‘Trope on Trope’:
Rethinking Nature Writing Pedagogy through Metaphor

Submitted by Isabel Rose Loveday Galleymore to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English in December 2015.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

(Signature) ……

Abstract

This thesis examines the predominant strategies that are currently used to teach nature writing in Higher Education in the UK and US based on a series of interviews with educators. Investigating and drawing on recent developments in ecocriticism, it assesses the limitations of pedagogical instruction, highlights the challenges faced in representing the environment, and establishes the need for alternative strategies. This research concentrates upon the ways in which current nature writing pedagogy emphasises 'direct perception' that distinguishes between a literal, scientific writing on the one hand and a figurative, imaginative writing on the other, and values the former above the latter. It also reveals the disparity between pedagogical intentions to foster responsibility for the environment in their students, and the shortage of exercises that engage with the threats currently posed to environments. Challenging these practices, this thesis argues that metaphor – an inclusive term for a range of figurative devices such as apostrophe and anthropomorphism – can guide important engagements that lead to new understandings of the environment. Close readings of poetry by a number of contemporary poets from the UK and US lead this argument. These establish how each poet's application of metaphor serves to draw attention towards particular qualities in materiality, different temporalities and places, nonhuman lives, and the issues affecting environments. Developing certain readings with twentieth-century metaphor theory further attests to the capacities of metaphor to guide new thinking. As nature writing courses and classes continue to be offered, this research proposes an alternative set of engagements that aim to enrich the relationship between the writer and the environment. A short collection of my poems, collected as an appendix, acts as further methodological investigation of metaphor in environmental representation. A second appendix demonstrates my interview methodology.

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Contents

Introduction

This thesis offers the first book-length critical analysis of current nature writing pedagogy that challenges recurring prescriptions given by educators on writing about nature, and proposes alternative strategies that serve to enrich the relationship between writer and the environment. Educators aim to introduce their students to a 'rich aesthetic and an ethical field', as John Elder describes his teaching (Personal Interview).[1] Yet, as one student admits 'I forgot it was meant to be about nature' (Student A, Personal Interview). Furthermore, much of this guidance on representing the environment in literature is anachronistic in the context of recent developments in ecocriticism by, for example, David Abram and Timothy Morton, that aim to explore a greater range of environments, aesthetic styles and their ethical implications. Nature writing tutor, Laird Christensen, who teaches at Green Mountain College, Vermont, US, currently advocates 'direct perception – not creative, but precise' to distinguish between scientific objectivity and an imaginative creativity, and encourages the former while discouraging the latter (Class Notes 26 September). Representative of much teaching, this instruction leads to engagements with the environment through fact, plain-speech and unquestioned ideas of authenticity, frequently focusing upon local environments and personal responses to them. In advocating these approaches, educators deny more creative forms of language comprising metaphor. As this thesis will argue, these strategies are unnecessarily restrictive and require development. Using ecocritical arguments that identify the need for new modes of environmental engagement, this thesis turns pedagogical dismissals of metaphor around by analysing how contemporary poets such as Jorie Graham and Jen Hadfield effectively deploy metaphor. Consequently, it becomes possible to establish how metaphor can guide new understandings of environments.

This study revolves around three key questions defined in the next three paragraphs. The first of these asks what prescriptions for writing about the environment dominate pedagogy, and what are their shortcomings? My analysis of

[1] Details of all personal interviews can be found in the bibliography. A certificate of ethical approval has made it possible to cite this material.

nature writing pedagogy, both from recent material on the topic and from the data I have collected from a series of interviews with teachers in Higher Education across universities in the UK and US between 2013-2014, aims to answer this question. Questioning educators' claims for and against literary styles, focusing on contradictions and ambiguities in their advice, and comparing their instructions to their intention for students to become environmentally-conscious, attests to certain weaknesses in current teaching. Furthermore, in comparison to pedagogy's set of prescriptions that centre upon 'direct perception' and warn against more creative, 'morally conscionable narrative devices', new studies in ecocriticism explore a fuller range of possibilities for literary representation of environments (David Petersen 185). As explained later, this argument builds upon Greg Garrard's ecocritical claims that acknowledge the existence of second-wave ecocriticism and the comparative lack of second-wave pedagogy.

How, then, might ecocritical thought provide alternative thinking on how to represent environments through literature? Examining key ecocritical arguments made in the last decade by David Abrams, Rob Nixon, Ursula Heise, Timothy Morton, Adam Dickinson and Kate Rigby, helps to support my identification of pedagogical shortcomings as ecocriticism takes issue with environmental engagements similar to those perpetuated by educators (as explained above, these engagements encourage 'direct perception'). More crucially, this study's examination of ecocriticism focuses upon the way ecocritics dismiss these approaches because their work identifies how the environment poses particular representational challenges that require new modes of thinking. For example, Abrams believes that scientific ways of describing the environment (similar to those advanced by educators) create deterministic accounts of environments that cannot represent the environment's 'multiform strangeness' (*Becoming Animal* 3). Similarly, Heise reconsiders the emphasis upon 'the local' – advocated by environmentalists and educators alike – in view of the global. In identifying the need for new modes of engagement, ecocritics raise the question of *how* to make these engagements – of what strategies a writer might use to conceive of, for example, the connection between the local and the global?

This study asks how literary styles based on figurative language might enable new perspectives of environments and thus counter teachers' dismissals of

metaphor and develop pedagogical strategy. As noted, figurative language has been avoided by tutors in nature writing – viewed as the antithesis to 'direct perception' of environments. A series of close readings demonstrate how metaphor works to extend perception of environments in the writing of predominantly UK and US twentieth and twenty-first century poets: Charles Tomlinson, Jorie Graham, Juliana Spahr, Les Murray, Roy Fisher, Mark Doty, Don McKay, and Jen Hadfield. For instance, Charles Tomlinson's use of metaphor responds to distinctions in the environment otherwise neglected by an approach focused on fact. Likewise, Juliana Spahr's use of synecdoche in her collection, *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs,* attends to implicit links between the local and the global. Evident from the discussion later in this introduction, my diverse grouping of environmental poets, some of whom I introduce newly as *environmental*, serves to challenge the canon of nature writing texts that seminar leaders continually present to their students as models that demonstrate their prescriptions. This affords refreshing ways of seeing and writing about environments. Furthermore, the poets examined in this thesis demonstrate clear and consistent uses of metaphor that are transferable to other genres, such as creative nonfiction. To develop the analyses of metaphor in poetry, this study examines 'interactive' metaphor theory that argues for metaphor's potential to assist perception and meaning.

Explained in greater detail in the chapter outline later in the introduction, Chapter One examines the pedagogical dualism between fact and metaphor and argues for metaphor's capacity to describe nuances in the environment. Chapter Two and Chapter Three aim to rethink pedagogical emphases upon the personal and the local through apostrophe and synecdoche. Challenging educators' views of anthropomorphism, Chapter Four argues that the device enriches environmental respect and responsibility. Lastly, Chapter Five and Six question pedagogical instructions for wonder and authenticity, and demonstrate how the structural dynamics of metaphor can enable reconsideration of such approaches to the environment.

In what follows I offer a survey of pedagogy, ecocriticism and metaphor that not only aims to situate the thesis, but also aims to explain and justify what might appear an unusual approach, combining as it does several theoretical and literary perspectives. The first survey outlines the current state of nature writing teaching

and identifies common prescriptions; the second section shows the development of ecocriticism and suggests how this development might prompt development in pedagogy; and the third survey on metaphor contextualises pedagogical anxiety surrounding metaphor and, conversely, demonstrates how metaphor deserves to be better received in considerations of environmental writing by examining recent theory and practice of metaphor.

A Note on Terminology

The phrase 'nature writing pedagogy' refers to creative writing courses with an environmental focus. Yet, as demonstrated by Green Mountain College, Vermont, courses will occasionally be titled 'Environmental Writing'. What distinguishes 'nature' and 'environment' and what position does this thesis take? In his influential *Keywords*, Raymond Williams alerted critics to how 'nature' is 'perhaps the most complex word in the language' (219). Kate Soper's study, *What Is Nature?*, went on to explore how the term contains a variety of contrary ideologies by focusing upon the long-held dichotomy between nature and culture and, paradoxically, long-held cultural conceptualisations of nature. The word has since come under greater scrutiny by Timothy Morton's *Ecology without Nature.* Summarised in more detail later, Morton finds 'nature' to be synonymous with the capitalised term 'Nature' and thus inextricably involved in an ideological system in which nature and culture are opposed categories. When asked why his course was entitled 'Environmental Writing' and not 'Nature Writing', Christensen echoes Soper and Morton in explaining it as an attempt not to perpetuate 'this false dichotomy between the natural world and the human world' (Personal Interview). Given that both Christensen and Morton offer the word 'environment' as a more neutral, outward-looking term, and given that this thesis approaches a range of environments and the interactions between humans and nonhumans, it has been decided to predominantly deploy the term 'environment'.

Regarding literary genre, nature writing primarily alludes to non-fiction texts. However, as courses expect a range of writing genres from their students, this thesis deploys the phrase broadly. Much scholarly debate concerns the nuances between nature poetry, environmental poetry and ecopoetry. While nature poetry

has associations with pristine nature (as suggested by the nature/culture dualism), the distinction between environmental poetry and ecopoetry is beginning to lose its potency as the latter becomes shorthand for the former. Ecopoetry, however, continues to convey a more activist undertone.[2] Not wanting to impose this activist agenda upon several poets who do not indicate such an agenda, the more encompassing phrase 'environmental poets' is used in this introduction. The term 'metaphor' is predominantly used in this introduction as an inclusive term for figurative devices such as apostrophe, synecdoche and anthropomorphism. Lastly, 'ego' is a term used by educators that refers to an unhealthy dominance of the self in encounters with environments, rather than referring to a greater theoretical or Freudian context.

Nature Writing Pedagogy

Nature writing pedagogy begun as a primarily US endeavour: the few available texts on the subject are by educators from the US, although occasionally these texts include British contributors. In the 1960s and 1970s, a growing environmental movement took place in the US: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* is often heralded as provoking the movement in 1962, before new environmental legislation was passed, and President Nixon introduced the National Environmental Education Act in 1969.[3] This act anticipated an international educational movement as the United Nations proposed the importance of environmental education in 1972.[4] The humanities took up this call for action as scholars saw an opportunity to engage with the sciences and create an interdisciplinary curriculum (see examination of Frederick O. Waage below). Educational theorists believed models for environmental education that combined literature and ecology were already in existence in the writing of John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson that, broadly speaking, combined scientific fact, environmental

[2] See Leonard Scigaj's essay *Contemporary Ecological and Environmental Poetry*, Scott Bryson's *Ecopoetry: a Critical Introduction* and *Earth Shattering: Ecopoems*, edited by Neil Astley.
[3] Some of the most influential of these legislative acts include the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Clean Air Acts of 1963 and 1967, and the Clean Water Act 1960.
[4] This UN Conference is frequently recognised as marking a surge in thought on environmental education by leading scholars in the field: see Joy Palmer's argument in *Environmental Education in the 21st Century*.

issues, and literary non-fiction – often presented from the first-person 'I'.[5] As the survey of pedagogy demonstrates in the following paragraphs, humanities scholars frequently prescribed the first-person 'I' in engaging with the environment through creative writing, but crudely adopted environmental science by emphasising the role of fieldwork in the few creative writing strategies they proposed. First-hand experience opposed classroom teaching, which, according to David Orr, a leading scholar on environmental education, provided 'secondhand', abstract facts to students (*Earth in Mind* 65). Yet, the emphasis upon fieldwork also recommended these experiential, factual engagements at the expense of the imagination, which became secondary – relegated to a position not unlike that of the classroom: abstract; divorced from the outdoors.

The beginnings of ecocriticism, marked by William Rueckert's essay 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism' in 1978, was also influenced by the environmental movement. Early ecocriticism dovetailed with environmental education as ecocritics similarly recognised Muir, Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson as key models in establishing a new interdisciplinary theoretical field based on environmentalist beliefs.[6] Christensen suggests that as ecocriticism grew so did nature writing pedagogy as the Association for Literature and the Environment (ASLE), used by scholars and teachers alike, collected sample syllabi (Email Correspondence).[7] In setting creative writing assignments for students to complete alongside their critical reading of these texts, pedagogical strategies for nature writing continued to emerge in fits and starts with similar prescriptions for empirical, factual styles that asserted the 'environmental' in 'environmental literature', and similarly advocated a personal 'I' to provide a literary voice. It might be assumed that these classes grew into postgraduate courses and modules with the increased attention to the genre of environmental literature and the rise of the creative writing course in Higher Education. Yet, Professor Sheryl St. Germain believes that this development arose from teachers such as herself becoming

[5] These writers are advocated by Frederick O'Waage and David Orr. Orr suggests 'Students should not be considered ecologically literate until they have read' these examples (*Ecological Literacy* 94).
[6] As a set of philosophic principles that followed the general thrust of the environmental movement, ecocriticism occasionally called upon Deep Ecology'. Defined by Arne Naess in 1973, Deep Ecology recognises the environment has a value of its own, which is independent of how humans might use it, and declares the threat that humans pose to the environment.
[7] Details of all email correspondence can be found in the bibliography.

'disenchanted' with the developments of ecocriticism (Email Correspondence). Before going on to chart these developments, the following survey on pedagogy demonstrates the predominance of certain prescriptions (anticipating Christensen's 'direct perception – not creative, but precise') and hints at their shortcomings.

In 1985, Frederick O. Waage provided the first collection of essays that included instances of nature writing pedagogy: *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources*. Waage situates the collection as a work that contributes to the environmental humanities and responds to the need for an interdisciplinary curriculum. Introducing the collection, Waage argues for Muir's texts as exemplary in demonstrating a blend of literary prose and debate upon conservation (xiii). The essays echo the previously outlined instructions for the empirical and the personal: Paul T. Bryant's essay advises students that 'nature writing must remain true to the objective facts of nature, but at the same time it must present the human response to nature' (93). Margaret McFadden accentuates the latter in asking her students to write an 'I in Nature' journal that helps them explore 'the relation of the self to nature' (102). Although published ten years later, John A. Murray's *The Sierra Club Nature Writing Handbook* (1995) does little to advance such prescription as he stresses the importance of a personal voice and 'the need for complete fidelity to the truth' (13-14). Resonating with Murray and Waage, *Stories in the Land* (1998), produced by the Orion Society as part of their drive for place-based education, holds similar prescriptions. John Elder, who edits this collection, argues for 'a perceptual process of discovery, celebration, and community' (15). Educators included in this book emphasise the potential for outdoor experiences in local environments to enable students to write field journals or environmental magazines. Possibilities that conflict with factual engagements arising from fieldwork are barely taken into account. When Lorain Varela does discuss poetry, her essay loses all sight of the environment in praising poetry's 'magical' properties and so unhelpfully perpetuates disconnection between the environment and the imagination (87).

On first impressions, *Into the Field* (1999), edited by Clare Leslie Walker and Ann Zwinger, presents similarly basic strategies. Walker and Zwinger explain that the book's focus will be 'writing about what you see' in yet another crude adoption of the outdoor classroom that hopes to nurture 'informed and active

stewards of the natural world' (v, back cover text). However, as John Tallmadge's exercise, 'Giving Voice to the Voiceless', asks students to explore the living creatures in their urban environment and speak from their perspective, Tallmadge's exercise reveals a perceptual process that utilises the imagination towards a more considered argument — that the nonhuman has a perspective different to that of humans. *The Alphabet of the Trees* (2001) includes these exercises by Tallmadge and others that 'move beond [sic] the more usual approaches' that emphasise factual styles or personal celebration of environments (xvi). Editors Christian McEwen and Mark Statman frame the anthology by stating that 'Our world today is in recognizable jeopardy' and an effort to save it depends upon 'the kinds of local knowledge and imaginative identification that are celebrated here' (xviii). Given this advancement toward more 'imaginative identification', it is disappointing that published in the same year, David Petersen's *Writing Naturally* (2001) returns discussion to fact and literary realism. Believing that nature writing is defined by nonfiction and a restrained use of the imagination, Petersen equates metaphor with narcissism and states 'Everything you claim has happened, must in fact have happened, just as told' (183).

Teaching in the Field (2003), edited by Hal Crimmel, explicitly states its pedagogical position in its title and contributes to considerations of interdisciplinary pedagogy. Yet, once again, this focus upon outdoor education produces rather banal exercises: in Fred Taylor's exercise students are requested to 'Go find a place, and sit there for fifteen to twenty minutes, and just look, and then describe what you see' (179). However, the volume also includes Terry Gifford's 'Teaching Environmental Values'. Gifford's interest in *ways* of seeing productively complicates Taylor's advice. Like Tallmadge, Gifford asks his students to give voices to environments and so challenges Petersen's prohibition of metaphor by using an anthropomorphic strategy. As Gifford explains, such an exercise aims to help students to become more environmentally sensitive and perceive objects as subjects (147).

Despite these small advancements, there have been no books on nature writing pedagogy since 2003. No essays in *Teaching about Place* (2008) directly speak to the creative genre. More surprisingly, the second edition of *Teaching North American Environmental Literature* (2008) is only concerned with interpreting

existing texts unlike its first edition that initiated this survey.[8] Nevertheless, the number of nature writing courses offered in Higher Education demonstrates its continued presence. My interviews with educators, alongside class-shadowing, discover similar instruction given by educators today that maintains the value of 'scientific' approaches. Indeed, Laird Christensen tells his students that he wants nature writing that is informed by 'direct perception – not creative, but precise' and thus continues a dualism between a kind of scientific precision and the creative imagination (Class Notes 26 September). Christensen's phrase – 'direct perception' – helps to define the recurring pedagogical prescriptions in nature writing today. Students are expected, for example, to identify their environments through field-guides and to produce 'authentic' writing. This not only advocates contestable terms such as 'authenticity', but also advocates complete abandonment of metaphor, which I argue against in Chapters One, Four and Six. Like Petersen's belief that metaphor is 'narcissistic', Jim Perrin, director of Bath Spa University's 'Travel & Nature Writing' course, finds metaphor 'forced' and 'unnatural'. In 'The Case against Metaphor', Brenda Miller also believes metaphor imposes human terms upon the environment (117).

The importance of 'direct perception' in current education is also evident in the frequent encouragement of nature essays that are simultaneously 'personal essays' to show students' direct connection with the environment. Likewise, these tutors hope to create students that are 'placed' by concentrating on local environments. As I argue in Chapters Two and Three, these prescriptions and intentions might be considered short-sighted. Furthermore, apparent throughout these prescriptions is the fact that despite all of the seminar leaders hoping that their teaching will create environmentally-conscious students, there is both prejudice and anxiety at engaging with these issues through nature writing. Perrin believes, for example, that such an engagement will only produce 'polemic'. As this summary shows, current pedagogy necessitates development.

Little criticism exists on pedagogical strategy: this study has not found any evidence of other approaches that raise the kind of issues indicated above. Greg Garrard, an influential British ecocritic, has published two essays that make some

[8] Note the first edition is titled differently: *Teaching Environmental Literature*.

headway in reviewing 'ecocritical pedagogy'.[9] In 'Ecocriticism and Education for Sustainable Development' (2007), Garrard expresses his concern for the lack of innovation he sees in pedagogical strategy. He claims this lack is rooted in 'the commitment of "first-wave" ecocritics to wilderness epiphany [that] skewed their attention toward the methods and assumptions of environmental education (EE)' (363). While I explain the difference between first and second-wave ecocriticism and its relevance in considering pedagogical strategy in the next section, Garrard believes that such an emphasis upon epiphany in ecocriticism (shared by the pedagogical emphasis on the personal 'I' as shown in certain examples above) comes at the expense of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) that stresses particular environmental issues. Garrard's response to this need for pedagogical innovation is to 'assess the effectiveness of our EE provision' at Bath Spa University in terms of its ability to foster environmental attitudes (369).

Although breaking some new ground in critiquing ecocritical pedagogy, Garrard's concept of 'effectiveness' and his methodological practice presents several flaws. First, he asks a series of closed questions to see 'whether stated commitment to environmental causes correlated to empirical knowledge': 'Have you ever taken part in recycling?', 'Name five native edible plants and their season of availability' (382). Quite why this particular correlation marks effectiveness when there has been no particular teaching on recycling or foraging is not explained. Only after this section does Garrard approach the wider import of his article by asking his students for definitions of ecocriticism and sustainable development. It is no wonder that students are, as Garrard describes, 'totally mystified' by his questions: the questions are completely divorced from the particular teaching methods that he sketches in previous pages of his article (382). This, coupled with his vague findings in which '20-40%' of students showed little environmental commitment means, paradoxically, that Garrard cannot learn how to change the syllabus. A more productive endeavour might be to ask whether (and how) certain exercises, or readings on the course, have developed awareness about the environment. A fully qualitative, rather than quantitative methodology, has the potential to better connect the teaching to the student learning.

[9] This term refers to courses on ecocriticism that centre upon the interpretation of existing texts through ecocritical theory, rather than courses on creative writing about the environment.

Garrard's 'Problems and Prospects in Ecocritical Pedagogy' (2010) takes a different angle by exploring place-based ecocritical pedagogy. Like his previous concern with epiphany, he berates 'the momentary revelation – the epiphany – that educates' in Hal Crimmel's *Teaching in the Field* (235). Garrard looks for pedagogy that unsettles these environmental engagements and that answers Timothy Morton's ecocritical call to think of 'ecology without nature' (238). This call is positioned under Garrard's aforementioned subtitle 'Second-wave ecocriticism – but not pedagogy' that, as aforementioned, highlights pedagogy's lack of progression compared to that of ecocriticism (237). Garrard finds some new thinking around lococentrism (or place-centricism) in Mitchell Thomashow's *Bringing the Biosphere Home* (2002): a pedagogical text that aims to foster environmental identity. Yet, because Thomashow oscillates between the possibility and impossibility of dwelling in place in view of historical and contemporary migration and transience, Garrard deems his pedagogy paradoxical (240). Although rightly observed, Garrard fails to recognise how this inconsistency is characteristic of Thomashow's exercises. One is here and also there in following Thomashow's prescription to draw upon the memory of a place in order to realise the changes that have altered it today. In turn, too busy with pinpointing paradox, Garrard neglects to realise the pedagogical progress made in comparison to Crimmel. After all, Thomashow's perceptual exercises does not emphasise 'epiphany'. Furthermore, responding to Garrard's previous essay, Thomashow's work, unlike Crimmel's, responds to the issue-led criteria of ESD.

Concluding this investigation of pedagogical criticism, it seems Garrard aims to cover too much over the course of two articles. As well as failing to deploy a suitable methodology for his project, he neglects the valuable potential of certain pedagogical strategies. Far more progress *is* needed in pedagogical technique, but by simply critiquing strategies – and not suggesting ways in which these strategies might be developed – how can second-wave pedagogy be instigated? The lack of scholarly reception to Garrard's work might further indicate its limitations.[10]

[10] Garrard's 'Ecocriticism and Education for Sustainability' is briefly cited by scholars who draw upon his definitions of environmental texts and sustainability, but not upon his pedagogical method (see Roman Bartosch's *EnvironMentality* and Daniel J. Philippon's article 'Sustainability and the Humanities: An Extensive Pleasure'). Likewise, Sidney I. Dobrin cites Garrard's 'Prospects and

Consequently, this thesis intends a far more extensive, analytical and productive study than that offered by Garrard. Over the course of six chapters, I examine pedagogical strategies by a range of educators by investigating the process of these strategies: attending to educators' guidance and exercises. Furthermore, the level of detail involved in this examination of pedagogy enables investigation of where educators conflict with other educators, where they suggest innovative methods and – crucially – how these methods might be developed. Rather than simply calling for second-wave pedagogy as Garrard does, it is possible to show what it might actually look like.

The different methodology used for this study depended, in the first instance, on my invitation to educators to send relevant syllabuses via the ASLE mailing list. This prominent, international mailing list for scholars provided a good initial picture of nature writing in Higher Education, but few responses came from the UK. Internet searches filled some of these gaps, and also revealed the existence of many short courses outside academia. In comparison to these short courses that are often one-off occurrences lasting from as little as one hour to a maximum of five days, the duration of courses in HE (from one term to an entire academic year) have taken precedence in this research because they show a broader development of exercises. From these findings, contact was made with those courses most appropriate, and interviews and class-shadowing proposed. The ability to travel to UK-based courses led to material from the universities of Warwick, Swansea, Royal Holloway (University of London), Bath Spa, and Essex. Given the similar, if not increased, emergence of courses in the US, data was collected through Skype calls with University of Iowa State, Chatham University, Pittsburgh, and a four-week residential period at Green Mountain College, Vermont, which also allowed discussion with Middlebury College, Vermont. Because of their ongoing commitment to teaching the subject, two interviews were also conducted with non-HE educators because they frequently deliver classes to groups of writers.

Conscious of Garrard's errors, this thesis employs a qualitative methodology. Rather than asking closed questions, this methodology comprised

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Problems in Ecocritical Pedagogy' to discuss ecocriticism's flaws rather than discuss pedagogy (see 'Through Green Eyes: Complex Visual Culture and Post-Literacy').

semi-structured interviews to enable exploration of the prescriptions in current pedagogy, the arguments supporting them and their possible effects. After all, a teacher's prescription appears in many different forms. Prescription appears explicitly when educators discuss a particular exercise, but also emerges in educators' descriptions of what is *not* wanted in student writing. The semi-structured interview also allowed questions to be tailored to suit the distinct syllabuses and allowed the opportunity to ask questions raised by interviewee responses. Three examples of the questions posed to educators are included as an appendix to this thesis in order to demonstrate the similarities and differences between the interviews. Semi-structured interviews with students were also conducted. These aimed to reveal whether the tutors' intentions were successfully communicated and what effect they had on student attitudes toward the environment. Considering the material sourced from all interviews, it is important to acknowledge the difference between a real-time interview about pedagogical approach, especially one that includes an element of informal conversation, and a written piece on the same subject. The material sourced from these interviews is to be considered more spontaneous and 'off-the-cuff' than printed matter in which an educator has had the opportunity to fully prepare their line of argument. Class-shadowing supplemented interview procedure by recording how pedagogical prescriptions manifest in the classroom through discussion. In each instance, every possible action was taken to avoid influencing the class. However, class-shadowing was harder to arrange, and recognising the restrictions of focusing on one class in which only so much activity and discussion takes place, it was decided a better sense of the course was more efficiently sourced from interviews. A small amount of data comes from handouts given to students by the educators and from email correspondence with educators that sought to clarify aspects of the interview material. These informed decisions on methodological practices aim to ensure an accurate and rich discussion for the thesis.

Having surveyed the prescriptions that persist in nature writing pedagogy, hinted at their shortcomings, revealed the current lack of pedagogical critique, and explained the methodology underpinning my critique of pedagogy, I now turn to study ecocriticism. This next survey establishes how ecocriticism shares, but ultimately departs from, pedagogical prescription and how ecocriticism's departure

helps to develop new pedagogical opportunities.

Ecocriticism

This survey of ecocriticism demonstrates how ecocriticism broadly shares the prescriptive tone and ethical goals described of nature writing pedagogy in the previous survey. Early ecocriticism demonstrates many correspondences with how pedagogy currently conceptualises the environment. However as recent developments in ecocriticism begin to question these early conceptualisations, ecocriticism conveys new prescriptions for how to engage with the environment. While professors such as Andrew Motion admit to not being 'au-fait' with these recent arguments, and Sheryl St. Germain describes being 'disenchanted' by these 'irrelevant' developments,[11] this study finds value in them (Personal Interview, Email Communication). Indeed, reviewing this movement in ecocriticism helps to anticipate how this study uses ecocriticism to challenge pedagogical prescriptions and develop much-needed alternative strategies in its six chapters. This survey thus shows how first-wave ecocriticism and pedagogy share particular approaches toward nature writing and the potential of second-wave ecocriticism to advance these pedagogical strategies. Lawrence Buell's landmark text, *The Environmental Imagination* (1995) provides a much-quoted definition of ecocriticism as an approach to literature 'in the spirit of environmentalist praxis' (430 n.20). Another ecocritical pioneer, Cheryll Glotfelty, writes in response to 'What is Ecocriticism?' that the task is to 'encourage others to think seriously about the relationship of humans to nature'. Ecocriticism thus draws attention to literary representations of environments and interprets them as ethical models with which to reconsider the relationship between humans and the environment. This means that as ecocritics respond to literary representation, they are also involved in advocating particular methods of engaging with environments. In what follows, I map a crucial movement between first and second-wave ecocriticism and its impact upon ecocritical

[11] By way of context, St. Germain rather cryptically suggests that ecocritical developments that involved poststructuralism and deconstruction (explained later in the Introduction) are 'irrelevant' because such work has more to do with 'self promotion' (Email Correspondence). In doing so, St. Germain suggests that these developments are indicative of fashionable trends in critical theory and not actually useful to environmental engagements.

prescription. This shows how second-wave ecocriticism explores different environments, apprehends how the environment poses representational challenges (previously unacknowledged by first-wave ecocritics) and then suggests how such ecocriticism might be used to prompt alternative pedagogical strategies. Furthermore, given my argument on how metaphor develops and guides these alternative strategies, a summary of the ecocritical work on metaphor accomplished so far is provided.

Given these aims, the texts that form this survey are taken from 1985-2012 and have been chosen because of their boldness in calling for, and indeed, criticising, particular forms of literary engagement with environments. The majority of ecocritics cited are from the US as they more readily offer a prescriptive tone that echoes the prescriptions found in pedagogy. However, ecocriticism from the UK and US is generally thought of as co-constitutive.[12] In *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005), Lawrence Buell presents a much-cited definition of first and second-wave ecocriticism. He explains that first-wave ecocritics focused upon a pristine nature divorced from humanity, and how second-wave ecocriticism challenged this by taking into account the entangled character of nature and culture and thus considered a greater range of environments. Yet, as I argue, this transition is also marked by an awareness of the challenges involved in representing the environment that consequently necessitate the need for new thinking about the environment.

John Elder's *Imagining the Earth* (1985, 1996) is often described as a pioneer work of ecocriticism. Elder explores writers' relationships with nature that mark a turn 'from estrangement to reconciliation' (1). Elder highlights literary celebrations of nature as he shows how poets Gary Snyder and Wendell Berry, in a tradition started by the Romantics and Transcendentalists, 'advance […] connectedness, through reverence for nature' (39). Elder echoes the pedagogical emphasis upon personal response to the environment and, paralleling his own pedagogical emphasis upon the local in *Stories in the Land*, he stresses the importance of how a reverence for nature springs from 'one chosen place' (39). Continuing other pedagogical emphases upon empirical observation, Elder draws

[12] See Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (203).

attention to Snyder's 'unelaborated' expression that conveys 'groundedness' in the writing (39). A decade prior to Buell's definition of first and second-wave ecocriticism, Buell wrote *The Environmental Imagination* (1995). Predominantly concerned with Thoreau's writing, Buell also echoes pedagogical instruction for objective, empirical writing as he explores nineteenth-century realism and the potential for mimetic representation of the environment. This interest in realism begins to echo the literary celebration of nature put forward by Elder. Indeed, Buell's response to Gerard Manley Hopkins's 'God's Grandeur' epitomises the latter as Buell exclaims 'how delicately responsive the poem is to the stimuli it registers!' (98).

Buell's strategy, however, is challenged by ecocritic Dana Phillips. As it becomes evident that Buell's ecocritical approach is focused upon celebrating realistic depictions of nature (which, in turn, reductively frame the text), Dana Phillips fears 'ecocriticism will lapse into merely the appreciative mode' (*The Truth of Ecology* 168). Phillips criticises ecocriticism's lack of theory and draws upon the arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified to counter Buell's argument (9).[13] Phillips's argument is anticipated by the beginning of second-wave ecocriticism that initially put all its energy into interrogating first-wave assumptions. In *Sustainable Poetry* (1999), for example, Leonard Scigaj argues language that divorces '*dulce* from *utile*, is not sustainable' (79). Seeking more than an appreciative mode, Scigaj develops a poststructuralist argument that looks for environmental writing that is aware of 'the limits of language' (38). David W. Gilcrest similarly advises a certain self-reflexive awareness of language's limits in *Greening the Lyre* (2002). Guided by Scigaj, Gilcrest suggests 'an environmental poetics informed by linguistic scepticism can serve to establish a more intimate and responsive relationship toward nature' (133). Yet, this scepticism is completely undermined by Gilcrest's belief in the possibility for an unmediated perception of the environment that can be represented through plain language. Gilcrest's proposal resonates with Buell's earlier belief in literary realism. Furthermore, suggesting a 'diminishment of the self or ego', this unmediated perception denies metaphor. Resonating with Christensen's pedagogical belief in 'direct perception –

[13] Phillips refers to Roland Barthes's essay 'Myth Today'.

not creative, but precise', Gilcrest argues that metaphor is rooted in a Romantic sensibility and indicative of anthropocentrism as it 'creates a new world by means of more self' – a claim explored in the next survey on metaphor (127).

