animal imagery and Darwinian logic. Finally, in the epilogue, I suggest further implications of my research, and I defend my choice of genre in this study, ultimately advocating the idea that speculative fiction provides a unique, albeit limited, opportunity for both ecocritical and postcolonial inquiry in its interest in wonder, possibility, and place-making.

II – Taking Stock of the Enclosure

In this critical study of the enclosure, I perch on the margins of the fields of postcolonialism, ecocriticism, animal studies, and gender studies. Interdisciplinary work between the first two fields, postcolonialism and ecocriticism, has blossomed in recent years. That ecocriticism has recently turned to postcolonial theory and comparative global literatures signifies the expansive, occasionally painful growth the field has witnessed since its inauspicious beginnings as an offshoot from the American Western Literature Association in the mid-1980s. Certainly, the two disciplines stand to gain much from one another. Ecocriticism might work to correct potential anthropocentric blind spots in postcolonial theory, while the latter might add a necessary cultural and historical sensitivity to the former's advocacy of place-based ethics, as well as bringing its own ways of "thinking through" the politics of space to bear on traditional ecocritical ideas about the places we encounter, build, and inhabit.

As literary critic Cheryll Glotfelty's perennially useful definition reminds us, "ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment . . . [that] shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting and affected by it" (*xviii*). Writing in a period of profound environmental exigency, ecocriticism does not pretend to be an apolitical or ideologically disinterested critical enterprise. It instead examines how the stories we tell about the non-human world determine whether or not we—and the other life forms on the planet—will be able to productively and sustainably inhabit our environments into posterity.

Glotfelty argues that literary and cultural analysis is particularly apt to perform this kind of work because our "environmental problems are largely of our own making"

and are a “by-product of culture” (xii). Ecocriticism, then, seeks a realignment of cultural values towards environmental sustainability and cherishing of the non-human world, an interest that differentiates it from “other critical approaches” in literary theory that examine “the relations between writers, texts, and the world” but which make “the world . . . synonymous with society—the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of ‘the world’ to include the entire ecosphere.” As Glotfelty succinctly puts it, “literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether” (*ibid.*). The pinions of ecocriticism turn on the hermeneutic scrutiny and political transformation of hegemonic values that are largely detrimental to ecological systems—values and systems of thought that have also been largely responsible for structures of global domination along axes of gender, class, empire, and race.

As Elleke Boehmer writes in her survey, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, postcolonialism is similarly interested in the transformative values of, in this instance, decolonization. For Boehmer, decolonization is a “symbolic overhaul, a reshaping of dominant meanings,” in that “postcolonial writers [seek] to undercut thematically and formally the discourses which supported colonization—the myths of power, the race classifications, the imagery of subordination” (3). But what differentiates ecocriticism from a dominant strain in postcolonialism is that the latter is significantly interested in cultural constructions perpetuated through semiotics—a theme thoroughly investigated by Said, Spivak, and Bhabha in their seminal works—whereas early ecocriticism in the 1980s positioned itself mostly in reactionary terms against literary theory interested in co-constituent problems of language, power, and textuality. Such resistance has remained somewhat recalcitrant among first-wave ecocritics such as Glen Love, who argues that

poststructuralist “subjectivism intimates no reality, no nature, beyond what we construct within our own minds . . . a world of human solipsism” (26). Although I do think it is prudent to cast some doubt onto Love’s stubborn conviction that we can somehow tunnel under the barricades of our own subjectivity, I wish to leave aside the probably unanswerable question of whether or not human consciousness can apprehend, to say nothing of communicate, anything like “reality” or “nature” outside the structures of language. Certainly, though, Love’s quote indicates that a possible conciliation of postcolonialism and ecocriticism might not come easily.

What is at stake in this encounter between the two fields is the authenticity of nature and representations of nature, ideas championed by first-wave ecocritics, and which postcolonial ecocritics must be particularly wary of using without some serious qualifications. Elizabeth DeLoughrey and Cara Cilano contend in a special 2007 issue of *ISLE* that critics working at a conjunction of the two fields must foreground the historicity of “modified” landscapes and creatures, thereby refusing colonial discourses of the “natural” or “authentic” environment, as these constructions can be revealed as colonial fantasies of “the garden of Eden, or a myth of the hyperfecundity of the tropics” (79). One origin of my interest in the enclosure, in particular, lay in DeLoughrey and Cilano’s forceful claim that “a vital aspect of postcolonial ecocriticism” is that which “refuses the nostalgia of pure landscape” while searching to “proffer more workable options by which diverse peoples can come to a shared (if only provisional) understanding of how to combat environmental degradation” (*ibid.*).

The terrain of “authentic” nature and “authentic” culture remains under significant pressure in both ecocritical and postcolonial discussions. On one hand, ideas of an

essential culture and an authentic, historical connection to place constitute a powerful discourse for some indigenous, place-based politics.³ On the other hand, these arguments come uncomfortably close to a Rousseauvian “nostalgia for origins,” which oppressively figured native peoples as part and parcel of their natural environments. This view thus remains open to critique for postcolonialists who wish to defetishize notions of the concrete or authentic. As Said has influentially argued, the attribution of a native “essence” to the colonised, far from destabilizing imperial prerogatives, actually serves to reconstitute them. Said notes that “in Post-colonial national states, the liabilities” of essentialisms, whether “the Celtic spirit, *négritude*, or Islam,” actually “have much to do not only with the native manipulators, who also use them to cover up contemporary faults, corruptions, tyrannies, but also with the embattled imperial contexts out of which they came and in which they were felt to be necessary” (*Culture and Imperialism* 16).

Even more telling for the purposes of ecocriticism is Spivak’s discussion of a certain reading of a “double” history central to essentialist European subject-formation, “one hidden in the amnesia of the infant, the other lodged in our archaic past, assuming by implication a preoriginary space where human and animal were not yet differentiated” (297). Both Said and Spivak point to a central problem with essentialisms. They are often predicated on an uncritical nostalgia for “authentic” origins in a lost, elysian nature, which, while it adds ballast to some indigenous politics, has also historically spawned an excessive politics of factionalism and undesirable nationalisms.

As my discussion of Robert Marzec and, later, H. G. Wells, will indicate, the marking off of the colonial enclosure is a two-fold gesture. It both symbolically recreates this prelapsarian unity with and mastery over nature, as well as declares a particular space

fit for the development of capital. In trying to have it both ways, the enclosure can be read as a spatial (de)construction, both immanent and imminent in its functionality. If postcolonial ecocriticism must be conscious of both environmental crises like the erasure of biodiversity (leading to, most obviously, a critique of the unchecked growth of Western global consumerism) and the right to cultural self-determination, the enclosure offers rich opportunities for critics. For if there is one platform upon which postcolonialism and ecocriticism can rest, it is the shared attack on notions of centralized, capitalist control over enclosed spaces, technologies that exploit both people and natural resources and elide cultural difference. In its colonial guises, the enclosure unwittingly produces hybridity in its mania for purity and control, an ecocritical politics favorable to both Darwinian conceptions of the human animal, showing our kinship with the non-human, as well as diasporic identity formation. And reappropriated by an indigenous, reservation or nation-based politics, the enclosure also can be a boon to land-based, materialist postcolonialisms. It is nothing if not flexible.

This is ironic considering that the enclosure was a central representative structure for a colonial mania for rigidly “pure” landscapes. We can attempt to historicize and problematize this very “purity” by uncovering the inadvertently progressive effects of enclosure. And, as I will later demonstrate, the monstrous animal—a collection of uncanny images that is anything *but* couched in the modes of traditional literary verisimilitude favored by ecocriticism, despite being consummately “of nature”—provides an ideological counterweight to the enclosure’s obsession with homogeneity.

What is colonial about the enclosure? Robert P. Marzec has influentially argued in an article published in 2002 that one of the key “framing” devices for the spread of the

British empire and the naturalization of imperial power was the enclosure: “the meticulous measurement of a piece of land, followed by the surrounding of that land with barriers designed to close off the free passage of people and animals.” Through enclosure, “[l]arge, ‘open’ fields formerly devoid of physical territorial boundaries are brought into a system in which land is held ‘in severalty’ (by individuals) through the erection of stone walls, fences, ditches, and hedges that separate one person’s land from one’s neighbors” (138). For Marzec, the enclosure was crucial to British colonialism because it both expressed a profound ontological dread surrounding “undifferentiated,” chaotic earth, and also facilitated the spread of empire itself. Enclosing land allowed

[t]he British subject to establish a sovereign sense of identity . . . [and] precipitate and prepare the way for England’s relocation in the expanding circle of the colonial world map. It was in the enclosure act that the ideology of imperialism became a material reality, with enclosures creating a new problematic that formed a nexus between the growing colonial cultural order, the domestication of foreign lands and peoples, monopoly capital, and the novel. (130)

I find Marzec’s line of argument compelling. He draws useful parallels between material practices developed in early modern England to ensure class stratification, and the same practices that made colonialism possible. As Marzec writes, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* encloses space—making a crude goat pen and surrounding his cave with a fence—“in order that he may unearth some significance in a land uncharted and indeterminably distant from the known, and thus meaningful, land of England” (143). Defoe provides a concrete example from an early colonial moment of how enclosure reified colonial power in strange, new environments. Crusoe orders and above all controls his parcel of the

island by limiting what is allowed egress and ingress, both materially and culturally. Crusoe's acts of enclosure become even more frantically necessary for him when he discovers that cannibalistic tribes occasionally visit the island to consume prisoners, as he retreats into his enclosure, fortifying it against unwanted encounters.

Moreover, Defoe's ideas about landscape modification exemplify how the enclosure is a Foucauldian "administration of knowledge." The master narrative of enclosure thus becomes both "symbolic and corporeal" (139), an act of writing over the land and placing upon it "a gridwork of oppositions, not only inside versus outside, but by extension, individual against individual, ethnicity against ethnicity, nation against nation" (142). The mandate of the enclosure remains divisionary and reactionary, as it both enunciates relationships of power, and creates a structure that limits exchanges of power.

Neo/colonial histories abound with examples of enclosures as manufactured sites that naturalized racial, gender, and class hierarchies: the British Indian hill stations originally built as sanatoria in the late nineteenth century, the spatial planning of Caribbean sugar plantation, or the pavilions of the 1931 *exposition coloniale* in Paris.⁴ Enclosures were not limited to "purely cultural" effects, either. They dramatically impacted migration and inhabitation patterns of non-human species, most obviously in Australia and New Zealand, where pastoral shepherding was introduced to great success in the late eighteenth century. The wool and mutton industries caused an economic windfall in these settler states and dramatically bolstered the British textile industry. One commenter in 1849 reported that imports of wool from Australia alone reached almost thirty-six million pounds, leading to a massive increase in cloth and wool good exports

from Britain back out to colonial markets (Southey 21). This dramatic remaking of settler land required the erection of large post and rail fences, which were then followed by the overwhelmingly successful introduction of cheap iron fences—the “rabbit-proof” constructions that traverse the island continent—in the 1850s to control stock and ward off predators.⁵ Over the last two hundred years, roughly forty percent of the world’s total mammals that have gone extinct were endemic to Australia, according to the World Wildlife Federation. This holocaust was caused by the introduction of new, European predators in the nineteenth century like foxes and cats, as well as massive land clearing for sheep grazing, aided by large-scale fence construction (Walters 2). These examples of the uses of various kinds of enclosure are not, of course, to suggest that neo/colonial enclosures operate(d) monolithically, as Marzec seems to want to have it. As my readings of Wells and Lai demonstrate, the enclosure is a flexible entity whose power inflections, meanings, and uses are culturally and historically specific.

A technology given over to the creation of purity, European-style pastoralism, and taxonomic opposition, the enclosure also cannot easily be severed from the eighteenth and nineteenth century gender politics of European colonialism. The enclosure provides a concrete, spatial example of what literary critic Anne McClintock sees as a central trope of Enlightenment metaphysics: knowledge as a “relation of power between two gendered spaces, articulated by a journey and a technology of conversion: the male penetration and exposure of a veiled, female interior,” as well as “the aggressive conversion of its ‘secrets’ into a visible male science of the surface” (23). New territory cried out for enclosure, and the drawing of new cartographies was defined by a practice of indicating the dangerous thresholds of the known world. As McClintock notes, European men

represented this danger by “ritualistically” feminizing the borders and boundaries of empire; sailors “bound wooden female figures to their ship’s prows” and cartographers “filled the blank seas of their maps with mermaids and sirens,” indicating that “the erotics of imperial conquest were also an erotics of engulfment” (24). The act of enclosure, then, was as much a projection of a sexualized masculine quest narrative onto landscapes that needed taming as it was a practical means of establishing commodity markets in “virgin” territories. McClintock’s mention of “mermaids and sirens” also recalls a familiar trope of European colonialism: the labeling of *terra incognita* on medieval and colonial maps with now-comedic epithets like “hic sunt leones” (“here are lions”) and colorful drawings of sea serpents. These elements playfully indicate that European colonial practices often represented land “beyond enclosure” as consummately monstrous.

This is a kind of monstrosity that runs underneath (or, perhaps, inside) the enclosure that I am interested in. The capture and enslavement of the monstrous animal, an act often entangled in racial and gender politics, is a common feature of postcolonial works set in wild spaces. Notable popular examples include the confinement of the main character and a Royal Bengal tiger in a lifeboat in Yann Martel’s 2001 *Life of Pi*, or the cinematic shackling of King Kong (1932) and his disastrous exhibition in Manhattan. As my later chapters indicate, too, both *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *Salt Fish Girl* center on beastly monsters that straddle the margins between the human and the animal, or that are locked up in cages in order to be categorized, tamed, or exploited. But monsters cannot easily be brought back in from the margins of empire. Mary Douglas has influentially pointed out that margins—whether conceptual or geographical, or both—are productive and dangerous, as they frustrate societal needs for “pure” categories.⁶

Monsters are no exception, as their inexcusable horror is that they fail to signify purely, but rather purely signify. In their mash-ups of animal and human bodies, their strange speech, and their uncanniness—that intractable quality in which something that is familiar to us returns in an alienated form, or vice versa—they slip around stable meaning-making and insist only on their own grotesqueness. A grotesque conjures up conflicting, simultaneous emotions (most often a mixture of disgust and sympathy). It is also useful to consider the aesthetic of the grotesque not only as a blurring of categories, but also as a process that generates new meaning, and which depends upon time. Art historian Geoffrey Halt Harpham helpfully defines the grotesque as a duration of time in which an audience or reader is held in suspense between coherent formal principles. Thus, “the grotesque occupies a gap or interval; it is the middle of a narrative of emergent comprehension” (15). Harpham sees in this interstice the potential for both dramatic deconstruction (a kind of “madness”), as well as creative fecundity, as “[c]onfused things lead the mind to new inventions” (17). Importantly, this interval does not resolve in the case of the grotesque. The interval persists. The mind must either recognize the heterogeneity of principles at play, or conjure up a new vocabulary.