Given Dana Phillips's criticism of Buell, it is unsurprising that Phillips's *The Truth of Ecology* (2003) challenges the passivity of Gilcrest's unmediated mode. Phillips states that writers who try to transform 'into bell-like instruments and empty vessels of pure responsiveness', although attempting an ethical act, undermine the active, participatory nature of being ethical (220). Departing from an interrogation of first-wave approaches, however, Timothy Morton proposes new approaches. Morton's landmark text of second-wave ecocriticism, *Ecology without Nature* (2007) takes previous scepticism regarding environmental representation to new heights. Influenced by the philosophy of Bruno Latour who challenges 'monolithic conceptions of Nature' in *Politics of Nature,* Morton explores the relationship between nature and the capitalised term 'Nature' and the ideologies they express (17). Asking this question allows Morton to develop the field of ecocriticism by interrogating traditional ways of representing the environment, including Buell's literary realism, which Morton calls 'ecomimesis' and likens to 'kitsch' (31-35, 160). Morton draws upon Karl Marx and Jacques Derrida to reflect upon cultural constructions of nature and to consider how deconstruction helps to explore points of contradiction in these conceptions. Having disturbed traditional representations of nature, Morton evokes Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* in stating that ecocritics should follow the phrase: 'not afraid of non-identity' (13). Such argument reverses Elder's wish to progress 'from estrangement to reconciliation' with regard to human relationships with environments.

Morton is a key thinker in this movement that discerns other understandings of nature, the difficulties of representing these different natures, and thus the need for new thinking. This movement influences the majority of ecocritics deployed in this thesis to challenge pedagogy and develop alternative strategies. For example, Chapter Three draws attention to Ursula Heise's desire to create environmental commitment in an age of globalisation: can there be a way of adapting Elder's 'reverence for nature that is rooted in one chosen place', shared by many nature writing educators, for a more global outlook? Second-wave ecocriticism realises the environment is not immediately identifiable: there are challenges posed by the

environment that necessitate new considerations of representational strategies in order to engage with the environment. Such awareness continues in material ecocriticism: an emerging field dedicated to engaging ecocriticism with the 'material turn'. The particular challenges that material ecocritics concentrate on concern the active matter of environments: what representational strategies are needed to explore new understandings of material agency and narrative? This overlap between second-wave ecocriticism and material ecocriticism is acknowledged by Chapter Four's examination of the New Materialist philosophy of Jane Bennett (see next survey on metaphor).

Given it will be argued that metaphor affords a range of representational strategies with which to respond to the challenges identified by ecocriticism (and thus develop pedagogical strategies), it is necessary to summarise ecocritical studies on metaphor that precede this study before moving on to survey metaphor itself. Often, ecocritical arguments on metaphor ask, as Glotfelty asks in her aforementioned article, 'How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it?' William J. Mills's article, 'Metaphorical Vision', exemplifies such study in regarding the metaphors of 'nature as book' and 'nature as machine' in Western attitudes through history. However, rather than exploring prevalent metaphors already in existence, this study concerns itself with exploring the processes of metaphor. Adam Dickinson's thesis *Lyric Ethics* (2005) is the first book-length ecocritical argument that approaches metaphor in this way. Dickinson's argument derives from his distrust of the literary realism upheld by Buell and Gilcrest. Like Morton, he accentuates the need to 'make an issue of the unquestioned reality of materiality' and finds a productive means is through metaphor's uncertain 'is/is not' dynamic (39). Although Chapter Five adopts Dickinson's ideas on the relationship between the environment and metaphor, Chapter Two, Five and Six also note how Dickinson's approach – too broad in places and too narrow in others – requires development. A similar problem arises in Scott Knickerbocker's *Ecopoetics* (2012). Knickerbocker declares the need for 'sensuous poesis' to 'perform the complexity, mystery, and beauty of nature rather than merely represent it' (159). Given its appreciative tone, this argument suggests a piece of first-wave ecocriticism. However, Knickerbocker's call to 'embrace artifice — not for its own sake, but as a way to relate meaningfully to the natural world' indicates a position more conscious

of representational difficulties. Indeed, Knickerbocker's emphasis on 'relation' indicates an acknowledged distance, or irreconcilability, between the representation of the environment and the environment itself. However, as demonstrated in Chapter One and Chapter Six, Knickerbocker's analysis of metaphor is not thorough enough. The fact that metaphor is only considered as one form of artifice amongst many others (such as alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhyme) seems to distract Knickerbocker from making stronger claims about metaphor.

Another three texts defend figurative devices, yet the first two of these appear oblivious of second-wave ecocriticism's emphasis upon scepticism and representational challenge. Bryan L. Moore's *Ecocentric Personification* (2008) discusses personification from early Christian times to contemporary writing to argue that personification represents interrelationships with other beings and increases sociality with animals. Similarly, in 'Ecocriticism, New Historicism and Romantic Apostrophe' (2005), Helena Feder intends 'close examination of a formal device', but does little more than state that apostrophe 'restore[s] our connectedness' with nature via her readings of Wordsworth and Coleridge (43). John Simons's *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation* (2005) departs from these texts through deeper examination of figurative connection. Simons does this by distinguishing between different forms of anthropomorphism: 'fable', 'trivial', and 'strong'. Simons's 'strong' anthropomorphism claims the attribution of human qualities does not obliterate nonhuman experience but illuminates it to generate an exploration of difference – not unlike Morton's call for ecocritics that are 'not afraid of non-identity'. However as explained in Chapter Four, like Knickerbocker, Simons's brief readings mean that he is unable to create a detailed analysis of the particular strategies that underpin 'strong' anthropomorphism.

Clearly, much more needs to be explored with regard to metaphor and how it might help to conceive of environments differently. As asked in Chapter Six of this study, what other structures might metaphor offer to environmental thinking apart from the 'is/is not' structure? Similarly, in Chapter Four, how might anthropomorphism apply to the kinds of materials that lead discussion in material ecocriticism? One major drawback shared by previous ecocritical arguments on

metaphor is their lack of engagement with metaphor theory, which, as I demonstrate, can deepen and advance consideration of metaphor in literary works. Furthermore, these ecocritics neglect to situate their appraisals of metaphor against the hostilities that their peers feel toward metaphor, which could consequently help to guide stronger, more meticulous arguments about metaphor. The following survey aims to show how metaphorical engagements with the environment have been made and how this has led to unfavourable attitudes towards metaphor in pedagogy that are consistent with concerns in early ecocriticism. In going on to summarise how certain contemporary poets and theorists have approached nature through metaphor, the survey demonstrates the need for such unfavourable attitudes to be reassessed.

Metaphor

As explained, this thesis argues for the ways in which metaphor can guide much-needed alternative strategies for nature writing pedagogy. Strategies based on metaphor go beyond the pedagogical preoccupation with 'direct perception' and *extend* perception of environments. Yet, as discerned by the discussion of pedagogy, and ecocriticism to a lesser extent, metaphor is heavily criticised. Metaphor has a very long and complex history that is far beyond the scope of this survey. However, given this study's argument for metaphor, and the dismissive attitudes it aims to overthrow, the first half of this survey comprises writers and philosophers who figure nature anthropocentrically through metaphor and who warn of the detrimental capacities of metaphor. As this helps to provide a background to contemporary pedagogical anxieties, the second half of this survey then summarises writers and philosophers who, conversely, deploy metaphor to engage with the environment as a subject in itself, or who claim there to be a cognitive power in metaphor that aids perception of the world. This in turn helps to anticipate this thesis's argument on metaphor.

With its foundations in Ancient Greece, metaphor was viewed by philosophers primarily as a rhetorical tool. While this has established long-lasting principles of metaphor, it has also had repercussions for how the environment features in metaphor through history and the tensions it produces. In *Poetics*,

Aristotle describes metaphor as the difference between beautiful and trivial description. He suggests that metaphor is essential for the poet's role as imitator, but also maintains the importance of moderation in using metaphorical language. These points are expanded in *Rhetoric*: Aristotle describes metaphor as a 'bringing-before-the-eyes' that makes the lifeless living, and the need for 'appropriate' metaphors that are powerfully persuasive (3.11,1411b). Such an understanding continues in current discourse. Educator John A. Murray cites Aristotle in describing how nature writing can be brought 'vividly to life' through metaphor. Yet, as demonstrated further in Chapter One, Murray also continues Aristotle's warnings in stating that metaphor can cause 'substantial damage to structures of meaning, somewhat like power tools misused by the unskilled' (74). Cicero and Quintilian followed Aristotle in considering metaphor as a rhetorical device that, despite having the potential to confuse the listener or reader, was ultimately deployed 'to assist meaning' and for 'embellishment' (Quintilian *The Orator's Education* 8.6,4). In the introduction to *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, Mark Johnson argues that the continuance of Aristotle's theory leads to metaphor's further confinement within the trivium: separated from logic and viewed as only a method of communication for 'twenty-three hundred years' (8).[14] With early Christianity, this rhetorical device became an important means with which to convey spiritual truths and,[15] as such metaphors began to feature the environment, it becomes possible to begin situating certain pedagogical concerns about metaphor's manipulation of nature through these.

The medieval appetite for beast fables demonstrates classical definitions of metaphor as a communicative and persuasive device and demonstrates the manipulative potential of metaphor. In these texts animals were anthropomorphised in order to convey key moral stories. Figuratively appropriating the animal in this way has rightly garnered much ecocritical distrust. Citing Aesop's *Fables* and the *Roman de Renart* in his aforementioned work, *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation,* John Simons argues that 'the role of

[14] The trivium comprised logic, grammar and rhetoric. Used as a basis for education, this strategy intended to facilitate clear and rational thinking.

[15] Mark Johnson cites St. Thomas Aquinas who argued that spiritual truths could be better understood through material comparison (10). It is also possible to see how Aquinas may have been influenced by St. Augustine who held similar beliefs (see Marcus Ehrlich's 'Metaphor and Image in Medieval Philosophy').

animals in the fable is almost irrelevant. They are merely vehicles for the human and are not, in any way, presented as having physical or psychological existence in their own right' (119). The practice of metaphor as a 'bringing-before-the-eyes', as described by Aristotle, serves to draw attention to the human story at the expense of the animal. Texts such as Geoffrey Chaucer's 'The Nun's Priest's Tale' provide further example as to how anthropomorphic animals can be used not only to teach moral lessons, but also to inveigh against powerful institutions such as the church. The way in which anthropomorphism appropriates the nonhuman body in order to communicate human concerns evokes Andrew Motion's pedagogical statement that anthropomorphism is 'predatory', which leads the investigation in Chapter Four.

This anthropocentric attitude towards the environment that was enacted through metaphor continues in Renaissance writing that adopted the allegorical form alongside classical considerations of metaphor's political and ornamental powers. Evoking Aristotle's conception of metaphor as rhetoric in 'A Defence of Poetry', Philip Sidney states that metaphor should not be believed in itself, but that metaphor communicates truth. Sidney praises Aesop's ability to convey 'virtue from those dumb speakers' (animals) and evokes Virgil when reflecting upon the pastoral genre in which 'the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience' (87, 95). Sidney creates his own allegory in *Arcadia* as he finds the pastoral a means of expressing political thought. With such metaphors the environment becomes a backdrop for thought on class, wealth and morality. This anthropocentric potential of metaphor concerns Brenda Miller who, analysed in Chapter Six, argues against metaphor in her teaching because she sees it as appropriating and changing the environment when 'I want the world to just remain as it is, firmly itself' (117). The decorative potential of metaphor, described by Aristotle and Cicero as pleasing, was not forgotten during this period and Miller's concerns are similarly applicable here. The popularity of the poetic blazon relied on metaphor that frequently praised women by depicting them in terms of the natural world. Thomas Campion's poem, 'There is a Garden in Her Face', exemplifies this descriptive mode that was so commonplace Shakespeare parodied it in Sonnet 130. Although Shakespeare provides a refreshing series of anti-metaphors ('coral is far more red than her lips'

red'), the predominant metaphor between pristine nature and women reveals another anthropocentric approach of the environment as lilies, roses and corals are used to represent human beauty.[16]

The relationship between metaphor and the environment attracts further criticism focusing upon the contrived nature of representations. Given their more unusual, far-fetched conceits, the metaphysical poets came under attack from eighteenth-century neoclassicists. Resonating with Jim Perrin's pedagogical concern of metaphor as 'forced' and 'unnatural' as previously discussed, Samuel Johnson described John Donne's metaphors as 'yoked by violence': 'nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions' (*Lives of the Poets* 348). Donne's 'The Flea' exemplifies Johnson's concern as Donne compares the blood that a flea has sucked from the male speaker and his female lover to sexual intercourse. In highlighting (perhaps even celebrating) the flea, it is possible to read Donne's poem as an environmental poem that evokes second-wave ecocriticism and the work of Timothy Morton in the way it reconsiders an otherwise undesirable form of nature. However, the fact that the figurative representation of the flea continues to function as rhetoric in the way it is deployed by the male speaker in order to persuade his lover into bed, renews concerns of anthropocentrism discussed with regard to allegory. Other concerns are also raised in evaluating the effect of contrived or 'forced' metaphors. Arguing for the importance of clear communication in a social context in his seminal work *Leviathan*, philosopher Thomas Hobbes drew attention to the misleading potential of metaphor as he saw 'Metaphors, and senslesse and ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui*; and reasoning upon them, is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities' (1.5).[17] Analysed in Chapter Five, educator Chris Kinsey warns of the potential for 'whimsical' figurative language to create a similar insubstantiality, or even meaninglessness, in nature writing.

In his influential ecocritical text, *Romantic Ecology,* Jonathan Bate identifies

[16] Further criticism of these metaphors is presented in the arguments of ecofeminist ecocritics such as Val Plumwood who argue that this relationship between women and nature finds both women and nature as inferior beings. See also Jacqueline Vanhouette's ecofeminist thesis that argues such blazons reflect colonial destruction of natural resources: '*My Prospect Lies upon that Coast': The Feminine Conquered in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella.*

[17] See also John Locke who continues to praise the anthropomorphic fable for its pedagogical role in 'Some Thoughts Concerning Education', yet damned metaphor's less straightforward and productive qualities in 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding'.

the Romantics as expressing a shift in attitudes to both language and the natural environment in reacting to the Enlightenment and its emphasis upon rational thought. Indeed, far from being misleading, the Romantics believed metaphor revealed the origins of language, and a closer relationship between humans and environments (as noted in Chapter One with regard to Giambattista Vico and Percy Bysshe Shelley). Such attitudes began to shift metaphor from a solely rhetorical device, to a device that could be associated with cognition. However, consistent with concerns about the appropriative and contrived potential of metaphor, new apprehensions arise in contemporary thought as to whether such uses of metaphor impose the self's imagination on to the environment at the expense of the environment. In 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality', Wordsworth found an animate force in the land, the sea and even in the pansy at his feet. Such uses of metaphor express life in matter and suggest potential modes for material ecocriticism to follow.[18] Yet, Wordsworth's references to an animate environment serve to produce a wider reflection upon youth, age and mortality. In turn, ecocritics previously mentioned, such as David W. Gilcrest, argue that these metaphors frequently employ nature as a prompt for inner speculation and the 'metaphoric consciousness' of the Romantics is symptomatic of a 'poetics of more self' (128). This criticism provides some background to David Petersen's pedagogical concern that metaphor is narcissistic and symptomatic of an overactive ego.

However, amongst these criticisms of metaphor, there remains the possibility that metaphor might be used to describe the environment as a subject in its own right. In 'Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself', Wallace Stevens recognises how unifying the human mind and the environment through metaphor comes at the cost of forgetting the independent reality of nature itself when he writes of 'a scrawny cry from outside / Seemed like a sound in his mind' (2-3). Although representative of Stevens's larger battle between the self and reality, his attempt to perceive 'the thing itself' demonstrates the broad tenets of Modernist thought. Ezra Pound proposed 'Direct treatment of the "thing" ' and thus to 'Go in fear of abstraction' in his essay 'A Retrospect' (3, 5). Such principles are evident in

[18] Chapter One's examination of David Abram's ecocritical argument supports such thought. Jane Bennett (see *Vibrant Matter* xvii-xviii) and Heather I. Sullivan (see *Material Ecocriticism* 82) also make gestures towards the relationship between Romanticism and the 'material turn'.

the writing of Marianne Moore as she takes nature as a subject worthy of examination in itself. Her use of metaphor compares nature to other forms to generate a specific description: in ‘The Fish’, the mussel shells are ‘crow-blue’, the crabs are ‘like green / lilies’ (3, 23-24). Evoking the kind of vividness that John A. Murray describes metaphor can achieve in a pedagogical context, this gradual shift in the way metaphor was practised in writing about the environment (without any other obvious anthropocentric agenda) anticipates the metaphorical strategies exercised by the poets closely examined in this thesis.

While the poets studied in this thesis cannot be said to belong to any one particular movement and, as such, their grouping may seem unusual, many correspondences bring these poets together and make for a significant study. Writing between the mid-twentieth century and the present day, these writers frequently exhibit a Romantic and Modernist literary inheritance. Demonstrated in Chapter One and Two, Charles Tomlinson and Jorie Graham explicitly refer to Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore as literary influences in how they approach the environment. Yet, the poets analysed in this thesis differ from their literary antecedents in the way they take a step forward from realising environments as objects of perception, as described of Moore, and apprehend the difficulty of representing environments by considering their innumerable distinctions; futures; interconnections; narratives; indeterminacy, and their refusal to be identified by words. These perspectives are to some degree influenced by the fact that several of the poets associate themselves with the principles of ecopoetry: a poetic movement that, as previously described, aims to address the environment in view of the issues that currently threaten it. Yet, what brings these poets into closer comparison is the self-reflexive quality in their practice. This self-reflexivity is occasionally deployed to scrutinise their Romantic and Modernist influences, but more widely this self-reflexivity concerns their choices to use particular literary styles and strategies for representing environments. This self-consciousness in each poet’s work generates informed uses of metaphor that respond to their search for more ethical strategies. As literary devices are questioned and negotiated in view of their intentions toward representing environments, the poets appear to alternate between environmental poet and ecocritic. Study of these self-reflexive poets thus strengthens ecocritical arguments discussed in each chapter,

contributes to the critical approach taken towards current education, and demonstrates the potential for figurative language to lead alternative pedagogical strategies.

As aforementioned, this grouping of poets challenges the canon of nature writers that recurs in pedagogy and demonstrates the importance of less constrained set reading lists if a greater awareness of the environment is to be achieved. The very decision to study poets instead of other types of writers emphasises this point: despite educators expecting students to write in a range of genres, nonfiction and creative nonfiction texts dominate their reading lists. Indeed, the reading list belonging to the Wild Writing Masters course at the University of Essex neglects to include any poetry. This study's attention to poetry aims to redress the balance. Furthermore, when poetry does feature on reading lists, it often works to complement the nonfiction texts. The work of Mary Oliver is one example here. Set as reading by Laird Christensen, Sheryl St. Germain and Jon Gower, amongst other educators, Oliver's work extends the Transcendentalist tradition exemplified by Thoreau, as John Elder argues in *Imagining the Earth* (217-219). Furthermore, as Elder's argument on Oliver's connection to Thoreau indicates, the poetry of Mary Oliver has received much attention from first-wave ecocriticism. Having outlined the way in which second-wave ecocriticism has advanced consideration of literary engagements with environments, this point on Oliver's presence on reading lists underlines the need to introduce alternative literary voices to facilitate new pedagogical strategies and thus develop conceptualisations of environments.

The Poets and Metaphor Theorists Studied in This Thesis

Charles Tomlinson (1927 – 2015) initially parallels pedagogical calls for fact and warnings of 'egotistical' metaphor in his poems. Yet, questioning the definition of 'fact' leads Tomlinson to consider metaphor's potential to represent what he calls the 'variegated excess' in environments and draw attention toward the particularities, of, say, the sea's colour. Jorie Graham (1950 –), whose collections chart an important transition from her concerns with the personal 'I' to her concerns with environmental issues, demonstrates the ability to figuratively project into future

environments and become other 'I's. Like Graham's perception of connections between different temporal frames, Juliana Spahr (1969 –) deploys synecdoche and analogy to perceive connections between the local and the global. This study then turns to Les Murray (1938 –) and Roy Fisher (1930 –) who, in contrast to the Romantic approach that found life in matter and contemplated it to consider human concerns, demonstrate an anthropomorphic style that explores how the experience of nonhumans differs from that of humans. Mark Doty (1953 –) demonstrates another practice of metaphor, which conveys uncertainty at how to express environments that 'shine // and seem'. Close readings of Doty focus upon how his metaphors respond to indeterminate environments with an unstable representation that maintains an engagement with the environment as it recognises the failure of words to fully capture its subject. Jen Hadfield (1978 –) and Don McKay (1942 –) take this failure of words to another level as their metaphors break down and reveal the gap between their representations and the environment itself.

The poets, summarised above, come at a time of renewed interest in theorising metaphor within analytic philosophy. Mark Johnson warns in his attempt to historicise debates on metaphor: 'the material explodes after 1960' (*Philosophical Perspectives* 3). Within this explosion in metaphor theory, a division between approaches is apparent between the 'substitution view' (often referred to as the 'comparison view' or the Literalist School) and the 'interaction view'. The former view, led by theorists such as Donald Davidson, Paul Grice and Robert Fogelin, argues that metaphor is an assertion of similarity that can be paraphrased in literal terms, and so continues the long-standing view of metaphor as a literary 'ornament'. In opposition, the 'interaction view', far from seeing metaphor as rhetoric, emphasises the way metaphor can create new meaning.[19] Given this study's argument on the potential for metaphor to guide new understandings of environments, it is necessary to engage with this movement in metaphor theory that suggests metaphor's effect on cognition.

Max Black remains the most well-known and influential theorist of this movement. Inspired by I.A. Richards's significant argument in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) that suggested metaphor's meaning comes from the interaction of

[19] Indeed, in his account of twentieth-century metaphor theory in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, David Hills describes the 'interaction view' in a broader tradition of the 'semantic twist'.

its two parts (93), Max Black developed an 'interaction theory' of metaphor in his articles 'Metaphor' and 'More about Metaphor' (1954, 1979). In the latter article, Black suggests metaphors 'generate new knowledge and insight by changing relationships between the things designated' (37).[20] Given this study's argument on the potential for metaphor to draw new attention to environments, Black's emphasis upon 'new knowledge' and 'insight' is of particular value, as Chapter One explains in more detail. Black's theory influenced continental philosophy on metaphor, such as Paul Ricoeur's *Rule of Metaphor* (1975). Considering the tensions involved in metaphor, Ricoeur develops Black's theory of interactive metaphor and heeds how a metaphor 'preserves the "is not" within the "is" ' (294). Challenging previous beliefs in which Samuel Johnson saw metaphor as two entities potentially 'yoked by violence', and similar pedagogical fears of metaphor as 'forced' or appropriative, Ricoeur suggests metaphor conveys a tenuous linguistic claim (348). Ecocritic Adam Dickinson identifies that Ricoeur's claim has repercussions for the way in which the environment might feature in metaphor. As a result, Dickinson's work helps to guide analysis of metaphor's structure in Chapter Five.

Further theorists influenced by continental philosophy who suggest how metaphor creates interaction are also the subject of analysis. Jonathan Culler's deconstructionist approach to apostrophe in *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981) may not be defined under the 'interaction view', but Culler's claims on how apostrophe tropes on the circuit of communication to create a series of possible interactions conveys an interactive theory. Likewise, this study engages with another, although far less acknowledged, deconstructionist approach to metaphor proposed by James Seitz. Seitz's theory (1999), embedded in pedagogical theory and inspired by Roland Barthes, challenges the way literalist metaphor theorists stress metaphorical similarity and suggests, instead, metaphor's ability to emphasise difference. In dismissing the potential for metaphor to create likeness by focusing on difference, Seitz's theory helps to negotiate pedagogical fears about metaphor's appropriative potential. Furthermore, as Seitz examines the effect of such metaphor on its reader, Seitz conveys further cognitive effects associated with

[20] For further studies of analytic philosophy that adopt Black's ideas see Monroe Beardsley ('The Metaphorical Twist') and Nelson Goodman ('Metaphor as Moonlighting').

interactions in metaphor. In *Nature and Language* (1980), Ralf Norrman and Jon Haarberg propose another account of metaphor that, part of a semiotic approach, develops Black's interaction theory to consider not only the relationship between words, but the relationship between words and materiality. Like Dickinson's account of Ricoeur, Norrman's theory is of particular value because it already takes the environment as its subject.

The chief thrust of metaphor theory has since shifted towards cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor, yet instances of interaction theory remain present. Developed from his influential text on conceptual metaphor, *Metaphors We Live By* (co-authored by Lakoff in 1980), Johnson argues for the way in which metaphor – as a kind of figurative projection – underpins everyday interactions with people and their situations in *Moral Imagination* (1993). This helps to consider further effects arising from the interactive potential of metaphor, as do certain arguments belonging to New Materialism. As suggested by the definition above, metaphor is not a chief concern of New Materialism by any means. However, Jane Bennett's argument on anthropomorphism as a way of regarding active matter demonstrates the way metaphor interacts with matter and thus continues to generate 'insight', in the terms used by Black. Graham Harman and Ian Bogost provide another New Materialist angle to metaphor in their studies of Object-Oriented Ontology that claim objects interact in the same way as words interact to create a new object.[21] Although their argument draws some parallel with Black's argument, the fact that their argument is inextricably tied to wider arguments that raise issues on the epistemology and ontology of objects, means that it is not of direct relevance to this study's argument on pedagogy.

As should be evident from this survey, recent 'interactive' thinking on metaphor by poets and theorists attests to a range of metaphor's capacities that might be used to productively reconceive of environments and challenge the tradition of anthropocentric uses of nature in metaphor. The following summary explains how these discussions on metaphor, ecocriticism and pedagogy are brought together in the chapters themselves.

[21] See Harman's chapter, 'Metaphor' in *Guerilla Metaphysics*, and Ian Bogost's chapter, 'Metaphorism' in *Alien Phenomenology*.

Chapter Overview

To challenge current teaching and propose complementary and alternative strategies, six chapters examine metaphor in different forms. Each chapter begins by exploring particular pedagogical instructions and examining ecocritical arguments that call for alternative engagements, before making close readings of a poet's use of metaphor to develop a new strategy. These readings, extended by metaphor theory where relevant, suggest how metaphor provokes further explorations of environments and, in doing so, addresses environmental issues. Arguing against pedagogical emphasis upon 'direct perception' and the naïve straightforwardness of instructions such as 'just look, and then describe what you see' (Taylor 179), the chapters are ordered according to an increasing scale of representational challenge posed by the environment that demand a new literary approach: from the difficulty of describing innumerable distinctions in the environment to the question of whether the written word can represent the otherness of environments.

Chapter One argues against the dualism between fact and metaphor proposed by nature writing educators. Challenging the belief that metaphor only conveys the writer's ego, whereas factual literary styles accurately represent the environment, I show how metaphor attends to material distinctions in the environment potentially neglected by factual styles. This argument follows, but ultimately departs from, David Abram's ecocritical argument that calls for more creative forms of language to distinguish the strange nuances of environments. Close readings of poetry by Charles Tomlinson (*The Necklace*, *Seeing Is Believing*), demonstrate the capacity of metaphor to represent the environment and, furthermore, to represent nuances within the environment that might otherwise remain neglected. This latter point enables a consideration of how metaphor might help to approach the subject of biodiversity in nature writing pedagogy. Supporting analyses of metaphor in this chapter, I examine the theoretical arguments of Ralf Norrman and Jon Haarberg, and Max Black on how metaphor generates insight.

Chapter Two challenges pedagogy's prescription for personal narration in nature writing because of its potential to distract from the environment and introduce the very egotistical imposition that educators fear of metaphor. As an alternative strategy, it is argued that figuratively becoming other 'I's draws awareness beyond the personal self and toward important changes in environments that occur over time. This strategy thus proposes a way of fulfilling pedagogical calls for students to become conscious of environmental issues. Rob Nixon's ecocritical call for new ways of perceiving 'slow violence' in the environment helps to build an alternative narrative style based on figurative projection. Furthermore, close readings of Jorie Graham's poetry (*Never, Sea Change*, *P L A C E*) demonstrate the potential of reconsidering the personal 'I' through figurative projection and apostrophe. Studying the theories of Jonathan Culler and Mark Johnson helps to examine this figurative projection and use of apostrophe.

The third chapter takes issue with pedagogical prescriptions for place writing that define place strictly in terms of local surroundings. Showing how this definition might come at the expense of understanding the connections between places – of the relationship between the local and the global – it is shown how synecdoche and analogy afford appreciation of how these spatial frames interact. This argument builds upon the work of Ursula Heise, whose ecocritical argument on 'eco-cosmopolitanism' reconsiders environmental commitment in view of globalisation. Building upon this, analyses of synecdoche and analogy in the poetry of Juliana Spahr (*This Connection of Everyone with Lungs*, *Well Then There Now*) demonstrate how perception can extend from the local towards the global. The chapter subsequently explains how such devices afford opportunities to engage nature writing pedagogy with environmental issues that cross local and global frames, and how these engagements might extend feelings of responsibility for the environment.

Nature writing teachers are critical, if not damning, of anthropomorphism. Chapter Four counters pedagogical beliefs that fear anthropomorphism transforms a nonhuman into a human through a process of identification, and establishes, conversely, how anthropomorphism can explore the difference between human and nonhuman experience. In foregrounding this possibility, I argue that

anthropomorphism provokes respectful and responsible attitudes towards the environment. Timothy Morton's ecocritical theory of animals as 'strange strangers' helps to introduce this capacity of anthropomorphism. Analysis of Les Murray's representations of animals that convey the strangeness of animal experience (*Translations from the Natural World*), and Roy Fisher's representations of animate industrial matter (*A Furnace*) then develop this reconsideration of anthropomorphism. By engaging with the threatened lives of animals, as well as the threatening lives of matter, anthropomorphism is shown to respond to pedagogical intentions to increase consciousness of environmental issues. To explore anthropomorphism in terms of matter, I investigate Jane Bennett's theory on 'lively' matter.

Chapter Five redefines pedagogical calls for wonder in nature writing, which are vague and often fickle, by considering the relationship between wonder and uncertainty. As an epistemological stance, uncertainty currently stimulates much analysis in environmental thinking, and this chapter specifically refers to Adam Dickinson's argument on how matter escapes definition through its 'material metaphoricity'. Developing Dickinson's ideas, this chapter demonstrates how metaphor expresses an uncertainty at how to represent shape-shifting, indeterminate environments by analysing Mark Doty's poetry (*Atlantis*, *My Alexandria*, *Sweet Machine*). This affords further study as to how climate change presents similar shape-shifting and indeterminate qualities and, consequently, how climate change might be similarly approached through metaphor. The argument thus proposes a creative strategy to combat otherwise negative pedagogical attitudes toward the issue (educators are concerned that bringing climate change into the class will depress their students). Timothy Morton's argument on climate change in *Hyperobjects* aids this chapter's movement from the indeterminacy of matter to the indeterminacy of climate change given his understanding of the issue as 'transdimensional'.

The final chapter of this thesis argues for a new strategy based on metaphor with which to represent reality. Educators frequently call for 'authenticity' in nature writing and warm of metaphor as an inauthentic representational style. Challenging the notion of authenticity, which is particularly untenable given Chapter Five's argument on the way environments evade definition, I explain the potential for

metaphor to become self-conscious, or self-reflexive of itself, and therefore apprehend that the reality of the environment is beyond language. To create this self-reflexive metaphor, certain principles proposed by Kate Rigby's ecocritical theory of 'negative ecopoetics' are followed. Close readings of poetry by Don McKay and Jen Hadfield (from a variety of their collections) demonstrate this self-reflexive metaphor and prompt inquiry as to its other effects. Indeed, this chapter explores how metaphor's self-reflexivity fosters awareness of the environment beyond language, but also has the potential to reflect upon its own literary appropriation of the environment in a way that evokes physical appropriations of environments. This point affords investigation into how the self-reflexive metaphor enables discussion of environmental issues. I examine James Seitz's metaphor theory in order to consider how metaphor's 'shaping' potential induces reflection on society's physical shaping of environments.