The monster thus provides a necessary counterforce to the stagnancy of the enclosure, whose master narrative, to return to Marzec, “comes to set the terms of interpretation, to govern the ‘truth’ of the land, and to administer that truth.” Land “comes to ‘hold within’ its essence a hidden element that, if not vigilantly contained by this discursive administration, would lead to the national subject’s *monstrous* transmutation into the foreign Other” (139, italics mine). I argue, then, that ambivalence is at the core of the monstrous image, as it em-*body*-s the problematic of the sovereign

subject, dramatizing the insurmountable differences within the self prefigured by Freud and later theorized as central to poststructuralist and hybridized notions of identity. We might also indicate, from a more material, ecocritical perspective, that this monstrous, interior otherness is also representative of common Western anxieties over a disowned and paranoid distance from animals themselves. Donna Haraway reminds us that our very bodies are somewhat monstrous in that “to be one is to always *become with many*,” as “human genomes can be found in only about 10 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such,” whereby “I am vastly outnumbered by my tiny companions” (3-4, italics original). If we think of the monster in traditional, corporeal terms as a being that is “mixed up,” formed of various bodily borrowings from a variety of species, we are all in a sense grotesque.

Some readers may object that I am here playing too fast and loose with animals themselves, myopically and anthropocentrically viewing the non-human under the rubric of the monster, a cultural construction. I am doing so, however, because traditional notions of animals often unconsciously reinstate a myth of origins that I have above critiqued by way of postcolonialism, and which ossifies the counterproductive boundary between an integrated, “whole” animal and a modern humanity that is out of touch with nature. The twentieth-century American nature writer Henry Beston exemplifies this view when he writes:

In a world older and more complete than ours [animals] move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not

underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth. (25)

Beston invokes what is seemingly an unbridgeable schism between fullness and desiccation, silence and voice, animal and whatever was once animal-like in humanity, and incompleteness and completion. Notwithstanding the compact grace and beauty of the passage, Beston here does violence to multivalent conceptions of the human that view our interactions with nature as bound by history and culture, or that recognize alternate ethics of human-animal interdependencies. To say nothing of the fact that, as Haraway reminds us, we ourselves are comprised of biotic communities. Beston distances us from the animal, and in doing so distances us from both our strangeness and our selves, reinscribing a nature/culture boundary.

The monstrous “difference within” the subject, biological and/or cultural, is perhaps best articulated by Theodor Adorno, who writes in *Negative Dialectics* that “the most enduring result of Hegelian logic is that the individual is not flatly for himself, he is his otherness and linked with others” (161). If acts of colonial enclosure attempt to suppress and contain difference, or banish it symbolically through the act of exile beyond its walls, such acts are, as my readings will demonstrate, necessarily prone to failure, as the enclosure is destabilized from within and without.

While the latent “difference-within” and schizophrenic suppression of Otherness in the psychology of colonialisms has been a key argument in postcolonial circles since the first explosion of the field’s seminar theory in the 1960s and 70s, it is interesting that such discussions have remained more or less confined to discourses of cultural theory and psychoanalytic criticism. What Marzec and McClintock fail to consider—and it is

surprising, considering their attention to landscape representation—is the enclosure in any kind of ecocritical sense, in addition to its obvious nationalist, gendered, and postcolonial aspects. The fantasy of geopolitical control—the carving out of capitalist space in an emptied, pliant wilderness with either absent or assimilated native peoples—cannot be easily untangled from the fantasy of environmental dominion, where nature can be controlled, exploited, admired, and its symbolic capital used in service of other political projects. The necessity of adding an ecological dimension to the use and ideology of enclosures is even more pressing considering the tangible, often deleterious effects that acts of enclosure had, and continue to have, on biospheres.

Before turning to Wells and Lai to moor the theory of enclosures in two works that depend upon the enclosure as an organizing structure for their politics and drama, I wish to linger for a moment on the etymology of the word “enclosure” itself. As Marzec notes, its most commonly circulated meaning between 1750 and 1860 referred to the act of converting common land to private property, which ultimately resulted in the severing of public access to common land like English forests, setting them aside for the private use and management of the aristocracy. The word also carries its more common spatial meaning, as “an encompassing fence or barrier,” or “buildings around a court,” again rooting the word in aristocratic privilege. Late fifteenth century texts favored the appellation “incline,” from the Latin stem, *inclūs-*, meaning “to close,” or “shut,” particularly in reference to a house or the eyes. It can also mean to insert in a frame or setting, to shut up in a case, envelope or receptacle (OED). Many of the verbal inflections of the word therefore seem interested the act of enclosure itself, freighting it with its ability to transform, silence, blind, and reconstruct.

Enclosure, however, also suggests a drawing-in—a bringing “in *close*”—a gesture towards intimacy and mutual encounter in an *eros* of close quarters. The enclosure may be as much about juxtaposition, or even exchange, as it is about control, surveillance, and separation. It suggests a dialogic space, where identities can become gauzy and cross-hatched, and new political identities foment across species, race, nationality, ethnicity, and gender.

Some of the most potent postcolonial identity movements have ironically arisen out of the enclosures left behind by legacies of unequal development and segregation under European colonialism. The reservation is a critical space employed by some Native American and First Nations peoples from which to launch a politics of sovereign identity, a practice of dwelling that takes an enclosure inherited from a tragic history and uses it in service of cultural vitality and futurity.⁷ Across the Atlantic, Abahlali baseMjondolo, the largest shack-dwellers organization in South Africa, was formed in 2005 in the impoverished slums of Durban and Cape Town, spaces “forgotten” and ghettoized in the fallout from apartheid. These shack-dwellers, who represent a range of South African ethnic identities, have won great gains by demanding the expropriation of private land for public housing, and recreating the Commons.⁸ They are, in essence, demanding the reversal of colonial enclosure in favor of a communalism that both respects a basic human right to housing, and appeals to an environmental justice argument for a non-toxic, safe place to live.

The etymology and actuality of enclosure evidence that it is a site that is always being produced and negotiated, not a fixed array of power that remains free from interrogation and deconstruction. As the fantastic fictions of Wells and Lai will indicate,

the spaces of neo/colonialism are always socially produced, even if they cannot be disentangled from the non-human world upon which they are built. And even as they “close in” on a pure, undifferentiated identity—the “animal perfected” in Wells, and the complacent, Westernized corporate wage-slave in Lai—the space is available for appropriation and destabilization. As the prominent spatial theorist Henry Lefebvre notes, “An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the *raison d’être* which determines its forms, functions, and structures,” and can “become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial one” (167). Even emptied of tigers, and with its walls militarized and fortified, the enclosure takes on new, contagious meanings that cause us to wonder just how well—or why—it functioned in the first place.

Chapter Two: Animals in the Ashes of Dr. Moreau's Enclosure

I got out of the hammock and went to the door to assure myself that the key was turned. Then I tried the window-bar, and found it firmly fixed. That these manlike creatures were in truth only bestial monsters, mere grotesque travesties of men, filled me with a vague uncertainty of their possibilities that was far worse than any definite fear.

-H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, 110

I - Monstrous Productions

“I’ve not confined myself to man-making,” says the eponymous villain of H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Dr. Moreau* in the novel’s critical chapter “Dr. Moreau Explains,” in which he unveils the purpose behind his bizarre “monsters manufactured” (100). While it is true that Moreau has not solely “confined” himself to the grisly project of fashioning human forms from beastly bodies—the “animals carven and wrought into new shapes” (97)—it is ultimately the recreation of the ideal human form that he is after in his animal-rearranging experiments. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* thus envisions what happens when bodies shuttle between species boundaries. The novel sees the end result of a colonial experiment as a hybrid creature that fits neither into the speechless jungle, nor into the rarified arena of reason.

Wells’s island is defined by two settings, the enclosure and the jungle, places that eventually bleed and burn into one another as Moreau’s insanity and hubris guarantee his downfall and he is torn to ribbons by his own creations. From these spatial distinctions, uses and abuses of the colonial enclosure begin to emerge: the uncanny hints of fleshly

kinship between animal and human, the suppression and control of “beastly” traits, and the Faustian promises and dangers of opening the compass of scientific knowledge for its own sake.

In this chapter, I wish to explore the implications of the spaces, and the threatening hybridities those spaces produce and make possible, in Wells’s book. What is the aim—or the nature, if you like—of Moreau’s “man-making”? And why is the enclosure the “central” space for the novel, both as the imagined “actual” space of Moreau’s living compound, and as an architectural discourse of colonial and anthropocentric identities? I will suggest that the enclosure is the central conceit of Wells’s novella because it thematically organizes space. It does so initially in order to reorganize animals, rendering them upwardly mobile on the Great Chain of Being. But the novel also sees these enclosures as bearing a central paradox: they unwittingly produce the very retrogression they attempt to contain. Moreau’s experiments forecast a disastrous collapse of Western civilization into the ruin of chance and the predatory chaos of ferality. By insinuating that Moreau’s island is an allegorical microcosm of London, the seat of British empire itself, in the book’s final pages, Wells undermines both anthropocentric and imperial hierarchies—acts that rattled his contemporary readers with his nightmarish visions of biological and cultural orders turned abruptly on their heads. I will ultimately argue, however, that although the text’s vision of kinship between the animal and the human obliquely interrogates a colonization of the text’s Native workers, the Kanakas, this interrogation has serious limitations.

I would like to begin with a brief synopsis of Well’s strange little novel for readers unfamiliar with it, especially since *The Island of Dr. Moreau* occupies a strange

position between the modernist canon and pulpy, middlebrow science fiction. Critical attention to the work remained somewhat limited until recent years, limiting its visibility to academic audiences. An early science fiction-horror novella published in 1896 at the zenith of Wells's popular success (he had serially published *The Time Machine* a year prior, which was enthusiastically received by the British public), *Moreau* follows the misadventures of an English gentleman, Edward Prendick, who dabbles in natural history and who is dramatically shipwrecked in the south Pacific. Rescued by the tongue-twistingly named *Ipecacuanha*, a trader ship, Prendick falls in with one of the ship's passengers, Montgomery, traveling with an "ocean menagerie" (16) of exotic animals en route to his employer's island residence. Cast overboard by the ship's captain, a manic drunk, Prendick finds himself an uninvited guest in Dr. Moreau's enclosure on a small volcanic island.

Prendick proves to be an irritatingly nosy guest, and it is only after he alternately stumbles into, then flees from Moreau's unnerving experiments that the doctor explains himself. An unrepentant scientific idealist and self-proclaimed visionary, Moreau has spent eleven years pursuing the "strange colorless delight" of his "intellectual desires" on the island, manipulating one animal after another into human form by way of vivisection (102). His semi-humans, endowed with both speech and abstract thought, are at first glance uncannily close enough to their intended forms to wholly unnerve Prendick. But they are not *quite* human. Moreau fails because, as he tells Prendick in frustration, their "stubborn beast flesh grows back, day by day" (105). After they begin to evince signs of reversion, the twisted, half-human waste creatures are promptly booted from the enclosure to fend for themselves elsewhere on the island. They become the Beast People

who eke out a measly, terrified existence in one of the island's ravines, kept in check by Montgomery, who has taken an "unnatural" interest in them. He ensures their obedience by spreading religious dogma that apotheosizes Moreau and makes them ashamed of their more obviously "beastly" traits like lust and predation.

The "beastly creep" of the People cannot be kept at bay once one of them, the Leopard Man, rediscovers his taste for blood. As the social order among the Beast People crumbles, Moreau's latest experiment, a puma, escapes from its restraints and eviscerates the doctor. Mayhem ensues. In a bit of nastily black humor, Montgomery is killed after drunkenly deciding to share his beloved bottle of brandy with the Beast People. And after the enclosure burns down in a freak accident, Prendick opts not to grasp "the vacant scepter of Moreau" and rule the Beast People. Rather, he becomes "one among them" (164-5), reverting to animal characteristics in order to survive among the increasingly bloodthirsty throng for ten months until he is able to escape the island using a boat that serendipitously rolls in with the breakers.

Beyond bearing the tracks of the shipwreck survival and deserted island narratives popular in the nineteenth century British imagination, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* alludes most obviously to *Frankenstein*, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's 1818 Gothic fantasia. As critics have noted, Wells pays homage to Shelley in the text's antagonizing of Dr. Moreau as a scientific patriarch who refuses to bear any degree of responsibility for the creatures churned out by—and turned out of—his laboratory.⁹ In setting Moreau's despotism on a deserted island in the hinterlands of Empire where the scientist is able to conduct his research without the meddlesome business of Victorian

animal ethics, Wells also recalls Joseph Conrad's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1899, just after *Moreau*.

If your frame is allegorical, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is a lodestone of a text. The novel's symbolic structures have fixated commentators and critics surrounding Wells since its publication. The book split its contemporary reviewers in two directions. The first were too disgusted by its more sensationalist aspects—a 1896 review by Basil Williams published in the *Athenaeum* asked its readership, “how far it is legitimate to create feelings of disgust in a work of art?” (Williams 51)—to notice any attempts Wells might have made at literary achievement or incisive cultural critique. For all the sallies at the book's content, sharper observers of Wells's day, such as the author of an unsigned review in *The Guardian* in June 1896, were quick to draw attention to the text's subversive qualities: “Sometimes one is inclined to think the intention of the author has been to satirize and rebuke the presumption of science; at other times his object seems to parody the work of the Creator of the human race” (52).

In this tradition, the novel is traditionally read by literary critics as a kind of extended theological grotesque, or an attack on (or, occasionally, a defense of) scientific ethics in Darwin's wake.¹⁰ More recent scholarship has branched into readings of its racial politics, or taken up the “problem of the animal” in *Moreau* (that is to say, how the text envisions postspecies biological kinships), or treated the text's construction of imperial masculinity.¹¹ Yet any readings of the island enclosure's role in the story have—like these spaces themselves as they are introduced in *Moreau*'s introduction by Wells—been unmappable and absent in the critical constellation surrounding the work. This, I think, is symptomatic of a greater need for sensitive ecocritical attention to the work, as

criticism that fails to pay attention to the text's use of natural and built environments replicates a colonial epistemology that relegates environmental presences in the text to the inert and depoliticized realm of "setting." Furthermore, that Wells twins so carefully matters of (un)enclosure and identity formation—and, for that matter, bodily formation—warrants an examination of how spatial politics form the text's undercarriage.

I now turn to the space of the enclosure itself, first by examining how Moreau's scientific operation is located both within and beyond the purview of the British empire. I will then explore the text's pessimistic structure of feeling about the business of "man-making" from animal bodies, and the troublesome postcolonial implications of its attitudes.

II – Reproducing the Enclosure in the Shadow of the Law

The island of Dr. Moreau is murky, sinister, and dense. In counterpoint to the supposed civility of London and its late Victorian social gospel, Moreau sets up shops in the backwater of empire, outside the controlled and legitimated institutions of the metropolis. Where and how do we encounter such an island? The reader is first guided through the biohorrors of Moreau's island through a key formal feature often present in colonial narratives: the narrator who triangulates space in order to map, organize, and reproduce it.¹² Wells broaches this technique in a frame story in *Moreau's* introduction, supposedly written long after the text's events by the nephew of the story's protagonist, Edward Prendick.

The introduction cloaks the forthcoming narrative in discourses of nautical cartography and the historiography of colonial discovery: "The only island known to

exist in the region . . . is Noble's Isle, a small volcanic islet, and uninhabited" near "latitude 5°3' s and longitude 101°" (3). The deliberate play on the island's name—the "Noble's Isle"—indicates its suitability for both scientific and Eurocentric political-scientific experimentation, as Moreau's ultimately self-destroying experiments recall the specters of settler colony revolutions in the 18th and 19th centuries that rattled the British aristocracy. The built structure of the enclosure—emblematic of a colonial presence and its attempt to refashion space for the benefit of a European center—is revealed as subject to deterioration and collapse because of the chaotic, untamable presence of "jungle" life that surrounds its fragile exterior.

From the introduction alone, the novel seems bent on the figuration of both space, in the form of global coordinates, and the ways in which the spatial descriptions of the island produce and obfuscate its identity. We cannot be sure that the island in the narrative is really Moreau's, as the proper evidence for us to map it definitively as such is missing. The regression of Moreau's beasts makes the island impossible to be located. Prendick's nephew is quick to point out that the story-to-come's protagonist (and narrator), Prendick, cannot be trusted in his account of what occurred on the island following his exposure to the island. This is because no specimens of Moreau's creations remain when sailors visit the island years after the novel's events. These later visitors to the island only find "certain curious white moths, some hogs and rabbits, and some rather peculiar rats," which leads the frame narrator to conclude that the "narrative is without confirmation in its most essential particular" (4). The "most essential particulars," of course, are the results of Moreau's vivisections themselves. Thus, the instability of Prendick's character, and his reliability as a narrator, are intimately linked with the

island's unstable geographical identity itself, which are further bound up with the instability of the Beast People themselves. From its opening, the text hovers in a space that structuralist critic Tzvetan Todorov would label essentially "fantastic," as it obliges "the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural or supernatural explanation of the events described" (33) without resolving the dialectical mystery between those two possibilities. That Moreau's island can be read as a Todorovian fantasy is important because it evidences that, even from the introduction, Wells is metatextually obsessed with the malleable qualities of both colonial space and identities, and the literary spaces that produce and are produced by them.

Even though the reader cannot easily ascertain whether the spaces in the text are in any sense "true," *Moreau* still leans on common Eurocentric landscape tropes to make its drama possible, and relies upon its audience's knowledge of the island's common, archetypal meanings. Wells's island thus participates in a larger discourse that envisioned the peripheral space of the wilderness as a repository for the spurned flotsam and jetsam of civilization. As cultural historian and literary critic Robert Pogue Harrison writes in his excellent study, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, during the Christian era in Europe, the forest—a space metonymically representative of uncolonized space for our purposes here—became emblematic of the "shadow of the law" (63), since

forests were *foris*, "outside." In them lived the outcasts, the mad, the lovers, brigands, hermits, saints, lepers, the *maquis*, fugitives, misfits, the persecuted, the wild men. Where else could they go? . . . But the forest's asylum was

unspeakable. One could not remain human in the forest; one could only rise above or sink below the human level. (61)

Harrison's theory, though originally discussing anxieties of early modern imaginations, can be grafted here to account for Moreau's workings both inside and outside imperially sanctioned boundaries. As Harrison notes, in the "Post-Christian" era of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, British forests became increasingly regulated, confined, contained, and appropriated via both scientific method and the laws of forestry economics. They were spaces considered mastered and possessed, interesting in terms of their "utility," even when that utility was conceived as recreational, where forests became "'museums' of original nature" (108). If forests moved from the penumbra of civilization into the Enlightenment, where could those who existed in its asylum go? How was it possible to be *foris* without the forest?

It is not too much of a stretch to argue that an archetypal jungle grew into the British colonial imaginary to replace and augment the symbolic position of the forest as the latter became increasingly controlled. If, as historian Richard Grove has influentially argued, French and English conceptions of islands oscillated between an Edenic paradise in need of preservation and an empty wasteland crying out for European development,¹³ it is also true that Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increasingly viewed the island, and its trackless jungle, as a kind of ultimate refuge for the (re)creation of the subject. Grove suggests as much in his discussion of Defoe and Rousseau, who offered the island as a symbolic return to the "comfort and security of the womb" (235) for the Romantic self. However, in setting aside forest preserves in places like Mauritius, the island Eden paradigm became increasingly complicated as it confronted the reality of

native inhabitation and the unfamiliar nature of tropical and subtropical ecospheres. Grove writes that “the notion of the noble savage died a violent metaphorical death in the Caribbean” and “the construct of the forest” as desirable “starkly confronted a more confused (and more antique and atavistic) image of the forest as the characteristic dwelling place of fearsome rebels and indigenous bandits” (282). The jungle, then, was alternately, even simultaneously, a heart of darkness, a hide-out, a preserve, a recuperative locus for the self, and a rich source for the growth of capitalism.

Returning to reconsider Harrison’s final point in the long passage quoted above, I argue Wells literalizes the hierarchical notion that one cannot “remain human” in the colonial jungle, a place beyond, yet bound to imperial law. Moreau’s project forces a choice between transcendence and degeneration. This is true not only of the island’s dense jungle spaces, where the Beast People in their grotesque forms gradually “sink below” the human level artificially granted them. It is also true of the whole island itself, including the doctor’s enclosure. Moreau, in attempting to “rise above” the human in his denial of bodily pain as “the mark of the beast” (102), tries to transcend species boundaries. In doing so, he becomes a kind of monster himself.

The doctor, however, articulates how being labeled a “monster” of society is largely contingent upon the construction of “monstrous” behavior—that which is deemed inhuman or ethically abhorrent—according to specific cultural and historical matrices. His project on the island is also, then, an endeavor in remaking the human as well as the animal. “The study of Nature,” he tells Prendick, “makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature” (102). Thus, “[v]ery much, indeed, of what we call moral education is such an artificial modification and perversion of instinct” (99). It is only because of a slavish and

unsophisticated obsession with pain (which Moreau discounts, subscribing to a Cartesian view of an animal as a complicated, mechanical system of instinctual responses) that the doctor's actions are condemned by scientific philistines.

Middle- and upper-class Londoner society, unsurprisingly, has a dramatically different take on Moreau's rather, well, unorthodox ideas. Shortly after his arrival on the island, Prendick recalls with disgust the "Moreau Horrors," a scandal that led to the doctor's expulsion from London when one of his "wantonly cruel" experiments, a flayed dog, escaped from his house, making a ghastly spectacle of itself in a well-to-do part of the city. As a result of the "silly season" and the strict conscience of the nation, the doctor "was simply howled out of the country," choosing to pursue his research elsewhere rather than abandon his investigations (44).

Philip Armstrong notes that the furor over Moreau's questionable ethics echoes the heated debate in the British popular press at the time of the text's publication over the legality of vivisection in animal experimentation, particularly as "physiology was working hard to achieve respectability by shaking of its earlier, more lurid associations . . . exemplified by Astley Cooper's 1801 dissection of an elephant before an appreciative crowd" (91). Armstrong reads Wells as recording a historical and ideological transition from an "Enlightenment and Romantic valorization of sympathy and sentiment" regarding animals, to one of disengaged, "epistemological authority," where the former attitude was "banished to the undervalued domains of popular and feminine culture" (93). Regardless of the fact that Wells's own scientific position on the vivisection largely tilted in favor of scientific progress, not sentimental concern for animal suffering,¹⁴ the text—by virtue of placing Moreau's operations in the shadow of legitimacy and encouraging

sympathy with his creations—seems to largely agree with the Victorians who oust Moreau from Britain in the first place.¹⁵

In his forced exile (or, if you like, ex-isle), Moreau is able to work outside, *foris*, the restraints of contemporary ethics. He is both exiled, yet liberated. The doctor's removal from society exemplifies how enclosures inscribe, yet ultimately fail to produce, homogenized social meaning. Cast beyond the pale of national boundaries, Moreau ironically embodies the same metropolitan mania for purity and the purging of undesirable elements by using the space of his own enclosure to “burn out all the animal” in his creations (107). He then banishes those who fail to measure up to his standards of purity because of their “beastliness.” We have the dizzying scenario of an exile exiling others.

Through these two nested spaces of banishment from society, Wells comments on the lingering Enlightenment mania over the supposed perfectibility of man. The ideology, a defining marker of eighteenth and nineteenth century philosophy, and one rooted in meliorist traditions stretching all the way back to Augustinian theology, was championed and ossified into scientific and political dogma by figures such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his second discourse. In paralleling Moreau's banishment with that of his own freakish creatures—both exiles in service of expelling “that which is not perfectible”—Wells casts doubt upon this Enlightenment epistemological authority, along with its grand telos of biological and social progress. Such lusting after perfection becomes perverse when incarnated in Moreau's colonial exile *in partibus infidelium*, and it offers a dramatic example of British colonial anxieties surrounding homogeneity and cultural assimilation policies in the empire's foreign territories. The text suggests that such attempts at

purified, ordered identities (passed in this case through a verticalized Darwinian prism that sees culture—and biology—as flexible constructs and that permit movement up and down the Great Chain of Being) are ultimately futile. As Carrie Rohman succinctly puts it, “Philosophical pronouncements” in the novel, such as those made by Prendick when he views the “grotesquerie” of the Leopard Man, a Beast Person who he has just murdered, “trouble the sanctity of humanism,” and “Prendick’s vision of humanity is permanently altered by his experience on the island” (131). The text first puts human identity into flux with Prendick’s experiences, which then puts under pressure grander spaces that construct, produce, and reify that same (white, male, and British colonial) identity.

In reconstructing the enclosure in *Moreau*—and I will turn to its material functions in a moment—it is worth further sketching how it is inseparable from British colonial ideas about both nature and race. These orientations are present most immediately in the text’s attitude towards the island itself and the Beast People who call it home. The island, Prendick tells us in his initial approach, is “low and covered with thick vegetation, chiefly a kind of palm that was new to me” (34). As he later leaves the enclosure for the first time and explores a small, narrow valley, Prendick expresses his newfound aesthetic appreciation for the island: “The place was a pleasant one. The rivulet was hidden by the luxuriant vegetation of the banks” (51). The color imagery in this scene is vibrant and luminous, from the “glittering water,” to the “luminous blue of the sky,” to the “splash of white or crimson [on] the blooming of some trailing epiphyte” (*ibid.*). Moreau later describes the island in a markedly similar way when he recalls to Prendick the memory of his first landing: “I remember the green stillness of the island,

and the empty ocean about us as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me” (102-3).

Prendick’s description, echoed by Moreau, resonates with a foundational colonial trope: precolonial nature as “empty,” a *locus amoenus*, or site of pleasure. In this figuration, as Mary Louise Pratt writes in “Scratches on the Face of the Country,” “emptiness” stands in for the primitive, a place before history, waiting in perpetuity for European technology and cultural achievement to shock it into development and usher it into the halcyon realm of modernity.¹⁶ As Moreau says of his landing, “The place seemed waiting for me.” The land is mythologized as a pliant, lush body, waiting for domestication and melioration. It is, in short, the perfect place for an enclosure, a symbolic first marking upon the land in order to capitalize on its resources and set it off as private property. This narrative, found throughout colonialist literatures from *Robinson Crusoe* to the letters of Christopher Columbus, envisioned the island as an opportunity to claw back into Eden by re-fencing it to vouchsafe its control, then to grasp at the fruits found there.¹⁷

Moreover, both Moreau and Prendick’s choice of pictorial diction, from the “green stillness” of the land to the way Prendick reduces the landscape to isolated features and lets his “eyes wander over this scene for a while” (51), recall another common element in British colonial approaches to nature (and, for that matter, approaches to foreign cultures): its distillation into a harmonious picture. I do not wish to belabor this last particular point, as its history has been well documented.¹⁸ However, it is worth noting that one avenue not trod in this essay is an expansion of how aesthetic habits of seeing, particularly picturesque landscape compositions and colonial garden-

making, might themselves be seen as kinds of artistic practices of enclosure to similarly seek to control a space without drawing attention to potential weaknesses of—or even the existence of—the “framing” devices and border-creations necessary for these practices.

Such domineering colonial attitudes towards nature are not limited to Prendick’s grasp of the island. They are also evident in the taxonomizing impulse in his apprehensions of the Beast People. Taxonomy was an ocularcentric technology that reached its zenith due, in part, to late nineteenth century British, French, and German colonialisms. Historian Harriet Ritvo describes how, via the ascendance of biology and other sciences to epistemological authority in the late nineteenth century, monstrous animals increasingly were discredited as innocuous mythological creatures (unicorns and mermaids, for example), while “actual” monstrosities—newly catalogued species, hybrid breeds produced by London zoological societies, and creatures born with deformities—were painstakingly slotted into taxonomic schema (qtd. in Armstrong 93-4). The classification of such monstrosities often indexed a host of late nineteenth century British anxieties about supposedly “uninhibited” reproduction in the colonies, passed through misapprehensions of Darwin that saw such monsters as evidence of grotesque inter- and overbreeding, supposedly leading to beastly ontological and societal reversion. As one mid-nineteenth agricultural writer put it (“complexly conflating the reproductive behavior of people with that of their domesticated animals,” as Harriet Ritvo reads him), “the human race have fulfilled the threat of Caliban and peopled the isle with monsters” (qtd. in Ritvo 132-33).

Moreau’s enclosure, with its mission of bettering animals by eliminating their sexual excesses and instinctual behaviors, ironically does “people the island with

monsters.” But what of the Beast People? It is tempting to read their unruliness as a kind of symbolic placeholder for a colonizer’s failure to both assimilate a group of “natives,” and prune away any unruly aspects of nature in order to shape its topiary into something unthreatening and familiar. Certainly, these different projects were often allied in colonial epistemologies that construed native peoples as integrated with natural surroundings in ways that Europeans were ostensibly not. But it is disingenuous to refer to the Beast People as “natives,” as they are brought to the island in their original animal forms from African markets. It is true that, in a sense, they are indicative of how products of the animal commodity trade, including whale oil, ivory, and beaver pelts, and animals themselves, were central to the economic projects of colonialism—but this does not make them “like” the peoples disenfranchised by European expansion. However, the colonization of animals and the colonization of people—both aided and complicated by the productive space of the enclosure—are allied and co-constitutive projects that depend upon the same categorical ways of othering.

It is worth noting that probably the most “colonized” presence—or absence—in the text are the Pacific Islander laborers employed and deployed throughout the Empire. Detailing the origins of his presence on the island, Moreau notes that the “Kanakas” who founded his site were “scared out of their wits” by his presence after they witnessed his first attempt at man-making. Ironically, though, it is one of Moreau’s “boys,” as he calls the laborers, who first attempts to fold the creature into the wings of civilization: “There was one among the boys, a bit of a missionary, and he taught the thing to read, or at least to pick out letters, and gave him some rudimentary ideas of morality, but it seems the beast’s habits were not all that is desirable” (104).