The conclusion of the thesis summarises the argument and explains the ways in which it contributes to current debate on how to write about the environment. Twenty-five of my poems, collected as an appendix, complement this work in their explorations of the kinds of tension that inform not only the pedagogical criticisms of metaphor, but also the work of the metaphor theorists investigated in the thesis. These poems explore interactions within environments and how these are paralleled by the various interactions inherent to metaphor. Furthermore, introducing the human world of relationships to discern other forms of interaction, these poems introduce further questions regarding metaphorical interactions in a way that brings their consequences closer to home. A second appendix includes three samples of the questions posed to educators in the interviews.

Chapter One

Writing 'More in the World': Recognising Distinction in Environments through Charles Tomlinson's Metaphorical Practice

This chapter examines the limitations of pedagogical instruction that frequently advises students to write in a straightforward factual style associated with natural history. It shows how this instruction warns against metaphor that is, according to certain educators, symptomatic of an overactive ego. Taking issue with this seeming dualism between fact and metaphor, this chapter shows how metaphor is not necessarily associated with the ego, but provides other opportunities to engage with the materiality of the environment. Patrick D. Murphy, a leading ecocritic, suggests a formula that is pertinent in considering the uncompromising prescriptions in nature writing: 'nature writing = nonfiction = fact = truth' (*Ecocritical Explorations* 33). Exemplifying this equation is John Elder, teacher at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School, who advocates that learning the names of the trees growing in Vermont means 'your writing will not be so solipsistic, it will be more in the world' (Personal Interview). As instructions such as this begin to associate metaphor with solipsism or egotism I argue, conversely, for metaphor's capacity to represent distinctions in the environment concerning, for example, the colour, shape and texture of plant species. In making this argument, I claim that a metaphorical literary style can prompt writing 'more in the world' and help conceive of the variegated nature of environments. Furthermore, considering educators' intentions to prompt or increase environmental commitment in their students in light of environmental issues, this argument goes on to examine how the capacities of metaphor can lead to thinking on the subject of biodiversity.

Before arguing for metaphor's potential, this chapter shows the need for such an argument by investigating recurring prescriptions of plain, factual styles that dismiss metaphor. With the nature and frequency of these prescriptions established, questions are raised as to the arguments behind these prescriptions,

which leads to an investigation into their shortcomings and demonstrates the need for alternative strategies. To support this critique, I analyse recent ecocritical claims by David Abram and Scott Knickerbocker that demonstrate a shift from factual realisations of environments to engagements that use more creative forms of language. These perspectives serve to situate the close readings of the contemporary British poet, Charles Tomlinson, that inform this chapter's argument on metaphor. Three central claims arise from these close readings. The first establishes the referential capacity of metaphor as an initial step. This then affords an examination of how metaphor's capacity to refer to the environment might draw attention to distinctions in the environment otherwise neglected by a factual literary style. Lastly, the argument explores how metaphor's potential to produce linguistic variation in view of ecological variation might play a role in approaching the subject of biodiversity and drawing attention to the significance of distinctions in the environment. To support and advance these claims regarding perception, language and materiality, this chapter examines twentieth-century metaphor theory: the neglected work of Ralf Norrman and Jon Haarberg, and the more influential studies made by Max Black outlined in the Introduction.

'Not Creative, but Precise': Fact versus Metaphor

Natural history influences what may be considered a 'tradition of fact' in nature writing. Indeed, natural history texts frequently appear on the set reading for nature writing courses.[22] Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*, first published in 1789, exemplifies this tradition given White's close observation of the natural world through fieldwork. White refrains from putting himself into the text and records particularities in his surroundings in a style that is consistent with scientific research. In his account of the behaviour of birds, White describes a Great Speckled Diver: 'This colymbus was of considerable bulk, weighing only three drachms short of three pounds avoirdupois. It measured in length from the bill to

[22] For example, Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*, Thoreau's *Walden* and essays by Richard Mabey feature on the set reading for the 'Place, Environment, Writing' Masters course at Royal Holloway. White and Thoreau feature similarly on Bath Spa University's set reading for the 'Travel & Nature Writing' Masters course. White, Thoreau and Mark Cocker's *Crow Country* are set reading for Swansea University's module on nature writing.

the tail (which was very short) two feet, and to the extremities of the toes four inches more' (346). As well as influencing British writers such as Richard Jefferies, Frank Stewart argues in *A Natural History of Nature Writing* that Gilbert's influence extended to the US in the writing of Thoreau and John Burroughs. This emphasis upon natural history was taken a stage further by the Nature Fakers controversy led by John Burroughs and supported by president Theodore Roosevelt. Marked by Burroughs's article 'Real and Sham Natural History' in 1903, Burroughs describes White as telling 'the thing for what it is', whereas writers such as Ernest Thompson Seton repeatedly cross 'the line between fact and fiction' (298, 300). Although such criticism was primarily based upon Seton's accounts of animal behaviour, this criticism also concerned Seton's literary style. Burroughs laments Seton's figurative account of crows: 'They have no calls that, we can be sure, answer to our words, "Mount," "Bunch," "Scatter", "Descend" ' (302). In the Preface to his own piece of nature writing, *Wake-Robin*, Burroughs declared with regard to the nature writer that 'facts are the flora upon which he lives' and denounced writing that was sentimental or anthropomorphic as the 'witchery of words' (xiii-xiv).

Natural history writers such as Gilbert continue to influence nature writers from post-war nature writer James Fisher, to the 'new nature writing' of Mark Cocker and, similarly, metaphor remains suspect. Jim Perrin, an influential nature writer and teacher (as explained later in this chapter) describes the use of metaphor in current 'new nature writing' – particularly that of William Atkins – as an 'exhibitionist choice of lexis' (Personal Interview). Likewise, at the beginning of a workshop with Mark Cocker as part of the 'Wild Writing' Masters course at the University of Essex, seminar leader James Canton takes issue with Cocker's metaphors in the opening pages of *Crow Country* for being 'too exotic' (Class Notes). 'The Country Diary' column, published weekly in *The Guardian* since 1906, repeatedly represents British landscapes through literal description heavily punctuated by the naming of certain species. However, the equation between 'nonfiction = fact = truth' has not always held strong in literature. Emily Dickinson's statement 'Tell all the Truth but tell it slant' suggests another strategy of representation that departs from traditional ideas of fact. Although not as immediately obvious, the steady emergence of the 'creative nonfiction' genre also

begins to question the literal quality of nonfiction. As these examples suggest, there are other ways of representing environments.

With the relationship between nature writing and natural history in mind, a good place to begin investigating pedagogical prescriptions of a factual style is with the nature writing journal; a frequent exercise for students on nature writing courses. Educators affirm that more objective or scientific responses are expected by contextualising the nature journal in terms of field notes that use literal, factual language for observation. As the students are expected to write their journals in situ – either as a one-off occurrence or as part of an ongoing record – the experiential quality of the engagement is brought to the fore. An example of this pedagogical strategy occurs in David Petersen's guide to nature writing, *Writing Naturally*. Here, Petersen advises his students to keep a 'detailed daily phenology for a full calendar month' as this will generate 'not only the natural history information recorded therein, but lucrative practice in observation, identification, recording, interpreting, ordering, ruminating and *feeling* the natural world. And best of all, you'll be *out there*' (50). Although Petersen includes some personal approaches to this phenology, the main thrust lies in fostering a logical accuracy ('identification', 'ordering'). In *The Sierra Club Nature Writing Handbook*, John A. Murray advises a similar use of 'the journal, as a sort of unflinching mirror' that can 'remind the author of the importance of eliminating self-deception and half-truths in thought and writing' (2). Here, Murphy's previously mentioned formula serves Murray's understanding that experiencing environments first-hand guides literal, factual accounts of environments that are, as it were, more true.

The anxiety inherent to Murray's argument is resolved by the journal's role to record the observation in situ and therefore avoid elaboration of the observation through memory and imagination, but Murray's anxiety is symptomatic of a further anxiety regarding language and representation. The nature journal's association with field notes dictates the use of plain language and this means that more creative responses that may supposedly exaggerate the observation are dismissed. Examining the advice of another educator, Laird Christensen, based at Green Mountain College Vermont US, helps to explore this concern in more detail. Explaining the importance of the nature journal in his syllabus for the Environmental Writing Workshop, Christensen writes that the student is 'especially

reliant on her journal to keep him honest.' Like Murray, Christensen's journal assumes the role of an 'unflinching mirror' in which the external world can supposedly be reflected in a plain style. Indeed, honesty is disputed by Christensen in the first month of the Environmental Writing Workshop as he finds that his students' writing is too 'artistic' and states, with some conciliatory humour, that he wants to 'squelch' this creativity (Class Notes 26 September). What Christensen wants is 'direct perception' which is 'not creative, but precise' and thus supposedly more honest. He specifically warns his students, 'I don't want to see a metaphor or anything like that.' Despite Murray's previously discussed belief that metaphor creates vividness in writing, the fear of metaphor's manipulative potential dominates in these approaches. The understanding that metaphor is linked to creativity and as such is not only inappropriate, but dishonest when representing environments, is taken to an extreme in Petersen's guide. Petersen holds up a quote from *Men's Journal* that claims, 'the trouble with nature writing is that it's always reaching, trying to tease great thoughts, great metaphors, out of the world. It's a kind of narcissism, an ego on parade: Look how well I can write mom!' (8). These cautions and criticisms show that a second formula in which 'creativity = imagination/ego = false' underpins Murphy's first formula.

Fact and plain language are, of course, important and to suggest that writers can do without either would be just as short-sighted as thinking these form the only route towards environmental engagement. Recently acclaimed nature writers such as Robert Macfarlane deplore the removal of words about nature (such as 'conker' and 'cowslip') from the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* and the addition of technological terminology.[23] Macfarlane suggests this change is indicative of further disengagement from natural environments. These exercises by educators that guide students into naming species, say a hooded crow, and ask students to straightforwardly describe the species as having 'mixed grey and black plumage' are valuable in that they allow a way of introducing students to the environment – perhaps for the first time in some cases. A sense of experiential connection and ecoliteracy arises from this ability to differentiate between the birds that the students see. However, the instruction given by teachers for fact and against

[23] See 'The Word-Hoard: Robert Macfarlane on Rewilding Our Language of Landscape'.

metaphor distorts the tradition of fact in nature writing. After all, while the nature writing by, say, Gilbert or Cocker is predominantly factual and conveyed in a fairly straightforward style, these writers occasionally utilise metaphor to assist the identification of species. Indeed, J. A. Baker has no hesitancy using metaphor in *The Peregrine*, which despite being known as a more unusual natural history text, and often criticised for its overtly lyrical style, is referred to as a classic of natural history nonetheless.[24] Furthermore, in creating this kind of dualism between fact and metaphor, educators obscure the role metaphor often plays in naming species: the *hooded* crow provides a case in point.

Consequently, factual approaches are not to be dismissed; it is the insistence on fact as the only referential style that is to be challenged. As anticipated above, metaphor has the potential to become a complementary, if not alternative, referential style as it assists identifications and representations of the environment. Reconsidering pedagogical strategies concerning fact and metaphor is particularly important given how factual approaches to environments have often been negatively received by students on nature writing courses. One student explains that if they use all of the factual terms expected of them in their writing 'the scientific names of trees isn't going to connect with a reader who doesn't know them' (Student B, Personal Interview). This evokes Richard Smyth's recent critique of nature writing in the *Times Literary Supplement* for its 'clatter of namedropping' (of plant names and place names) that is comparable to 'jargon' ('The Limits of Nature Writing'). Considering how many of the students come to these courses from other states, counties and, indeed, countries in which certain species are rare or unknown accentuates the problem. Responding to the expectation to name species, one student who has travelled from New Mexico to New England US in order to attend a course explains 'I struggle with that here because I've never lived here before' (Personal Interview). She acknowledges that having learnt what a

[24] Richard Smyth draws attention to the critique subtly conveyed by Robert Macfarlane. Smyth quotes Macfarlane in saying that 'in order to keep the reader reading through the same cycle of events, he [Baker] had to forge a new language of description'. Smyth summarises 'Nature is interesting because Baker is interesting' and so suggests that Macfarlane reads Baker's lyricism as imbued with the self and not with nature. Kathleen Jamie expresses a critique of Baker's high lyrical style in her essay deliberately focused upon the same birds in a domestic context ('Peregrines, Ospreys, Cranes', *Findings*).

maple is ‘helps with the observational writing’ but ‘it doesn’t help with specifics’. These statements raise a question as to whether encounters with the environment that are dominated by pedagogical understandings of fact, though encouraging greater engagement with environments, might in fact hinder the engagement. This is of great concern when considering how educators hope nature writing courses can ultimately produce environmental commitment in students. Allison B. Wallace, whose exercise using field guides is analysed later, hopes for ‘more attentive, more placed’ students (102). Likewise, Andrew Motion who teaches the Place, Environment, Writing Masters Course at Royal Holloway, University of London, wants students to know in ‘a proper scientific way what the hell they were looking at’ because ‘we can’t afford to be detached’ given contemporary environmental issues (Personal Interview). Identifying the shortcomings of factual styles necessitates examination of an alternative literary style based on metaphor that aims to negotiate these issues.

Concern about the relationship between fact and truth drives David Abram’s argument in *Becoming Animal* (2010). This work of environmental philosophy has influenced much ecocritical thought; material ecocriticism in particular has benefitted from Abram’s ideas on animist matter.[25] Bringing Abram’s work into the discussion affords further scrutiny of pedagogical limitations and the possibility of alternative approaches. Building upon his phenomenological approach in *Spell of the Sensuous* that was informed by the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in *Becoming Animal* Abram argues that scientific ways of speaking and referring to the world generate theoretical understandings, which are taken as ‘more fundamental, more real than this palpable world that we experience with our breathing bodies’ (75). In adopting this scientific way of speaking, Abram argues that we ‘refer to nature only as a set of determinate objects’ that isolate us from our senses and our surroundings (70). Abram’s argument prompts thought as to whether pedagogical strategies involving fact might incur a mechanistic view of nature that many environmentalist thinkers believe has led to the serious environmental issues faced today. Moving away from first-wave ecocritical arguments which to some degree followed Patrick D. Murphy’s formula by

[25] See Serenella Iovino’s essay ‘Steps to a Material Ecocriticism’ and *Material Ecocriticism* edited by Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann.

emphasising an empirical literary realism, Abram believes that recognising entities as ‘determinate’ does an injustice to the physical world as well as to our own senses. The connection Abram makes between scientific representation and lack of engagement with our sensual capacities speaks to the pedagogical strategies discussed and raises the question as to whether factual description can hinder the very experiential quality that tutors think they are emphasising? This also applies to the associated pedagogical prescription of plain language and its restrictive vocabulary. Like nature writing educators, Abram desires more committed relationships to environments, yet his strategy for fulfilling this intention ends this similarity with pedagogy. Indeed, Abram challenges factual understandings as he seeks to ‘free the things [environmental entities] from their conceptual straightjackets’ and establish ‘A style of speech that opens our senses to the sensuous in all its multiform strangeness’ (9, 3).

Oral culture, according to Abram, forms this ‘style of speech’ as it deploys a language closer to immediate experience and better able to respond to ‘an animate, expressive world’ (4). Abram’s claim that oral culture made little distinction between the literal and the metaphorical offers a point of correspondence to the discussion on the referential capacity of metaphor. This continues as Abram explains that primitive stories used metaphor to ‘convey practical information regarding the tangible cosmos’ (296). Furthermore, Abram’s subsequent claim that today’s ‘literal’, fixed representations of environments are inappropriate given ‘a world in continual metamorphosis’ reinforces the irrelevance of the ego as it suggests, in contrast to educators such as Petersen, that metaphor might be able to produce ‘honest’ representations by responding to certain qualities of materiality (296). This argument on metaphor that stems from Abram’s contrast between scientific and ‘primitive’ modes of thinking is not new. Abram’s discussion conjures the Romantic challenge to science via the imagination and, more specifically, the Romantic privileging of the primitive. Giambattista Vico argued that ‘metaphor originated in primitive men who, without language, expressed themselves by using bodies that were naturally related to the ideas they wished to signify’ (*The New Science* 161) and in his *Defence of Poetry*, Percy Bysshe Shelley argues similarly ‘Poetry is connate with the origin of man’ (675). However, Abram’s focus on metaphor’s capacity to ‘convey practical information’ in terms of

primitive stories appears somewhat short-sighted when considering developments in twentieth-century arguments on the referential capacity of metaphor, which will be examined later.

In his recent work of ecocriticism, *Ecopoetics*, Scott Knickerbocker suggests another perspective on the role of metaphor that similarly challenges pedagogical thought, though he, too, refrains from engaging with modern theoretical discussion on the device. Knickerbocker is concerned by arguments in first-wave ecocriticism that claim 'a healthy dose of realism […] serves as a cure for solipsism' and, conversely, that linguistic creativity jeopardises true representations of environments (9). Knickerbocker aligns his ecocritical argument with Neil Evernden's provocative statement that 'Environmentalism without aesthetics is merely regional planning' (103). Such an analogy develops the idea that 'deterministic' recognition of environments leads to potentially manipulative and destructive behaviour, as cautioned in Abram's *Becoming Animal*. Consequently, Knickerbocker defends aesthetics by claiming poetic artifice (including metaphor) is not opposed to realism but central to a 'process of rematerializing language' (2). Indeed, Knickerbocker wants to show how metaphor might provoke a closer relationship between the world and the written word. Echoing Abram's desire for a language that does justice to human sensory capacities, Knickerbocker analyses Wallace Stevens and briefly makes mention of Stevens's line 'Words add to the senses' (22). However, Knickerbocker's sweep over Stevens's work (and the work of other poets in his following chapters) takes away the opportunity for an otherwise detailed, analytical argument of how metaphor might 'rematerialize' language.

With this awareness of existing ecocritical approaches to metaphor it is possible to further challenge pedagogical thought and simultaneously develop such ecocritical thought. In what follows I further question the pedagogical association of fact and truth, metaphor and ego, by carefully examining the referential function of metaphor. Through close readings of Charles Tomlinson's poetry this argument on metaphor is taken a step further by demonstrating metaphor's capacity to respond to differences within environmental materiality. During these close readings, analysis of educational exercises continues to accentuate metaphor's potential to

develop pedagogical strategies.

'Facts. And What are They?': Tomlinson's Approach to Fact and Metaphor

The British poet, translator and artist, Charles Tomlinson (1927 – 2015), has written what amounts to almost thirty collections of poetry. His influences range from British writers such as John Ruskin and Tomlinson's peer, Donald Davie, to the work of Modernists from the US, such as Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore. The work of these latter writers, alongside Tomlinson's own role as an artist, informs his poetic inquiry into questions of style, perception and reality. This chapter draws attention to the first two of Tomlinson's full-length collections: *The Necklace* (1955) and the subsequent *Seeing Is Believing* (1958, 1960) referred to as (*N*) and (*SB*) hereafter. These collections demonstrate a poetics that appear faithful to fact and simultaneously curious of whether fact can adequately represent the strange nature of things. Committed to the physical world around him, Tomlinson's questioning of fact leads to an increased use of metaphorical language. The self-reflexive quality of his writing throughout this transition contributes to the argument that challenges pedagogical instruction and seeks alternative approaches based on metaphor. Discussing the relationship between observation and the physical world in the 'Author's Preface' to *The Necklace*, Tomlinson writes that Wallace Stevens's 'sense of the complex relation of observer and environment fascinated me, but was there ever a poetry which stood so explicitly by a physical universe and against transcendence, but which gives so little account of that universe, its spaces, patterns, textures'. Showing some parallel with Stevens, Tomlinson's explanation ultimately reveals a point of departure as Tomlinson puts materiality rather than language first. As stated in the 'Author's Preface', Tomlinson explains that his poems are interested in 'according objects their own existence'.

Much scholarly work on Tomlinson centres upon his approach to perception. Karl Klein's chapter, 'Poetry: An Art of Lying', argues that influence precipitates perception in Tomlinson's writing and draws attention to how particular works of art, such as Cezanne's landscapes, influence perception of reality in Tomlinson's work. Willard Spiegelman's chapter on Tomlinson in his book *How Poets See the*

World takes a broader view of Tomlinson's descriptive approach to the external world and his perceptual awareness of its capacity to change. More commentary than argument, Spiegelman relates Tomlinson's writing to the descriptive practices of Williams and Pound. In his book *Passionate Intellect*, Michael Kirkham studies the contrast between fact and imagination in Tomlinson's poems and loosely discusses the 'ethics' of Tomlinson's perception. With regard to the later, Kirkham highlights how Tomlinson is aware of perceptual limitations and keen to analyse them. Arguing that the imagination has the potential to extend these perceptions in different directions, Kirkham explores how the 'relation of fact and imagination is either compulsory or contrary or simultaneously both' (33). In 'Tomlinson, Ruskin, and Moore: Facts and Fir Trees', Ruth Grogan provides a more rigorous scrutiny of Tomlinson's representation of environmental entities. Grogan provides an inter-textual study that finds Ruskin's depiction of fir trees and Marianne Moore's economical descriptions of animals to influence Tomlinson's exploration of visual appearances. Grogan briefly focuses upon metaphor in Ruskin and Moore as a way of overcoming perceptual convention and explains how Tomlinson appears to imitate this practice. However, this study on metaphor only forms a small part of Grogan's wider focus upon how these writers influence Tomlinson. Scholarly work on Tomlinson requires further attention to his use of metaphorical language that, as touched upon by Grogan, is key in Tomlinson's challenge to perceptual limits. Furthermore, more attention needs to be paid to how the environment features in Tomlinson's writing. Scholars have so far neglected to examine how Tomlinson's 'ethics of perception', as described by Kirkham, might correspond to environmentalist thinking.

Tomlinson invites consideration as to how his approach toward perception and the environment can be read in the broader context of environmentalist thought in his essay 'The Poet as Painter'. Explaining his concerns of the self's capacity to impose upon observation, Tomlinson writes 'You cease to impose and you discover, to rephrase another aphorism of Stevens' (210). As his revision of Stevens's approach suggests, Tomlinson is conscious of the possibility for the self to dominate observation in a similar way as the nature writing educators, such as Petersen or Murray, are conscious of the ego. Referring to John Ruskin in an

interview with Bruce Meyer analysed in more detail later, Tomlinson believes a suitably ethical 'lesson' in response to these concerns is

> to make yourself a servant, as Adrian Stokes said of Cezanne, of 'the outwardness of the external world.' At one level, the issue is an ecological one and Ruskin was one of the earliest critics of industrial pollution. At another level, it means chastening yourself by realizing your relationship to all that surrounds you. (441)

Noted previously, Tomlinson's poetry moves from conviction in a plain, factual style to questioning these qualities in view of the strangeness of things and recognising the need for metaphor. Despite this shift, the lesson identified above can be interpreted throughout: Tomlinson remains a 'servant' when using plain-speech as well as figurative styles. As this suggests, it is not only fact that affords an 'honest' environmental representation.

Tomlinson's poem, 'Observation of Facts', demonstrates the former emphasis on straightforward representation that initially positions Tomlinson alongside the nature writing teachers previously discussed. However, contrasting this with a reading of Tomlinson's 'The Art of Poetry' demonstrates the use of figurative language as fact and thus challenges the approaches to fact and metaphor identified in pedagogy. The first poem opens with the following stanza:

> Facts have no eyes. One must
> Surprise them, as one surprises a tree
> By regarding its (shall I say?)
> Facets of copiousness. (1-4)

Acknowledging the independence of the fact (or tree, given Tomlinson's comparison) prompts Tomlinson to list three 'facts stripped of imagination' (8): 'The tree stands / The house encloses. / The room flowers' (5-7). Although the house that 'encloses' creates another entity that is quite literally closed-off and independent of the observer, 'The room flowers' suggests an imaginative departure. However, as Tomlinson goes on to explain 'The room flowers once one has introduced / Mental fibre beneath its elegance, / A rough pot or two' (17-19). Tomlinson is keen to show that such figurative language is based upon the reality of pot-plants inside the room.

Tomlinson's notion of 'chastening yourself' within literary description is enacted as the reality of pot plants is said to be 'outweighing / The persistence of frippery / In lampshades or wallpaper' (19-21). A contrast between the real and the unnecessarily decorative is portrayed in which the plainness of reality is more highly valued. This is accentuated by Tomlinson's more obvious contrast between a dryad and a tree:

> A dryad is a sort of chintz curtain
> between myself and a tree.
> the tree stands: or does not stand:
> as I draw, or remove the curtain. (10-13)

As the dryad threatens to conceal the tree or the 'fact' of it, a parallel emerges between imagistic and linguistic 'frippery'. In turn, a further parallel can be interpreted between Tomlinson's poem and Christensen's pedagogical advice in which he wanted to 'squelch' artistic tendencies in students in order to emphasise direct perception. This concern about styles of embellishment anticipates Tomlinson's penultimate verse in which he expresses his unease at how 'Style speaks what was seen, / Or it conceals the observation / Behind the observer' (22-24). Consistent with Murray's instruction of the nature writing journal as an 'unflinching mirror', Tomlinson suggests a plain literary style can translate what was seen. Extending the notion of 'frippery' criticised in previous lines, Tomlinson warns of how 'a voice / Wearing a ruff' will dominate the observation (24-25). The ruff, associated with flamboyancy and perhaps (given the dryad) the Elizabethan high poetic style of Edmund Spenser, concerns Tomlinson just as metaphor concerns Petersen as he associates it with narcissism. This sense of the ego becomes stronger in Tomlinson's conclusion that plays with the notion of authorial manipulation of physical material using enjambment: 'Those facets of copiousness which I proposed / Exist, do so when we have silenced ourselves' (26-27).

This reading of Tomlinson's 'Observation of Facts' may appear to offer little to the proposed argument on metaphor given its approval of a plain style that corresponds to pedagogical instruction. However, the phonetic proximity of Tomlinson's 'facts' and 'facets of copiousness' reveals a significant correspondence that echoes Abram's curiosity in 'multiform strangeness' and

prefigures later poems by Tomlinson in which metaphor plays a key role. Tomlinson's poem, 'The Art of Poetry', questions the definition of plain-speech and fact put forward in 'Observation of Facts', despite its opening lines that appear consistent with the former poem's argument:

> The fact being, that when the truth is not good enough
> We exaggerate. Proportions
> Matter. It is difficult to get them right.
> There must be nothing
> Superfluous, nothing which is not elegant
> And nothing which is if it is merely that. (5-10)

Tomlinson's instruction for 'proportions' corresponds to the 'detailed daily phenology' Petersen prescribed for nature writers as well as his later warning that any deviation from the reality of the observation is 'morally conscionable' (183). In a rather intimidating manner, Petersen continues, 'everything you claim has happened, must in fact have happened, just as told' (183). Yet, Tomlinson hesitates as to whether this is possible as another disturbing enjambment dislocates 'proportions' from 'matter' as if inviting a disruption between materiality and measurement. This disruption continues in the following isolated line by Tomlinson: 'This green twilight has violet borders' (11). At odds with realistic 'proportions', Tomlinson's line prompts the question as to whether this representation of twilight is a linguistic exaggeration, or even indicative of 'an ego on parade'. Yet, simultaneously, this description might just as easily be representative of Tomlinson 'chastening' himself as 'this green twilight' is true to phenomena relating to natural light; it is one facet of the sky's 'facets of copiousness'.

Tomlinson's doubt as to whether a literary style of plain speech is appropriate for making an 'honest' representation of the environment looms larger in 'A Meditation on John Constable' in his second collection *Seeing Is Believing*. This doubt is initiated by Tomlinson's epigraph that comprises a quote from the nineteenth-century painter famed for working in situ: 'Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature.' In uniting art and science, Constable's statement leads Tomlinson to describe how the painter 'replied to his own question' with 'the unmannered / Exactness of art' (1-2). Yet, in using

language to record Constable's practice of painting, Tomlinson implicitly replies to a parallel question concerning artistic *language* and scientific understanding of environments. After setting out a practice applicable to both painting and writing, that of 'the labour of observation / in face of meteorological fact' (3-4), the following fifteen lines of 'A Meditation on John Constable' describe 'Clouds […] […] scattered and mellowed shafts […] raw fire […] rags […] gauze […] a crescent crushed out […] silvered-yellow' (4-19). After presenting this imagery, Tomlinson notionally returns to the earlier line with: 'Facts. And what are they?' (20). Literary critic Karl Klein describes 'at the very moment when the objectivity of perception seems to be established, he puts it into question' (31). Yet, what is really questioned here is not the objectivity of the perception but familiar definitions of objectivity that accompany definitions of fact. The timing of Tomlinson's question provokes a return to his lines only to discover that figurative language rather than fact has formed this detailed, recognisable representation of the sky.

Tomlinson's 'A Meditation' suggests metaphor's capacity to represent the external world is equivalent to a plain, factual style. This approach helps to illustrate the irrelevance of the pedagogical dualism concerning fact and metaphor. Looking again at Christensen's environmental writing workshop shows some inconsistency in pedagogical instruction that, surprisingly, helps to refine the argument on this particular capacity of metaphor. A week after the class that concludes with Christensen's instruction that he wants students to see environments for what they are and so does 'not want to see a metaphor' in their nature writing, a paradoxically positive mention of metaphor arises. Discussing a student's poem in the weekly creative workshop, Christensen draws attention to the description of 'a family of clovers' for the way it 'humanises plants' through metaphor (Class Notes 3 October). His comment suggests anthropocentricity is at work in the writing that comes at the expense of direct perception and so resonates with Tomlinson's concern about the self imposing upon the observation. However, sceptical of the validity of Christensen's comment, a student responds by asking whether this humanising is actually problematic given that clovers do grow in clusters. Christensen concedes that perhaps this metaphorical expression is 'a form of ecological realism'.

Despite this brilliant equation of metaphor with realism, its brevity does not provoke an analytical discussion of quite how metaphor can be equated with realism and so fails to stop Christensen from banning metaphor from his students' writing. By examining the metaphor theory of Ralf Norrman and Jon Haarberg in *Nature and Language* it becomes possible to more fully comprehend the referential potential of metaphor that both Tomlinson, and to some extent, Christensen, indicate. This gives further rigour to the argument that counters the pedagogical dualism between fact and metaphor and sets up an alternative approach. Norrman and Haarberg present a semiotic study that claims linguistic signs are 'naturally motivated' (4). In this way, the theorists challenge structuralist modes of thinking that highlight the 'arbitrary' relationship between signifier and signified. However, by not explaining their argument in view of these common structuralist counter-arguments, Norrman and Haarberg have received much criticism for being cripplingly anachronistic, which may also explain why their theory has been much neglected.[26] Yet, as Norman and Haarberg offer this view of language to underpin a broader argument on metaphor, their argument conveys a productive new way of thinking about language and materiality. Although their focus rather eccentrically remains on cucurbits throughout the book, Norrman and Haarberg's attention to the process of metaphor is applicable to other forms of materiality, including clouds and clovers. '[W]hen a man is called a pumpkin', Norrman and Haarberg write, 'the sign "pumpkin" in the metaphor […] preserves its *pumpkiness*, which again means that to understand its meaning it is necessary not only to study language but to study reality as well' (5). Not questioning the relationship between the signifier and signified allows Norrman and Haarberg to examine how uses of a pumpkin in a figurative context are dependent upon the physical reality of a pumpkin. In other words, the physical qualities of the pumpkin determine its role in metaphor (149).

This argument by Norrman and Haarberg, which highlights metaphor's referential function, applies just as well to the metaphor created by Christensen's student as it becomes necessary to study the reality of 'a family' to understand its

[26] See John Sturrock's critical review, 'Cucurbits' in *London Review of Books*. This is contrasted with more positive reviews by Gregory M. Shreve (*American Anthropologist*) and G. B. Milner (*Journal of Biogeography*). Little citation of their work exists. Norrman and Haarberg are mentioned in the *Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment*, but only for their discussion on cucurbit imagery and not for their discussion on metaphor (250).

relevance to the ‘reality’ of ‘clovers’. ‘The normal relationship between language and reality is for language to refer to reality’, yet the theorists’ definition of metaphor suggests a process in which ‘reality can refer to other reality’ (164). Pedagogical concerns about metaphor as abstract and symptomatic of the ego could not be further from the theorists’ claim that there is not only material grounding in metaphor, but also that material agency exists within metaphor in the sense that the physical subjects determine their use in language. Rather than writing ‘cloud’ or ‘stratocumulus’ that might imply either detachment from the patterns and textures of the environment, or an unhelpful shorthand for them, Tomlinson creates an interaction between two realities in his description of ‘remnant *clouds* trailing across it / In *rags*’ (11-12 emphasis added).