It is difficult to pin down any definitive meaning or political aim in Wells's use of the Pacific Islanders. One of them in this passage serves as a kind of colonial figure who takes up the mantle of the missionary educator. But while there are native characters in the text, there are certainly not native perspectives. Moreau's narrative of the enclosure's origins elides an awareness that the dislocated natives are, in some way, materially foundational for the island's project. Conveniently, none of the islanders are around when Prendick makes his stay on the island, as Moreau tells him: "All the Kanaka boys are dead now." Or at least Moreau thinks they are dead: "One fell overboard of the launch, and one died of a wounded heel that he poisoned in some way with plant juice. Three went away in the yacht, and I suppose, and hope, were drowned. The other one . . . was killed. Well—I have replaced them" (105). The "replacements," naturally, are the Beast People themselves, such as Moreau's Ariel-like ape-man servant, M'Ling.

For Moreau, the islanders, like the Beast People themselves, provide a network of inferior identity markers against which he can position himself. They are both, in a matter of speaking, his spurned progeny. Moreau refers to the islanders as his "boys." And in a strange way, in "turning out" the Beast People from his lab (both in the sense of a factory assembly line and a banishment) Moreau is "remaking" the absent Kanakas. He indicates as much when he coldly conflates the two groups by describing how each is prone to superstition: "They sicken me with a sense of failure. I take no interest in them. I fancy they follow in the lines the Kanaka missionary marked out, and have a kind of mockery of a rational life" (108) in their colony in the island's ravines. The metaphor "marking out lines" draws parallels between the way the Beast people inhabit and construct a "devolved" enclosure in the island's ravine that is a shadowy counterpart of Moreau's

own. It also slyly suggests Moreau's own act of writing onto bodies, his "marking out" and erasing lines of animality, ironically indicating that the Beast People's religious asceticism and Moreau's scientific quest might not be so different after all. Lastly, the passage suggests an orderly descent, or kind of taxonomy. It draws a line from the Kanaka missionary, himself already refashioned by Christian proselytizing, through the Beast People. For Moreau, each additional passing on of the law is a further regression, a further tainting of rationality by the bestial realm of moral dogma and sexual repression, and it is via this oppositional representation that Moreau reconstitutes and identifies himself in terms of his supposed purity.

Wells is careful enough in his thinking not to say that the Kanakas and the Beast People are the same, but they are enough alike (or unlike him) for Moreau to dismiss both outside the peripheries of both his material domain, and to foreclose any possible heteroglossic narrative about that domain. Thus, the colonial enclosure for Wells is not only, to recall my earlier discussion of Marzec, a rewriting and discovery—a space constructed in order that the Englishman abroad might "unearth some significance in a land uncharted and indeterminably distant from the known, and thus meaningful, land of England" (143). It is, as *The Island of Dr. Moreau* dramatizes through the stories the doctor allows to be told, also a space that requires the suppression of alternate histories, and the continual expulsion beyond its borders of the metaphorical and literal waste it produces.

With its ideological vectors established, we can illuminate the material and practical functions of Moreau's enclosure on the island. By turns, it is a laboratory, a storehouse, a sanitarium that permits no contagion, a schoolroom in which Moreau

attempts to teach his experiments to speak, and a prison block for both animals and humans (early on, Prendick is confined to his room to keep him from stumbling into the doctor's ghastly experiments-in-progress, and much of the novel is given over to the business of padlocks and keys). It is a storehouse of secrets, a place "closed up" from any outside eyes. Moreau interestingly literalizes this metaphor by even keeping his creations "under wraps," thickly swaddled in bandages, their cries of pain muted by the walls and restraints, in order to maintain his control over who is granted access to the nature of his experiments.

To continue in an inventory of its functions, it is worth noting that the enclosure also contains a library full of "surgical works and editions of the Latin and Greek classics," languages that Prendick "cannot read with any comfort" (41)—a feature that adds to the sense that the enclosure cannot be "easily read" by anyone save Moreau. It also memorably serves as a morgue and makeshift funeral pyre as Prendick lays out Moreau's corpse alongside "his mutilated victims" (153) shortly before the enclosure goes up in an accidental inferno. Portions of it are open-air, as Wells continually employs the enclosure's walled and paved "yard" as a setting (37). The enclosure's interior style, from what little sense the reader has of it, is unmistakably European, even aristocratic, a self-proclaimed site of "purely" intellectual indicated by its décor, from Moreau's cigars (95), to Montgomery's brandy, to the library's selections. And perhaps its most exaggerated features as the novel progresses are those that relate to its use as a fortress, a "house in a chequered wall" (50) with its small windows "defended" by iron bars (41).

The stunning variety of uses for Moreau's enclosure may not seem to hold much in common, but all of these functions evince how Moreau enunciates his authority over

the space, especially regarding who, or what, can cross its boundaries. He rejects the chaff of his labor, casting the Beast People beyond the walls: “I turn them out when I begin to feel the beast in them,” he tells Prendick, “and presently they wander there. They all dread this house and me. There is a kind of travesty of humanity over there” (107). Moreau’s implied meaning is clear—only humans, or creatures on their way to becoming human, are allowed on the premises, whereas any travesties, perversions, or contaminations are relegated beyond the walls.

The enclosure’s functions—while it is still functional before Moreau’s death, anyway—dramatize a kind of architectural discourse of scientific, patriarchal (it is worth noting that Moreau’s prized puma is a female specimen), and racialized space (it is also worth noting that Moreau’s first failed experiment is a “fair specimen of the negroid type” [103]). Moreau limits the movement of bodies with locks and keys, controls epistemological development as a teacher and showman, and keeps the space under his economic thumb. Conceptualizing the discourse of the space in this way opens a pathway between its ideology and its architectural and spatial practice, which allows Moreau’s exploitation of the Beast People and condones their treatment. The enclosure reflects and reinforces late nineteenth century assumptions about species, racial, and gender difference, and in doing so naturalizes, even embodies geographically, the separation between Moreau and his creations. The implications of the “travesty of humanity” practiced by the spurned Beast People, according to Moreau, are an example of what Edward Said calls an “imaginative geography.” Safe within the enclosure and in no degree of intimacy with his creations, Moreau is free to represent their existence on the island’s peripheries as he wishes, a colonial place-making that, as Said notes in

Orientalism, “helps the mind intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close and what is far away” (55).

There is one additional function of the enclosure that bears mentioning: the “House of Pain,” the space’s meaning supplied by the Beast People. This name for the enclosure first surfaces when Prendick bumbles into their ravine and is forced to repeat the Beast People’s “mad litany” that they chant as they “sway from side to side”:

His is the House of Pain.

His is the Hand that makes.

His is the Hand that wounds.

His is the Hand that heals. (80, italics original)

These maxims, repeated often by the Beast People as they tremble in Moreau’s presence, are not their own invention. They are promulgated by Montgomery, and in cultivating a useful mixture of meekness, awe, and fear towards the doctor, they keep the Beast People docile. However, the frontloading of Moreau’s enclosure—the “House of Pain”—in this quatrain places emphasis on the enclosure itself as a site of ritualized power, a place that demands self-debasement and which is unapproachable. Moreau, through Montgomery, sows poetry with ideology that keeps his undesirable “children” from becoming enclosed, “in close,” with him.

Evidence of anxieties surrounding the Beast People’s access to the interior of the enclosure are evident in this religious dogma, the “Fixed Ideas implanted by Moreau in their minds, which absolutely bounded their imaginations” (111), keeping them at arm’s length and colonizing their psyches. Everything about the enclosure is designed to keep beasts out. Certainly, Prendick realizes that the spatial control of the Beast People is a

cause for concern. Soon after Moreau explains the nature of his experiments, Prendick becomes “urgent to know how these inhuman monsters were kept from falling upon Moreau and Montgomery” (110). But what if the “inhuman monsters” prove to be the most recognizably human characters in the text? And what if the real danger to the enclosure’s integrity lies not from without, but from within?

III – After the Ashes

The elaborate system of control and abjection symbolized and created by Moreau’s enclosure comes under scrutiny in one of the novel’s key scenes: the hunting of the Leopard Man, who has spurned Moreau’s Law by killing and ingesting the flesh of an animal. Outside of the enclosure, Moreau, Montgomery, Prendick, and all of the Beast People hotly pursue the Leopard Man onto one of the island’s capes, where they corner him in a “fretted network of branches and leaves.” Surrounded by the Beast People, and in some ways indistinguishable from them as he is equally caught up in the chase, Prendick comes to his senses when he hears the Ape-man cry, “Back to the House of Pain, the House of Pain, the House of Pain!” (130) At almost the exact same moment, Prendick spies the group’s quarry:

When I heard that, I forgave the poor wretch all the fear he had inspired in me. I heard the twigs snap and the boughs swish aside before the heavy tread of the Horse-Rhinoceros upon my right. Then suddenly through a polygon of green, in the half darkness under the luxuriant growth, I saw the creature we were hunting . . . It may seem a strange contradiction in me,—I cannot explain the fact,—but now, seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light

gleaming in its eyes and its imperfectly human face distorted with terror, I realised again the fact of its humanity. In another moment one of its pursuers would see it, and it would be overpowered and captured, to experience once more the horrible tortures of the enclosure. Abruptly I slipped out my revolver, aimed between its terror-struck eyes, and fired. (131)

Prendick's encounter is littered with illuminating paradoxes. He moves instantaneously from identifying as part of the hunting pack to identifying with the pursued animal. He claims he "cannot explain" the fact of his realization, then immediately does so in a remarkably lucid and compelling way. Prendick, probably the least observant and sense-aware of all the hunters, is ironically the first to stumble upon the quarry. And, on the "wildest" part of the island, the cape where earlier in the text he was stalked like animal prey by the Leopard Man, he comes up hard against the most recalcitrant and defining feature that bridges categories of "human" and "animal": the soul-deadening terror of being subjected to meaningless suffering.

It is ultimately this epiphany regarding suffering that the "House of Pain" comes to represent for the narrator, which is why the eerie screech of the Ape-Man, that hollow, mimicking cry of "Back to the House of Pain," so unnerves him. This may not justify Prendick's admittedly extreme gesture of taking the Leopard Man's life, but it does provide the first instance of the categorical destabilization of spaces and identities that will mark the remainder of the novel. Prendick indicates as much when, for the first time, he wholly condemns Moreau's project as "wanton" following the Leopard Man's death: "Had Moreau had any intelligible object I could have sympathized at least a little with him. I am not so squeamish about pain as that . . . But he was so irresponsible, so utterly

careless,” about his creations, who “were thrown out to live a year or so, to struggle, and blunder, and suffer; at last to die painfully” (133). The purpose of the enclosure, pure and unproblematic in Moreau’s view, is complicated by Prendick’s redefining it as a “careless” space, a place of pain that has been entirely evacuated of any redemptive features except a tyrannical, self-justifying scientific knowledge.

If the enclosure is ultimately redefined as “careless,” it is fitting that it is ultimately destroyed by a series of accidents. The first is Moreau’s death itself, when his latest victim, a puma, accidentally breaks free of her restraints and bolts into the jungle with her experimenter in pursuit. In the space beyond the walls, Moreau’s controlling identity can no longer hold, and the infamous vivisector becomes ironically vivisected in the cat’s jaws in revenge for the Beast People.¹⁹

The aleatoric pattern of deconstruction and cyclical revenge continues when the Beast People suddenly “go mad” after Moreau’s death. Montgomery tells Prendick that they are “all rushing about mad. What could have happened? I don’t know” (140). And the crowning achievement of the text’s descent into a maelstrom of chance is the burning of the enclosure itself, caused in part by Montgomery’s drunken “bank holiday” outside the walls as he begins to go mad in Moreau’s absence. Struck by a sense of purposelessness, Montgomery raves, “What’s it all for, Prendick? Are we bubbles blown by a baby? . . . What’s the good of getting away? I’m an outcast” (148-9). Having identified himself as an exile, Montgomery opts to share his brandy with the Beast People outside the walls, and when trouble unsurprisingly erupts, he has his “neck bitten open” (154). Prendick rushes out to assist him, but it is too late and Montgomery is dead. And then, from outside the walls, the narrator watches “great tumultuous masses of black

smoke” boil up from the enclosure. With horror, he realizes that when he had “rushed out to Montgomery’s assistance,” he “had overturned the lamp” (156).

This intertwining helix of catastrophes, especially Montgomery’s final lapse into apathy, resonates with Prendick’s epiphany following his shooting of the Leopard Man, when he “lost faith in the sanity of the world when I saw it suffering the painful disorder of this island. A blind fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence” (134). This dark, unknowable determinism becomes a law that blankets both the inside of the enclosure and its exterior, leading to the collapse of distinction between the two, literalized in the space’s destruction.

Prendick, then, must recognize his biological kinship with animals in order to survive in an enclosure-less island. He attempts to reconstitute some lingering potency of the hierarchy represented by the enclosure by making his home in its ashes, but soon even this fades. He begins, like the Beast people, to ontologically revert to the famed hybrid figure of *l’homme sauvage*: “My hair grew long, and became matted together. I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement” (174). Importantly, this portion of Prendick’s misadventures is more or less excised from the text, as he prefers to “make no chronicle for that gap of time . . . the ten months I spent as an intimate of these half-humanized brutes” (169).

As he turns a sharp corner into beasthood and begins to view himself in his irreducible and communal animal strangeness, part of a kind of animal chorus, Prendick recalls Friedrich Nietzsche’s conception of the metamorphosis as a Dionysian ecstasy in which a *mélange* of fluid identities replaces the integrated subject:

This process of the tragic chorus is the *dramatic* proto-phenomenon: to see oneself transformed before one's own eyes and to begin to act as if one had actually entered into another body, another character . . . In this magic transformation the Dionysian reveler sees himself as a satyr, *and as a satyr, in turn, he sees the god*, which means that in his metamorphosis he beholds another vision outside himself, as the Apollinian complement of his own state. With this new vision the drama is complete. (64, italics original)

Wells recasts Nietzsche's theory, which discusses Greek choral drama in its original context, using animal masks. The satyrs in question are not "men of the woods," but our beastly, flesh-and-blood evolutionary kin. Rather than a joyful communalism or an ecstatic "fusion with primal being" (Nietzsche 65), Wells gives us the horror of an Englishman forced to recognize his shared place among a society of freakish animal-humans. While Nietzsche offers up a possible dialectical resolution where, following the transformation, a character is able to recognize his or her "Apollinian complement"—the luminous presence of reason seen anew from its exterior—Wells offers no such relief to the reader.

Rather, Wells subjects that which is "outside the enclosure" to a classic Gothic inversion. Upon Prendick's return, Londoners become conflated with the Beast People, and Moreau's island becomes exchangeable with Britain. Traumatized and reshaped by his life in an enclosure-less world, the narrator pulls the hinges free on any other doors between civilization and savagery, reason and body, when he is unable to cope with his return to the metropolis: "When I lived in London the horror was wellnigh insupportable. I could not get away from men; their voices came through windows; locked doors were

flimsy safeguards” (183). “Contaminated” by “something of the natural wildness” of the Beast People, Prendick cannot but help view his fellow Englishmen as “animals half-wrought into the outward image of human souls,” and is terrified that “they would presently begin to revert, to show first this bestial mark and then that” (183).²⁰ The dawning, awful clarity of Prendick’s thought lies in the awareness of a certain monstrous capacity within each of us, given the proper circumstances, to enslave, predate, exploit, and kill—and that such a capacity, this dark truth, was the primary output of Moreau’s colonization of, and experimentation on, the island. To call upon the shade of Conrad, Prendick may as well be repeating, “the horror, the horror.”

The only solace possible for the poor Englishman is another creation of distance between himself and beastly Londoners, evident in the title of the book’s last chapter, “The Man Alone.” Prendick removes himself entirely from the “daily cares and sins and troubles of men” to the pastoral riparian environment of the Thames downlands. He inhabits a simple house, “surrounded by wise books” and “bright windows.” Prendick’s echo of Moreau’s self-imposed isolation is obvious. While Prendick opts to study the comparatively bloodless disciplines of chemistry and astronomy, not veterinary surgery, his exile is a similar exercise in avoiding material, communal, and bodily reality. It is “in the vast and eternal laws of matter,” he tells the reader, “that whatever is more than animal within us must find its solace and its hope” (185).

But *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has outstripped itself, caught in the net of its central paradox. The seemingly noble quest for that which is “more than animal” is inextricably bound up with Moreau’s madness, and Prendick has already recognized that cognizance of shared, bodily suffering is what is most critically “human.”

We cannot champion *The Island of Dr. Moreau* unquestioningly, however, as the text's suppression of Kanaka labor and perspectives indicate that a cognizance of shared suffering still maintains hidden boundaries. If the Beast People indicate that monstrous animals cannot easily be conceptually accommodated into either the civilized space of the enclosure or the natural space of the island, maybe *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is not simply a book about animals and our relationships with them. Maybe it is about what animals ultimately come to symbolize in the book: the nature of a community based on an embodied awareness of others' suffering. The text can be read as a meditation on who can be included in that community in a culture still steeped in colonial racism. The lesson of the Beast People is thus what South African novelist J. M. Coetzee calls a "record of an engagement" with an animal. According to Coetzee, our encounters with animals are not intellectual, but phenomenological, defined by their sheer particularity and physicality: "we know the jaguar not from the way he seems but from the way he moves. The body is as the body moves, or as the currents of life move within it," asking us "to imagine our way into that way of moving, to inhabit that body" (51). Coetzee imagines acts of trans-species, bodily communication, a recognition of shared flesh. Animals, Coetzee seems to be saying, may not think like us, but they do inhabit bodies like ours, allowing us to weave fleshly affinities between the human and animal. If the body is the Foucauldian site of social inscription, and also where power is reconstituted and the self created, it is also the locus of speaking across—without foreclosing—differences in species to common feelings of entrapment, suffering, and loss.

In this way, Prendick's record of engagement with the Beast People allows him to discover the difference-within himself as a disintegrated subject. This destabilizing of

Prendick's self can be optimistically read as a path to decolonizing Western imperial and patronizing relationships with animals. But its myopic focus on the male, European subject, and sidelong advocacy for a kind of universalized, dehistoricized relationship with others (here, animals) indicates its limited, although still significant, applicability to cultural decolonizations. Merleau-Ponty reminds us that while the "perceiving mind is an incarnated body" and the "roots of the mind" are "in its body and in its world," we must be wary of a philosophy that reduces the subject entirely to a "pure exteriority" where perception is a "simple result of the action of external things on our body" (3). This reduction to the surface of the body is disconcertingly close to a British colonial physiognomy that ignores cultural constructions of how bodies are perceived, dismissed, or, worse, considered disposable.²¹ There must, in short, be room for psychology and history as well as skin, even if these epistemologies are, as Elizabeth Grosz has pointed out, impossible to separate from one another.²²

Indeed, Wells does not, cannot, go so far as a decolonization of both colonized people and animals. A mixture of empathy and disgust can be extended to his common Londoners, animals, and to Prendick himself, but not to the subjects of empire. And a certain tense strain in the narrative still seems to wonder if transcendence and purity might not be such horrors, after all. Wells ends up giving us a kind of half-complete, hesitant politics of liberation. The firing of Moreau's enclosure, with its pursuit of the proof of hierarchical Enlightenment structures of being—structures exported and central to eighteenth and nineteenth century British colonialism—has undermined these same structures. The only adequate response to this deconstruction for Prendick is a re-

installation of the enclosure, an impossible yet required restaging of Moreau's Sisyphean endeavor.

Chapter Three:

Writing Bodies and Octopus Eyes: Evading (En)Closure in *Salt Fish Girl*

Animals at last. The myth and the tall tale. The secret and the subterranean. The dark, the feminine, the yin. All allies in this task. For, if diasporic cultures in the West are to be living breathing things they must change. We must have the power of construction, as long, of course, as we behave as responsibly as we know how in the act of construction.

-Larissa Lai, "Political Animals and the Body of History," 593

I: What's That Smell?: Placing *Salt Fish Girl*

Wells leaves us with an image of the last man, so it seems only appropriate to balance my discussion with a story about a first woman. While more than a century of dramatic decolonizations, global migrations, and ecological traumas separate H. G. Wells and Larissa Lai, the two texts are equally entranced by what it means to cage up an animal, or to cage up a human as though it were an animal, and what these two acts of enclosures might have in common.

Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*, like *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, is a novel about the combustibility of imperfect experiments, fascinated with the singular agency of creatures who have spent time going quietly mad in cages. It is also, however, an unabashedly smelly book, thick with any number of olfactory offenses: rotting garbage, old petrol, sulfur, virtual cesspools, and the unmistakable scent of the durian, an uncomely, spiky fruit native to southeast Asia. The durian is redolent with the "reek of cat pee tinged with the smell of hot peppers that have not been dried and are on the verge of going off" (13).

The durian's smell, which seeps uncontrollably out of Miranda's pores, manages to get into everything. "There was no escape," Miranda, the novel's protagonist, tells us, from the miasmatic smell that crosses all boundaries and cloys all surfaces, from the "faux zebra rug on the living-room floor" to "the gingham cloth on the kitchen table." It "infused the marital bedspread, the shirts, jackets, and neatly pressed trousers," and "crept into people's underwear drawers" (16). If *Salt Fish Girl* has a leitmotif, it is this obstinacy of the durian's smell, standing in for the simultaneous irrepressibility and irrecoverability of origins in the wake of diaspora.

In this chapter, I argue that *Salt Fish Girl* is fixated on this kind of organic, uncontrollable moving through, around, and between the slick walls, both real and metaphorical, that attempt to control, regiment, naturalize, and commodify identities in the novel. In doing so, Lai exposes the hairline fissures in the walls of our era's own enclosures, particularly those of the novel's biocolonial and corporate labs that exploit the genetic material of indigenous peoples. In the spirit of the transmuting and category-blurring power of the Beast People, the ageless female protagonist who swims through Lai's time- and genre-bending text puts into disarray the stable oppositions upon which neocolonial logic depends. But while Wells ends in the sodden gloom of a British modernity in retrogression, Lai paints an exuberant future in which hybridized identities and a kind of fuzzy ontology surrounding the body are seen as viable ways out of the homogenizing traps of globalization. Wells ends up depositing the reader in the (im)possible solace of being "more than animal," an ontological obsession from which his novel seems unable to deviate. In contrast, Lai shifts the focus of her enclosures not

only onto the hybrid beings it is designed to control, but to the liberating, difference-affirming stories that those creatures tell us.

Salt Fish Girl was published in 2002 by Thomas Allen and Son, an independent literary press in Ontario. It is a feminist, science fiction dystopian novel, as well as a reworking of late nineteenth century Chinese history and mythology. Informed by the cyberpunk obsessions with bodily manipulation, cloning, and mechanical augmentation that William Gibson let loose into the cultural ether in the 1980s, Lai also has obvious affinities with female science fiction writers like Octavia Butler, Margaret Atwood, and Ursula K. Le Guin who use futurist palettes to interrogate social constructions of gender and race. And her novel, too, bears obvious marks of the lively postcolonial and diasporic politics of British Columbian literary culture, embodied in the cosmopolitan city of Vancouver.

Critical attention surrounding Lai has flowered since she was awarded an Astraea Foundation Emerging Writers Award in 1995, and her first novel, *When Fox Is A Thousand* (1996), was shortlisted for the Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award. *Salt Fish Girl* attracted further accolades following its publication, quickly shortlisted for the Tiptree Award and Sunburst Award, among others. Scholarly interest in Lai crystallized in a special issue of *West Coast Line* in 2005, featuring an interview with her and both critical and creative responses to her work.²³ While analytic work on Lai has almost without exception focused on racial, (trans)national, and gender identities in her texts, no critic has paid attention to her use of spatial metaphors and architectural conceits to explore mechanisms of, and resistances to, colonial legacies. This is surprising, considering Lai's close attention to space in *Salt Fish Girl* and *When Fox Is A Thousand*,

as well as the convention of science fiction itself as a genre that often emphasizes dense, imaginative settings, and is invested in the politics of “world-making.”

Salt Fish Girl's plot eludes easy summary. It is a chiasmic, at times hallucinatory novel, swinging between two parallel stories, one unfurling in South China in the late nineteenth century, the other in a corporatized, walled city-state named Serendipity on the west coast of North America in 2044, a futuristic version of Vancouver. Both narratives center on incarnations of Nu Wa, the Chinese creator goddess, who is able to shift her form between woman, fish, girl, fruit, and snake. Rather than glibly paddling the reader into this mythological current to add cultural potency to the story, or to tweak the conventions of science fiction, Lai interrogates the very notion of mythic truth (one of which postmodernist criticism has been justifiably critical) by reforming Nu Wa's origin story into one of protean, feminist self-creation.

As Nicholas Birns writes in his excellent short study of the novel, Lai's “critical reframing of fertility motifs from ancient Chinese myth supplies the genuinely global dimension” that was conspicuously absent from twentieth century myth criticism, whose most prominent practitioners were Northrop Frye and Kenneth Burke. Thus, “Lai shows how third-wave feminism and transfeminism can absorb what might formerly be seen as ‘essentialist’ discourses without losing their critical edge,” and the text lays a “substrate of permanence” under “contemporary cultural concerns” (2). While Birns does not mention it, Lai's text playfully ripples that very same “substrate of permanence” of myth by excising the tradition of Nu Wa's male consort/husband/brother, Fu Xi, and replacing him with a female consort.²⁴ Rather than blandly rehearsing essentialist myths, or letting their “permanence” stand unquestioningly, Lai radicalizes and revisualizes them in

women-identified-women, matrilineal terms. (Here, as elsewhere in this essay, I follow Lai's lead in avoiding the term "lesbian," due to its "eurocentric roots, and because it does not necessarily connote community or social independence," employing "women-identified-women" instead ["Political Animals..." 591].) Lai's employ of Nu Wa, then, is less a rehashing than a permutation, or perhaps an improvisation, casting cultural heritage and the urgency of contemporary gender politics into a kind of Mobius strip.

Temperamentally, both of *Salt Fish Girl's* stories are coming-of-age tales, awakenings into sexual desire and political consciousness. In nineteenth century China, Nu Wa is reborn as a skinny girl who grows up in a coastal town and falls in love with the daughter of a salt fish merchant. With the merchant set on a traditional marriage for the salt fish girl, the lovers abscond to a larger factory town. Here, the salt fish girl is forced into wage slavery, making mechanical toy animals in a sweatshop, while Nu Wa immigrates to—and is eventually trapped in—the City of Hope, a phantasmagoric, Western island where she is forced to work for a gambling racket. After staging an escape back to China, she is unable to find the salt fish girl again, or achieve any kind of normal social function in the village of her birth, and drowns herself, merging with a river pool of water in a scene that reverses Nu Wa's original (re)emergence into being from water early in the text.

The reader spends the majority of *Salt Fish Girl* in the year 2044 with Miranda as she deals with her own coming into herself, and as she navigates the tense waters between assimilation to Western futurity and her Chinese heritage. Lai paints a world under massive corporate control, with obvious refractions of current multinational corporations gone power-mad. The conflict over Miranda's assimilation is most obvious

in her family's increasingly desperate attempts to eradicate her durian smell and scaly skin, as well as her "Dreaming Disease," in which Miranda lives through traumatic events of the past.

As she tells the reader early in the novel, Miranda is not alone in her symptoms, which have begun to plague and alarm the ultra-sterile confines of Serendipity and other corporate compounds. "Because my existence in this lifetime had been carried out entirely within the narrow confines of the Serendipity," she says, "I did not understand my condition as a 'condition,' nor did I know that there were others in other compounds or out in the Unregulated Zone," people "who were afflicted with variations of the same bizarre symptoms, and whose bodies reeked of oranges, or tobacco, or rotten eggs, or cabbage" (70). The sufferers of the Dreaming Disease end up hypnotically committing mass suicide, marching into rivers and oceans to compulsively drown themselves.

After Miranda unwittingly causes her father to lose his job as a virtual tax collector, the entire family moves into the Unregulated Zone beyond Serendipity's walls, where they set up a corner grocery, living in near-poverty and bartering for goods. The family's move, however, also neutralizes Miranda's smell, as she blends in with the store's stock of durians. The remainder of this thread of the novel concerns Miranda's heated interactions with two strikingly original characters: Evie, the cloned cyborg who becomes her lover, and Dr. Flowers, the bioengineer employed by the novel's primary antagonist, the Nextcorp company. Flowers first takes on Miranda as his apprentice, then repeatedly abducts her in order to perform experiments on her unique physiology. As the Dreaming Disease begins to unravel the fabric of the corporate *polis* system, Flowers is ultimately revealed as a monomaniacal genetic pirate, producing automaton clones—

modeled on the DNA of non-Western peoples—for sale and labor in the subterranean spaces of the corporate compounds.

From Flowers' labs, to restrictive bodysuits worn by Serendipity's corporate employees, to the walls of Serendipity itself, the futuristic narrative of *Salt Fish Girl* organizes itself around notions of ingress and egress, bodies bound and unbound by force, wrapped in the identities they are given and that they give themselves. And in Lai's ramshackle portrait of life outside the city-state walls, narratives rich with old mythic residues and appropriations of new technology wait to make their way into the enclosure.