Analysing Tomlinson in this way shows how metaphor has a referential capacity and how this capacity can attend to particular qualities in materiality. However, it is possible that metaphor should not be thought simply as a substitution for a literal description. ‘A Meditation on John Constable’ concludes with a witty remark: ‘The artist lies / For the improvement of truth. Believe him’ (51-52). Given Petersen’s warning that ‘everything you claim has happened, must in fact have happened, just as told’ and Christensen’s hoped-for ‘honest’ nature writer, Tomlinson’s notion that lying can generate an improvement of truth would presumably send these educators into shock. Tomlinson’s act of lying could be interpreted as an act of exaggeration that supposedly improves the truth by heightening it. Yet, this interpretation is not consistent with the poem that describes how art convinces ‘As the *adequate* gauge, both of the passion / And its object’ (50-51 emphasis added). Rather, Tomlinson’s metaphorical use of language seems to underpin his sense of ‘lying’. After all, metaphor has often been noted as a ‘false’ statement (the clouds are, after all, not rags). In turn, it is possible to interpret Tomlinson’s ‘lying’ in terms of metaphor that, whilst making a false linguistic claim, improves truth by drawing attention to the particularity of its subject. Norrman and Haarberg are of a similar mind as they claim the normal relationship between language and reality is confined, whereas metaphor can ‘allow man to extend his knowledge’ (164). With this development, it is possible to reinterpret Tomlinson’s earlier line, ‘Facts. And what are they?’, as no longer merely questioning the definition of fact, but suggesting that figurative language

surpasses the representational capacity of fact. When considering the prevalent pedagogical understanding in which plain speech and fact form direct perception of environments, the notion that metaphor can develop these strategies is a significant claim that should be pursued.

Metaphor's 'Improvement of Truth' in Perceiving Environmental Distinctions

Tomlinson's figurative examination of the particular patterns and textures of clouds defines his controversial statement concerning the artist's 'improvement of truth'. It poses the question as to whether the particular differences between clouds would be appreciated without metaphor. Following this example leads to further analysis of how metaphor attends to particular differences in materiality and how such 'improves' truth. This helps to present a strategy that, based on metaphor, aims to develop closer examination of environments than that afforded by pedagogical instruction. Inspecting a pedagogical exercise proposed by educator Allison B. Wallace helps to define further problems with the factual mode that can be overcome by analysing the metaphorical practice Tomlinson's work presents. In Wallace's article, 'The Place of Drawing in Nature Journaling', the nature journal takes a leading role. 'At the top of each entry' Wallace explains that the students are expected to 'record the date; the time of day; the ambient temperature; the degree of cloud cover; and the direction and strength of the wind' (101). Unlike Christensen who asks his students to do the latter by using a Beaufort scale in the second class of the semester, Wallace states 'I acknowledge aloud, when introducing the assignment, the temptation students will surely feel to get some of these data off the web—after all, many of them carry smart phones—I urge them to set aside this crutch' (101). The argument behind this decision fits with the experiential encounter educators hope to foster: Wallace claims that 'being able to gauge accurately and unassisted the temperature, wind velocity, and other conditions is part of the sharpened powers of perception' she hopes to foster in her students (101). All the more surprising, then, is her choice 'To help students identify their local tree, flower, bird, insect, and mammal species (beyond generic terms like "bug"), I lend out field guides such as the Audubon Society's guide to North American birds' (102). Instead of letting her students experience the diversity

of species and notice differences between them, as she did with the temperature, cloud cover and wind, Wallace lets a guide's pre-existing definitions lead the study and, put bluntly, do the work for them.

In the words of a student mentioned previously, such a practice might assist 'observational writing' but shortens what could be more extensive, experiential engagements in which students could recognise 'specifics' in materiality themselves. There is some validity to Wallace's claim, that 'A student who goes from saying "bird" to "starling" or "towhee" within a few weeks is already a more attentive, more *placed* student than she was at the start of the course' (102). After all, the student can begin to differentiate what they see. However, with the 'crutch' of the field guide, are the students really as attentive as they could be? Wallace may state that 'we often do not truly see or hear something for which we have no name', but immediately providing students with these names and descriptions takes away the students' opportunity to engage with materiality and its distinguishing features themselves (102). As Wallace goes on to ask her students to draw what they see, she quotes ornithologist Roger Tory Petersen's claim that drawing goes 'beyond mere identification naming things [sic]; you begin to understand shape, function, movement, and behavior' (103). Yet, in contrasting linguistic identification of the environment to drawing the environment, Wallace does not apprehend how language might offer a similarly refined understanding. Rather than saying 'starling' or 'towhee', students could better respond to the species by noting, say, an icing-sugar-sprinkled breast and a seaweed-green iridescence in the process that can later lead to the starling's identification. By prompting students to generate their own metaphors, it becomes evident that students really have attended to materiality rather than attending to field guides. Drawing out their own appreciation of distinctions within the environment provides a far more participatory process of representation than the previous passivity discerned in Wallace's encouragement of fact.

Tomlinson's attention to the patterns and textures of clouds in 'A Meditation' moves towards characteristics of colour and shape in his poem 'Frondes Agrestes' (*SB*) and so gives further demonstration of how metaphor responds to distinctions in the environment. The very title of Tomlinson's poem, 'Frondes Agrestes', acknowledges the poem's influence to the nineteenth-century art critic, John

Ruskin. Many of the descriptions in Tomlinson's poem are taken directly from the Frondes Agrestes section in Ruskin's *Modern Painters* such as the first two lines: 'A leaf, catching the sun, transmits it: / First a torch, then an emerald' (1-2). Later in the poem Tomlinson uses another, even more concise metaphor belonging to Ruskin that draws out differences in colour and texture: 'a leopard-skin of moss' (12). The poem itself concerns Ruskin's style: given Tomlinson's fascination with 'facets of copiousness' Tomlinson admires Ruskin's use of metaphor to aid with physical specifics. Tomlinson is, however, concurrently wary of Ruskin's potential to be an 'Organ voice dissolving among cloud-wrack', dominating the observation the way the 'voice / wearing a ruff' threatened to dominate in 'The Observation of Facts' (17). But metaphor is not symptomatic of this 'Sublimity' in 'Frondes Agrestes' (16). When 'The climber returns' from his lofty Romantic adventure among 'cloud-wrack', 'He brings / Sword-shaped, its narrowing strip / Fluted and green, the single grass-blade' (18, 18-20). What triumphs, then, is a perception that participates with material distinction as the differing shapes of the grass-blade are perceived through the shapes of swords and flutes.

It is this process of perception that requires further investigation in view of Tomlinson's statement that 'The artist lies / For the improvement of truth'. After all, the grass-blade is not a sword, nor are lichens actually 'slow-pencilled, iris-dyed' as Ruskin strikingly describes in *Modern Painters* (130). In each case the artist is lying in order to draw out differences in the environment. Tomlinson's use of 'sword' resuscitates the dead metaphor contained within the phrase 'blade of grass' to improve understanding of its shape. Likewise, without the metaphorical use of 'iris' to describe the colour of the lichen, it is unlikely that such a distinction could be representable through the restrictive pedagogical instruction for a metaphor-less, plain literary style. The improvement Tomlinson refers to concerns the distinctions of environmental material that only become perceivable through metaphor's ability to respond to them. The 'only' of this explanation might appear a radical suggestion, but it is not without consideration.

Max Black, a mid-twentieth century analytic philosopher, best known for his 'interaction view' of metaphor, argues for metaphor's capacity to 'generate new knowledge and insight' and so helps to further scrutinise this potential of metaphor to improve truth (35). Black's interaction view of metaphor continues to be

anthologised and has contributed to many studies of metaphor in a range of disciplines.[27] This theory of metaphor develops I.A. Richards' understanding in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* that the meaning of metaphor results from the interaction between the vehicle and the tenor. As explained in the Introduction to this thesis, Black situates his argument against substitution theories of metaphor that claim metaphors can be paraphrased in literal terms.[28] Introducing his work to the argument helps to extend the case for metaphor's value that contrasts with educators' more dismissive views. In 'More about Metaphor', Black argues against substitution theories as he proposes the interaction view in which 'the presence of the primary subject incites the hearer to select some of the secondary subject's properties' and so establishes how words in metaphor can create change in their meaning (29). An example from Black's earlier essay, 'Metaphor', explains that to describe a battle using vocabulary drawn from chess means that 'The chess vocabulary filters and transforms: it not only selects, it brings forward aspects of the battle that might not be seen at all through another medium' (289). Mindful of metaphor's juxtaposition, consequent interaction and insight in his later essay, Black compares the insight afforded by metaphor through a question: 'Did the slow-moving appearance of a galloping horse exist before the invention of cinematography?' ('More about Metaphor' 37). Although seeming like a peculiar diversion, Black's analogy refers to early photographers such as Eadweard Muybridge whose use of motion photography afforded an improved understanding of how horses run, which overturned many previous assumptions. In turn, Black suggests 'some metaphors are what might be called "cognitive instruments," indispensable for perceiving connections that, once perceived, are then truly present' (37). This metaphorical practice of revealing what is already there as if it were new corresponds to the kind of 'improvement of truth' that Tomlinson describes.

Analysing Tomlinson's poem, 'Distinctions' (*SB*), illustrates Black's claim on metaphor in terms of how metaphor might create insight into the environment. The poem opens with a solitary line in which 'The seascape shifts' (1). The disturbingly

[27] These studies range in focus from cognitive studies (see Bipin Indurkhya) to studies of theological texts (see Stephen H. Webb).
[28] See Donald Davidson's 'What Metaphors Mean'.

alliterative quality of the line suggests the blurring of waves: the seeming impossibility of definition. The notion that the observer cannot keep up with the observation as the environment changes is invited by the following couplet: 'Between the minutest interstices of time / Blue is blue' (2-3). However, blue is not simply blue once 'A pine-branch / Tugs at the eye' (4-5). Having perceived the pine-branch,

> the eye
> Returns to grey-blue, blue-black or indigo
> Or it returns, simply,
> To blue-after-the-pine-branch (5-8)

As Norrman and Haarberg claim, 'reality can refer to other reality' as the 'pine branch' becomes a metaphorical vehicle that informs the perception of the sea. Moreover, as Black's analysis helps to explain, the sea is no longer just blue because the interaction of this vehicle with the tenor 'filters' to generate a more specific sea colour. Plainness of language, exemplified by Tomlinson's initial 'blue', cannot respond to the particularity the sea presents. Without the pine-branch, and so without the metaphor, this distinction of the 'blue-black' or 'pine-branch blue' sea would not have been represented. Returning then to Wallace's pedagogical strategy; Wallace's instruction for naming birds through the field-guides reduces the possibility for students to develop their own understanding of material particularity through language as the field guides present ready-made definitions. In contrast, metaphor provides a literary strategy for apprehending material particularity in a way that challenges conventional definition by highlighting the nuances within environments.

Finding Language for 'Variegated Excess': Metaphor and Biodiversity

Arguing that metaphor has the capacity to represent material distinction has introduced a more detailed approach to David Abram's ecocritical concept of 'multiform strangeness'. Abram may hope to find 'A language that stirs a new humility in relation to other earthborn beings, whether spiders or obsidian outcrops or spruce limbs bent low by the clumped snow', but his listing of entities conveys

an understanding of diversity that is too obvious (3). Rather than the difference between a spruce and a spider, Tomlinson contrasts one wave in the sea against another and so demonstrates how identifying small distinctions within an entity can make the entity itself different to us. Having made this argument concerning metaphor on this small material scale it is now possible to consider the argument on larger material scales. Doing so affords an inquiry into how this understanding of metaphor might lead to an engagement with environmental issues regarding biodiversity. This is central to the argument that goes on to reveal the limitations in pedagogical approaches to environmental issues and establishes the way in which a strategy based on metaphor can rethink these engagements.

While Abram indicates it is language that stirs a new humility to material entities, and Knickerbocker believes it is poetic artifice that prompts better perception of the world, Tomlinson offers a contrasting angle. Developing his own advice that 'you cease to impose and you discover', Tomlinson shows how humility in perception – being a 'servant' to materiality – stirs a new language (Interview with Bruce Meyer). After all, 'A leaf, catching the sun, *transmits*' the metaphorical torch and emerald in 'Frondes Agrestes' (emphasis added). Challenging Abram and Knickerbocker, this sequence that prioritises materiality before representation becomes clearer still when returning to Tomlinson's discussion with Bruce Meyer. Responding to whether Ruskin was 'prerequisite training for your eye', Tomlinson explains his interest in Ruskin's attention to the 'peculiar and separating form' he found in nature (438). With this close attention to difference in mind, Tomlinson goes on to declare on a broad scale,

> We have so violently annexed that universe to our needs and our fantasies, literary, economic, political, we need to look again and find language for it and, in doing so, become more human, although in the finding of that language we are, say, putting to one side the ego, the personality, and what is thought to be "human". (438)

Tomlinson's charge that 'we need to look again' implies that it is not just a moss that is different to how we think it is, but that the whole universe is different to our first assumptions and that this large-scale difference requires a different language if we are to represent it. Tomlinson suggests that those who are unaware of these

differences are “human”: Tomlinson’s scare quotes return the assuming and egotistical personality that, as demonstrated, concerns Tomlinson throughout his poems. His way of responding to this concern is to turn towards another type of human who *does* look again and find language and so is ‘more human’. The question of what defines this concept of a ‘more human’ human can be answered by closely examining the process of ‘finding language’ in terms of metaphor.

Approaching a vast seascape in ‘Sea Change’ (*N*), Tomlinson acknowledges ‘To define the sea – / We change our opinions / With the changing light’ (1-3). Consequently, Tomlinson does not just look once but looks three times in the following lines that are isolated from one another on the page: ‘The sea is uneasy marble. // The sea is green silk. // The sea is blue mud’ (8-10). Each instance of observation prompts a different use of language. Later in the poem, this process of finding language becomes even more prominent: ‘Beneath dawn a sardonyx may be cut from it / In white layers laced with a carnelian orange, / A leek – or apple-green chalcedony’ (12-14). Here, Tomlinson creates a mixed metaphor: not only is the sea compared to mineral quartz in terms of its colour, but it is also compared to an apple. Rather than the bold, direct use of metaphor in the ‘leopard skin of moss’ in ‘Frondes Agrestes’, Tomlinson portrays a hashing of metaphorical language to represent the distinction he recognises within the sea. ‘A leek – or apple-green chalcedony’ mixes signifiers: one metaphorical vehicle is offered up and then another to produce a nuanced literary representation that tries to match the particular colour of the ocean itself. In this act of servitude to materiality, Tomlinson is forced to use less straightforward instances of metaphor and explore more varied linguistic possibilities such as mixed metaphor. In doing so, Tomlinson advocates a practice that is more responsible, more response-able and thus, reflecting his statement, ‘more human’ in really using our perceptual and linguistic capacities.

While these linguistic capacities make nature writing teachers nervous, as exemplified by Petersen’s equation of metaphor with the ego, these linguistic capacities afforded by metaphor suggest a new literary style for environmental representation. Tomlinson’s ‘Northern Spring’ (*SB*) pursues exploration of these linguistic capacities as he utilises metaphor in response to a whole landscape. The first line declares broadly ‘Nor is this the setting for extravagance’ (1). Yet, like ‘The

Art of Poetry', in which plainness of observation is advocated and strange description responds, Tomlinson continues with a depiction in which metaphorical language plays a role:

> Trees
> Fight with the wind, the wind eludes them
> Streaking its cross-lanes over the uneasy water
> Whose bronze whitens. (1-4)

Regarding the relationship between the physical world and literary representation of it, Tomlinson instructs that 'To emulate such confusion / One must impoverish the resources of folly / But to taste it is medicinal' (4-6). Tomlinson sees the environment as 'confusion' in a way that echoes Abram's perception of environmental strangeness. Tomlinson defends this quality as good for you as if disorientation were an antidote to an assuming ego. A poetic counterpart to his earlier statement that explained the importance of looking again and finding language, 'Northern Spring' advocates that to approach such 'confusion' witnessed in the environment, only language usually associated with nonsense ('the resources of folly') is successful. Reflecting upon Tomlinson's description of trees that 'fight' and the water that is 'uneasy', this nonsense has a distinctly figurative flavour.

As sunlight and shadow change the scene in 'Northern Spring', Tomlinson asks 'Where should one look / In the profusion of possibilities?' (14-15). Tomlinson's attempt to represent the environment provokes a question that is posed both to perception as well as to language. When Tomlinson goes on to describe a cloud's shadow 'quenching the verdure / As its bulk muffles the sun' it is evident that Tomlinson's eye is shifting focus across a profusion of possible perceptions as he moves from the ground to the sky (11-12). Moreover, the language Tomlinson uses to represent this perceptual shift demonstrates 'category mistakes' in terms of the figurative verbs deployed ('quenching', 'muffles') and so realises the true extent of the linguistic 'possibilities' Tomlinson is working with. Just as Tomlinson mixed figurative terms such as 'leek', 'apple' and 'chalcedony' to create greater linguistic nuance to represent the sea in 'Sea Change', so in 'Northern Spring' Tomlinson is mixing and misusing language to represent the

diversity he sees. Tomlinson's practice of *finding* language is, then, a *making* of language through metaphor. In Max Black's 'Metaphor', Black briefly claims that **'**Metaphor plugs the gaps in the literal vocabulary' (280). In turn, Black views metaphor as 'a species of *catachresis*, which I shall define as the use of a word in some new sense in order to remedy a gap in the vocabulary' (280). He footnotes the definition given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* that explains catachresis as an 'Improper use of words; application of a term to a thing which it does not properly denote; abuse or perversion of a trope or metaphor' and disputes the 'pejorative' suggestions of catachresis as perverse or abusive. Black's understanding of catachresis as that which can 'remedy' a gap in the vocabulary counters the dictionary definition. His choice of words emphasises the need for additional language that corresponds to Tomlinson's sense that in order to 'emulate such confusion', one '*must*' use the 'resources of folly' (emphasis added). Indeed, as Tomlinson identifies 'variegated excess' growing from the 'verdant ground' so he must create a 'variegated excess' of language (19-20).

Jim Perrin, nature writer, freelance workshop leader and director of the Travel & Nature Writing Masters course at the University of Bath Spa, describes a nature writing exercise that at first seems to correspond with Tomlinson's practice and depart from other pedagogical strategies analysed so far. With an intention to foster 'attentiveness', Perrin asks his students to 'sit in a café with a notebook and just transcribe people's conversations by eavesdropping on them' (Personal Interview). He explains that 'they have to listen closely' to customers' 'bizarre' exchanges that include 'particular conversational tics' and that such a practice is good for 'shaking up the sense of what's conventional'. The point of this exercise is that students will 'bring the same sharpened quality of attention' to the environment; 'they'll look all the more closely at a rhododendron leaf and be able to describe it more particularly'. Perrin's exercise echoes the current discussion on Tomlinson as Perrin acknowledges distinction and diversity in the language used by café customers and how apprehending this might lead to greater awareness of distinction in the environment. However, Perrin's interest in the potential strangeness of language appears to stay firmly in the café. The 'bizarre' language of customers is a prerequisite exercise to foster attentiveness to materiality and not a way of subsequently thinking about the potential strangeness of materiality and

how to represent it through writing. When Perrin does consider literary style in environmental writing later on, he subtly continues the dualism between fact and metaphor by praising plain, straightforward diction and warning of metaphor's potential to be an 'unnatural', 'forced image' (Personal Interview).

However, as Tomlinson continues to demonstrate in poems from 'A Meditation' to 'Northern Spring' it is often what might be regarded as inappropriate language that is the most appropriate for representing environmental materiality. Owing to the fact that 'Northern Spring' takes place in the outdoors rather than in the context of a theatre, the scene may not immediately be thought of as a 'setting for extravagance' (1). Yet, just as Tomlinson revised common understandings of fact in 'A Meditation', he also redefines extravagance by attending to the extravagant quality of the environment's 'variegated excess'. In doing so, Tomlinson suggests that a kind of literary folly is the only style for 'honest' representations of the environment (20). Indeed, by using words inappropriately, metaphor increases the stores of vocabulary and thus responds to abundant differences in the environment. Educators such as Wallace may think that their students are involved with 'writing – "naming" in the broadest sense of the word' but with the frequent deployment of field-guides, it is possible that these students are involved in naming in a reductive sense (103). Presented with, say, the language of the Audubon field guide, the students are not engaged with finding language themselves. The experiential quality intended by these educators' instruction to go out and write in the field is compromised by their praise of field-guides and plain language that restricts vocabulary. Carrying out these pedagogical strategies, educators also compromise an experiential exploration of the capacities of language: of what language is and what it can do.

In assessing the capacity of metaphor to produce linguistic variation in view of ecological variation, it becomes possible to take the argument a stage further and consider how a metaphorical literary style might approach the subject of biodiversity in which 'variegated excess' is currently threatened. Professors such as Andrew Motion indicate their intention to increase environmental awareness in their students in light of environmental issues. However, the question of how nature writing pedagogy can actually approach environmental issues such as climate change or pollution, is frequently met with anxiety and dismissal and so

necessitates further examination. When asked how nature writing might engage with these issues, Perrin immediately associated the idea with polemical styles: 'Once you start taking a polemical slant I think you're in danger of losing your closeness to subject, losing your attentiveness' (Personal Interview). Of course Perrin has good reason for these concerns; one might be found among the twenty poems on climate change commissioned for the *Guardian*'s recent 'Keep It in the Ground' campaign that demonstrate an angry call to arms, or bitter elegiac tone, conveyed in part by frequent rhetorical questions and exclamations.[29] However, taken as a definitive prescription, the direct line Perrin makes between environmental issues and polemic is unnecessary and unhelpful.

To revisit Wallace's exercise again in the light of this context initially does little to help overturn Perrin's opinion. Acknowledging that she does not expect her students to become 'tomorrow's nature writers nor environmental activists', it is appropriate to first ask what Wallace *does* hope for her students (103). She concludes 'given that they will be tomorrow's caretakers of the world we share with plants and animals, I would like them to become citizens who are thoughtful about this charge. To become, in other words, people who can *see*' (103). Not only is Wallace's notion of 'seeing' unhelpfully broad, but given the previous analysis of Wallace's exercise, rather than creating 'people who can *see*', her exercise is more likely to generate people who can *name*. Despite these complaints, Wallace's concern to conserve these names deserves further examination in light of the environmental issues that Perrin wishes to avoid. Alongside *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds*, Wallace recommends her students 'a compendium of hundreds of terms for specific features of North American landscapes, terms that are in danger of being lost for lack of use as more and more of us spend our lives surrounded by walls, concrete, and glass' (102). While Wallace appears to propose an environmental agenda in remembering specific words for the landscape, Wallace's concern seems to neglect the fact that these terms are 'in danger of being lost' not simply because more time is spent in cities, but because these cities are expanding. Rather than the linguistic signifier being forgotten, it is the specific feature itself — the signified — that is at risk of being

[29] See 'Still Life with Sea Pinks and High Tide' by Maura Dooley, The Question' by Theo Dorgan, and 'Extinction' by Jackie Kay.

lost. The general thrust of Wallace's argument is, however, shared by Robert Macfarlane whose aforementioned article 'The Word-Hoard', and recent book *Landmarks*, pursues a discussion in this vein. Macfarlane describes collecting terms for the environment from conversations, correspondence, maps and books. He lists, for example, seven different words for 'icicle' used across the UK: *aquabob*, *clinkerbell*, *daggler*, *cancervell*, *ickle*, *tankle* and *shuckle* ('The Word-Hoard'). This practice takes on a conservatory ethic when Macfarlane notes 'As we deplete our ability to denote and figure particular aspects of our places, so our competence for understanding and imagining possible relationships with non-human nature is correspondingly depleted'.

In drawing attention to these dialect terms, Wallace and Macfarlane introduce what might be considered less plain, more creative terms that might refresh a factual style and which represent a sense of diversity under threat. Yet, in still providing readymade descriptions of environmental entities, these terms continue the problem of giving students preconceptions regarding the entity's 'facets of copiousness', therefore creating a less active experiential engagement with the environment. A literary style based on metaphor challenges this potential passivity. Given the referential capacity of metaphor and the capacity of metaphor to *make* language, a literary style based on metaphor affords the opportunity to actively engage with material differences in the environment and create definitions afresh. Macfarlane notes people are still creating new words for entities within their environments, and this, I argue, is where metaphor is essential given its ability to respond to material variation with linguistic variation. This ability has significance when considering biodiversity: from the numerous species of insect in a back garden in the UK, the array of marine species inhabiting a coral reef in Queensland, Australia, to the many species still yet to be recorded. As these species present a rich array of differences in terms of their characteristics (involving, say, colour, texture, sound and shape) metaphor can find language for them. While this effective capacity of metaphor has been sourced from Tomlinson's exploration of clouds as well as his careful representation of a Northern landscape in spring, metaphor's applicability to biodiversity has already been anticipated in its exploration of difference between the colours and patterns of a starling and its attention to a particular 'iris' lichen.

With biodiversity currently under great threat by what can be broadly identified as pollution, habitat loss, the introduction of exotic species and climate change, the need for an understanding and appreciation of diversity is high. Recent reports presented by the BBC suggest the earth has entered 'a new period of extinction' (*BBC Science and Environment*). Even if Wallace's pedagogical desire to continue using learned names for specific features of a landscape were situated within this context of extinction, it has been shown throughout this chapter that the practice of naming she prescribes generates potentially passive environmental engagements on its own. Although this discussion of biodiversity is not, perhaps, what Tomlinson's poems mean to address, the lesson presented by 'Northern Spring'— that without the 'resources of folly' we are unable to represent the 'confusion' presented by environments — takes on a certain gravitas in view of these threats to the number of species on earth and the predominant prescription of a plain literary style in pedagogy. In view of these matters, figurative language is crucial to engaging with, appreciating and ultimately representing the rich diversity of species in ecosystems. This argument on metaphor's capacity to respond to environments reverses Perrin's concern that to engage with issues is to lose 'closeness' and 'attentiveness' to subject. Instead, introducing these capacities of metaphor to environmental issues such as biodiversity means that attentiveness is fostered towards both the distinctions in environmental materiality and towards the ecological significance of these distinctions.

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In response to the first of my research questions on what instructions dominate in nature writing pedagogy, this chapter has identified recurring pedagogical instruction for factual representations and against 'narcissistic' metaphor. It has shown how these attitudes towards literary style are unnecessary and a potential hindrance to nature writing. The examination of David Abram's argument addressed the next research question on how ecocriticism might provide alternative thinking: Abram's work helped to identify potential pedagogical shortcomings by outlining the 'deterministic' effects of scientific writing and the importance of metaphor as an alternative descriptive mode. Close readings of

Tomlinson's metaphorical practice then afforded an answer to the final research question on how metaphor might enable new perspectives and develop pedagogical strategy. Advancing beyond Abram's ideas, these close readings established metaphor's referential capacity and metaphor's ability to represent particular material differences. Answering the chief aim of this thesis – to propose alternative approaches for nature writing pedagogy through metaphor – the capacities of metaphor studied by this particular chapter can be used to counteract inattentive, even dismissive, encounters with environments and foster awareness of the 'variegated excess' of the earth in a gesture towards conservation.

Having started with the claim that metaphor has a referential function that parallels fact, the argument of this chapter has progressed to show how metaphor affords new appreciation of environments by attending to distinctions in the environment otherwise neglected by pedagogical instruction for a plain, factual style. This challenges John Elder's pedagogical advice to students; that factual learning will mean 'your writing will not be so solipsistic, it will be more in the world' and shows how metaphor has the potential to create writing 'more in the world'. The last section of this chapter has taken the argument another step further by explaining how metaphor's relationship to material distinction speaks to the environmental issue of biodiversity. Once again, this has challenged pedagogical thought in which environmental issues are associated with 'polemical' writing and demonstrated how metaphor can create sensitivity to these issues. These findings advance Abram's ecocritical argument that searched for other types of language than fact and so initially assisted the critique of pedagogy. The argument adds detail to Abram's broad conception of 'multiform strangeness' via Tomlinson's eye for distinction. Furthermore, this argument has developed Abram's brief discussion of metaphor (that he contextualised within 'primitive' culture) by highlighting metaphor's representational capacities with Max Black's metaphor theory.

Breaking the chains that linked fact and truth, metaphor and ego, in pedagogical approach has cleared a substantial space in which to focus on metaphor's productive potential in later chapters. In making such progress, this chapter has established three key interlinking principles for further argument. Showing how metaphor has a referential capacity that draws attention to material distinction has led to the principle that metaphor is not necessarily symptomatic of

the ego but potentially complementary to factual styles. This prepares for the next chapter investigating broader concerns of the ego in terms of the first-person ‘I’ and how other uses of metaphor negotiate particular narrative concerns. This point is of course joined by another point; that metaphor engages with the environment. Studying metaphor has revealed interactive dynamics between materiality and language. Understanding these dynamics allows further explication of them later on as the focus of each chapter conveys a different approach to materiality – such as past and future environments in the next chapter. Lastly, this chapter has established how a literary style based on metaphor can approach environmental issues faced today. This sets a precedent for further investigation about how uses of metaphor can engage with environmental issues in other ways than the polemical writing that certain educators fear their students will produce. As each chapter follows such principles, a basis is established from which to discern the diverse but corroborative ways that metaphor can help rather than hinder key conceptualisations of environments.

Chapter Two

The 'I' in Nature Writing: Jorie Graham's Figurative Projection in 'Casting My Eye Out / to See'

This chapter searches for an alternative strategy to the frequent pedagogical instruction of the personal 'I' in nature writing. It draws attention to how the personal 'I's capacity to distract from the environment and its potential to introduce the very egotistical imposition educators feared in the previous chapter, necessitates an examination into alternative narrative styles. Consequently, this chapter argues that figuratively becoming other 'I's draws attention beyond the personal self and creates awareness of important changes in environments that occur over time and are often the result of human behaviour. By focusing on figurative projection as an alternative strategy to the personal 'I' advised by educators, this chapter complements the previous chapter: it proposes another way in which metaphor denies the ego in attending to environmental materiality. Furthermore, this capacity of metaphor responds to recurring pedagogical intentions to prompt students, as Andrew Motion describes, 'to look and look out' for environmental issues (Personal Interview). Advancing previous arguments on biodiversity, this chapter shows how a practice of figurative projection affords an engagement with issues such as extinction. In doing so, it pursues the argument of the thesis in establishing another strategy in which metaphor helps to develop understanding of environments.

After investigating the reasoning behind the repetitive advice for a personal 'I' in nature writing pedagogy, this study explains the limitation and ethical viability of this literary style. Establishing the need for other strategies, the analysis turns to instances of pedagogical disagreement and Rob Nixon's recent ecocritical argument in *Slow Violence.* Nixon's call for new ways of perceiving environmental violence helps to solidify further limitations with the personal 'I' and provoke the possibility of an alternative narrative style based on figurative projection. This examination of Nixon anticipates a series of close readings of contemporary US poet, Jorie Graham. These readings clarify the appropriative potential of the 'I' before going on to inform two claims in response to this problem. The first claim

demonstrates how figurative projection into other temporal frames provides an opportunity to shift the focus away from the self and towards environmental change. The second claim explores how this projection works: it establishes apostrophic address as a figurative practice involving interactions between 'I' and (a future) 'you' that enables an engagement with the changed environments of the future. Interview responses from Graham guide these claims, as does examination of theories by Jonathan Culler and Mark Johnson. Culler's landmark deconstructionist argument on apostrophe's effect and its relationship to time in literary texts, as well as Mark Johnson's philosophical study on morality, reason and the imagination, helps to investigate the interactive nature of this figurative literary style between different 'I's.