II – “A Membranous Sort of Intelligence”

Before forging theoretical links between Lai's critique of neocolonialism—located in the enclosures that distinguish many of the novel's key settings—and the politics of her animal symbolism, I want to begin with a scene from *Salt Fish Girl* that canvasses some of these connections in miniature. Late in the novel, Evie and Miranda seek anonymity and solace in an aquarium while fleeing from Flowers:

We moved on to a tall narrow tank in which an octopus lay, the brown bulbous body pulsing with a visceral, membranous sort of intelligence. Its wrinkled folds moved in and out and its tentacles furled and unfurled to their fine, sensitive tips. Its white suction cups pushed against the glass, not at all the slimy stuff of horror movies, but something infinitely more delicate and lovely. Its eyes, though, were glazed and stunned, but there was a chart beside it declaring that octopus eyes and human eyes were very similar in their construction and functioning. (262)

Anyone who has spent a rainy afternoon in the dusky half-light of an aquarium, slack-jawed with their nose pressed to the glass, is probably familiar with the mixture of emotions in this scene. A dense cloud of declarative sentences circumscribes the meanings of Lai's octopus, meanings present both in objective descriptors of the animal and via Lai's use of a limited omniscient point of view that gives us a glimpse at Miranda's interiority. The passage is tense with conflicting figures of the octopus. Lai stages a dialectic between a biological sublime—the irreducible otherness of the animal presence that slips past the net of human language, present in that “something infinitely more delicate and lovely”—and competing instrumental uses of the animal.

By “instrumental,” I mean the term common in ecocritical explorations of how animals (and nature more broadly) are “of use”—whether economically, symbolically, and/or ideologically—to humans, practices that are generally seen as negative because they foreclose any agency of nature itself. Instrumentality can be seen in an array of representational techniques that justifiably trouble many ecocritics and animal studies theorists because they often (although not necessarily always) seek to make nature a transparent conduit for human meaning-making or exploitation.²⁵

There are at least three types of instrumental value at play in the aquarium scene. There is Miranda's observation of how the aquarium's octopus is dramatically different from its popular representation. (One need only think of the slimy grotesqueries of Lovecraftian legend, or the octopi overlords of classic B-movies like 1955's *It Came From Beneath The Sea* to recognize the wide currency of the creature's “monstrousness.”) Another meaning, provided by the authoritative discourse of marine biology, is provided by the chart next to the tank, which declares “that octopus eyes and

human eyes” are “very similar in their construction and functioning.” The syntax of the chart’s “declaration” is striking, as it lumps both “human eyes” and “octopus eyes” into the same nominative phrase, effectively equalizing their place of importance within the sentence. This is a radical departure from the rhetoric of informative plaques of zoos and aquariums that couches the animal world in anthropocentric terms, often via similes that privilege human noun phrases over animal ones (a recent blog post on the San Diego Zoo’s Blog compared their making casts of elephant calf footprints to the “handprints with finger paint” that human children paint “for proud parents to display on their refrigerators” [Rothwell para. 1]). Yet this descriptor remains instrumental in that it encourages epistemological expansion, via a positivist—even a mechanically Cartesian—description of “how an octopus works.”

Both the popular and scientific discourses of the octopus are belied by Miranda’s own interpretation. Perhaps the passage’s most emphatic instrumental use is how Miranda aestheticizes the creature behind the glass. She draws attention to the delicate drift of its body, as its “wrinkled folds” move “in and out” and its tentacles roll in and out, all indicating a “visceral, membranous sort of intelligence.” The symbolic power of Miranda’s description resonates with its formal properties, from the dense alliteration of the octopus’ “brown bulbous body,” to the symmetrical grace and repetition of the prepositions “in and out,” followed by “furled and unfurled.” The octopus has an otherworldly beauty, a bodily intelligence, and Lai’s imagery indicates a kind of yonnic potency. It is perhaps not too much of a stretch to see Lai’s employ of the octopus here in terms of her gender politics, recalling similar uses of the animal in feminist literature (a germane example is American poet Marianne Moore’s long work “An Octopus.”) But

what are the costs of aestheticizing an animal—of furcating its whole body into parts and reducing it to an object of pleasure?

Immediately following the paragraph explored at length above, *Salt Fish Girl* provides some answers in the form of a dialogue between Evie and Miranda:

“Hard not to believe in God, isn’t it?” said Evie. “All this beauty and all this variety.”

“I never thought about it.”

“But if you look at this, and it makes you believe in God, then you also have to believe that it was all meant for human pleasure. Which makes it perfectly all right to shut these beautiful things up in tanks and bottles. The logic is built right into the architecture.”

“Do you think they get depressed?”

“No doubt. Wouldn’t you?”

“Their eyes are so different from ours. I can’t tell what they feel.” (*ibid.*)

The dialogue suggests that it is risky to think of the octopus (which in its strangeness and variegation comes to metonymically represent nature-at-large) as either a proof of divine revelation (a kind of *liber naturae*, authored by God in the hieroglyphics of natural phenomena), or as an unproblematic source of human pleasure. Evie’s point that “the logic is built into the architecture” is particularly telling. Some Judeo-Christian dominion theology casts nature as a thing created for humans, justifying its caging, to say nothing of thinking of something like an octopus having any kind of agency. Her wry use of “architecture” is significant, as she is not talking in purely theoretical terms; by mentioning the octopus itself, “shut up” in a “tank,” she also indicts the aquarium walls

themselves as embodying anthropocentric logic. The diction—“tanks and bottles”—casts the aquarium, like the zoo, as a site in which animals are commodified, put in storage, or swim neurotically on display in an ocularcentric calculus that ensures separation between what lies within the glass, and what watches in amazement from without.²⁶

It is in this vein that, for Miranda, Evie’s critique is far too superficial. Miranda asks her, “Do you think they get depressed?” She refuses, however, to answer her own question, as she “can’t tell what they feel.” Miranda refuses to answer because Evie’s answer—that octopi get melancholic, just as she would—presumes to know what it must be like to know the strange topography of an octopus’ emotional landscape. In her declaration that octopus eyes “are so different from ours”; Miranda opts not to describe or project attributes onto the creature, despite the assuring rhetoric of the tank’s placard. In admitting the limits of her knowledge about the animal, Miranda fractures *idées reçues* about octopi, restoring their integrity and articulating crucial differences between species.

Miranda’s choice “not to know,” or at least not to know the octopus poorly, provides a powerful literary anodyne to John Berger’s anxieties about the cultural marginalization of animals in modernity in his seminal essay, “Why Look at Animals?” Berger writes that “[a]ll animals appear like fish seen through the plate glass of an aquarium,” exhibited and arranged to provide “ever more arresting images,” in which “animals are always the observed . . . They are the objects of our ever-extending knowledge. What we know about them is an index of our power, and thus an index of what separates us from them. The more we know, the further away they are” (14) Miranda’s epistemological *via negativa*—her character’s choice to remain suspended in a

kind of non-knowing—can then be read as a gesture against power, and a tacit admission of the creature’s autonomy.

The difference between the two main characters is also poignant in this scene. While Evie waxes philosophical, Miranda experiences quiet wonder. Her choice not to “make” the octopus “mean,” or to tell a cohesive story about it, can be read, I think, as a watermark of the end of her character arc. It is arguably a result of her time enclosed in the terrifying, aquarium-like confines of Dr. Flowers’ makeshift labs, and her exposure to life inside the walls of Serendipity. In contrast to Wells, it is wonder and a yearning for provisional connection with others, rather than paranoid self-isolation, that results from being aware of the suffering of others. As a result, she refuses the architectural principle that keeps the octopus—whatever it is feeling—bound and quartered. Put another way, she refuses to tell a story about it.

III – Enclosing Space, Allowable Pleasures, and the Saturnalia

Early in the novel while she is still living inside Serendipity’s walls, Miranda slips downstairs into her father’s home office to try on his Business Suit. The Business Suit in *Salt Fish Girl* is a cross between an s/m bodysuit and a scuba diver’s wetsuit, “made of some shiny synthetic material, elastic and tight-fitting . . . a torso piece, two leg pieces, detachable sleeves, boots, globes, a hood, a terrifying anonymous black mask in the exact contours of my father’s face but without features or color” (25). In Serendipity, middle-class labor has been replaced by an elaborate video game. “The Business Suit” seems to make “tax collecting into a marvelous adventure” for Miranda, who only over the course of the novel comes to question the technologies and ideologies of the corporate nation-

state she is born into when she is exposed to the anticorporate rhetoric of Evie, the cyborg clone who is also the future reincarnation of the salt fish girl. Even when she is held in thrall by the Suit's stories as she watches her father, Stewart, move through virtual space and battle ravenous digital birds, Miranda is aware that the suit has some serious drawbacks. Her father is physically punished inside it as part of his job. When he is forced to work overtime, Stewart becomes "so pale, in fact, that you could see the veins pulsing beneath the skin of his face and neck. He looked more like a man who had emerged from a coffin than a man just home from work" (78). One thing that Lai seems to be getting at is that the logic built into the architecture of the suit is also that of Serendipity's general principle: the control of spaces through the stories that are told in and about them. If the suit is a kind of enclosure, its sartorial function is to erase messy corporeality and cultural difference, and to recast Miranda's father into the stock role of a masculine protector. The image Miranda sees on screen while she watches him work is of her father, "but a much younger, stronger, more heroic version of him, both like the man I knew and entirely without the soft, gentle bookish demeanor with which he carried himself through family life" (27). It is this attractive fantasy that keeps Stewart coming back to the suit, and which masks the exploitative nature of his work keeping Serendipity's system of political control humming along.

When Miranda can no longer bear the sights and sounds of her father's torture, she decides to take on her father's mantle and immediately monkeywrenches the game's conventions:

I reached the door of the dungeon and was admitted by the guards. But when the Receivers General came to chain me to the wall, I jabbed my fingers into their

eyes . . . shot streams of fire from my arms and knees simultaneously until they were burned to a black skeleton crisp. (79)

It is this virtual act of rebellion that ultimately causes Stewart to lose his job and his savings, as “a tax collector was not supposed to give money back to the people. And to assault a Receiver General was an indictable offence punishable by death” (80). In her dramatic crossing of domestic and public spheres, which differentially bind up genders, as well as her anarchic redistribution of wealth, Miranda represents a disordered and volatile difference that can be answered by the enclosure only with repulsion. The family is forced to move into the Unregulated Zone.

Upon a cursory read, Miranda seems to be a model child for happy assimilation to Serendipity’s norms of technological futurism and monocultural corporatism, glued to her electronic toys inside Serendipity’s walls. However, Miranda’s actions in the Business Suit scene reveal one of her main characteristics: her most effective form of resistance is to move away. Miranda’s family disengages from the inner rings of power to move into “unregulated”—unmarked, anarchic, unclaimed, and unsurveilled—space, where Miranda begins to truly explore her self and family’s cultural heritage in the shadow of Serendipity’s walls. Indeed, Miranda is nothing if not an adept escape artist. This tendency is slyly linked to Lai’s own playing with myth in her metatextual conceit of an interactive comic book, *The Forbidden Tales*, which Miranda loves because it is “about a young Nordic royal kidnapped by an evil sultan and forced to live with him in a tent in the desert,” but who “always escapes,” which delights Miranda as she is allowed “to participate in devising the means of her emancipation” (34). Notwithstanding the obvious, even ham-handed Orientalist symbolism of the story (Miranda’s father feels

uncomfortable with Miranda reading “socially destructive stereotypes [*ibid.*]), what Miranda’s toying with the game prefigures is her ability to manipulate a given enclosure—a narrative, in this case—through a subversive act of reading to dramatically change its meaning. She ignores the “array of outfits . . . from brassieres and hot pants to tiaras and long flowing dresses” with which she is supposed to dress up the princess, instead obsessed with the “mechanics of escape” (35). From this scene, Lai establishes one clear vector for avoiding societal norms: escape. Escape—the voluntary, often surreptitious movement of a body from confining circumstances—becomes one of the key tropes in the novel’s critique of structures that seek assimilation and obedience.

The obedience required by Serendipity does not arise out of a historical vacuum. As the props that populate the enclosure, especially the Pallas running shoes that are highly sought after by corporate citizens, echo products produced by current multinational corporations, what is at play in *Salt Fish Girl* is a critique of postindustrial capitalism and its ideological apparatuses. However, by setting the novel in a futuristic, speculative echo of the Pacific Northwest, Lai links the reprehensible and homogenizing features of late capitalism to legacies of colonialism.

In her discussion of the main antagonist of the text, the Nextcorp company, Lai especially calls into question the nostalgic and containing impulse of colonialism to preserve, document, and capitalize on the “authentic” indigeneity it, by definition, historically compromises, and of which it demands control. This critique is dramatized in a discussion between Miranda and Evie, a cloned product of the corporation’s bioengineering and biopiracy. “I do know that Nextcorp brought out the Diverse Genome Project around the same time as I was born,” Evie explains, “which focused on the

peoples of the so-called Third World, Aboriginal peoples, and peoples in danger of extinction.” This bloodstock is used to create “all the Workers in the factories . . . Brown eyes and black hair, every one,” a revelation which shocks Miranda. “Stuff like that is not supposed to happen any more,” she says, to which Evie responds, “Stuff like that never stopped” (160).²⁷

Evie’s point is salient considering Lai’s increasingly prominent position within Canadian literature, particularly as a Canadian speculative fiction writer of color. It might be tempting to fault Lai for eliding any kind of First Nations presence in a text ostensibly “about” Vancouver, ironically perpetuating a history-erasing legacy in a novel that outright demands the recognition and articulation of heterogeneous records of the past. But what if Lai is not erasing a Native projection into future British Columbia, so much as castigating power structures that would seek to wholly assimilate and appropriate the signifiers and symbols of indigeneity? That is, she might not be eliding a First Nations presence so much as giving us a terrifying future in which elisions of indigenous people are even further normalized and their lifeways appropriated as the trinkets and products of a Western bourgeoisie. I do not mean to serve as an apologist for Lai’s representational tactics. Certainly, *Salt Fish Girl* seems to tilt its lance much more obviously towards a hybrid and affinitive politics of diaspora than towards one of indigenous sovereignty. But that is not to say that the latter does not exist at all in the novel, or that its absence is not as conspicuously important as any possible presence.

Notably, we can read an interest in the erasure of a Native presence in *Salt Fish Girl* through a scene near the end of the novel that describes another enclosure: the cabin where Nextcorp stores its DNA. Miranda says the cabin consists of a “ring of thick cedar

logs for its sides and a roof that spiraled up and ended with a skylight at the top.” Evie tells her that Nextcorp “commissioned a Native architect, Agnes Bishop, to design it As though purchasing her labour would somehow connect their project to the land” (267). Nextcorp has paid token service to a multicultural “appreciation” of alternate aesthetics on the surface, but then promptly employs the building’s hidden interior to house its pirated genetic materials and to cast its ventures under a veil of being “rooted” and “natural.”

Lai elsewhere makes clear her suspicion of a certain liberal tendency in modern Canadian politics to celebrate a supposed anti-essentialist character in the nation’s view of itself, rooted in its well-established multicultural discourse.²⁸ Miranda’s exclamation that “stuff like that is not supposed to happen any more” could very well be a direct paraphrase of a similar sentiment Lai makes in her late-1990s essay, “Political Animals and the Body of History,” where she notes that “[g]rowing up in Canada in the seventies, and eighties, I was very much crammed inside the racism-was-terrible-but-now-it’s-over box—a quick-fix product of official Multiculturalism that did precious little” to address actual inequalities, as this “liberal position, so seemingly loaded with good intentions, had a pale, clammy underside that merely masked existing power imbalances while doing little to rectify them” (589). The cabin’s “Native” architecture provides such a discursive masking of lingering power imbalances in Lai’s future world, hiding the effects of hegemony under a false sense of “being connected” to the land. It is thus evident that Lai is more interested in breaking down essentialist boxes—especially the suffocating multiculturalism box into which she was “crammed” growing up in Newfoundland and Vancouver—than arguing for their occasional necessity. Flowers’ experiments

themselves embody the bloodcurdling prospect of a world in which cultural difference is stripped of history, in order to be dismantled, assimilated, and mass-marketed.

Flowers' perpetuation of a colonial legacy of racial inequalities also notably recalls Moreau in his attempt to "render up" a perfected image from the combinatory material of his experiments. Miranda's childhood friend, Ian, casts Flowers' manipulations of captive bodies in religious terms: "He rearranges the organs of the afflicted . . . They are the new language of God" (76). The parallel to Moreau's reorganization and "rearrangement" of the body is almost uncanny, as Miranda describes the re-folded and re-aestheticized female bodies of the Janitors, the cloned cyborgs produced by Nextcorp and Flowers. "We had studied anatomy at school," she says, able to see the Janitors' internal organs through the transparent silicone composite that has replaced the skin and muscle on their backs, "I could see that the organs had been shifted, had been carefully arranged like stones in a formal garden, mimicking the asymmetrical aesthetics of nature, but with human intention" (77).

There is more to Flowers' creations than meets Miranda's eye. It is true that they unnerve the narrator in their grotesque scaffolding, simultaneously beautiful and abhorrent. But Flowers' aims are not purely aesthetic. Leaving aside any objections to the fact that Flowers plays free and loose with the human form, often discussed in Western circles as a kind of sacrilege, Lai here twins patriarchal and racial control over the indigenous female body with the erasure of alternative histories. As Ian's dialogue with Miranda shows, Flowers' latest research is attempting to eradicate the Dreaming Disease, that strange affliction that allows the past to leak into the present, contaminating it with stories that have been repressed by the official record of the past. But in lieu of Moreau's

obsession with scientific knowledge for its own sake, Flowers' creations are global commodities, spliced together to be marketed and sold for use in subterranean labor positions in other walled cities.

Flowers is an extremely powerful man, and Miranda and Evie's attempt to decolonize and historicize Serendipity seems futile, if not suicidal. But the most electrifying narrative moments in *Salt Fish Girl* are ones in which the logic of various enclosures—their established, orderly procedures—is short-circuited. These subversive incidents occur when the “wrong” characters find themselves inside cages they are able to manipulate, or when they begin to offer powerful counter-stories that attack the narrative integrity of the enclosures previously in place. In short, Lai is interested when fishy characters fail to play by the rules of the spaces in which they find themselves.

Lai offers a potential way out, or perhaps, if the eventual breaching of Serendipity's walls and Flowers' sanctum offers any clue, a way in to anticolonialism: the power of animal stories, and the hybrid past/present and nature/human articulations they represent. Indeed, the “stuff” that is “not supposed to happen any more” in the mid-21st century can only be challenged in *Salt Fish Girl* via subversive animal and floral imagery. Lai especially draws the reader's attention to the “fishiness” of the titular character to denote the ecological vision that eventually threatens Nextcorp at the book's climax. The company's rebellious cyborg clones attempt to reinstate all of the transgressive, “smelly” tastes through a rhizomic reproduction system involving durian trees. As Evie, who is biologically 0.03% freshwater carp (a creature symbolic of uncontrollable, invasive reproduction), explains the clones' project to Miranda:

It was all conjecture, but Sonia 14 says it started a century ago. They were implanting human genes into fruit as fertility therapy for women who could not conceive. And of course the pollen blew every which way and could not be contained. And fertilized the fruit of trees bred for other purposes—trees bred to withstand cold climates, trees bred to produce fruit that would strengthen the blood. Perhaps some natural mutations were also involved. What we learned was that the fruit of certain trees could make women pregnant without any need for insemination. It was great for us, because, as you know, Painted Horse and Saturna manufacture only women. (258)

What is in part a wild celebration of both the trope of the master's tools turned against him and put to new uses in a servants' *bricolage* is also a powerful image of the ecological possibilities for the enunciation of identity differences. If discourses of what is "natural" have, for centuries, cemented Western gender identities and reproductive expectations, Lai takes up these reigns and shifts the ideological possibilities of "nature." With the pollen blowing "every which way," completely uncontainable, Lai pushes nature's meaning in the direction of the aleatoric: the random mutations, species gradations, and horizontal cross-breeds of Darwinian evolution. Lai's take on evolution is not a vertical "tree of life," which, as we saw in Wells, can fall too easily into the lingering pitfall and hierarchical justifications of the Great Chain of Being. Rather, it resembles what evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould memorably calls "the bush of life," where there are no central lineages, but where each species' genetic "sequence is but one labyrinthine pathway among thousands on a complex bush" (36). Lai's use of ecological relationships is no naïve nostalgia for a pure and integrated bodily relationship

with nature, but rather one in which the bodily co-shaping of human and plant genes looks towards a future where the fetters of gender and biopolitical class roles (in the case of the cyborgs) break apart entirely.

The pollen's literal uncontainability is also metaphorical, as it is the free-floating source of the Dreaming Disease that reproduces marginalized histories. When the Disease reaches its peak, the walls of Serendipity begin to crumble, "blasted away in huge chunks" (191) by sufferers of the Disease and anti-corporate activists like Evie. The dwindling remainder of the city under corporate control hurriedly reconstitutes itself with double layers of chain link fence and razor wire, but it is too late and contagious memories have been unleashed. If before the only condoned performances within the enclosure were ones of corporate bondage, represented by Saturna's video game, things change dramatically when activists begin to blow up the walls of the Regulated Zone, rapidly deregulating it.

A new set of stories rises to precedence, and are performed at the "Saturnalia," the first "party inside the walled city" and a "48-hour carnival" (189) in which "contagion" is embraced. Miranda is moved to tears by dramatic re-interpretations of past traumas and myths, presented in an obtusely symbolic fashion recalling the opaque and arresting performativity of David Lynch's films. A woman seemingly undergoes autopsy on an operating table, only to rise and juggle her organs like bowling pins. A stripper chanteuse sings a lachrymose song about a crane woman whose clothes are stolen while she bathes in a rocky pool (193-5). In contrast to the solitary confinement of the Business Suit, with its virtual world of strictly regimented gender expectations, the Saturnalia is a free-

wheeling kaleidoscope of animal-human pairings experienced by a community rising up to re-animate the shades of the past in a pleasurable performance.

This breaching of narrative and physical walls, caused by the infectious uncontainability of unintended side effects of globalization, is not limited to the scale of community. It also manifests itself metatextually. The fishy “flow” of the transgressive reproduction at the heart of Lai’s politics of sexual difference is also a boundary-breaching exercise. When Miranda couples with Evie, the language itself reflects the ways in which Lai uses unruly fishy bodies to metonymically represent the reproduction of pre-colonial cultures, that which is continually written onto and by the body’s irreducible “strangeness”:

The fishiness of her drew me, but I tried not to think about the strangeness of her conception . . . my body a single silver muscle slipping against hers, flailing for oxygen in a fast underwater current, shivering slippery cool wet and tumbling through dark towards a blue point of light in the distance, teeth, lip, nipple, the steel taste of blood, gills gaping open and closed. (161)

Lai provides a moment in the text, unique in its formal properties, that is free of any notion of linguistic, individualized, or material enclosure. What is remarkable in this passage is not only the way in which traditionally “human” and “animal” attributes are commingled and sexualized, but also the way in which the language itself lyrically breaks down from linear syntactical constraints into conjoining fragments, recalling Gertrude Stein’s employ of alliterative sound-repetition towards an *écriture féminine* (the “shivering slippery” and “single silver muscle slipping”),²⁹ creating alternative ways of “knowing” bodies through prose. Lai thus employs these zoomorphic, linguistic eruptions

to illustrate the ways in which animal bodies themselves provide a powerful representational vocabulary to combat the suffocating patriarchal and globalizing meaning-making that Nextcorp uses to organize space, and control standards of taste and patterns of consumption.

Strange bodies signify fissures in both space and language. Although Nextcorp has not been totally defeated at the novel's conclusion, and the inner corporate sanctum of Serendipity still exists and exerts power, its legacy is uncertain. Lai documents the narrative power represented by the Unregulated Zone: infectious multiplicities, rhizomatic reproduction that circumvents a traditional conception of the family, and an accommodation of both cultural heritage and new permutations.

These new narratives (which, as Lai reminds us, are simultaneously not-new) are thus open to, and formed out of, the strangeness of the self and the self's history: "Once we stepped out of mud, now we step out of moist earth, out of DNA both new and old, an imprint of what has gone before, but also a variation. By our strangeness we write our bodies into the future" (259). Our essential fishiness makes our selves slippery. We acknowledge how we are "imprinted" by our multiple origins, and we remain open to the contingencies of our slippery, Darwinian futures.

The emphasis on the "variations" of posterity in this passage recalls American novelist Evan Dara's point in *The Lost Scrapbook* that "variations represent excursions towards some kind of higher understanding, repeated graspings-at and circlings-in towards some central truth." However, they also "illustrate the cliché that the truth remains, ultimately, indeterminable; that's why all the fancy footworks of variations is necessary," for through all the "gropings" and "variation-searching," what we arrive at is

“the beauty of struggle” rather than “the illusion of accomplishment” (41). This is the vision that Lai so artfully counterpoises against the false illusions of Serendipity’s enclosure, which allows no bio-cultural dissent in its racial blanching and stagnant perpetuation of a false End of History.

“We are the new children of the earth, of the earth’s revenge,” (259) Miranda tells us. There is no doing away with the myths that we born out of and into, especially the tenacious myths and false promises of Western consumerism and globalization. But there is the promise that myths are not bedrock, and the future is not held in the throes of their determinism. They are more akin to the alluvian fans of soft earth on the ocean’s bottom, fans that twist into extraordinary shapes in the current, both recognizable in their timeless patterns, yet infinitely malleable.

Epilogue

I have mostly sidestepped the question of genre until now partly out of embarrassment. As a suburban child of the 1980s and 90s, I have long been subject to a certain critical and cultural skittishness regarding speculative fiction. Even now, when shopping for books, it is with a degree of sheepishness that I enter the fantasy and science fiction shelves, wondering if my intellectual development is going to be stymied by picking up the latest offering from Kim Stanley Robinson, an author that a high school teacher once caught me reading between classes and dismissed as “puerile trash.” One childhood friend was chucked wholesale into a dumpster by a roving group of loutish eighth-graders when they spied him trying to shelter J.R.R. Tolkien under his jean jacket.

I cannot help but wonder what our ongoing embarrassment with the fantastic or speculative might mean. Why does science fiction remain marginalized, despite its popular success, and the fact that many hallowed Western classics and postcolonial touchstones alike—*Gulliver’s Travels*, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Octavia Butler’s Kindred series, *Frankenstein*, Voltaire’s “Micromégas,” *Midnight’s Children*, Linda Hogan’s *Mean Spirit*—make obvious overtures to readers’ love of the fantastic, an impulse that speaks across nation, ethnicity, gender, and chronology?

Ironically, part of the problem that surrounds speculative fiction is the same one that surrounds fiction and poetry about animals. Both are dismissed as infantile, unserious, or, worse, evidence that reader and author alike are stuck in a kind of arrested development. Standards of literary taste thus shore up socio-political structures that determine what is civilized, adult, or literarily meritorious, and what is not. Ursula K. Le Guin writes in *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences* that this attitude towards

speculative fiction shares much in common with how suppressed subjects are represented in the West:

People to whom sophistication is a positive intellectual value shun anything “written for children”: if you want to clear the room of derrideans [sic], mention Beatrix Potter without sneering. With the agreed exception of *Alice in Wonderland*, books for children are to be mentioned only dismissively or jocosely by the adult male critic . . . In literature as in “real life”, women, children, and animals are the obscure matter upon which Civilization erects itself, phallogically. (10)

This is not to suggest that all speculative fiction is, as a rule, fit for children (it frequently is not), or to argue that it even has “a” central politics that undercuts imperial and patriarchal ideals. As the overwhelming diversity within the already fiendishly difficult-to-categorize notion of what is “speculative” indicates, the genre can run the gamut from Lai’s overtly politicized, fragmentary, multiethnic novels, to the conservative, but enormously popular works of Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein, which present ironically antediluvian futures that objectify and exoticize female and racialized bodies, or which evacuate those futures of all ethnic difference, replacing them with an invisible, insidious whiteness.

I am interested, rather, in what motivates our literary encounters with the marvelous and fantastic: a yearning for our own otherness. Literature of the fantastic has its roots in what the Jesuit philosopher Michel de Certeau calls “the joyful and silent experience of childhood: . . . *to be other and to move toward the other*” (110, italics original). If the verisimilar European novel was beget in the nineteenth century out of a

desire to give epic form to the “extensive totality of life” (Lukács 46), speculative fiction locates itself in the world-as-it-might-be. In its orientation towards what lies beyond the familiar borders of the present self, speculative fiction often, even self-consciously, reenacts a kind of colonial encounter. It registers unprecedented forms of epistemological and ontological difference. Reading speculative fiction is therefore invested in two possibilities. It is freighted with the transformative power to assimilate difference, or it can encourage a reader to rest in a state of reciprocal and communicative wonder.

Stephen Greenblatt writes that the power of the colonial encounter with wonder lies not in a vision of the “gradual expansion through the world but in the shock of the unfamiliar, the provocation of an intense curiosity, the local excitement of discontinuous wonders,” indicating a “world not in stately and harmonious order” (2). To again recall Douglas, margins are often productive, and the ecological and cultural encounter with wonder can provide dramatic inversions and interrogations of hegemony. An obvious signpost in this pattern—particularly interesting in its employ of the tragic mode and problematic racial, postcolonial, and gender iconography—is Cooper and Shoedsack’s 1933 classic *King Kong*, where de-evolution is subversively depicted as the “savage” ape becomes an ironic, noble paramour of civilization in the final act and white, well-heeled Manhattanites “devolve” into warmongering.³⁰

The problem with wonder, neo/colonially speaking, is that it is usually for sale. Late and global capitalism can be loosely defined by the founding of new markets and the exploitation of new resources, a process that requires its subjects to be constantly exposed to the wondrous and the novel, fetishized in the identity of the commodity. This is the impulse that underpinned the cagings of exotic animals for British menageries in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,³¹ and which enclosed whole tracts of space in new terrains in order to sort out, label, control, and circulate representations of who and what was found there.