The 'I-Me-My Voice'

John A. Murray exemplifies the practice of using a personal 'I' in advising his students that 'You need that personal "I" as often as possible to remind the reader that this is not scholarly discourse or impersonal journalism but is, rather, a personal or nature essay' (19). Likewise, what John Elder wants from his students is '[S]trongly voiced, authentic, personal stories; reflective stories' (Personal Interview). The argument behind such prescriptions of a personal literary style is based on connection – both with the environment and with the reader. Elder claims that encounters with environments through a first-person 'I' are 'guided by a sense of connectedness' and 'discovery' with the environment and leads to 'the most vivid stirring writing' for readers. Quoting from a letter by Robert Frost, Elder supports the latter point by stating, 'No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader. No tears for the writer, no tears for the reader'. Yet Elder's conflation in his definition of 'whatever you call it – nature essay, personal essay' (consistent with Murray's earlier description) jars with previous pedagogical concerns regarding authorial imposition upon the environment. In a bold statement, David Petersen continues to demonstrate this seeming inconsistency when he writes that the 'I-me-my voice' is 'the voice of choice for nature narration' (99). Given Petersen's anxiety regarding metaphor and narcissism that was analysed in the previous chapter, this advice on an 'I-me-my-voice' appears surprisingly unaware of its appropriative claim over the

environment. This emphasis on a personal literary style is typical of much nature writing teaching. An extreme example can be identified in the very title of Margaret McFadden's exercise ' "The I in Nature" Nature Writing as Self Discovery'. Far from putting the emphasis upon learning about the environment, McFadden explains that 'One of the more satisfying reasons for spending time in Nature is to learn something about ourselves, as individuals' (102). Evoking a certain Transcendentalist quality and later citing works by Thoreau, McFadden describes how going into nature is 'a quest for pilgrimage in self-awareness, exploring the relation […] of human to divine' (102). The environment in McFadden's exercise seems to come second place to the subject of the self, or even third place when considering this latter spiritual reference.

Despite the prescription of a personal literary style persisting in nature writing pedagogy, certain teachers do appreciate how this style might lead to authorial imposition. When asked whether he felt any particular literary styles posed ethical problems, Elder admits that 'you do have to worry about making everything about yourself – I think, I feel, I remember'. This concern appears present across the Atlantic as the majority of set reading lists for British nature writing courses include Kathleen Jamie's review of Robert Macfarlane's *The Wild Places* in the *London Review of Books*, famed for its attack of Macfarlane's 'enraptured' first-person 'I' ('A Lone Enraptured Male').[30] Reinforcing the concern about authorial imposition, Jamie identifies an inherent paradox within nature writing as she claims 'If there is a lot of "I" (and there is, in *The Wild Places*) then it won't be the wild places we behold, but the author'. Echoing previous criticism of Petersen's 'I-me-my-voice', Jamie claims 'The authorial 'I' is seen to appropriate the land; becoming an 'owner, or if not an owner, certainly a single mediator'. This sense of appropriation is a cause for concern. As Jamie suggests that there is a danger in putting the self first and not thinking about the consequences of doing so, she evokes the way physical appropriation of environments has resulted in habitat losses, species extinctions and toxic degradation.

[30] Jamie's review is set reading for James Canton's 'Wild Writing' Master course at the University of Essex, Miriam Darlington's 'Places and Journeys' undergraduate module at the University of Exeter, and Andrew Motion's 'Place, Environment, Writing' Masters course at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Confusion occasionally arises as to whether pedagogical prescription of the 'I' is compatible with engaging with environments. The advised 'I' could well be a 'voice wearing a ruff' as Tomlinson described and – as he continued to warn – such a voice is likely to position the 'observation / Behind the observer' ('Observation of Facts' 25, 23-24). The role of the 'I' is questionable still when returning to the fact that educators hope to sensitise their students to environmental issues. Petersen makes a bewildering swerve at the end of *Writing Naturally* in which he explains that 'one provocative paragraph' in view of environmental issues 'is nature writing at its best and most useful – more useful than a book-length extravaganza of eloquently transcendental musings' (191). Although this might seem to negotiate the 'I-me-my-voice' and the 'enraptured' quality that Jamie dismisses, it is likely that in order to make this 'provocative paragraph', the personal 'I' remains to an extent. Petersen's instruction for 'one provocative paragraph' asks for the more obvious polemical style that Perrin wanted to avoid in the previous chapter (191). Given that the majority of educators hope, like Andrew Motion, to foster an ability in students 'to look and look out' in terms of issues, it is necessary to consider how a literary style involving the 'I' can generate these kind of engagements without reverting to polemic.

Jon Gower, who teaches nature writing at Swansea University, disagrees with pedagogical preference for the 'I' and states 'I think that letting go of the ego is really important' (Personal Interview). As he explains, 'We can talk about me and my relationship with nature but if you're writing a biography it's the subject first and not the *biographer* […] stop being interested in yourself, and telling us how you feel.' Although Gower does not provide an alternative literary style to the personal 'I', one of Gower's students, clearly influenced by his advice, shows initiative. When asked about styles of narration, the student explained that 'I'm very much an "I" in my writing and I'm trying to learn on this course not to be so much from my viewpoint – to be other "I"s' (Personal Interview, Student E). This suggestion, that one can figuratively become 'other I's', deserves further exploration in considering how to negotiate concerns regarding appropriation and shift attention beyond the personal self.

Of course the basic concept of becoming other 'I's is not new. Much theoretical study has engaged with this idea of ontological migration – particularly

in view of animals (see the summary of some of these inquiries in the introduction of Chapter Four with regard to anthropomorphism). However, when regarding 'becoming' more broadly, attention might be paid to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Their landmark work of metaphysics, *A Thousand Plateaus*, has informed much ecocriticial thinking and guided much discussion in cultural geography in recent years.[31] Deleuze and Guattari consider 'becoming-animal' in a way that might approach becoming other 'I's. They are interested in 'becoming' not as an imitative process but as a 'deterritorialisation' in which a subject's identity detaches from particular fixed categories and labels, and becomes involved in 'a line of flight' (324). This 'line of flight' is a course of constant metamorphosis in which identity remains unstable. However, the indeterminate nature of this 'becoming' that Deleuze and Guattari claim is without structure, or definition, is difficult to apply to pedagogy as it resists providing a single strategy to follow. In *Place Pedagogy Change*, for example, Margaret Somerville describes an environmental education exercise for young children that is 'a perfect example of Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-animal" ': 'becoming-frog' (9). Somerville asks her pupils 'How does a frog move?' and asks them to dance like frogs to music comprised of frog calls. Yet, this exercise would appear to foster the very imitative 'becoming' that Deleuze and Guattari aim to guard against and so suggests it is not a 'perfect example' at all. Given that this thesis argues for the ways in which metaphor can create valuable environmental engagements, to deploy Deleuze and Guattari in this chapter would similarly risk oversimplifying and thus misusing their theory.

Examining recent ecocriticism, on the other hand, affords opportunities to focus upon representational challenges posed by the environment and to let these challenges guide a particular practice of figuratively becoming other 'I's, initially suggested by Gower's student. Analysing Rob Nixon's ecocritical argument in *Slow Violence* (2011) draws out how perception can be extended to 'look and look out' for environmental change. Nixon's argument is based upon a simple principle that violence cannot always be immediately seen. He believes

[31] See *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches and The Future of Ecocriticism*. Exemplifying trends in cultural geography, see *Deleuze and Space*.

> that we urgently need to rethink – politically, imaginatively, and theoretically – what I call "slow violence." By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. (2)

With this in mind, Nixon studies the impact of slow violence upon the global South. Nixon's argument is representative of a larger ecocriticial movement concerning the 'greening' of postcolonial studies: recent titles include *Postcolonial Environments*, *Postcolonial Ecologies* and *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*. However, in the context of the current inquiry, Nixon's conceptualisation of environmental issues and how they challenge perception offers a standpoint from which to conceive an alternative literary style of narration. The personal 'I', constrained by a very local sense of time and space, has little to offer Nixon's urgent call to think about slow violence. However, the figurative leap of becoming other 'I's is applicable to what is currently 'out of sight'. As what might be out of sight comes into sight by becoming other 'I's, John Elder's understanding of 'connectedness' and 'discovery' advances towards new environmental engagements.

Rather than the 'I' that threatens to change the environment through an overly personal approach, by adapting Nixon's ecocritical argument to this discussion on narrative it becomes possible to develop an alternative literary style that focuses predominantly upon changes within environments. Consequently, the dynamic between authorial imposition and the environment is reversed. This important reversal – seemingly unacknowledged as a pedagogical possibility – parallels Tomlinson's literary relationship to materiality. Instead of metaphorical language imposing upon the environment, the previous chapter established how the character of the environment prompted Tomlinson to 'find' metaphorical language. As close readings of Jorie Graham in this chapter show, recognising how an environment is 'out of sight' incurs a similar prompt to find another 'I'. Through these close readings of Graham, Nixon's concept of 'slow violence' is developed towards a figurative literary style that offers an alternative to current pedagogical instruction.

'I Can Make It Carry My Fatigue': the Appropriative 'I'

Jorie Graham (1950 –), a Pulitzer Prize winning poet from the US with twelve poetry collections, explores interactions between the 'I' and the environment. Graham's work portrays particular Modernist influences such as T.S. Eliot's use of fragmentation and Wallace Stevens's fraught relationship between the subjective viewpoint and the external world. Tensions such as this are explored across her collections, yet only recently has Graham begun to self-consciously address environmental issues. Like Tomlinson's self-reflexivity regarding facts and metaphor, drawing attention to Graham's increasing awareness of environmental change in her collections invites identification and analysis of how Graham then changes her conceptualisation and use of the 'I'. Consequently, Graham's work helps to illustrate the case for developing pedagogical thought. Currently the Bolyston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard University, Graham has also held a long-term teaching position at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. In an interview with Mark Wunderlich, Graham explains that her students at Iowa were 'more questioning of subjectivity in general, more self-conscious regarding the representation of subjective experience' ('The Glorious Thing'). Graham speculates that this 'questioning' comes from 'the distrust not only of the validity of personal experience but of the very notion of an essential self who might claim to have such an experience'. As Graham reveals the kinds of interrogations applicable to the 'I', any pedagogical faith in 'strongly voiced, authentic, personal stories' with regard to nature writing appears even more questionable.

Certain trends in scholarship on Graham's work take up these comments on the self-consciousness of experience and representation. Willard Spiegelman's chapter on Graham in his book *How Poets See the World* focuses upon how Graham enacts description and, in doing so, questions the character of seeing in such collections as *Materialism*. His study goes on to look at how Graham uses frames in her work to explore the boundaries and enclosures of sight. The act of seeing (and more broadly, the way the world is experienced) also becomes the central focus of Thomas Gardner's collection of essays, *Jorie Graham: Essays on the Poetry*. Collected by Gardner, Helen Vendler's essay on the length of, and disruption in, Graham's lines foregrounds the way in which Graham tackles the 'excess' of experience ('The Moment of Excess'). Gardner's collection of essays

also emphasises the way in which Graham's poems problematise the act of writing. James Logenbach's chapter, 'The Place of Jorie Graham', draws attention to poems that attempt to describe particular locations at particular times but, recognising the temporal act of recording these locations, these poems 'simultaneously conjure and disperse locations' (206). The 'I' in Graham's work is approached by Terry Pettinger's thesis chapter 'Self as Other' included in her thesis, *I Close My Eyes to Feel the Strange*. Despite her chapter title evoking this current chapter's argument on becoming other 'I's, Pettinger's focus is very different. Situating Graham in Lacanian terms, Pettinger explores Graham's portrayal of the subject's pursuit of self-knowledge.

Leonard Scigaj, Garth Greenwell and Adam Dickinson write on Graham's work with an ecocritical perspective. Furthermore, with regard to the later two scholars, this involves consideration of time and metaphor in Graham's work. In *Sustainable Poetry*, Scigaj asks how postmodern poets such as Graham can 'cross such a chasm to the referentiality needed for environmental poetry?' (36). Remarking upon Graham's collections up to *Materialism*, Scigaj offers a short exploration of Graham's approach to the environment that is chiefly a complaint. Scijag finds Graham to be overly involved in her own distrust of perception and representation at the expense of engaging with the environment and affirming 'our human potential for positive social action' (59). Yet in view of Graham's later collections Scigaj's argument that critiques Graham's 'lonely anthropocentric introspection' becomes, quite simply, false and so necessitates further study (59). Greenwell's article, 'To a Green Thought', addresses this issue to some extent by focusing upon Graham's *Sea Change*. Greenwell studies how Graham conveys an urgency to communicate environmental issues and a simultaneous awareness of the challenges posed by the scale of such issues. In one instance, Greenwell argues that Graham addresses future readers in degraded environments and so begins to consider how Graham might traverse different temporal frames. Dickinson develops Greenwell's brief attention to time in Graham's work in his thesis *Lyric Ethics*. Dickinson argues that Graham explores the 'elemental forces' in the environment and that these explorations create an 'ethical openness' in her poetry by attending to different times other than the lyric present (258). In particular, Dickinson focuses upon Graham's use of 'meanwhile' as presenting a

metaphorical dynamic as it conveys an understanding of two different times at once. Graham's sensitivity to different temporalities, according to Dickinson, conveys metaphor's 'is/is not' dynamic (see Chapter Five) that Dickinson establishes as an ethical way of standing in relation to the world (261).

This overview of scholarship on Graham shows that further attention needs to be paid to how Graham's problematisation of perception and representation prompt particular narrative strategies in her work that reconsider the 'I'. Greenwell's brief examination of Graham's address to future readers necessitates development that brings metaphor into the discussion via apostrophe and explores the different types of address in her work and their different effects.

Before examining how Graham's attention to environmental issues determines her use of 'I' and 'you' in her later collections, it is important to see why Graham arrives at this practice. Analysing the problematic capacity of the 'I' with regard to environmental representation in her earlier collections creates a starting point. 'Drawing Wildflowers', collected in Graham's first volume of poetry *Hybrids of Plants and of Ghosts* (1980), elucidates how Graham's writing speaks to the problematic advice for personal narration in teaching. 'Having picked one / I can start anywhere', Graham describes of a flower (8-9). Such a declaration expresses freedom in the sense that now the wildflower has been 'picked' it is no longer framed by the earth and sky. Instead, the wildflower belongs to the artist's surroundings and so the artist is in control in being able to 'start anywhere'. Corresponding to Jamie's comments on Macfarlane, 'this begins to feel like an appropriation'. Graham continues the line with 'and as it bends, weakening, // ignore that' (9-10). Dismissing the wildflower's own action, attention is drawn to the action of the 'I': 'I can chart the shading of the moment – tempting – though shading / changes hands so rapidly. / Yes should I draw it changing, making of the flower a kind of mind' (11-13). Graham's repetition of 'shading' and 'changing' demonstrates the possibilities of the self imposing upon the wildflowers. Of course, the wildflowers present a certain shade of their own and this can change depending upon the light. However, the artist's pencil can also shade the wildflower. This shading 'changes hands' (or shifts responsibility) once again as the artist's own character can shade the wildflower. Echoing David Petersen's pedagogical prescription of nature writing as 'necessarily first-person and

profoundly invested with (colored by) the writer's personality' (3), it is possible to see the wildflower as literally 'colored by' the 'I' as the artist considers 'making of the flower a kind of mind' and even more dramatically, 'I can make it carry my fatigue, / or make it dying' (13, 15-16).

As Margaret McFadden hopes her nature writing students will gain what might be thought of as an ecotherapeutic experience (in 'The I in Nature'), Graham's poem demonstrates a very different 'quest for pilgrimage in self-awareness' as she realises the opportunities for the 'I' to impose and manipulate (McFadden 102). This awareness occurs again in 'Thinking' (*The Errancy*) in which the 'I's' manipulation goes further when, in trying to represent a crow, the 'I' in fact makes 'a *version* of a crow' (3 emphasis added). Early in the poem, the crow is described as

> tightly feathered
> in the chafing air. Rain was expected. All round him air
> dilated, as if my steady glance on him, cindering at the glance-core where
> it held him tightest, swelled and sucked (3-6)

In such an excerpt it becomes difficult to differentiate the crow from the seeing of the crow: the crow could be 'tightly feathered' because of the 'glance' that 'held him tightest'. The opening of the poem that claims 'I can't really remember now' continues in the past tense to recall the crow 'hung like a cough to a wire above me', and so indicates that this version is being made from memory or from 'thinking' (1, 2). After all it is 'thinking' rather than 'crow' that forms the title of the poem.

In both poems, Graham demonstrates how the 'I' manipulates the environment with and without intention respectively and consequently raises further questions about pedagogical instruction. The latter practice of the 'I' that is inherent, seemingly unconscious, informs another of Graham's poems collected in her later volume, *Never* (2002). In 'Philosopher's Stone', Graham depicts the distinction between presentation and representation on a meticulous scale. Concentrating upon an observer in an environment, Graham writes

> – eyes open now – over
> sky, blue, stonewall, vectoring grasses, three trees,

distance, close-up, all as if
being drawn-in without it affecting *how*.
If you open and close your eyes
there should be a difference, no, in the way
the thing seen *is* – in its weight? – and then
what the thinking has begun to make – (21-28)

When the eyes are open the environment appears to be viewed objectively. However, when the eyes are closed, the environment weighs differently in the mind and thinking has the potential to remake the perception. The latter process returns John A. Murray's pedagogical emphasis upon the 'importance of eliminating self-deception and half-truths in thought and writing' (2). Despite this being analysed in view of other pedagogical concerns over 'false' metaphorical language in the previous chapter, Murray's instruction is pertinent to Graham's concern over the very act of perception that precedes language. Graham's juxtaposition of eyes open and eyes closed evokes Percy Bysshe Shelley's distinction between reason and the imagination in suggesting a contrast between direct perception of the environment and an abstract understanding of the environment.

As shown in the previous chapter, Murray responds to these concerns by proposing the nature journal that, as an 'unflinching mirror', records the environment in situ without memory or 'thinking' manipulating the observation (2). Using the journal in this way, Murray advocates a kind of self-effacement within the writing practice – surprisingly, given his statement that 'You need that personal "I" as often as possible' (19). Although Graham suggests it is as simple as turning the 'I' on and off with a blink, her line concerning the external world 'as if / being drawn-in without it affecting *how*' indicates that even in this submissive state, the observer might be changing the perception to some degree. Graham's 'as if' draws attention to the obvious question of whether it is possible to receive the environment without some selectivity in the observation. This is more boldly expressed in other poems of Graham's, such as 'Futures' in which she asks 'is there a skin of the I own which can be scoured from inside the glance / – no' (23-24). Graham's conclusive 'no' declares the impossibility of eradicating a possessive tendency from perception. Laird Christensen's pedagogical stance relates to Graham's scrupulous consideration of the relationship between the observer and environment as he advises his students to think about 'the differences between perception,

interpretation and imagination' (Personal Interview). He asks his students the following questions 'How does perceiving an environment differ from interpreting an environment?' and 'Is it possible to perceive an environment without interpreting it, to represent an environment in words without interpreting it?' (Class Notes 7 October). Christensen's careful attention makes an issue out of Murray's advice that stresses the journal as an 'unflinching mirror', as if there is no self who mediates between the observation and the notebook. Unlike Murray, Christensen begins to reveal the enmeshed character of the eye and the 'I'.

One student response to Christensen's questions is to claim that 'the ability to classify an oriole' is interpretation rather than perception of the natural world. Another student suggests that the difference is 'a case of objectivity versus subjectivity and that the latter happens with filters'. A further student chimes in by questioning whether these 'filters' can be avoided: she suggests that our past is always going to 'influence us' and remain a filter of what would otherwise be direct perceptions (Class Notes 7 October). Although Christensen's questions go further than Murray's pedagogical instruction by reflecting upon the 'I' and its manipulative perceptual tendencies, the focus on human perception creates a limited discussion in the class. Indeed, Christensen's questions inspect perception to such an extent that consideration of the object of such perception – the environment – is minimal. Although it is assumed that 'objective' perception allows a representation of an environment that is more direct and more focused upon the environment than on the self, Christensen fails to acknowledge the dynamics of environmental materiality that might challenge or determine these particular types of perception. Graham, on the other hand, is mindful of the importance of materiality and how it might guide perception: unlike Christensen she asks in an interview with Thomas Gardner: 'how much of the world can we bear-in via sense perception and its rendering in language […]?' ('The Art of Poetry').

Graham goes on to ask whether we can 'look into the very act of description to find where our instinct for destruction sets in'. This evokes analyses in Chapter One regarding pedagogical attitudes towards metaphorical description and the ego. Yet, this concern is preempted by her first question – of how much we can carry via perception – that considers the very copiousness of materiality before considering how to represent it descriptively. The first-hand practice of observation

that Murray advises his students clearly informs Graham's own writing beyond 'Philosopher's Stone', as she explains in the interview with Gardner that the 'descriptions in *Never* take place, physically, *en plein air*'. However, the fact that Graham contemplates the copious nature of materiality means that her practice is more complex. Graham's process goes a step further than those encouraged by educators. Speaking to Gardner, Graham explains that in *Never* she was interested in 'porting' the environment rather than 'reporting' it: 'In front of me – water and gulls on the beach in a certain moment of sunset, say – and I look up and describe the thing – then I look up and it has changed, and I change the word.' Like the argument in the previous chapter that established Tomlinson as a 'servant' to materiality in his practice of finding language for it, Graham becomes a servant too (Tomlinson's interview with Bruce Meyer). By changing the word, Graham offers 'an attempt to change the power ratio of witness to the world, to give the world – the subject – more power.' Having an awareness of an environment's changeability makes Graham want to be ' "corrected" by the given' ('The Art of Poetry').

Graham's practice corresponds with the greater temporal thrust in *Never.* As Graham explains in the collection's notes, the book is an 'attempt to enact the time in which it takes to see the thing, the time in which that seen thing is living and constantly changing' in terms of 'the rate of extinction [that] is estimated at one every nine minutes' (111). Although this alarming frequency of extinction might not seem in keeping with Nixon's understanding of 'slow violence', these extinctions take place all over the globe and are often the result of causal chains spread out over time, meaning that the loss of a particular species is, as Nixon indicates, 'out of sight'. Additionally, rather than an instant spectacle of catastrophe, an extinction is a loss: a kind of violence that is difficult, if not impossible, to see. By revising the power ratio of witness to world, Graham attempts to lessen the possibility of the 'I' changing the environment further. This revision allows Graham to appreciate the changes occuring within the environment: for instance, the gulls on the beach arriving and departing. Demonstrating an alternative approach to that proposed by teachers, Graham's process of 'porting' the environment rather than 'reporting' is no easy task. Although the process responds to the problem of how much

materiality can be carried via perception, the changes she wishes to record are ongoing, making it impossible for the writer to keep up.

In ‘Afterwards’, Graham demonstrates the way perception is challenged by materiality as the observer struggles to focus upon a group of starlings that cannot be seen, only heard:

> starlings starting up ladderings of chatter,
> all at once all to the left,
> invisible in the pruned-back
> hawthorn, heard and heard again, and yet again
> differently heard, but silting
> the head with inwardness and making always a
> dispersing but still
> coalescing opening in the listener who
> cannot look at them exactly,
> since they are invisible inside the greens (9-18)

As the physical presence of the birds is lost, the observer experiences a synaesthetic reaction: the starlings are ‘screeching-full in / syncopations of yellowest / fine thought’ (18-20). Like the crow in ‘Thinking’ that is seen with the mind’s eye rather than with the eye, the starlings become made of thought ‘finespun’ (20). However, ‘When two / appear in flight,’ Graham describes their

> thrash, dunk, rise, shake, rethrashing, reconfiguring through
> reshufflings and resettlings the whole body of integrated
> featherwork,
> they shatter open the blue-and-tree-tip filled-up gaze of
> the lawn’s two pools,
> breaking and ruffling all the crisp true sky we had seen living
> down in that tasselled
> earth. How shall we say this *happened*? (22-23, 25-32)

There is a ‘porting’ of the event: verbs and adjectives replace one another in a way that is consistent with Graham’s process of looking up, recognising change and changing the word. In particular, the four instances of words prefixed with ‘re’ (reconfiguring, reshuffling) imply that as the birds move and change position, the language reconfigures and reshuffles too. However, the question at the conclusion of this passage requires attention. In the preceding ten lines Graham has, after all, attempted to explain what has happened. Closer attention to the line reveals that

rather than *how* shall we say this happened, Graham has put the italicised stress on *happened* as if doubting the finality of the past tense.

'Afterwards' may attempt an alternative narrative style to the 'I' in identifying the starlings by 'porting' them, but the starlings supposedly continue 'reconfiguring through / reshufflings' despite the poem coming to an end. Graham's understanding of the relentless changes in the environment interrogates the immediacy and validity of direct perception: 'there's on / goingness', Graham playfully recognises with a hesitant enjambment in 'Philosopher's Stone' (2). In these poems from *Never*, Graham redirects her attention from questioning the manipulations of the 'I' and towards environmental change, which in turn interrogates the 'I's ability to observe. As Graham is shown to deepen her focus on environmental change in the next section, the relevance of the 'I' in the present tense is questioned further. Analysis of Graham's poems from later collections, such as *Sea Change* (2008), show how a figurative literary style of projection responds to these limitations. In turn this affords an examination of how metaphor can foster new perspectives of environments.

'Casting My Eye Out / to See': Figurative Projection

Graham's decision to 'change the power ratio of witness to the world, to give the world – the subject – more power' is compromised by her realisation that the world continues to change once the writer stops writing. Consequently, in 'Woods' (*Never*), Graham is anxious about what she calls the 'swagger of dwelling in place, in voice' (12). She continues to explain

> surely one of us understands the importance.
> *Understands?* Shall I wave a "finished" copy at you
> whispering do you wish to come for lunch.
> Nor do I want to dwell on this.
> I cannot, actually, dwell on this.
> There is no home. One can stand out here
> and gesture wildly, yes. One can say "finished"
> and look into the woods, as I do now, here,
> but also casting my eye out
> to see (13-22)

The stability of the environmental representation is questioned in a similar way to that in 'Afterwards'. Comparable to Graham's italicised '*happened*', Graham's scare quotes parody the notion of an environment being "finished". The writer cannot hold the environment in a singular time. After all, if one looks up one will find it has changed, that it is different and thus the writing becomes unrepresentative.

In 'Woods', Graham moves away from the question of 'How shall we say this *happened*?' and even 'How shall we say this *as it is happening*?' to 'How shall we say what *will happen*?' In apprehending the continuance of environmental change, Graham's response is in 'casting my eye out / to see'. Graham's choice of vocabulary suggests an attempt to extend perception of the surroundings at hand, which is developed by identifying the potential pun in the line. Reading 'casting my eye out / to see' as 'casting my eye out / to sea' invites a comparison with a captain on board a ship who inspects the horizon for danger. Government offices including environmental agencies have adopted such an act into a key strategy identified as 'horizon scanning' in which the future is scanned for emerging concerns. By conducting this process, it is hoped that preventative or adaptive procedures can be delivered. With these associations in mind, it is possible to interpret Graham as expressing a desire to draw attention away from the immediacy of the present tense in order to apprehend change. In doing so, a correspondence arises between Graham's work and Andrew Motion's pedagogical advice to 'look and look out' for environmental threats. This correspondence indicates how rethinking the 'I' might help to raise awareness of environmental issues and develop pedagogical approaches.

The act of 'casting my eye out / to see' invites the opportunity to project observation into other temporal frames that are not limited to the 'now'. Yet this analysis should not be restricted to the future tense only. Analysing the past as a temporal frame develops the argument as to whether drawing from past experiences – the very process that concerned John A. Murray and Graham – may in fact assist perception of environments. Although attention has been drawn to how the differences between past and present perceptions can prompt an individual 'I' to *conceptually* change an environment in an appropriative manner,

comparing past and present perceptions can show how a collective 'I' (a society) has *physically* changed an environment.

When John Elder describes the hazardous potential of too much 'I' in nature writing, he believes one way of 'helping all of us to escape from that tendency' is to project into the past (Personal Interview). He explains 'one of the ways when you feel tired of your own voice is to shift scales, temporally or spatially' and puts forward the example of 'imagining what was happening here right after the glacier melt'. Corresponding to the criticism made of Christensen's questions about perception, Elder's practice remains slightly limited in its anthropocentricity: a writer might consider a past environment because it affords a temporary opportunity to imaginatively escape from their own dominating 'I'. Understandably, given his particular approach to the 'I', Elder does not explain how a writer might actively seek, rather than resort to, a temporal projection as a literary style in itself with which to assess environmental change on a more sustained basis. On the other hand, Mitchell Thomashow, an educator broadly concerned with environmental identity, proposes a deeper consideration of the past in his exercise.

As noted in this thesis's Introduction with regard to Garrard, Thomashow's work has influenced discussion in ecocriticism as to how new perceptions of the environment might be fostered. In *Ecological Identity*, a book aiming to cultivate reflective environmentalists, Thomashow describes an exercise entitled 'Childhood Memories of Special Places'. He instructs students to think about how their home region 'looked like when you were a child, and what it looks like now' in order to appreciate environmental change (8). As Thomashow foregrounds the importance of memory he embraces the same act that so concerned Graham in 'Thinking'. However, rather than the act of remembering being unhelpfully manipulative, Thomashow shows how it can be conducive: the memory produces contrast with the present day therefore allowing students to witness 'the transformation of those places […] to appreciate the magnitude of environmental change, to understand and feel the impact of the changes' (10). In his later *Bringing the Biosphere Home*, Thomashow cites the same exercise and acknowledges that while projecting into the past may introduce personal aspects of the 'I', 'travelling into your past is less a nostalgic exercise and more an opportunity to observe a global environmental change' (99).

Elder's advice on figurative projection demonstrates one way to break up the monotony of the 'I', whereas Thomashow's advice, readily adaptable for nature writing pedagogy, emphasises how 'casting my eye out' to the past affords recognition of change, which consequently disrupts the dominance of the narrative 'I'. This practice begins to extend towards the future as Thomashow explains that 'the places they [the students] currently live in may also fall prey to development or pollution' (*EI*, 12). Thomashow elaborates upon this brief address of the future as he explains that 'returning to a place where you once lived allows you to move backward and forward in time. Your memories represent the past in contrast to what you observe in the present, allowing you to feel like you're observing the future' (*BBH* 99). This entanglement of temporal frames that invites a new perception of the present is given in reverse by Graham. In an interview with Deidre Wengen, Graham explains that if we imagine 'where we are headed' then this will incur consideration of 'what it will feel like to look back at this juncture' and consequently 'maybe we will wake up in time' ('Imagining the Unimaginable'). Looking back from the imagined future makes the present appear like the past, but, given it is still the present, this means that adaptation and social change is still possible.

The temporal entanglements described by Thomashow and Graham generate the potential for a literary style of figurative projection that enables a new perspective of the environment. This can be identified further in 'Root End' (*Sea Change*). Here, Graham considers 'where we are headed' and finds that this 'desire to imagine / the future' is analogous to 'walking in the dark through a house you know by / heart' (1-4). Graham describes this attempt to imagine the future as exhibiting both arrogance and ignorance in the way that, in this dark house, the human

mind knows our place so
deeply well – you could run through it – without fear – even in this total dark – this is what
the mind says in you: accelerate! – it is your
place, you be-
long, you know it by
heart, place –
not imaginable, nor under-
stood, where death is still an in-
dividual thing, & in the dark outside only the garden, & in each plant at core a thing
by

heart (14-23)

Like other poems by Graham, a sense of misplaced ownership is evident in ‘Root End’. The fact that the future is likened to ‘a [dark] house you know by / heart’ reveals the self’s tendency to presume the future to be familiar with, or a continuation of, the present. Graham highlights this misunderstanding by pursuing it with the detail that the imagined future place is one in which ‘death is still an in- / dividual thing’. As the line is juxtaposed with the previous qualifier ‘not imaginable’, Graham suggests that death will, in fact, happen on a larger scale. Indeed, the misplaced assumption that death is ‘is still an in- / dividual thing’ raises a question as to whether death will become so common as to be meaningless in a future affected by environmental change.

Graham’s ‘attempt to see where we are headed’ and to anticipate a different environment through such figurative projection is even more vivid in ‘Futures’. Compared to Thomashow’s exercise that focuses merely on observation in order to recognise difference between past and present environments, Graham creates a more extensive engagement with the future environment by casting an entire ‘I’ out to see. Early in the poem, attention is drawn to ‘the imagined fragrance as one / bends, before the thing is close enough’ (11-12). This ‘thing’ is the future and yet described as if it were the anticipation of a flower. However, the expectation and the reality of this future are less pleasant than the ‘imagined fragrance’ with its associations of spring and new growth

because, looking up, the sky makes you hear it, you know why we have come it
blues, you know the trouble at the heart, blue, blue, what
pandemonium, blur of spears roots cries leaves master & slave, the crop destroyed,
water everywhere not
drinkable, & radioactive waste in it, & human bodily

waste (15-20)

Although ‘Futures’ does not present the future as a place known ‘by heart’ (‘Root End’), but instead acknowledges that there is ‘trouble at the heart’, the disturbing future environment remains punctuated with instances of intimacy and familiarity:

your lower back

started acting up again, & they pluck out the eyes at the end for
food, & don't forget
the meeting at 6, your child's teacher
wishes to speak to you
about his future, & if there is no food and the rain is everywhere switching-on as expected,
& you try to think of music and the blue of Giotto,
& if they have to eat the arms he will feel no pain at least (35-42)

The future environment that Graham describes shows continuation of certain domestic and cultural references – there are still such things as teacher-parent meetings and the paintings of Giotto continue as a reference point. This lulling familiarity then jars with the descriptions of meteorological catastrophe and cannibalistic activity, provoking a shocking recognition of change.

The contrast between the familiar and the different in Graham's figurative projection in 'Futures' continues on a more intimate level through sensory detail. Graham's conclusion appears to draw upon the opening of the poem when she writes of this future 'I' who is

remembering money, its dry touch, sweet strange
smell, it's a long time, the smell of it like lily of the valley
sometimes, and pondwater, and how
one could bend down close to it
and drink. (66-70)

This conclusion that concerns the smell of money disturbs the assumption in the analysis above; that the 'fragrance' belonged to spring flowers. Consequently, this inconsistency between the opening and closing of the poem challenges an expectation or appropriation of the future as Graham so parodied in 'Root End'. It draws attention to a need to identify and find consistency when it is necessary to acknowledge change and difference. Graham cultivates further uncertainty in what appears to be a zeugma. The sensorial juxtapositions Graham makes between money, lily of the valley and the pondwater means that money also becomes a source that 'one could bend down close to' and drink from. This act of remembering – of how one 'could' drink – provides an illustration of her earlier hope that looking into the future prompts a 'look back at this juncture': seeing such future destruction might prompt thought as to how current freshwater sources are

treated, as well as self-reflection upon contemporary attitudes to money and economic growth.

Via her practice of projection that affords perceptions of similarity and difference, Graham presents a practice that both compares and contrasts with nature writing exercises involving temporal frames, such as SueEllen Campbell's 'Layers of Place'. For Campbell, a place is 'finely and intricately laminated, not only with the immediate and personal, but also with what we don't see that is present, with what is past and future' (179). This kind of awareness, that appears consistent with Nixon's founding tenet of 'slow violence', is intended to make the perception of a place 'immeasurably richer – not necessarily more comforting, but certainly more thorough' (179). She begins by asking her students to choose 'one place that you know well, maybe a place you love. Put yourself there in your imagination and memory' (180) and asks a long series of in-depth questions such as

> How does the air feel going into your lungs? Can you feel your heart beating? Touch something you've been looking at—with your finger tips, with your face. How does it feel against your body? Taste something. How does it taste? […] How much water is around you, in what forms, doing what? What's the temperature? (180)

Campbell's sensory prompts immerse the writer in the place. However, these prompts attend to the place in the present tense and the future only creeps into Campbell's exercise later on in two questions: 'What might it be like here fifty or a hundred years from now? What might happen as the planet continues warming?' (181-182).

It may be implicit that the questions Campbell asks regarding the present tense will also be considered regarding the future tense: that the earlier, more insightful prompts of 'How much water is around you, in what forms, doing what? What's the temperature?' are implied by the question of 'What might happen as the planet continues warming?' Graham certainly records such details in 'Futures' where there is 'water everywhere not / drinkable' and the constant rain is likened to 'the blue of Giotto'. Yet, the hesitancy of Campbell's exercise works against her intention to 'put yourself there'. Campbell's speculative repetition of 'what might' is weak in comparison to Graham's figurative projections. Campbell's 'what might' draws attention to the distance between now and the future.

In his ecocritical text, *Slow Violence,* Rob Nixon asks 'What then, in the fullest sense of the phrase, is the place of seeing in the world that we now inhabit?' (15). Nixon makes clear that destructive acts against the environment are dispersed through space and time and therefore often invisible. This creates a challenge to common understandings of observation that Nixon believes can only be overcome by 'giving the unapparent a materiality upon which we can act' (16). Although recognising the challenge, Campbell's exercise appears to hesitate in fully responding to it. Unlike her speculative approach to the future, however, Graham's projection materialises an environment through a bold, confident use of sensory phenomena. As one example of 'slow violence' in literature, Nixon addresses how the Bhopal disaster 'physically manifest[s]' through the narrator's body in Indra Sinha's *Animal*. He draws attention to how Animal's contorted body comes to represent the environmental crisis. This is contrasted by Graham's practice that shows how a narrator does not have to stand for environmental degradation but can attempt to stand in it, experiencing the differences that change has introduced (52).

By allowing the 'I' rather than merely the 'eye' to be cast into the changed landscape, Graham materialises otherwise unperceivable future environments with their heavy rainfalls and their losses through the 'I's act of remembering. This figurative literary style of projection into the future has shown how changes in future environments can be imagined and so responds to Motion's desire 'to look and look out'. Yet, with the pedagogical advice for an 'I-me-my-voice' looming, further attention needs to be paid to the particular narrative style of this figurative projection. The next section examines how Graham mixes pronouns and develops a complex practice of apostrophic address with which to engage with the future in a way that accentuates connection. Concentrating upon the 'you' in terms of the 'I' establishes the productive potential of being other 'I's and shows how Graham takes this a step further by prompting her readers to participate in this figurative practice themselves. This lends further support as to how an alternative strategy based on metaphor can develop pedagogical instruction of the 'I' and deepen awareness of environments and the issues affecting them.

'From Where You Are Now': Interconnective Apostrophe

Graham may be ‘casting *my* eye out / to see’ in ‘Woods’ (emphasis added), but to whom exactly does the perception belong in ‘Futures’? After all, in ‘Futures’ Graham addresses ‘you’. Graham’s work presents a complex use of pronouns that necessitates further examination for this chapter’s argument that aims to challenge pedagogical emphasis upon the ‘I’ and establish the potential of becoming other ‘I’s. There is an omniscient narrative tone in Graham’s description of the large-scale pandemonium in which there is ‘water everywhere not / drinkable’, a slightly more familiar tone to the ‘you’ in ‘you know why we have come’, as well as another, far more intimate ‘you’ who is suffering from ‘lower back pain’. This question of address and addressee arises again when returning to ‘Root End’: regarding the future Graham claims ‘*you* know it by heart’ (and not ‘I know it by heart’), and yet conflation comes into play with Graham’s sense of the collective ‘*we*’ and ‘mind knows *our* place so / deeply well’ (emphasis added).

In an interview with Sharon Blackie, Graham explains that her most recent collection *P L A C E* (2012) addresses the question of how to ‘make the “deep future” – seven to ten generations hence – feel actually “connected” to us, right down to this […] this choice we make to use this styrofoam cup, this plastic bag’ (‘Interview with Jorie Graham’). Graham’s statement is similar to her previous statement regarding *Sea Change* in which apprehending the future provokes reflection of the present. However, in speaking to Blackie, Graham accentuates the need to ‘feel actually connected’ to future generations as if such connection could boost the productive potential of reflecting upon our current actions. As this final section examines, Graham’s use of pronouns enacts this hoped-for connection.

Returning to ‘Futures’ in which Graham imagines a damaged future environment, it might appear that Graham is addressing a future human when she writes ‘don’t forget / the meeting at 6, your child’s teacher / wishes to speak to you’. However, the degree of familiarity expressed through what seems to be an internal reminder – ‘don’t forget’ – is more representative of an inner-dialogue and so complicates the identification of address at work. In an interview with Katia Grubisic, Graham admits the confusion she experienced in this process of addressing future humans as she explains ‘I felt I was trying to address them directly, though — it did not feel easy as I could not figure out who I was. The hard-

to-squint-in nature of them goes hand in hand with a dissolving sense of the self-in-the-now' ('Instructions for Building the Arc'). Graham acknowledges the perceptual challenge of envisioning these future generations. After all, she fears in 'Untitled' (*P L A C E*) that humans may have 'become unrecognizable' in the future (37). In trying to figure out who they are, Graham becomes uncertain of who she is and thereby indicates that there is a transaction at work between herself and this other 'you'.

Examining theoretical discussions on apostrophe aids further identification of Graham's use of address. Jonathan Culler's seminal deconstructionist approach to apostrophe in *The Pursuit of Signs* attends to the complexity in certain uses of apostrophe.[32] Culler's influence has been felt in many studies on apostrophe in Romantic works and on the broader subject of the lyric genre as he reacts to what he sees as a deliberate avoidance of discussing apostrophe in literary works in the past. Culler believes this avoidance comes from the fact that apostrophe is viewed as an 'embarrassing' outburst of passion (153). Challenging this, Culler highlights the way in which apostrophe tropes 'on the circuit of situation or communication' (154). Furthermore, Culler is keen to emphasise how apostrophe conveys a 'timeless present', 'a temporality of writing' by playing with presence and absence (165). This latter point gives further reason to suggest that apostrophe is central to the discussion on temporality so far: that Graham's address is what allows her to traverse time in her poems. Proposing a series of ways to interpret apostrophe, Culler's definition of a 'fourth level' of apostrophe continues to help situate Graham's use of address. Culler proposes that the figurative device 'which seems to establish relations between the self and the other can in fact be read as an act of radical interiorization and solipsism' (157). With this in mind it becomes possible to interpret how Graham 'parcels out the self to fill the world' (in the future) in order to connect with 'the other' in 'Futures' (Culler 157). Graham's address of 'you' addresses a version of herself in the future and in doing so fosters connection

[32] See Paul de Man's essay, 'Autobiography as De-Facement', which conveys another deconstructionist argument on prosopopeia that is referred to by Culler. The decision to use Culler's argument and not that of de Man was made on the basis that de Man's emphasis upon the 'mask' contrasts with the reading of Graham's 'sensorial imagination'. Culler's set of apostrophic functions are more readily applicable to Graham and, furthermore, he describes the importance of these in terms of 'ecological theory' and the need to apprehend new agencies in his recent *Theory of the Lyric* (242).

between this generation and ‘ten generations hence’: the ‘you’ is still familiar, is still afflicted by the same lower back pain. However, in contrast to the ‘I-me-my-voice’ that Petersen and other educators are so ready to prescribe, Graham’s revisioning of the self as ‘you’ takes an external perspective that recognises and enforces distinction: despite the same back pain this self is not only elsewhere, but also not known ‘by heart’.

Although Culler helps to identify the interaction at work, quite what part of the self Graham ‘parcels out’ needs to be identified in order to analyse how this simultaneous connection and separation works in perceiving a changed future environment. In response to Katia Grubisic, and evoking Nixon’s sense of materialisation, Graham explains that ‘The human imagination — in art — has an amazing way of helping into reality things that will from that point on become real, feel real, be thought of as real’. She gives the example, that ‘once you meet Emma Bovary, or Mrs Dalloway — will they ever not be real to you again?’ The relevance of Graham’s apostrophic address becomes clear when Graham explains ‘so it is with scenarios of the future’ and asserts that making future humans ‘feel real’ is only possible ‘if we use our sensorial imagination (supplementing our conceptual intellect for a minute) to bring them to life’. Graham recognises that the sensorial imagination is a tool with which to connect present societies with future people and materialise changes in the future environment thereby. Echoing Culler’s claim of apostrophe, she explains that this process means ‘You can find yourself in them and them in you’.

Graham’s emphasis upon the ‘sensorial imagination’ as a connective device to apprehend change is developed from another apostrophic angle in ‘Although’. The poem begins with

> The vase of cut flowers with which the real is (before us on this page)
> permeated – is it a page – look hard (I try) – this bouquet
> in its
> vase – tiger dahlias (red and white), orange freesia (three stalks) (floating
> out), one
> large blue-mauve hydrangea-head, still
> wet (this
> bending falling heavy with
> load) (and yellow
> rose)

(wide open head, three just-slitting buds)(also holding drops of rain) (1-11)

The order to 'look hard' and its response '(I try)' initially seems to demonstrate another apostrophic self-dialogue. Observation of the bouquet is made difficult as the words on the page are a poor substitute for the reality of the bouquet. This tension evokes the poem 'Bouquet of Roses in Sunlight' in which Wallace Stevens finds the reality of the flowers to exceed any description of them. Yet, there is another perceptual challenge at work here that is created by a temporal shift. This shift is made clear as Graham asks much later in the poem,

is there still day, one of the days, are there still 'ones' of
things – vases or days –
you think it is wrong, perhaps, to play this game
when we are all
still here (69-73)

Rather than squinting into the future as in previous poems, Graham is envisioning someone in the future squinting back to the present day (for them, the past). Like 'the memory of money' in 'Futures', Graham suggests there might not be vases and thus there may not be bouquets in the future and so the sensorial imagination projects backwards to imagine the flowers in rich detail: 'blue-mauve', 'holding drops of rain'.

As this temporal shift becomes apparent the 'you' previously addressed requires further analysis. The uncertainty introduced with Graham's 'you' in the line 'you think it is wrong, *perhaps*' (emphasis added) disturbs the previous claim regarding apostrophic self-dialogue that previously portrayed an intimate knowledge of the 'you' as a different form of the 'I'. Indeed, Graham introduces a sense of speculation and hesitancy that resonates with the earlier criticism of SueEllen Campbell's exercise in order to self-consciously reflect upon the temporal projection. Advancing beyond Culler's understanding of apostrophic self-dialogue, Graham's 'you' appears to resonate more with Natalie Pollard's study of address in *Speaking to You*. Summarised broadly, Pollard's approach aims to counter the kind of interpretations Culler makes and identify 'you' as a distinct other in the work of contemporary British poets. Pursuing this intepretation, it could be said that

Graham is directly addressing a future human: the ‘we’ would then refer to our present generation playfully projecting into the future and a future human thinking it is ‘wrong’ to do so. However, the ‘we’ in Graham’s poem offers another interpretation that extends previous investigation of the entanglements between ‘I’ and ‘you’. Despite the proferred interpretation, there is no reason to jump to the assumption that the ‘you’ is separate from the ‘we’ because of a temporal dislocation. Rather, considering the ‘you’ as part of a collective ‘we’ makes it possible to argue that Graham is singling out a present reader with her apostrophic ‘you’. In other words, it is the present-day reader of Graham’s poem who is projected into the future by Graham’s questions (‘are there still “ones” of things’) and thus may regard this projection into the future as an uncomfortable experience and an unethical ‘game’.

The potential of apostrophe to provoke figurative projection into future environments in order to conceive of change is developed through these interpretations of ‘you’. These interpretations bolster the case for revising pedagogical emphases upon the narrative ‘I’ in order to cultivate new perspectives of environments. Pursuing the latter interpretation of ‘you’ (in which the ‘you’ addresses a present-day reader) finds that Graham is not simply projecting into the future on her own but involving the reader in a figurative future projection too. Reader participation is not unusual in Graham’s work: a direct address to readers features in several of Graham’s earlier volumes including *The End of Beauty* (1987) and *Materialism* (1993). In ‘Room Tone’, collected in the former volume, Graham writes ‘Dear reader, is it enough for you that I am thinking of you / in this generic sort of way’ (7-8). This continues in *Materialism* when Graham asks the reader another question: ‘Can we make this a *thinking*, here, this determination / between us to co- / exist’ in ‘Break of Day’ (147-149). Returning to ‘Although’, it is necessary to reinterpret those hesitant opening lines in which Graham wrote ‘Try to look (I try)’ as a proposition of her desire to ‘co- / exist’ with the reader. The order ‘Try to look’ addresses the reader and, consequently, the parenthetical addition ‘(I try)’ is her own; providing some sense of reassurance. Extending the connective capacity of the sensorial imagination, Graham’s particular order of ‘Try to look’ addresses the reader to use their own sensorial imagination to observe environmental change.

Comparable to the careful description of flowers in ‘Although’, in ‘Loan’ Graham sensually describes an urban scene after rain, of ‘wet rainbowing where oil from exhaust picks up light […] & the girl looking sideways carrying the large / bouquet of blue hydrangeas, shaking the water off’ (66, 71-72). In his aforementioned article, ‘To a Green Thought’, Garth Greenwell claims that Graham ‘describes the moments after a rain shower for future readers who may, she imagines, need careful testimony of such a phenomenon’ (122). Yet the following excerpt that Greenwell pays attention to does not correspond with his identification of ‘you’ as a future reader. He quotes an earlier section of ‘Loan’:

> do you remember it, the faucet flared like a glare
> of open speech, a cry, you could say what you
> pleased, you could turn it
> off, then on again--at will--and how it fell, teeming, too much, all over your
> hands, much as you please--from where you are now
> try to
> feel it — (31-37)

Greenwell states that this is an address to a reader in the future ‘wherein necessities—“open speech” as much as water--will be in short supply’ (122). However, the intimate connection and implied familiarity of ‘do you remember […] you could say what you / pleased, you could turn it off’ suggests that the reader has once performed these actions themselves. Rather than addressing an independent future reader in ‘a future shorn of such graces’ who would not be familiar with such graces, Graham addresses the present reader within a future temporal frame. This address prompts the reader to use their sensorial imagination of, say, water ‘teeming too much, all over your / hands’ and appreciate the rich materiality we currently have and stand to lose.

Having investigated the apostrophic interactions Graham portrays between ‘I’ and ‘you’, an examination of Mark Johnson’s work of philosophy, *Moral Imagination*, helps to give a broader contextualisation of the productive effects from the connections between ‘I’ and ‘you’. This develops claims as to how figurative projection into future environments can deepen awareness of environmental issues and extend educators’ methods. In *Moral Imagination*, Johnson continues work first demonstrated in *Metaphors We Live By* (co-authored with George Lakoff) on the

subjects of metaphor and cognition. Johnson comes from the perspective that Western moral traditions are dependent upon understandings of reason influenced by, for example, Enlightenment ethics. Finding this relationship between morality and reason problematic, Johnson extends Graham's brief comment on the imagination's relationship with reality by arguing that the imagination informs rationality and morality and ultimately helps to make people more empathetic and informed. Johnson explains that the human mind is constantly involved in 'metaphorically extending from that particular experience [in the past or belonging to another] to our present situation, which is not exactly the same' in order to make decisions and act appropriately (195). This metaphorical extension into other experiences separated from our immediate present affords the opportunity to 'perform acts of perception, decision, and criticism' (196). Here, Johnson highlights a particular causal relation that arises from projecting into another's perspective. This causal relation helps to conceptualise Graham's response to Katia Grubisic when Graham asks 'You can find yourself in them and them in you. Then what will you do?' Johnson's argument helps to identify how the connective capacity of the sensorial imagination in the interaction between 'I' and 'you' achieves an empathic experience of a future environment. Widening the circles of identification thus prompts reflection: figuratively experiencing the future by identifying with future humans provokes criticism of current behaviour, from the use of a Styrofoam cup to the flight to Europe for a weekend city break.

Graham's apostrophic practice makes use of the term's etymology: 'apo' (from) and 'strephein' (to turn) as Graham leaves 'the-self-in-the-now' and enters the life of an 'I' in the future. This practice fosters a new perspective of environments as they are no longer considered within a present tense, but recognised as ongoing and changing – particularly in view of environmental issues such as extinction, pollution and climate change. This provides a strong literary style with which to challenge the recurring pedagogical prescription of the personal 'I' in nature writing. Instead of the self-serving and appropriative 'I-me-my voice' prescribed by educators such as Petersen, analysis of Graham's practice of address has generated new ways of figuring the 'I' in order to respond to environmental change. The first close reading of Graham showed her projecting her mind into a wildflower: 'I can make it carry my fatigue'. However, recognising

environmental change in *Never*, her 'attempt to change the power ratio of witness to the world, to give the world – the subject – more power' has developed in *Sea Change* and *P L A C E*. Rather than projecting onto a flower in 'Drawing Wildflowers', in 'Although' Graham must project into other temporal frames in order to comprehend the possible loss of a bouquet and the fragility of current environments.

As this alternative narrative style negotiates the problem of authorial imposition, it retains the connective capacity of the personal 'I'. Asserted by tutors such as John Elder, the first-person 'I' provides the opportunity for 'discovery' with the environment and leads to 'the most vivid stirring writing'. Identifying the importance of the 'sensorial imagination' as a connective tool, Elder's sense of discovery is not lost, but enriched. The representation of smell, sight, or the active remembrance of such, provides immediacy despite the fact that the environment is imaginatively experienced as hundreds of years in the future. As Elder quotes Frost in stating the importance of 'no tears for the writer no tears for reader', Graham's practice advances this rule in activating the sensorial imagination of readers by addressing them within different temporal frames. The 'I', so frequently prescribed by educators, is figured differently in this literary style and in doing becomes receptive to what at first appeared to be contrary pedagogical hopes for students to 'look and look out' for environmental threat.

*

This chapter has examined the persistent instruction for the first person 'I' in nature writing teaching. The shortcomings of such a narrative style have been investigated in the light of environmental change and pedagogical intentions to foster awareness of environmental issues. Having answered the question as to what prescriptions dominate teaching and their potential limitations, this chapter went on to respond to the question of how ecocritical thought might supply alternative modes of engagement. By examining Nixon's ecocritical argument on 'slow violence' it was possible to further consider the importance of rethinking narrative styles and the potential of becoming other 'I's in order to apprehend environmental issues. Close readings of Graham's figurative projection into future

temporal frames and her use of apostrophe have addressed the question of how metaphor might enable new perspectives of environments. These figurative strategies have been shown to underpin an alternative narrative style to the personal 'I' that enables comprehension of environmental change. As Graham moves from extinction towards the broader disappearances of familiar material and sensory experience, particular attention has been paid to how figurative projection into the future fosters awareness of potential loss. This has contributed to and developed Nixon's ecocritical argument. Not only has the argument shown how the future and various losses can be figured within 'slow violence', the argument has also identified a particular figurative style of narration which is applicable to other instances of environmental violence otherwise unperceivable to a present 'I'. Having established how attention is drawn towards these losses in the future, theorists such as Mark Johnson have helped to identify how this reciprocally draws attention to current actions and behaviours.

Shaking up pedagogical preference of the 'I' and showing how such disruption yields alternative approaches to environmental engagements has provided an important step from which to continue with this thesis's examination of how metaphor affords new ways of approaching the environment in contrast to those predominantly proposed by educators. This chapter's argument has established three points to both lead and support the following chapters. Rather than Charles Tomlinson's leaf that was figured as an emerald through metaphor, this chapter has shown how metaphor can approach the 'I' and consequently introduce new narrative potential within nature writing. This point informs a second in which the potential of figurative projection into other temporal frames has extended perception and so necessitates further exploration in terms of projections based on different types of interaction. In particular, this prepares for the following chapter that investigates interactions between different places through synecdoche. Lastly, this chapter has established a third point concerning the importance of connective capacities (in this chapter, the 'sensorial imagination') within these metaphorical interactions. It has been argued that such a capacity is important in order to connect effectively with change and create new understandings of the environment thereby. This point requires further examination

in later chapters regarding different emphases upon connection and estrangement and their consequent effects for environmental engagements.

Chapter Three

'What's Around You': Seeing the Local in Terms of the Global though Synecdoche and Analogy in the Poetry of Juliana Spahr

This chapter argues that synecdoche and analogy afford opportunities to understand local place in terms of its connection to other places. In examining how spatial frames interact, this study develops the argument in Chapter Two that focused upon figurative projection between different temporal frames. By attending to place in this way, it becomes possible to challenge recurring pedagogical instruction for students to explore place strictly in terms of their local surroundings and provide an alternative strategy. Despite much debate in environmental discourse to 'act local, think global', [33] the pedagogical understanding of place that is defined by what is immediately to hand does not emphasise the conceptual shift to 'think global'. This hinders further engagements with the environment and is particularly unhelpful when considering educators' intentions to engage students with environmental issues. John Elder describes the importance of fostering familiarity with the local environment; 'to know about the geological background, the forest history, the wildlife supported in the landscape, the impacts of climate change' (Personal Interview). While these criteria mostly support how place might be defined through the surrounding landscape, Elder's inclusion of climate change suggests how place is affected by other spatial frames. This chapter demonstrates strategies for emphasising these connections by showing how synecdoche and analogy extend perception from the local frame towards different spatial frames. In doing so, this chapter develops the argument of this thesis in establishing further ways in which metaphor supports new perspectives of environments.

By examining examples of pedagogical prescription for place and identifying their shortcomings, this chapter establishes the need for a reconceptualisation of place. This reconceptualisation draws upon Ursula Heise's ecocritical argument on

[33] This phrase prompts thought on how actions and behaviours in the local environment have consequences on a planetary scale. The origin of the mantra is disputed, however, Wayne Visser suggests the phrase was adopted for the environmentalist cause by Friends of the Earth and the United Nations in the 1960s and 1970s (258).

‘eco-cosmopolitanism’ in which Heise explains the need to rebalance thinking local with thinking global. With Heise’s argument in mind, analysis of Juliana Spahr’s poetry is made in order to establish two arguments that focus upon the way she connects spatial frames. The first argument shows how synecdoche supports Spahr’s exploration of the inherent connections between local and global frames that aims to foster a wider sense of environmental responsibility. The second argument demonstrates how analogy can be a tool with which to perceive connections between spatial frames and understand the harmful changes resulting from such connections.

‘Where You Are’: The Local Frame

Sheryl St. Germain, who teaches on Chatham University’s Master of Fine Arts in Environmental Creative Writing in Pittsburgh, US, describes how her nature writing class is a way of ‘introducing people to pay attention to where they are’ (Personal Interview). As a strategy of engaging with local place, St. Germain asks her students to keep weekly blogs that ‘identify where they are: what are the trees? What are the animals? What are the birds?’ (Personal Interview). St. Germain’s argument is similar to that of Allison B. Wallace who, analysed in Chapter One, claimed that identifying species through field-guides created ‘*placed*’ students (102). Katherine R. Chandler appears less concerned with identifying species to define place in her essay ‘Can’t See the Forest or the Trees’ and more interested in emphasising a personal relationship with place. She explains, as part of her teaching that aims to increase student awareness of their surroundings, ‘One activity I now require is for students to adopt a tree as their “tree shrine” ’ (114). Although Chandler explains that this term originates with Thoreau’s description of particular trees that, in his words, ‘were the shrines I visited both summer and winter’, Chandler’s choice of vocabulary ‘*adopt* a tree’ suggests a stronger sense of stewardship and responsibility (emphasis added). Using the nature writing journal discussed in Chapter One and Two, she explains how a relationship is fostered with place as students return to that tree ‘For the whole semester’ and write about their experiences (114). These exercises, focusing upon the local, afford students the opportunity to engage with their surroundings, heighten attention to them and

thus foster attachment to place. Therefore these exercises make for a valid introduction to place. However, the question of 'where you are' is not as simple as it first seems. It is possible that these exercises might produce other, unintended understandings of the environment: defining place by naming a bird or by visiting a tree might lead students to believe that place is an isolated, fixed entity. This is clearly not the case, especially when considering how the birds and trees that students are asked to identify may not necessarily be native species. Returning to John Elder's nod to climate change in his instruction for studying place prompts further thought on how place is clearly connected to the rest of the world and thus subject to change.

To understand place in terms of 'where you are', as that which is immediately and unquestionably 'here', has further implications when considering educators' arguments that such exercises on place foster environmental responsibility in students. Comparable to Chandler's instruction to 'adopt' a tree, St. Germain believes that her exercise makes students 'charged for being responsible for that place' (Personal Interview). Such is possible, but in deciding not to give prominence to the connections between that place and other places, St. Germain's understanding of responsibility might be regarded as somewhat limited. Recognising how, for example, a local river's pollution is unlikely to remain only local prompts thought on how responsibility for one place might extend to other spatial frames. Wallace believes that her exercises on place contribute to the attitudes of 'tomorrow's caretakers of the world' (103). Yet, Wallace does not seem to recognise how the sense of place she cultivates does not necessarily translate into having responsibility for the '*world*', as she describes (emphasis added). Indeed, a reconceptualisation of place that makes obvious its connections to other places is needed if Wallace's ambitious assertion is to hold strong. This strategic shift appears particularly necessary given that teachers aim to engage their students with environmental issues that characteristically cross local and global frames. Responding to whether he intends to foster an awareness of human impact on the environment in his nature writing classes, Jon Gower states simply, 'I think that's all of it' (Personal Interview). As Gower goes on to mention such problems as the 'huge swathes of the ocean now covered in plastic', he provides further demonstration of how the local is connected to the global. Like Jorie

Graham's attention to how 'this choice we make to use this styrofoam cup, this plastic bag' travels through time, Gower evokes the Great Pacific garbage patch and in doing so suggests how plastic travels across spatial frames ('Interview with Jorie Graham').

Classic nature writing texts influence pedagogical instructions for writing about place. As noted in Chapter One, Thoreau's *Walden* dominates set reading lists for nature writing courses. Thoreau's decision to 'drive life into a corner' of land around Walden Pond clearly influences Katherine R. Chandler, if not other educators (83). Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* that explores Sauk County, Wisconsin and, later, Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (detailing her environmental encounters in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains) are similarly part of this tradition of place writing. Influencing the pedagogical strategies examined above, these writers demonstrate close attention to the local by identifying species and their behavioural habits, recognising seasonal change and considering issues affecting these places. Yet, unlike the teachers examined above, these writers do show some awareness of how the local connects to the global. Thoreau gestures to this connection when he describes how the ice in Walden Pond is harvested and sent to 'The sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta' (266). Annie Dillard, too, briefly considers how 'Spring is seeping north, towards me and away from me, at sixteen miles a day' and this leads her to think about other places: 'Caribou straggle across the tundra […] Somewhere, people in airplanes are watching the sunset […] In the montana in Peru, on the rain-forested slopes of the Andes, a woman kneels […] Along estuary banks of tidal rivers all over the world, snails in black clusters like currants' (99). Dillard's description evokes Gary Snyder's brief note in *Practice of the Wild.* Although much of Snyder's writing conveys a Californian bioregionalism, he states 'A place on earth is a mosaic within larger mosaics – the land is all small places, all precise tiny realms replicating larger and smaller patterns' (27). While this statement is a reminder of the way Snyder's local focus is influenced by less local Buddhist philosophy, Snyder's statement more crucially resonates with the synecdochic relationships that will be explored in this chapter in which the microcosmic is representative of the macrocosmic, and vice versa. As shown in the examination of pedagogical exercises, educators do not foreground, nor seemingly

even mention, these kinds of connections. This would seem to be a drawback given how an awareness of connections between spatial frames affords new understandings of place as well as engagements with environmental issues.

Concerns about the shortcomings of local conceptualisations of place are present in Ursula Heise's ecocritical argument in *Sense of Place Sense of Planet*. Analysing Heise's work provides further reason to critique pedagogical instruction. Heise's aim to overcome 'excessive investment in the local' that she sees presented in much contemporary environmental discourse results in her proposition of 'eco-cosmopolitanism' (10). Heise's argument is part of a wider critical movement that seeks new ways of considering identity with regard to place. Examples of such a movement include Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* that focuses upon the creation of nationalism, James Clifford's anthropological study on the 'transnational' character of certain cultures in *Routes*, and Ulrich Beck's sociological argument on cosmopolitanism. Considering how environmental commitment needs to be revised in the context of globalisation, Heise develops Beck's 'cosmopolitanism' towards eco-cosmopolitanism. In drawing attention to the connections that exist across spatial frames, Heise believes it is possible to foster 'world citizenship' (10).

Heise's critique of current environmental discourse and its emphasis upon the local touches upon the limitations of pedagogy as she relates her experience of a class taught by professor and poet Robert Hass. When students are unable to identify the tree in front of them, Heise quotes Hass's response: 'I don't think we have a chance of changing our relationship to the natural world if you don't know what's around you' (28). Heise notes how these students have an understanding of 'larger-scale ecological phenomena such as the depletion of the stratospheric ozone' and, suggesting how this forms one aspect of 'what's around you', Heise critiques the fact that such knowledge is deemed 'too abstract' by Hass (28). Realising the importance of the local frame but also its increasing unhelpfulness in view of global environmental issues, Heise proposes how eco-cosmopolitanism is 'an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary "imagined communities" of both human and nonhuman kinds' (61).

This attention to the relationship between local and global frames raises the question as to which literary devices and styles might be appropriate. Nature

writing tutors who prescribe nature writing journals for writing about place generally expect the kind of factual and personal styles investigated in Chapter One and Two. Yet, having already critiqued these styles within these chapters for hindering potential environmental engagements necessitates the need for further consideration of style. Quoting the same passage from Gary Snyder and Mitchell Thomashow's conception of place-attachment (analysed in the previous chapter), Heise searches for structural possibilities that reflect the 'zooming techniques enabled by recent digital technologies' such as Google Earth that she believes epitomises eco-cosmopolitan connections (11). Heise's use of Google Earth is somewhat surprising given the way its zooming techniques create a superficial form of connection and how the ease of zooming between local and global frames trivialises this connection. However, it is clear that this Google Earth metaphor is also generative: it brings Heise to touch upon collage and montage as ways of superimposing different places upon one another: literary fragmentation in the science fiction genre as a tool to integrate different localities and imagine their future, and the potential of virtual networks as new sites for recognising global connections. Yet, by exploring a broad range of artistic and literary works through the concept of eco-cosmopolitanism, Heise does not provide an in-depth study of any particular stylistic method. Consequently, this study investigates synecdoche and analogy as literary devices that draw attention outwards from the local frame in a way that is informed by Heise's global sense of community. Providing a complementary approach to pedagogical strategies, interpretations of synecdoche and analogy in Juliana Spahr's poems demonstrate the potential of these devices to express connections between local and global frames. This investigation shows how such devices can develop St. Germain's understanding of responsibility and Gower's intention for students to become aware of human impact on environments.