This paper has been an investigation into the messy politics of those who resist these acts of enclosure, and who emerge intact with a sense of wonder. Lai and Wells offer glimpses into emotional and intellectual experience in the presence of radical difference, a difference which is ultimately constituted in the self, and one which the enclosure seeks to eradicate through exile or imprisonment. The divergence between these forms of difference, however, lies in how the central characters in the novels react to their newfound knowledge. Following from Greenblatt's point that an encounter with the wondrous ushers in a "world not in stately and harmonious order," it is telling that both Lai and Wells reach this consciousness via the apprehension of others' suffering.

I have chosen *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *Salt Fish Girl* because both texts envision this encounter with possibility and difference in terms of acknowledging the sufferings of the past, and the pained legacy of our bodies. Lai and Wells emblemize the two possible responses to the wondrous suffering of others. With the Beast People having reconstituted his conception of what it means to be both human and animal under the idea of shared flesh, Prendick retreats from community to the prudish, self-ablution of transcendental science, thus perpetuating the assimilative trauma of the enclosure *ad infinitum*. His small world returns, at least to him, to an illusory state of rattled harmony.

Lai shows no such squeamishness, opting to leave us with a scatologically disharmonious vision of how things-might-be.³² Just before Miranda gives birth in the scene that ends the novel, Lai writes, "After all, children also enter the world from the

dirty end, poke their heads through the point of light. A stinking toilet as the end of the story? Why not? This is a story about stink, after all,” recalling the durian’s odor that runs through the novel, “a story about rot, about how life grows out of the most fetid-smelling places” (267-8). The body in *Lai* is left unenclosed, aware of its fluidic connections to nature, and open to the contingencies of the future and to our responsibilities to its wondrous, new bodies born out of sorrowful histories.

The most salient difference between the two novels’ conclusions, then, is present in their openness to change. *Wells* ends with a retrogressive (re)search for the disembodied end product of the Enlightenment, and a skeptical reinstatement of a kind of “pure” Englishness. *Moreau*’s transcendent utopia is still sought after, if in a different guise. *Lai*, however, exemplifies the suppleness and possibility of a diasporic identity that locates itself via difference. As Michel Foucault argues, questions of identity must relate “identity to our unique selves. But the relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation. To be the same is really boring” (385). So passes the traditional picture of the enclosure, and we are left with something altogether more vibrant and unsettling. *Lai*, too, gives us a kind of utopia towards which to reach, but it is one that remains aware of its predilection for failure and connections to history.

Speculative fiction is a necessitous genre for *Lai*’s fiction not only because it exposes a desire “to be other and to move toward the other,” but because its politics of un-enclosure welcome an ecologically informed future of rot, decay, and infection. Wonder remains suspended and the histories recalled by the *Dreaming Disease* cannot be disavowed. *Lai*’s vision of the future suggests Fredric Jameson’s idea that, at best,

“Utopia can serve the negative purpose of making us more aware of our mental and ideological imprisonment . . . and that therefore the best Utopias are those that fail the most comprehensively” (*xiii*). As Miranda gives birth in the temporary tranquility of a moonrise, she thinks something that can only come from one who has disavowed the desire to possess others, and the drive to wholly possess herself: “Eve reached under water, guided the thing out, black-haired and bawling, a little baby girl. Everything will be all right, I thought, until next time” (269).

Notes

1. For a good study of the colonial roots of the zoo as an institution, see “Exotic Captives,” in Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*; and Malamud, *Reading Zoos*.
2. See Rahman. For a fictionalized treatment of the Sundarbans’ tiger problem, see Ghosh.
3. See LaDuke.
4. The critical literature exploring these spaces is too broad and varied to be adequately sketched here, but for representative samples, see Kennedy on the hill station, Strachan on the plantation, and Jones on the 1931 exposition.
5. See Pickard. Interestingly, as Pickard points out, these same early post and rail fences employed in the new Australian colony have recently become a powerful symbol of an essential “rural Australia” in modern advertisements and tourism promotion materials.
6. See Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.
7. See LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, especially “White Earth: A Lifeway in the Forest,” her chapter about land-recovery efforts on the White Earth Indian Reservation.
8. See Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature*.
9. For a more thorough account of the intertextual relationship between Shelley and Wells, see Baldick.
10. For discussions of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and religiosity, see Beuchamp. For commentary on the novel’s convoluted relationship with late nineteenth-century scientific methodology, see Armstrong, Bowen, and Connor.
11. For a discussion of the text from the perspective of the burgeoning field of animal studies, see Armstrong, Rohman, and Youngs. For an investigation of the text’s reliance upon constructions of imperial masculinities, see Hendershot.
12. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.
13. See Grove, “Introduction,” in *Green Imperialism*.
14. See Wells, 194, in Philmus and Hughes, eds. See also Philips, 92.
15. For a survey of possible reasons why *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has usually been read in more recent decades as a “dire warning about the risks of arrogant scientific experimentation,” see Armstrong, 93. More generally, see Rohman.
16. See Pratt, “Scratches on the Face of the Country.”
17. For an exhaustive, excellent historical survey of how these two key archetypes (wasteland and paradise) were constitutive of early colonial and imperial attitudes towards nature, see Grove.
18. See, for example, Bohls; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; and especially Mitchell, who explores how European practices of viewing expected “everything . . . to be set up before one as though it were the mode or the picture of something” (12) in colonial encounters with difference in late nineteenth century Egypt and Paris.
19. For more on the “vivisector vivisected” trope, see Armstrong, particularly his chapters on Shelley and Wells.
20. For interesting notes on how Prendick’s misanthropy is probably a rewriting of *Gulliver’s Travels*, see Armstrong.
21. See Loomba, 64.
22. See Grosz, “Refiguring Bodies,” in *Volatile Bodies*.

23. See Lee and Mansbridge for particularly good studies of body philosophy and cultural identity, respectively, in *Salt Fish Girl*.
24. For a brief summary of a common Nüwa and Fuxi creation tale, see Schinz, 25-6.
25. For an examination of how the symbolization of animals is a tricky business, particularly in discourse of nationhood, considering the recalcitrance of the actual, biological animals being manufactured into images, see Baker.
26. See Ritvo. See also Malamud.
27. For a pressing, contemporary nonfictional example of how genetic piracy constitutes a form of neocolonialism, see Santos.
28. See Mackey for a thorough gloss on current snares and problems in Canadian identity politics.
29. That Lai recalls Stein with immediacy in this scene is unsurprising, considering that the novel's epigraph is from the Stein's "Farragut or a Husband's Recompense," from her *Useful Knowledge*: "I don't like rain. I don't mean that thunder scares me. You know very well what I mean I mean that sometimes I wish I was a fish with a settled smelling center."
30. See Sanders for an excellent discussion of *King Kong* and Freud. Also see Chow for an expansive discussion of the film's postcolonial politics.
31. See Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.
32. For a discussion of the "shared excremental vision" and "belly politics" of much transnational/postcolonial literature, see Esty.

Works Cited

- Adorno, Theodor. *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Continuum, 1973.
- Armstrong, Philip. *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Baker, Steve. *Picturing the Beast*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993.
- Berger, John. "Why Look at Animals?" In *About Looking*. New York: Pantheon, 1980. 3-30.
- Beston, Henry. *The Outermost House*. New York: Viking, 1962.
- Beuchamp, Gorman. "The Island of Dr. Moreau as Theological Grotesque." *Papers on Language & Literature* 15.4 (Fall 1979): 408-417.
- Birns, Nicholas. "'The Earth's Revenge': Nature, Diaspora, and Transfeminism in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*." *ACRAWSA: Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Association* 2.2 (2006): 15 pages. 17 Mar. 2009
<<http://www.acrawsa.org.au/ejournalVol2no22006.htm>>.
- Boehmer, Elleke. "Introduction." In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. 2nd ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2005.
- Bohls, Elizabeth A. "The Aesthetics of Colonialism: Janet Schaw in the West Indies, 1774-1775." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27.3 (1994): 363-390.
- Bowen, Roger. "Science, Myth, and Fiction in H. G. Wells's *Island of Dr. Moreau*." *Studies in the Novel* 8.3 (1976): 318-335.
- Chow, Rey. "King Kong in Hong Kong: Watching the 'Handover' from the USA." In *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Eds. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. London: Blackwell, 2000. 304-318
- Cilano, Cara, and Elizabeth DeLoughrey. "Against Authenticity: Global Knowledges and Postcolonial Ecocriticism." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 14.1 (2007): 71-88.
- Coetzee, J. M. *The Lives of Animals*. Ed. Amy Gutmann. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1999.

- Connor, J. T. "Cruel Knives? Vivisection and Biomedical Research in Victorian English Canada." *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 14.1 (1997): 37-64.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Robert Hampson. New York: Penguin, 1995.
- Dara, Evan. *The Lost Scrapbook*. Normal, IL: FC2, 1995.
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge Classics ed. London: Routledge, 2002.
- "enclosure." *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press. 28 Mar. 2009. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>>.
- Esty, Joshua D. "Excremental Postcolonialism." *Contemporary Literature* 40.1 (1999): 22-59.
- Fagan, Kevin, et al. "Trail of blood apparently led escaped tiger to victims." *San Francisco Chronicle*. 27 Dec. 2007: A1.
- Foucault, Michel. "Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity." In *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. Ed. Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 1996. 382-3.
- Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1996.
- Gould, Stephen Jay. *Wonderful Life*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1989.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994.
- Grove, Richard H. *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1995.

- Haraway, Donna J. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008.
- Harpham, Geoffrey Galt. *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1982.
- Harrison, Robert Pogue. *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Hendershot, Cyndy. "The Animal Without: Masculinity and Imperialism in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band.'" *Nineteenth Century Studies* 10 (1996): 1-32.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. New York and London: Verso, 2005.
- Jones, Donna V. "The Prison House of Modernism: Colonial Spaces and the Construction of the Primitive at the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition." *Modernism/modernity* 14.1 (2007): 55-69.
- Kennedy, Dale. *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj*. Illustrated ed. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.
- King Kong*. Dir. Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack. Perf. Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong, and Bruce Cabot. RKO Radio Pictures, 1932.
- Kovel, Joel. *The Enemy of Nature*. New York: Zed, 2007.
- LaDuke, Winona. *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. Cambridge, MA: South End, 1999.
- Lai, Larissa. "Political Animals and the Body of History." In *The Broadview Anthology of Expository Prose*. Eds. Tammy Roberts, Mical Moser, Don LePan, Craig Lawson, Julia Gaunce, and Jane Britton. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2002. 587-596.
- . *Salt Fish Girl: A Novel*. Toronto: Thomas Allen and Son, 2002.
- Lee, Tara. "Mutant Bodies in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*: Challenging the Alliance between Science and Capital." *West Coast Line* 44.38/2 (S2005): 94-109.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Blackwell, 1991.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1990.

- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Lukács, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Trans. Anna Bostock. Cambridge, MA: The MIT P, 1971.
- Love, Glen A. *Practical Ecocriticism*. Charlottesville and London: U of Virginia P, 2003.
- Mackey, Eva. *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Malamud, Randy. *Reading Zoos: Representations of Animals and Captivity*. New York: New York University P, 1998.
- Mansbridge, Joanna. "Abject Origins: Uncanny Strangers and Figures of Fetishism in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*." *West Coast Line* 44.38/2 (2005): 121-33.
- Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. New York: Harcourt, 2001.
- Marzec, Robert P. "Enclosures, Colonization, and the Robinson Crusoe Syndrome: A Genealogy of Land in a Global Context." *boundary 2* 29.2 (2002): 129-156.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Primacy of Perception*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1963.
- Moore, Marianne. "An Octopus." In *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*. New York: Macmillan/Viking, 1967. 71-76.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. Trans. Walter Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1967.
- Philmus, Robert M., and David Y. Hughes, eds. *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1975.
- Pickard, John. "Post and Rail Fences: Derivation, Development, and Demise of Rural Technology in Colonial Australia." *Agricultural History* 79.1 (2005): 27-49.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

- . “Scratches on the Face of the Country; Or, What Mr. Barrows Saw in the Land of the Bushman.” In *“Race,” Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985. 138-62.
- Rahman, Waliur. “Villagers beat tiger to death.” *BBC News*. 29 May 2003. British Broadcasting Corporation. 3 May 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2947758.stm>.
- Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1989.
- . *The Platypus and the Mermaid, and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1997.
- Rohman, Carrie. “Burning Out the Animal: The Failure of Enlightenment Purification in H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.” In *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Popular Culture*. Eds. Mary Sanders Pollock and Catherine Rainwater. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Rothwell, Emily. “Elephant Calves Measure Up.” *San Diego Zoo Blogs*. 7 Jan. 2009. San Diego Zoo. 11 Mar. 2009. <<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/wordpress/default/elephant-calves-measure-up/>>.
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1993.
- . *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- Sanders, Joseph E. “O’Brien and Monsters from the Id.” In *Scope of the Fantastic: Selected Essays from the First International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*. Eds. Robert A. Collins and Howard D. Pearce. Westport, CT and London: Greenwood, 1985. 205-17.
- Santos, Ricardo Ventura. “Indigenous Peoples, Postcolonial Contexts and Genomic Research in the Late 20th Century: A View from Amazonia (1960-2000).” *Critique of Anthropology* 22.1 (2002): 81-104.
- Schinz, Alfred. *The Magic Square: Cities in Ancient China*. Fellbach, Germany: Edition Axel Menges, 1996.
- Southey, Thomas. *Rise, Progress and Present State of Colonial Sheep & Wools, Continued from 1846, and Comprising Those of Australia, Van Diemen’s Land, New Zealand, South Africa, China, & With an Account of Our Home Production of Wool and Woollen Manufactures, and Embracing Remarks on the Use of Alpaca, Angora, & Cashmere Goats’ Wool; Together With Statistical Sketches of*

the Wool-Producing Colonies, Enumerated, Up to the Latest Dates Received From Each. London: Effingham Wilson, 1851.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1988. 271-313.

Strachan, Ian G. *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2003.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard. Cleveland, OH: Case Western Reserve UP, 1973.

"Unsigned review [of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*], *Guardian*." In *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 52-56.

Van Derbeken, Jaxon. "Mauling survivor said he yelled at tiger." *San Francisco Chronicle*. 17 Jan. 2008: A1.

Walters, Conrad. "Building a second ark." *Smh.com.au*. 22 Feb. 2008. The Sydney Morning Herald. 14 Mar. 2009.
<<http://www.smh.com.au/news/environment/building-a-second-ark/2008/02/22/1203467390101.html>>.

Wells, H. G. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Modern Library Paperback Ed. New York: Random House, 2002.

Williams, Basil. "Unsigned review [of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*] in *Athenaeum*, May 1896." In *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 51-52.

Youngs, Tim. "'The Plasticity of Living Forms': Beasts and Narrative in *The Octopus* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*." *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 1.1 (1997): 86-103.