Connecting Local and Global Frames

Juliana Spahr (1966 –) is an editor, critic and poet from the US whose experimental writing responds to political and environmental issues through a keen sense of global connection. Concerned by the exclusivity arising from the importance placed upon the individual in contemporary Western society, Spahr's

work demonstrates how apprehending connections between local and global frames produces more informed approaches to being 'placed' in the world. Like the other poets studied in this thesis, her self-reflexive exploration of literary styles and devices in her poems contributes to the argument as to how metaphor can guide and develop environmental thought. Having studied under Charles Bernstein and Susan Howe at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Spahr's work reveals certain Language School traits. The influence of Modernist writers, for example, is clear in both Spahr's choice of subject and style. Spahr's subject matter echoes Modernist explorations of the local and the global in the context of nineteenth-century imperialism and imperialism's consequences. Gertrude Stein, who Spahr frequently cites in her scholarly work, exemplifies this influence.[34] In *Lectures in America,* Stein argues that British literature of the nineteenth-century began to favour the 'phrase' (over the eighteenth-century 'sentence'), which was invented 'by those living a daily island life and owning everything else outside' (40). Demonstrated later in this chapter, Spahr's work echoes Stein's consideration of the politics of representation and Stein's own avant-garde, experimental writing might also be identified in Spahr's manipulations of language and form.

As the title suggests, in *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* (2005), hereafter referred to as *This Connection*, Spahr shows how local frames are embedded within national and global frames. Spahr then goes on to explore how global frames continue to disturb understandings of place via colonialism in the second collection to be studied, *Well Then There Now* (2011). Interviewing Spahr, Michael Boyko draws attention to Spahr's understanding of connection as he asks her about the 'complicated relationship' between the pronouns 'we' and 'I' in much of her work ('A Brief Q&A with Juliana Spahr'). Evoking the kind of spatial connections to be analysed, Spahr explains how her use of 'we' presents a global community and how 'becoming individuals, becoming distinct and disconnected, is part of the problem.' By suggesting how an engagement with smaller spatial scales produces disconnection rather than connection, Spahr's comments intensify the critique of pedagogical emphasis upon place and, in so doing, propose the importance of perceiving connections beyond the local.

[34] See *Everybody's Autonomy.*

Scholarly studies on Spahr's work have gone some way in identifying Spahr as an environmental poet whose work attends to the connections between different places. In his article 'Notes toward an Ecopoetics', Christopher Arigo is keen to establish Spahr as a prime model of the genre because of her work's participation in ecopoetry's 'unavoidable connection with sociopolitical realities'. Focusing upon Spahr's *This Connection*, Arigo analyses the way in which Spahr presents a chant-like form in 'Poem Written After September 11/2001' that leaves the reader breathless 'as if the scale of events and connections is too much to bear'. In her essay, 'Juliana Spahr's Ecopoetics: Ecologies and Politics of the Refrain', Dianne Chisholm develops Arigo's interest in Spahr's form as she argues that it is Spahr's use of the refrain that allows connection between spatial frames to take place. She draws from the concept of the 'territorial refrain' created by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to inform her claims. Approaching Spahr's 'Gentle Now, Don't Add to Heartache' and *This Connection*, Chisholm shows how Spahr's writing 'builds small refrains that frame a house (a habitat, a territory) into large and complex refrains that let in chaos and/or open out to the cosmos' (141). Although Chisholm's focus on the literary form of the refrain is useful, to understand Spahr's 'ecological logic of embedded habitats' further it is important to develop this understanding of repetition in terms of synecdochic relationships between parts and wholes (136).

To some extent, scholarship on Spahr has also attended to her use of figurative language within this environmental context. In her chapter, 'Network Aesthetics', Sianne Ngai approaches the subject of figurative language in Spahr's writing. Ngai explores the parallels between Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory and Spahr's prose work, *The Transformation*, to discuss relationships between Hawai'i and the rest of the US. Metaphor enters Ngai's argument as she acknowledges how Spahr uses a series of metaphors to convey a network or 'web of associations' between these lands: 'plant species with reticular root systems, airplane and boat travel routes, fifty hand-holding skydivers, file-sharing computers, an octopus, the Internet, the human circulatory system' (379). Ngai recogises how one of the most interesting metaphors for networks 'is "metaphor" itself, which Spahr explicitly aligns with transportation/transformation' (379). Ngai goes a step further in considering how metaphor supplies a figure that suggests a process of 'taking over something' in Spahr's work (379). This important realisation of

metaphor's potentially dominating power is nonetheless dropped, in order to return to Latour and themes of kinship and sexual relationships – the latter being a main theme in *The Transformation*. Corresponding to Ngai's previous focus, Tana Jean Welch's argument in her essay 'Entangled Species: The Inclusive Posthumanist Ecopoetics of Juliana Spahr', focuses upon interconnectedness. Welch frames her study with Timothy Morton's understanding of 'the mesh' to argue that Spahr writes 'poetry that explores her own accountability, her own entanglements' (5). Welch's analysis of Spahr's poem, 'Things of Each Possible Relation Hashing against One Another', provides a useful analysis of how Spahr's practice of analogy informs the subject of connection in her work. Welch explains how analogy is central to the act of colonisation and generates transformations not unlike those described in Ngai's analysis. However, Welch does not go far enough in investigating how analogy continues to be problematic in the ongoing causal chains resulting from the act of colonisation.

Consequently, scholarly reception of Spahr's work requires further attention as to how her connections between spatial frames are underpinned by figurative devices that afford interactions between the local and the global. In turn, this study's close readings of Spahr's poetry focus upon synecdoche, and later, analogy, in order to generate two literary strategies for perceiving global connections that challenge pedagogical prescription and develop environmental thought.

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole or vice versa. 'Wheels' is a common synecdoche to refer to a car and examples of synecdoche in current environmental discourse include the whale that stands for all endangered species, or the polar bear on a shrinking chunk of ice that represents the subject of climate change. Likewise, the overfilled kettle and the pollution-spewing power station are also parts that represent wholes in environmental thinking. As these latter examples suggest that individual or small-scale acts of environmental destruction contribute to larger environmental issues, they introduce the potential of synecdoche to connect local and global frames.

Spahr's use of pronouns 'we' and 'I' (of which Michael Boyko draws attention to in his interview) initiates consideration of synecdoche in her work. Departing from Graham's practice of deploying 'I' and 'you' to connect the present

and the future, Spahr's description of 'we' as a 'global community' presents a whole of which the 'I' is a part. This speaks strongly to the subject of spatial connection as this 'I' that exists in any part of the world is, according to Spahr, connected to the rest of the world. Spahr's 'Gentle Now, Don't Add to Heartache', collected in *Well Then There Now* (and hereafter known as 'Gentle Now') illustrates this particular use of pronouns and so pursues this understanding of synecdoche as a way of challenging pedagogical emphasis upon the local. Formed of five sections, the poem begins with the line 'We come into the world' and describes how 'we […] begin to move between the brown and the blue and the green of it' (124). Sections two and three of Spahr's poem then describe a stream. Initially, this stream is represented on a large scale as it flows into the 'Gulf of Mexico' (124). Yet, gradually, the stream is viewed through a smaller lens: amongst other things Spahr turns her attention to the sycamore trees along the banks and 'the long pendulous polygamous racemes of its small green flowers' (127). By focusing in from the 'world' to such details, Spahr attends to the parts that form the whole. This sense of connection problematises the pedagogical definition for one local understanding of place as Spahr provides no notion of boundary. Spahr is keen to show how 'we' are connected to these entities at all scales. She writes, 'We' are 'part of the rivers and thus part of the gulfs and the oceans' and later, 'Our hearts took on the shape of whirligigs [beetles] swirling across the water' (125, 127). As Spahr explains in the interview with Boyko mentioned previously, ' "We" is humans and animals and plants […] I wanted everyone to be there in the poem. I wanted "we" to include those who read it.'

Spahr's inclusivity evokes Heise's intention to establish perception of a global community. However, this inclusivity starts to change in section four of the poem. Beginning, 'It was not all long lines of connection and utopia', Spahr records how the stream became polluted and, as 'we' previously took on the stream's qualities and shapes, so we let in 'soda cans and we let in cigarette butts and we let in pink tampon applicators' (130). As this pollution degrades the environment and creates the loss of certain species, the global community of 'we' disintegrates. Spahr writes with a new pronoun: 'I replaced what I knew of the stream with Lifestream Total / Cholesterol Test Packets, with Snuggle Emerald Stream Fabric Softener Dryer Sheets' (132). The 'I' demonstrates a dislocation from the collective

‘we’. Furthermore, with this disconnection comes distortion as natural entities are replaced by chemical products of the same name, which the ‘I’ appears dependent upon. At the end of Spahr’s poem, the ‘I’ has forgotten her connection to a wider community.

The synecdoche involving ‘I’ and ‘we’, and the dangers that Spahr proposes arise from being only an ‘I’, disturbs the straightforwardness of pedagogical exercises that ask students to identify ‘where they are’, as described by Sheryl St. Germain. Spahr’s poem suggests that the question of ‘where they are’ involves thinking beyond local spatial frames and recognising connection to different places and the lives inhabiting them. The synecdochic quality that expresses connection in ‘Gentle Now’ tackles spatial frames more specifically in her collection *This Connection.* Analysing these poems in the following section provides further depth to criticisms of prescriptions for local understandings of place in nature writing teaching. Furthermore, this analysis helps to propose alternative strategies involving synecdoche that engage with environmental issues and subsequently respond and expand pedagogical intentions to foster environmental responsibility for place.

Spatial Connection and Synecdoche

Spahr’s understanding of the world as a global community continues to inform her collection *This Connection*. The poem that gives the collection its title is ‘Poem Written After September 11/2001’. Despite referring to the events of 9/11, Spahr only alludes to these events at the conclusion of the ten-page poem. Indeed, the poem concerns itself with building a series of connections between the local and the global to show ‘how connected we are’ through the air that everyone breathes (9). This makes the later introduction of materials from the twin towers into the air – ‘sulphur and sulphuric acid and titanium and nickel and minute silicon particles from pulverized glass and concrete’ – even more disturbing as the materials are shown to have impact beyond local as well as national spatial frames (10). Unlike ‘Gentle Now’ that opened with the world, Spahr begins the poem at a very small scale.

There are these things:

cells, the movements of cells and the division of cells

and then the general beating of circulation

and hands, and body, and feet

and skin that surrounds hands, body, feet.

This is a shape,

a shape of blood beating and cells dividing. (3)

Each of these 'things' is a synecdoche, or part, that represents the whole figure. Having created this supposedly human 'shape', Spahr continues the list

But outside of this shape is space.

There is space between the hands.

There is space between the hands and space around the hands.

There is space around the hands and space in the room. (4)

Although space quite literally dislocates the parts upon the page, the repetition in the lines and their increasing scale provokes connection. This connection is then heightened as Spahr states that 'This space goes in and out of everyone's bodies' (4). Paradoxically, then, the parts become connected through space as 'Everyone with lungs breathes the space in and out' (4).

Synecdoche underpins this increasing scale in Spahr's poem that moves far beyond the notion of personal space. This increasing scale can only be represented through extensive quotation of the text:

As everyone with lungs breathes the space between the hands and the space around the hands and the space of the room and the space of the building that surrounds the room in and out

As everyone with lungs breathes the space between the hands and the space around the hands and the space of the room and the space of the building that surrounds the room and the space of the neighborhoods nearby in and out […]

> As everyone with lungs breathes the space between the hands and the space around the hands and the space of the room and the space of the building that surrounds the room and the space of the neighborhoods nearby and the space of the cities and the space of the regions and the space of the nations and the space of the continents and islands and the space of the oceans and the space of the troposphere and the space of the stratosphere and the space of the mesosphere in and out. (5-8)

Evoking a child-like style of narration, Spahr's repetitive use of 'and' creates a synecdochic chain of parts and wholes. Although the space of the room appears to be contained and isolated, it becomes a part of a greater whole; 'the space of the building'. Yet, juxtaposing this 'building' against the 'neighborhoods' recognises yet another synecdoche in which the building is just a part, and so on, until Spahr reaches the mesosphere.

In making these connections, Spahr's work challenges the pedagogical emphasis upon personal understandings of place that often develop from the prescription of the 'I' that was challenged in Chapter Two. An example of such teaching can be seen in St. Germain's nature writing exercise entitled 'Map-Making' that aids her intention to introduce students to 'where they are' and foster responsibility for that place. She asks her students to make a 'visual map of a place that is important to you, and where you've spent a lot of time' and emphasises the need to map 'the emotional details […] where you experienced your first kiss, or buried your dog' ('Conjuring Place' Handout). This strategy that attends to place through the personal 'I' clearly has the potential to develop feelings of care as it recognises a personal investment in place. Yet, as this personal investment neglects broader notions of community – such as those proposed by Spahr – St. Germain's exercise unwittingly fosters an understanding of place that is restricted and which potentially echoes the seemingly irresponsible move from 'we' to 'I' that Spahr parodied in 'Gentle Now'.

St. Germain's exercise aims for a kind of stewardship of local place and as Snyder explained how 'A place on earth is a mosaic within larger mosaics', it is possible that this attention to local place might serve as a model to care for other places, perhaps even the world. Yet, in emphasising personal investment in this place and not foregrounding its potential connection to other places, it is possible

that St. Germain's exercise has the potential to foster a kind of NIMBYism in which environmental stewardship and more selfish attitudes to place become difficult to tell apart. If this unintended outcome were to occur, the effects of fostering NIMBYism through this personal investment in place risk completely subverting St. Germain's intention. NIMBYism has, since its popularisation by Conservative minister Nicholas Ridley, often disenfranchised local communities by blocking much-needed change.

In contrast, Spahr's writing finds that 'my backyard' is part of a much larger community. Indeed, any possibility of NIMBYism is denied by Spahr's poem that makes it difficult to pin down the 'space of the neighborhoods nearby' that St. Germain wanted her students to write about. Spahr shows that these neighbourhoods are, after all, only part of larger spatial frames. By creating the synecdochic sequence between the 'space around the hands' and the 'space of the mesosphere', that parallels the connections between 'I' and 'we' in 'Gentle Now', Spahr presents a much larger map than that expected from St. Germain's students. Such has repercussions when considering the responsibility that educators hope to foster. In Chapter Two, pedagogical emphasis upon the personal 'I' was challenged through Jorie Graham's figurative projection between temporal frames. This projection was afforded by Graham's use of apostrophe that drew upon the 'sensorial imagination' as a way to produce a 'felt' connection with future humans. Spahr produces an alternative form of connection – the act of breathing – to traverse spatial frames. As this shared act provokes perception to extend from local place to other places, so the potential to extend responsibility and care also becomes feasible. Unlike St. Germain's exercise, Spahr's poem suggests a widening of responsibility to places beyond the local. While St. Germain's approach suggests defending the local environment from threat, Spahr's poem also prompts thought as to how actions in the local environment might threaten other environments. In other words, the local environment is not only at threat, but potentially threatening, and seeing both sides of this situation enriches an understanding of responsibility.

Spahr's focus upon the act of breathing in terms of this connection of everyone with 'lungs' applies both to humans and animal nonhumans – however, Spahr's use of 'hands' that begins each stanza suggests the responsibility for this

global community is solely with humans (emphasis added). Spahr's repetition of this body part echoes the traditional synecdoche of 'hands' as representative of human agency ('all hands on deck') and so emphasises the potential for certain actions to have consequence upon 'everyone with lungs'. Spahr's impersonal phrasing – '*the* space between *the* hands' (emphasis added) – rather than 'this', 'your' or 'my' hands – affords the opportunity to participate in the synecdochic sequence in a similar way as Spahr's use of 'we' in 'Gentle Now' that aimed for reader participation. Although Spahr introduces 'sulphur and sulphuric acid and titanium and nickel' from the twin towers at the poem's conclusion, the interdependent structure that Spahr builds in the poem provokes thought on other causal relations. The hand turning the key in the ignition in order to drive to the shops is no longer a local place-based activity, but a synecdoche for greater global activity in terms of climate change. Likewise, the disposal of waste for incineration in a neighbourhood is brought into spatial proximity not only with one's own breathing – of polluting 'the space around the hands' – but also of polluting 'the space of the nations […] the troposphere'. By considering these synecdochic relationships, the responsibility that St. Germain hoped to foster through her exercises that may well have referred to issues such as waste and pollution on a local scale is extended towards a global scale.

Jonathan Skinner, who teaches a module on Ecopoetics at the University of Warwick, appears to recognise the limitations of predominant instructions regarding place in nature writing pedagogy. Skinner's experimental approach to teaching ecopoetics, that parallels his influential journal *Ecopoetics*, creates a very different reading list than those studied so far and includes the work of Juliana Spahr alongside Jack Collom and Brenda Hillman. He argues against the 'field pedagogy' of local place identification exemplified by St. Germain and Allison B. Wallace by describing how these strategies teach students to 'focus on certain details and it becomes very object-oriented, but creativity for me, at least, is often about losing focus, a bit of blur, letting things slip and slide into other things' (Personal Interview). Skinner explains that he wishes to 'dislodge the single-minded focus' and introduce a 'peripheral attention'. This attention that looks beyond what is close at hand complements the argument for extending perception beyond local frames. Skinner's rather unusual focus upon 'Soundings' in one week

of the module introduces his approach.[35] Here, he asks his students to undertake R. Murray Schafer's exercises. Schafer's work on sound aims to foster more awareness of sound in environments and the effect certain sounds have on perceptions of the environment. Skinner believes Schafer's exercises are examples of 'marvellous ecopedagogy' for the ways in which they sensitise students to their surroundings by demanding a different kind of attention. By deploying Schafer's exercises, Skinner affords an opportunity for students to 'treat the world as a macrocosmic musical composition' as Schafer describes (*The Soundscape* 5). In doing so, Skinner fosters a synecdochic understanding of how one sound contributes to a whole soundscape. Skinner's exercise thus provides some parallel with Spahr's approach of air and space as it brings students to an awareness of connection and causal relations that might consequently develop their understanding of place in terms of other places.

The process of relating parts to wholes responds to Heise's interest in how environmental commitment might be premised 'no longer primarily on ties to local places but on ties to territories and systems that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole' (8). Yet, these ties must be strong if they are to stretch to unknown places and their inhabitants. This issue is central to considering how responsibility can be fostered beyond a local frame, thus developing pedagogical instruction. Like Katherine R. Chandler's 'tree shrine' exercise, St. Germain aims to cultivate a relationship to place in her exercise on intimacy that complements her map-making prompt. She asks her students to 'Try to articulate the precise nature of the feeling of intimacy you might have with a place. How is it like or unlike the relationship you might have with another human, or an animal?' ('Conjuring Place' Handout). To some extent, Spahr has already achieved this feeling of intimacy on a global scale; 'Gentle Now' conveyed 'we' as a global community and 'Poem after September 11/2001' pursued this conceptualisation of community by foregrounding the connections between spatial frames through the intimate medium of breath. However, in later poems in *This Connection*, Spahr heightens this sense of intimacy and, in doing so, accentuates the synecdochic connections. These later

[35] Skinner's focus might seem unusual in comparison to other pedagogical strategies, however Skinner's interest in sound is part of a larger movement in recent environmental studies frequently referred to as 'ecomusicology'. See Aaron S. Allen's article 'Ecomusicology: Ecocriticism and Musicology'.

poems thus reveal a practice that expands St. Germain's exercise on intimacy, recognises how ties across spatial frames can be strengthened, and develops the pedagogical potential for responsibility.

Spahr's 'Note…' to 'Poems Written from November 30/2002 to March 27/2003' conveys a self-reflexive awareness of how connections to other places affect her own life and thus her own responsibilities. Referring to her time teaching at the University of Hawai'i that took place during the US invasion of Iraq, Spahr explains

> *I felt I had to think about what I was connected with, and what I was complicit with, as I lived off the fat of the military-industrial complex on a small island. I had to think about my intimacy with things I would rather not be intimate with even as (because?) I was very far away from all those things geographically. This feeling made lyric—with its attention to connection, with its dwelling on the beloved and on the afar—suddenly somewhat poignant, somewhat apt […] more useful than I usually find it.* (13)

St. Germain's intention for students to think about place as analogous to their meaningful relationships with humans and nonhumans is applied to a greater spatial scale through Spahr's appreciation of the lyric's 'dwelling on the beloved' and its relevance to 'far away' places.

This approach that highlights the intimacy involved in the aforementioned synecdochic relationships (between 'I' and 'we'', 'the space around the hands' and 'the space of the continents') is present in Spahr's poem 'December 2, 2002'. The poem begins with the statement: 'As it happens every night, beloved, while we turned in the night sleeping uneasily the world went on without us' and goes on to list particular events:

> While we turned sleeping uneasily at least ten were injured in a bomb blast in Bombay and four killed in Palestine
>
> While we turned sleeping uneasily a warehouse of food aid was destroyed, stocks on upbeat sales soared, Australia threatened first strikes, there was heavy gunfire in the city of Man, the Belarus ambassador to Japan went missing (24)

Those experiencing night in another time zone are quite literally unconscious of political and environmental events happening elsewhere. Yet this disconnection

becomes questionable as Spahr goes on to state ‘Beloveds, our world is small and isolated’ (25). Spahr’s use of the term ‘world’ is uncertain. At once ‘world’ is a common synecdoche for personal space: for the room or even the bed in which ‘we turned sleeping’. Clearly, this description underpins a sense of isolation. Simultaneously, however, Spahr’s ‘world’ refers to the actual globe that being ‘small and isolated’ increases the importance and possibility of global connection and community. By suggesting both understandings of ‘world’ Spahr brings them closer together to suggest both the limitation and possible expansion of an individual’s relationship with other spatial frames.

In the poem that follows, ‘December 8, 2002’, Spahr develops connections between the personal sense of ‘world’ and the literal, global sense of ‘world’ as she describes the relationship with others estranged through space as analogous to a relationship between lovers. She initially presents a simple, sensual scene in which lovers are looking at clouds ‘out the window from our bed as we lie there in the morning enjoying the touch of each other’s bodies’ (35). However, this scene becomes more complex as Spahr explains a few lines later

> This is an attempt to speak in praise of the firm touch of yours hands on my breast at night and its comfort to me.
>
> An attempt to celebrate the moments late at night when yous wake up with kindness (36)

Distorting the previous reference to a lover by making the pronoun plural radically changes the nature of the intimacy Spahr conveys. Rather than an intimacy between two people, Spahr suggests an intimacy between herself and a number of others. Initially these ‘yous’ might return the argument in the preceding chapter regarding Jorie Graham’s address of the reader. Yet, this inclusive use of ‘yous’ more strongly evokes the range of figures in Spahr’s previous poem such as ‘four killed in Palestine’ and the ‘Belarus ambassador’. This use of the lyric continues to be manipulated by Spahr to explore connections between her personal world and the world of others elsewhere as she writes ‘All I know is that I couldn’t get out of bed anymore at all without yous in my life. And I know that my ties with yous are not unique’ (38). Although Spahr makes particularly political connections through

this approach, it is possible to guide these connections towards more environmental events: for example, victims of flooding or as, Spahr writes, 'poachers' catching 'sturgeon in the reed-fringed Caspian' (25). Advancing beyond St. Germain's exercise that asked students to articulate 'the feeling of intimacy you might have with a place', Spahr's feeling of intimacy with the globe emphasises the connections of 'the space around the hands' to other spatial frames. Moreover, this lyrical language extends the feelings of care and responsibility for a lover towards other spatial frames otherwise deemed separate from her own.

In proposing synecdochic connections between 'I' and 'we', and between a local and global sense of world, Spahr's work develops the question of 'where you are' and, in doing so, develops the kind of responsibility that educators hope to foster in relation to environments. This strategy helps to foster a new perspective of environments that might not otherwise be reached through pedagogical instruction. To only conceive of place as that which is immediate and seemingly isolated is somewhat idealistic in the context of environmental issues and thus limiting in the environmental awareness that can be provoked. Identifying Skinner's exercise on sound in the context of Spahr's synecdochic approach to place not only shows that some alternatives are being pursued in nature writing pedagogy, but also raises further potential strategies. After all, realising how sound has the potential to provoke consideration of a global community prompts thought regarding implicit connections between spatial frames that might provide further opportunities. Synecdochic thinking regarding water, for example, in which one glass of water is understood to be a part of a whole ocean and vice versa, has the potential to foster thought towards other environmental connections and responsibilities. As Spahr goes on to explore the role of analogy in global transformations of the local in the specific context of colonial Hawai'i, the following section investigates analogy as a device to apprehend spatial interactions and their consequent changes to environments. The examination of these figurative devices develops Skinner's desire for nature writing to embrace 'a bit of blur, letting things slip and slide into other things' while continuing to challenge and expand educators' intentions to introduce students to place and foster environmental responsibility.

'The Problems of Analogy': Spatial Interactions and Change

Having moved to Hawai'i in 1997 for a teaching position, Spahr describes how she took offence at the nature poetry written by tourists visiting the islands: 'Much of it is written by those who vacation here and it is often full of errors. Rob Wilson calls these 747 poems' (69). Included in Spahr's afterword to her poem sequence 'Things of Each Possible Relation Hashing against One Another' (hereafter known as 'Things of Each') published in *Well Then There Now*, Spahr explains that

> even when it got the birds and the plants and the animals right it tended to show the beautiful bird and not the bulldozer off to the side that was destroying the bird's habitat. And it wasn't talking about how the bird, often a bird which had arrived recently from somewhere else, interacted with and changed the larger system of this small part of the world we live in and on. (69)

Spahr describes how this style of poetry parallels the practice of botanical artists who accompanied explorers of Hawai'i and who 'made drawings of isolated plants against white backgrounds' (69). Beth Fowkes Tobin states in 'Imperial Designs: Botanical Illustration and the British Botanic Empire' that these drawings 'reinforced the concept of plant transfer by erasing local habitat, plant physiology, human use, and cultural significance' (275). Drawing from Tobin's study, Spahr concludes that these artists were 'a crucial part of colonial exploration' (69). Echoing Stein's consideration of literary form and British imperialism in *Lectures in America* noted previously, Spahr suggests that the '747 poems' are not only naïve, but also potentially symptomatic of an appropriative attitude towards the environment.

Spahr's criticism of these tourists and their writing also echoes Kathleen Jamie's criticism of Robert Macfarlane's excursions in the *Wild Places.* Examined in the previous chapter, Jamie believes Macfarlane to be appropriating the land 'with his civilised lyrical words' ('A Lone Enraptured Male'). However, in contrast to Jamie's criticisms, it could be said that a certain solipsism underlies Spahr's criticism. Spahr indulges in chastising these tourists and privileging her own, supposedly more ethical position – and this while being a tourist of sorts herself. Yet, it is worth investigating Spahr's position – not least because of this awkward tension. After all, Spahr's description of 'a bird which had arrived recently from somewhere else' (although vague in this instance) suggests connections between

local frames and global frames that creates further challenge to pedagogical conceptualisations of place that are defined by particular species. For example, Allison B. Wallace believes that differentiating between a starling and a towhee creates more 'placed' students, yet says nothing of how starlings first came to the US from Europe. Spahr's noting of the arrival of a bird that has 'changed the larger system' of the islands alludes to the larger issue of non-native species in Hawai'i that have dominated native species since their colonial introduction in the eighteenth-century. Spahr takes the colonisation of Hawai'i as the subject for her poem 'Things of Each'. Her concentration on the interactions and change resulting from the imposition of one spatial frame onto another provides a level of detail and complexity that develops her earlier approach of connection in *This Connection* and thus affords further strategies for reconsidering pedagogical approaches to place.

The poem begins with 'the view from the sea / the constant motion of claiming, collecting, changing, and taking' (55). At first it seems as if it is the sea's currents and tides that are changing the shore. Yet, 'the view from the sea' introduces a more human presence to the poem that is developed as Spahr goes on to describe 'the arrival to someplace else' (55). The 'view from the sea' coupled with 'the arrival' suggests incoming ships. The following lines that repeat 'the arrival to someplace differently', and later, 'what we know is like and unalike', suggest that this view from the sea is a different perspective from 'the view from land' (65). Spahr's 'view from the sea' conveys the arrival of Captain Cook to Hawai'i in 1778 that provoked the further arrival of Protestant missionaries and whalers from the US in 1820. Her statement that 'what we know is like and unalike' anticipates her lines that repeat with variation: 'it is as the problems of analogy / it as the view from the sea' (56). In describing the arrival of settlers as presenting 'the problems of analogy', Spahr suggests those arriving from other lands disregarded what was 'unalike' in the ecosystem and culture of Hawai'i and assumed the land in Hawai'i to be the same as their own.

Spahr goes into further detail in describing how

> that is what the problems of the analogy are
> the problems of the sight from the sea
> and the problems of the introduction of koa haole […]

the problems of the analogy are still
as the sight of the sea
as the introduction of factories and animals, foreign, exotic (57)

Spahr understands analogy as a device that posits similarity and, evoking pedagogical concerns of the ego in Chapter One (and anticipating similar criticisms of anthropomorphism in Chapter Four), she understands its potentially imposing and appropriative consequences. Working from this basis, Spahr suggests that despite Hawai'i presenting much in the way of contrast to the Western world, Western settlers transferred their own notion of commercial business and their own dietary requirements that in turn would introduce new species and agricultural methods to the islands. What might at first appear like a local species, like the koa haole or mongoose, is revealed as a species entangled in other spatial frames. Moreover, Spahr suggests that these species are only parts of causal chains that continue to change life on the islands and thus produce even further entanglement. Spahr writes of 'Analogy from analogy' to indicate that the imposing acts of settlers create further imposition between natural entities themselves (58).

Spahr's earlier description of how 'the view from the sea' enacts a '*constant* motion of claiming, collecting, changing, and taking' comes to the fore as she names particular species introduced to Hawai'i by the explorers (emphasis added). The 'introduction of mongoose' mentioned by Spahr was made in order to help control the rat population, which had increased dramatically with the introduction of sugar plantations (58). Further change resulted from these changes as the mongoose devastated the native bird population through its particular diet of bird eggs. Spahr's expression, 'Analogy from analogy', acknowledges how it is not only the human settlers that make sense of the islands through their own perspectives and behavioural habits, but also the non-native species introduced by the settlers. Spahr's understanding of the problems of analogy affords the 'opening of the things sewn together' – a phrase Spahr repeats with some variation throughout the poem (59). This exploratory use of analogy probes Hawai'i's seemingly stable environment – exemplified by the aforementioned perception of 'the beautiful bird' – to find a series of interactions between entities brought together from divergent spatial frames.

Spahr's understanding of analogy not only continues to inform the content of her poem but also the form. In 'Things of Each', Spahr goes on to present a series of analogies

> like the wing of the butterfly and the bird
> like hummingbird the aspirations and the aspiration of the butterfly
> like the language of humans of nature and hummingbird the language
> as newt the wing under the amphibians and lizards under the reptiles (60)

This series of connections evokes a biological definition of analogy as presenting a superficial resemblance between unrelated species. In comparing species of different origins, Spahr forces connections in a way that echoes 'the problems of analogy'. The result is strange; yet it is not only the connections between species that are strange, but also the syntax that conveys such connections. The latter is in fact supported by a particular manipulation that Spahr uses in her practice and which self-consciously enacts the 'problems of analogy'. Spahr explains in her afterword, 'I put the drafts through the altavista translation machine (world.altavista.com) and translated my English words between the languages that came to the Pacific from somewhere else: French, Spanish, German, and Portuguese' (71). The process with which 'Things of Each' is written enacts analogy as the online translation machine finds a word supposedly analogous to another in a different language. As the outcome of this process presents grammatical discord, Spahr emphasises the distortive effects arising from the belief that spatial frames are alike and the dismissal of how they are unalike. In this way, Spahr's poem responds to Ursula Heise's call not only for an understanding of connection between spatial frames, but also of how these connections 'shape each other around the world' (21).

Margot Fortunato Galt's nature writing exercise presents a contrast to Spahr's poem via Galt's deployment of figurative language to perceive connections in the environment. While Spahr explores the way analogy connects and distorts environmental entities, Galt uses metaphor to convey a more positive, hopeful sense of connection. In 'Nature as Teacher and Guide', Galt guides her students towards thinking about environmental equality. Galt begins by explaining how

environmental entities are often structured through a hierarchical pyramid. She contrasts this with a circle and claims 'When we think of living things on a circle, we see that they are all connected, all related', and 'On the circle, every place is equal and every place is important' (250). Describing how this circle of life comes from 'Many Native American cultures', Galt presents N. Scott Momaday's poem 'The Delight Song of Tsoai-Talee' as a poetic model of such connective environmental thinking (249). Momaday's poem begins 'I am a feather on the bright sky / I am the blue horse that runs in the plain / I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water' (1-3). This metaphorical identification between 'I' and a range of environmental entities continues in a similar vein until Momaday concludes with 'I stand in good relation to the earth […] You see, I am alive. I am alive' (20-24).

Galt asks her students to draw their own circles and, around these circles, note environmental entities of varying scales and from places not necessarily familiar. She then asks her students to draw a line between any two points on the circle and 'describe how one part of the circle teaches something to another part', or to write in the style of Momaday; that 'I am' connected to these entities (253). As students find connection between themselves and, for example, rivers, oceans, soil and whales, Galt's approach helps to create connection between different entities, and, indeed, between different spatial frames. Galt's exercise thus begins to resonate with Spahr's earlier understanding of a global community proposed in 'Gentle Now' in which Spahr wrote of how 'we were a part of the stream and we were thus part of the rivers' (125). Galt's exercise creates an opportunity for her students to engage with a 'Native American' view of the world that accentuates equality with all beings. In this way, Galt suggests a practice of standing 'in good relation' to other cultures as well as to the environment. However, the ease and benign nature of identification that Galt fosters through her understanding of metaphor and connection goes no further.[36] Unlike Spahr, Galt does not consider how relations between humans and the environment or relations between entities might be more complex and potentially threatening. This awareness would seem

[36] Galt's exercise might be compared to Joseph Cornell's exercise. In his important work of environmental education, *Sharing Nature with Children*, Joseph Cornell proposes his exercise entitled 'Pyramid of Life'. Focusing upon the pyramid structure that Galt departs from, Cornell asks students to play the role of environmental entities and form a physical pyramid to represent the connections within a food chain. Cornell then takes his exercise a step further as he shows how a pesticide disrupts these connections as it enters the food chain.

useful for a more thorough understanding of why ‘good relation’ is important. Galt’s exercise is, after all, included in *The Alphabet of the Trees* anthology, which aims to respond to how ‘Our world today is in recognizable jeopardy’ as editors Christian McEwen and Mark Statman state. Galt fosters no awareness as to how, in the words of Spahr’s poem ‘Gentle Now’, ‘It was not all long lines of connections and utopia’.

Spahr acknowledges how certain connections can create threat and consequence in the environment, rather than simply ‘good relation’. In doing so, Spahr complements Galt’s more sentimental sense of connection with a more thought-provoking understanding of connection. Indeed, Spahr’s attention to the problems arising from connection not only enriches the subject of relation conveyed by Galt, but also the responsibility that previous educators intend to foster in their students. Spahr’s writing shows some parallel to Galt’s use of the Native American song of relation as Spahr intersects ‘Things of Each’ with her own version of a Hawaiian creation chant known as *The Kumulipo*. *The Kumulipo* conveys connection in terms of biological generation as a short passage of the text itself demonstrates:

> Born was the Grub, the parent
> Out came its child the Grasshopper, and flew
> Born was the Pinworm, the parent
> Out came its child a Fly, and flew (72)

With the translating machine occasionally disrupting certain words, Spahr creates her own version:

> caterpillar of the moth
> ant of the dragonfly
> connection from connection
> pinworm of the fly
> connection of the connection
> egg of the bird (58)

While the connections Spahr presents here are fairly straightforward, they become more complex. Nearing the end of the poem, Spahr writes

> we are consequently

we are consequently
so we are
alaaiha, `e`ea, alawai, crow, apapane, mudhen
we are so
bird, egg, fly, pinworm, grasshopper, grub
we are thus
fly-catcher, turnstone, a`u, a`o, plover, snipe (63)

Spahr's repeated use of 'we are' at first parallels Momaday's metaphorical use of 'I am' with more of a synecdochic quality in which the whole 'we' is connected to individual species. Spahr's 'we are alaaiha, `e`ea, alawai, crow' echoes her portrayal of a global community represented by 'we' in 'Gentle Now'.

Yet, a closer look introduces a less benign connection. This becomes evident when considering that the birds Spahr lists are all endangered or already extinct in Hawai'i due to the effects of Western settlers. In turn, Spahr's repeated use of 'consequently' takes on a more sinister tone. It is not simply that 'We are' the 'alawai' or 'crow' because 'we' represents a global community inclusive of these species, but 'we are' the 'alawai' or 'crow' because 'we' have taken the place of these species. The creatures that Spahr goes on to list may not all be threatened, but framing them within the context of these birds produces a looming sense that they will be lost too. Her mention of *The Kumulipo* in her prose text, *The Transformation*, pursues this focus on imposition, interaction and loss. Noting that the creation chant 'pointed out the connectedness of life', Spahr proposes that 'to see the connection between land and sea is also to see how one nation's oil-use could cause the disappearance of another's land' (107-108). In other words, Spahr presents how one nation's oil use is 'consequently' the 'disappearance of another's land'. In doing so, Spahr shows how an awareness of connection can generate awareness of destructive environmental connections. This helps to develop Galt's exercise to reflect upon what consequences the 'I' might have across spatial frames in terms of particular actions or behaviours: of what 'I am' in terms of what these behaviours ultimately replace in the environment. Spahr's careful consideration of causality becomes a way of extending pedagogical intentions to foster responsibility for place in their students. It speaks to other examples of imposition, interaction and change that cross spatial frames such as that between

carbon emissions and glaciers, or a cosmetic product's plastic microbeads and marine life across the planet's oceans.

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This chapter has examined pedagogical prescriptions for writing about local place and identified the potential shortcomings of local considerations of 'where you are' that neglect to emphasise the connection between the local and the global. By investigating Ursula Heise's ecocritical argument on eco-cosmopolitanism it was possible to strengthen these criticisms of pedagogy and outline the need for complementary strategies. Close readings of Juliana Spahr enabled a demonstration of how synecdoche and analogy can be used to guide such complementary strategies by fostering engagements that move beyond the local toward the global. Consistent with the greater thrust of this thesis, this chapter has identified another strategy with which to rethink nature writing teaching through metaphor.

Like Tomlinson and Graham, Spahr demonstrates strategies that, informed by figurative language, respond to representational challenges and afford valuable engagements with the environment. Spahr's use of synecdoche and analogy recognise that local environments are inherently connected to different environments belonging to other spatial frames. Establishing how personal and local places are parts of the whole world through synecdoche generates an intimate awareness of a global community that contributes to Heise's ecocritical argument on the need for new forms of environmental commitment. Furthermore, analogy has been shown to afford an opportunity to perceive interactions and changes arising from destructive connections within this community. Spahr's understanding of place challenges recurring pedagogical prescription that seeks to engage students with their immediate surroundings without explaining how these surroundings might extend and interact with different places. As Spahr extends perception from the local frame to the global frame by increasingly suggesting how these frames are connected through causality, these strategies based on synecdoche and analogy generate a more informed understanding of responsibility than that which educators hope to foster for local environments. If teachers of

nature writing are to engage their students with environmental issues, then this more thorough understanding of place is crucial.

Unsettling pedagogical understandings of place by emphasising connections between spatial frames has established three key points that guide the examination of environments and metaphor in the following chapters. Having examined the relationship between the 'I' and future humans, as well as the 'I' and the global community, it is pertinent in the next chapter to examine the relationship between 'I' and nonhumans in terms of anthropomorphism. Furthermore, exploring place not as one stable subject that is immediately identifiable, but as a subject that presents multiple other spatial frames, anticipates later study. For example, Chapter Five investigates the shape-shifting qualities of environmental materiality in view of pedagogical prescriptions for wonder. This chapter's argument on place has also explored the appropriative and distortive potential of analogy as a way of comprehending interactions and change within environments. Although these qualities of figurative language have been shown to be problematic in previous chapters (and this recurs in subsequent discussions on anthropomorphism), the appropriative potential of figurative language requires further examination. In particular, this capacity of metaphor prepares for Chapter Six that investigates the tensions inherent within anthropocentric metaphor. This enables an analysis of how exaggeration of these tensions generates a reconsideration of what educators problematically call 'authenticity' in writing about environments.

Chapter Four

‘Where We Might Be Similar’: Anthropomorphism’s Engagement with Difference in the Poetry of Les Murray and Roy Fisher

This chapter argues against recurring pedagogical distrust of anthropomorphism as a literary process of identification in which the nonhuman is made human. Although the definition of anthropomorphism does little to negotiate this by describing it as the ‘attribution’ of human characteristics to the nonhuman, I argue that this attribution of likeness can be used to explore how nonhuman experience is different to human experience. Giving a voice to a bird, for example, does not mean that the voice will describe human sensibilities. The focus of this chapter develops the examination of figurative interactions and projections belonging to temporal and spatial frames in Chapters Two and Three, as it concentrates upon the potential interactions between humans and nonhumans. Recognising anthropomorphism as a ‘trap’ that students frequently fall into when writing, educator Chris Kinsey finds the device that sees ‘things in human terms’ potentially ‘appropriating’ in a similar way to the appropriating ‘I’ examined in Chapter Two (Personal Interview). However, by foregrounding the way in which anthropomorphism can explore the difference between human and nonhuman experience, this chapter reverses Kinsey’s claim and shows how anthropomorphism can lead to respectful and responsible attitudes toward the environment. This is considered both in terms of animals (such as fish, pigs) and materials (such as plastic, carbon) and shows how an anthropomorphic style can engage with lives that are both threatened and threatening. Advancing the explorations of pollution and climate change in the previous chapter, this study demonstrates how anthropomorphism can respond to pedagogical intentions to increase consciousness of environmental issues.

This chapter begins by examining educators’ dismissals and concerns regarding anthropomorphism. Investigating the arguments that have led to such unease helps to identify the unnecessary limitations placed upon literary engagements with environments. Consequently, I propose a reconsideration of anthropomorphism that builds upon Timothy Morton’s ecocritical argument on the

‘strange stranger’. Morton’s emphasis upon other beings as ‘strange’ helps to emphasise the way in which anthropomorphism can engage with how nonhuman experience is different. Furthermore, Jane Bennett’s New Materialist argument in *Vibrant Matter,* that states matter is not inert but ‘lively’, develops Morton’s argument towards material ‘nonlife’ in order to examine further figurative interactions in urban environments (viii). Advancing the potential for this anthropomorphic style, close readings of Les Murray and Roy Fisher form two complementary arguments. Despite coming from diverse poetic contexts, their work shares an anthropomorphic style, or tendency, that challenges pedagogical assumptions. The first argument centres upon Murray’s representations of animals that convey the strangeness of animal experience and, in doing so, provoke environmental respect. The second argument focuses upon materials by analysing Fisher’s more subtle anthropomorphic style that recognises the life of industrial matter and provokes thought on societal responsibility. Supporting the latter argument, Bennett’s claims regarding the life of matter help to identify the figurative interactions relevant to anthropomorphism and reflect upon their consciousness-raising effect.

‘I Am Not *a Swift’: Reconsidering Anthropomorphism*

‘I think anthropomorphism is to be avoided’, states John Elder (Personal Interview). He describes the reason for his warning by stating that ‘animals are interesting and we don’t have to anthropomorphize them to make them interesting’. Elder’s concerns here are not surprising in view of how anthropomorphism has traditionally been deployed in literature, but his broad statement elides this complex debate. The Introduction of this thesis outlined what is often considered by ecocritics to be the most problematic example of anthropomorphism: the Aesopian tradition of beast fable. It was explained that by making animals behave and speak like humans in order to give moral lessons and critique institutions, this kind of anthropomorphism made no gesture as to how animals might be, in Elder’s words, ‘interesting’ themselves. Although somewhat subtler, Greg Garrard notes the use of pathetic fallacy in both pastoral and Romantic literature that ‘wrongly locates’ human emotions in the environment (*Ecocriticism* 36). Illustrating the latter

example, this anthropomorphic act appears as a human imposition upon the nonhuman world, as when in 'The Ruined Cottage' Wordsworth describes how 'The poets in their elegies and songs […] call upon the hills and streams to mourn' and illustrates such when he writes 'Beside yon spring I stood / and eyed its waters till we seemed to feel / One sadness, they and I' (73-75, 82-84).

John Ruskin was aware of these sentimental anthropomorphic styles. In his essay, 'Of the Pathetic Fallacy' in *Modern Painters*, Ruskin draws attention to how Charles Kingsley's poem 'Alton Locke' 'fallaciously' described the ocean's foam as 'cruel' and 'crawling', though Ruskin praises the representation because such anthropomorphisms 'faithfully represent sorrow' (210). The Nature Faker Controversy was less forgiving in the US. Described in Chapter One with regard to the 'tradition of fact' in nature writing, this early twentieth-century controversy highlighted the gap between science and sentiment in representations of animal behaviour. Theodore Roosevelt's article that ended the controversy in 1907 likened these false representations to 'Reynard the Fox', thereby returning concerns regarding beast fable (263). Of course, despite these movements against anthropomorphism's potential misrepresentation of the environment, these forms of anthropomorphism remain a cornerstone of the Western imagination. Elder's point that 'we don't have to anthropomorphize them [animals] to make them interesting' might counter the genre of beast fable just as it might counter the kinds of anthropomorphism endemic to contemporary children's literature.

Elder advises that to recognise the distinctive quality of animals it is unnecessary to cross the boundaries between species and practice anthropomorphism. However, realising the detachment that these boundaries might generate, Elder later considers how 'biological orthodoxy' has guided us into 'saying that birds and other animals don't have feelings' and concedes his position (Personal Interview). Maintaining that we should be careful 'not to automatically promote animals into human beings' (and qualifying this with 'if that were a promotion'), Elder intends his students 'to hold the question of where we might be similar'. Elder's responses are symptomatic of much scepticism regarding anthropomorphism in nature writing pedagogy. On the one hand, anthropomorphism appropriates the nonhuman. On the other hand, a lack of anthropomorphism accentuates species boundaries in a way that could provoke an

approach to the nonhuman as automata devoid of consciousness. Furthermore, while reinforcing species' boundaries may aim to guard against anthropocentrism this is not necessarily the result. In response to a class in which Laird Christensen describes a tree like a person, one student exclaims 'that's not something I would have thought […] before the tree was just a tree, it was just there for decoration' (Student A, Personal Interview). In this example, anthropomorphism challenges anthropocentric views that claim the natural world is simply there for human pleasure.

Despite this transformative potential of anthropomorphism, it continues to provoke wariness and disapproval. Andrew Motion states of the figurative device 'I hate it. I absolutely hate it. I think it's soppy and wrong […] it looks like sympathy but in its blasé way it is predatory' (Personal Interview). Motion goes beyond Elder in his vehement call to retain species' boundaries as well as in his understanding of anthropomorphism as a 'predatory' process of identification. He goes on, in a rather post-Romantic vein, to describe those who reject anthropomorphism as

> people who want to register the difference between themselves and creatures. They feel that however sympathetic they are to whatever they're writing about, they are hopelessly trapped in their humanity, which is what I feel for what it's worth. I am *not* a swift, I am not. I sometimes wish I were, but I can't be. And the implications of that are quite potent I think.

The 'implications' of accepting our human form and retaining boundaries between humans and nonhumans is, according to Motion, 'a way of reminding yourself that in our intelligence and power as a species the responsibility lies with us' (Personal Interview). Motion's sense of 'power' and 'responsibility' resonate with the pedagogical intentions analysed in previous chapters in which educators hope to increase awareness of environmental issues and provoke pro-environmental attitudes.

Mark Cocker, discussed in Chapter One as the author of *Crow Country*, regularly teaches nature writing. Previously leading courses at The Arvon Foundation and Ty Newydd National Writers' Centre of Wales, Cocker regularly contributes to the 'Wild Writing' Masters course offered by the University of Essex. Cocker's advice corresponds to Motion's insofar as he is similarly hopeful that his teaching will generate a 'respectful attitude' in which students will leave 'feeling

more engaged with nature' (Personal Interview). Furthermore, like Elder and Motion, Cocker is dubious of whether anthropomorphism is an ethical device to use in nature writing as he states that the writer 'should be aware of some monitor, some tester of authenticity' in using anthropomorphism. From the points made by Elder, Motion and Cocker, these educators suggest that anthropomorphism is a process of identification in which the nonhuman is made human. While the definition of anthropomorphism does little to negotiate this (as aforementioned), the phonetic proximity of anthropocentrism is also unhelpful. Yet, what seems to go unnoticed is that this attribution of likeness can be used as a connective capacity to explore difference. Of course, the language in which nature writing is written is exclusively human and there is no way of avoiding this. Yet, as will be shown, attributing a human voice to an animal does not mean that the voice will describe human experience. Challenging pedagogical concerns, this reconsideration of anthropomorphism may help students to reconceive the 'difference between themselves and creatures', and, in doing so, lead towards the respect and responsibility that educators intend to cultivate in their students.

There is a tradition of study concerning the boundaries between humans and nonhumans exemplified by, for instance, Michel de Montaigne's question 'When I play with my cat, who knows whether she is not amusing herself with me more than I with her?', and Jeremy Bentham's question of whether animals suffer. Such studies have raised questions concerning animal consciousness and intelligence. Many theorists in the twentieth and twenty-first century have made significant explorations into the idea of traversing human/nonhuman boundaries. In 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat?' Thomas Nagel discusses the subjective nature of consciousness. Yet, Nagel's philosophical argument claims that 'we are completely unequipped to think about the subjective character of experience without relying on the imagination' and sees this as a barrier to further consideration of the experience of others (178). As explained in Chapter Two, philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari propose a theory of 'becoming-animal' (more broadly, a theory on becoming-other) that differentiates 'becoming' from 'imitating' and warns against metaphor that establishes likeness between entities (*A Thousand Plateaus*). Rather, Deleuze and Guattari are interested in a practice of becoming that provokes suspension, or destabilisation, of identities. In like manner, Jacques

Derrida's approach in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* foregrounds the ontological uncertainty of humans and nonhumans. Derrida describes a situation in which 'the gaze of an animal', in this case his cat, makes him conscious of his own nudity. Exploring his own response to the cat – his feeling of shame – Derrida then begins to examine the response of the cat and what 'response' means in the case of an animal.

Derrida's writing has influenced contemporary works considering animal ethics. As Donna Haraway argues in *When Species Meet*, Derrida identifies a key question in asking not whether the animal can speak, but how to conceptualise an animal's response. However, Haraway argues that Derrida 'did not seriously consider an alternative form of engagement, one that risked knowing something more about cats' (20). Indeed, Haraway approaches Derrida's cat as a 'companion species' and contemplates 'what the cat might actually be doing, feeling, thinking' (20). With this more intimate focus, Haraway explores the interactions between humans and 'companion species' that range from dogs and cats to 'rice, bees, tulips, and intestinal flora' to argue that species are involved in 'coshaping' one another (15). Departing from 'becoming-animal', Haraway's theory of 'becoming-with' has been taken up in ecocritical studies on identity politics and posthumanism.[37]

Timothy Morton's ecocritical argument on animals in *The Ecological Thought* is very much part of this tradition. Morton's ideas on the 'strangeness' of nonhumans echo the way both Deleuze and Derrida undermine ideas of accessible and understandable nonhuman identities, and Morton's emphasis upon the intimacy humans have with such strangeness resonates with Haraway's approach. Moreover, his emphasis upon intimate 'strangeness' helps to develop the potential, and the significance, of exploring the difference between nonhuman and human experience through anthropomorphism. Indeed, in contrast to the theorists above, Morton's approach explores animals with regard to the problems and possibilities of representing the environment and so is particularly applicable to an examination of how nature writing teaching prescribes particular forms of representation. Challenging much first-wave ecocriticism in his landmark *Ecology without Nature*

[37] See Cary Wolfe's *What Is Posthumanism?* and 'Speciesism, Identity Politics, and Ecocriticism: A Conversation with Humanists and Posthumanists'.

(see Introduction for more on first-wave ecocriticism), Morton provides a poststructuralist approach to environmental theory that questions the meaning of 'nature'. *The Ecological Thought* continues to explore a postmodern scepticism towards conceptualisations of the environment and develops a theory of 'dark ecology'. Influenced by deconstructionist theory, in *The Ecological Thought* Morton describes 'dark ecology' as that which challenges appropriation and assumptive understandings of environments by putting 'hesitation, uncertainty, irony, and thoughtfulness back into ecological thinking' (16). This theory guides Morton's approach to animals. Resonating with the question of species' boundaries (previously raised by John Elder), Morton explains that '[s]aying "Humans are animals" could get you in trouble. So could saying "Humans are not animals," for different reasons' (41). He comes to the conclusion that 'Neither choice is satisfactory. There is no way to maintain the strangeness of things' (41). Morton shows how the process of reinstating species' boundaries is also a form of assumptive identification, which in turn deepens the critique of pedagogical approaches. Deploying the term 'strange stranger' instead of 'animal' helps Morton to acknowledge that 'We can never absolutely figure them out' (41).[38] As he explains, if it was possible to figure them out 'then all we would have is a ready-made box to put them in, and we would just be looking at the box, not the strange strangers' (41).

The impact of Morton's theory on the 'strange stranger' has been felt throughout much ecocriticism. Gregers Andersen uses the term to discuss the uncanniness of artificial environments in his article 'Greening the Sphere: Towards an Eco-Ethics for the Local and Artifical'. A forthcoming anthology of essays, *Dark Ecology*, takes Morton's ideas as guiding principles for further study of literature from the US. Additionally, as suggested later in Chapter Five, Morton's 'strange stranger' has been identified by Graham Harman as having parallels with the central argument of Object-Oriented Ontology.[39] In this chapter, however, Morton's emphasis upon the strangeness of nonhumans helps to frame the way in which

[38] In an endnote, Morton notes that 'strange stranger' is his translation of Derrida's notion of the 'arrivant' from his essay 'Hospitality'. Morton only explains a littler further in his essay 'Thinking Ecology' when he describes the arrivant as 'a being whose being we can't predict' (275).
[39] Harman sets out these parallels in his essay 'On the Mesh, the Strange Stranger, and Hyperobjects: Morton's Ecological Ontology'.

anthropomorphism can engage with how nonhuman experience differs from human experience. Although Morton does not discuss the figurative device, his assertion that 'The more we know them, the stranger they become. Intimacy itself is strange' corresponds to the possibility that anthropomorphism's connective capacities can conceive of the difference or strangeness of nonhuman experience (41). Moreover, Morton's belief that engaging with difference involves exploring 'the paradoxes and fissures of identity within "human" and "animal" ' is similarly relevant to a reconsideration of anthropomorphism that departs from existing pedagogical approaches (41). Morton's argument on the 'strange stranger' helps to guide a new approach to anthropomorphism that engages with Elder's question of 'where we might be similar', while anticipating that this question will lead to engagements with difference.

In arguing that anthropomorphism can engage with the ways in which nonhuman experience is different to that of humans, this chapter corresponds to John Simons's argument on 'strong anthropomorphism' in *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation*. Summarised and critiqued in the Introduction, Simons's work distinguishes 'strong anthropomorphism' from other types of anthropomorphism as that which prompts 'profound questions in the reader's mind as to the extent to which humans and non-humans are really different' (120). However, this taxonomy of anthropomorphism only arrives halfway into Simons's study and comprises such a whirlwind analysis of a variety of texts (Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*, Jonathan Swift's 'A Modest Proposal' and *Gulliver's Travels*, John Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals*, Eleanor Akinson's *Greyfriar's Bobby* and *Babe*) that a clear argument as to how 'strong anthropomorphism' might be achieved becomes difficult to recognise. Furthermore, Simons offers no analysis as to the potential effect of apprehending how nonhumans are different. Consequently, this chapter differs in the way it approaches anthropomorphism through Morton's argument on the 'strange stranger', the way it specifically attends to voice and narrative as connective capacities of anthropomorphism, and the way in which it heeds the effect of such connections. In searching for alternatives to current pedagogical strategies, close readings of Les Murray's poems first demonstrate these points. Following this, close readings of Roy Fisher demonstrate other ways of using anthropomorphism

in urban environments that, apparently unacknowledged by educators, increase the potential of the device to respond to pedagogical intentions for responsibility.

'Gill-Pulse': Anthropomorphism's Engagement with Difference

Les Murray (1938 –), an Australian poet who has written over twenty poetry collections, addresses an inhabited Australian landscape in his work. Murray cites a range of influences from Gerard Manley Hopkins who taught him 'how to melt language', to Elizabeth Bishop's attention to the dignity of animals ('A Conversation with Les Murray'). However, any study on Murray must necessarily touch upon the influence of indigenous Australian ancestry on his writing. Drawing upon Aboriginal culture that often tries to engage with, and express, the spirits of animals, Murray gives voice to nonhuman inhabitants in *Translations from the Natural World* (1992), hereafter referred to as *Translations*. Discussing this collection in an interview with Barbara Williams, Murray explains he enjoys 'getting to that other, absolutely timeless world in which the eagle's never heard of America' (126). Despite the eagle metonymically representing the US, Murray acknowledges that this symbolism is confined to the human world. Consequently, in contrast to pedagogical principles that ask students to consider 'where we might be similar' with nonhumans, Murray's statement immediately conjures difference. This mismatch between humans and nonhumans continues when Murray writes that 'living things do all talk, I say, but they don't talk human language, or always speak with their mouth' (quoted in Fürstenberg 145). As Jorie Graham connected to future humans though the sensorial imagination and Juliana Spahr connected to life across the globe through breath, Murray anticipates how, in *Translations*, he connects to nonhumans primarily though voice. Yet, in creating this connection between humans and nonhumans through voice, Murray then uses this connection to convey radical contrast. Not only does Murray apprehend how animal voices are linguistically different, but the content of such communication is bound by certain 'constraints: no hands, no colour vision if they're mammals' (145).

Scholars have responded to Les Murray's *Translations* with a series of interpretations that vary in their focus on Murray's representation of nonhumans. In his critical monograph, *Les Murray*, Steven Matthews historically contextualises

Translations and asserts that Murray wrote the collection in response to 'rationality and enlightenment history' (121). Matthews spends little time considering quite how Murray is 'breaking with normative terms and syntax', but argues that his use of language represents 'The experience of Australian difference', which is at odds with the number of international species represented in the collection (123, 124). A second critical monograph, *Les Murray Country*, is similarly restrained in exploring Murray's representation of how nonhuman experience differs from human experience. Ulla Fürstenberg produces a rather unstructured approach in which she leaps between poems to comment on Murray's 'question of boundaries between the human and nonhuman worlds' (140). Despite 'empathy' forming a subtitle of Fürstenberg's discussion, it is not identified in the poems themselves (144). Gillian Beer's article, 'Animal Presences: Tussles with Anthropomorphism', identifies Murray's use of the figurative device but, like the previous two works, shows minimal close reading of the poems themselves, preferring to establish, at a safe distance, that the poems 'warp language' (319).

However, Beer's analysis does evaluate the effect of Murray's strange language. In her article she states that Murray's practice 'pays respect to the ways of being that lie beyond language' (321). This point of view is taken up in the ecocritical arguments of Greg Garrard and Hugh Dunkerley. In his chapter on 'Animals' in *Ecocriticism,* Garrard briefly turns to Murray's works and states that 'Every poem is a vivid testament to the difficulty, if not impossibility, of the representational work it undertakes' (168). Hugh Dunkerley's article, 'Unnatural Relations?: Language and Nature in the Poetry of Mark Doty and Les Murray', takes a more obvious poststructuralist approach as he states that each poem uses 'signs to point towards this being, which is itself beyond language' (81). Yet, in immediately arguing that Murray's use of language invalidates itself in order to point towards the nonhuman outside of language, these critics do not attend to how Murray creates more subtle contrasts between the human and nonhuman. By broadly referring to language, these critics neglect the role of voice that speaks such language and how this voice prompts embodiment, or perspective-taking, of the nonhuman. Consequently, what is needed is not only a much closer examination of how Murray's use of voice generates empathic connections with nonhuman experience, but also how particular uses of this voice deny this sense of

shared experience by introducing moments of uncertainty or even non-identity. Demonstrated towards the end of the analysis of Murray, this experiential focus expands the relevance of Beer's suggestion that Murray's practice 'pays respect' to nonhuman beings.

Murray's 'Shoal' begins with a voice that speaks of self-identity: 'Eye-and-eye eye an eye / each. What blinks is I' (1-2). 'Eye-and-eye' shows Murray playing with 'I and I', a Rastafarian phrase used instead of 'we' to denote equality between people. Yet, Murray subverts this human association by continuing to play with the 'eye'/I' in different ways. While one 'eye' refers to a shared human and nonhuman physical feature, another 'eye' appears to be a verb. The attempt to find a stable connection between how a human might self-identify and how the shoal self-identifies becomes an impossible game as, 'again the eyes' I winks' (5). As Murray takes his own approach to Jorie Graham's 'sensorial imagination', he shows how this shoal's experience is different to that of humans. Murray describes the shoal as 'tasting' (10). Although this 'tasting' invites the human into the body of the nonhuman, it immediately introduces contrast when Murray writes of each fish 'being a tongue, / vague umbrations of chemical: / this way thrilling, that way Wrong' (10-12). Other bodily sensations are recorded by Murray in ways that immediately introduce a shared sense of physical experience with a simultaneous undermining of such connection. The shoal has, for example, a 'gill-pulse' that posits similarity ('pulse') and difference ('gill') at the same time (7). By creating terms such as 'gill-pulse' Murray echoes Charles Tomlinson's practice that used catachresis to represent environmental diversity, in order to convey the strangeness of nonhuman experience.

Murray pursues a sensorial connection in 'Eagle Pair'. The eagles speak of how 'we lean open and rise / and magnify this meat, then that, with the eyes of our eyes' (5-6). At first echoing the confusion of the 'eye and eye' in 'Shoal', Murray's repetition of 'eyes' more clearly suggests that the eagle's capacity for sight is much stronger than that of humans. Yet, the sensory connection Murray makes with the eagles' experience also possesses a conceptual dimension:

> All night
> the limitless Up digests its meats of light

> The circle-winged Egg then emerging from long pink and brown
> re-inverts life, and meats move or are still on the Down (1-4)

What the eagles' eyes comprehend seems to be the transition from night to day. However, as the sky is represented as an animated and capitalised 'Up' and the sun pictured as the 'Egg', Murray proposes that the eagles share a mythic capacity with humans that evokes the cosmic egg motif. Furthermore, while 'up' and 'down' have been analysed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson as figuratively mapping Western approaches to mood, consciousness and ideas of progress in their influential work *Metaphors We Live By*, Murray finds 'up' and 'down' occupying different conceptual domains:

> Meat is light, it is power and Up, as we free it from load
> And our mainstay, the cunningest hunter, is the human road
>
> But all the Down is heavy and tangled. Only meat is good there
> And the rebound heat ribbing up vertical rivers of air. (8-12).

As Murray stated earlier, the eagles have 'never heard of America'. Instead, they have their own figurative consciousness that reveals their own conceptual geographies and their own priorities concerning prey.

Murray's poems are still inescapably human: they are not only written in human language, but they are also written in rhyming couplets. The content of Murray's poems, however, continues to attempt a portrayal of nonhuman experience. Indeed, the nonhuman experience that Murray describes becomes difficult to identify: how are the eagles freeing the meat 'from load'? Is this a suggestion of liberating otherwise ground-dwelling prey into the air? The representation of the 'Down' as 'heavy' seems to support this. Is it too simplistic to read the 'tangled' as indicating the Australian bush, or might 'tangled' indicate a snare or even, resembling human conceptual metaphor, a more complex existence? The uncertainty generated by Murray interrupts the potential figurative projection into a nonhuman body that is initiated by Murray's use of the first-person voice and his use of sensorial and conceptual connections. As one projects into the body of a shoal, or an eagle, and finds this connection to nonhuman experience

impossibly different, Murray's poems enact Morton's claim that intimacy with the 'strange stranger' reveals more strangeness.

Despite Murray suggesting that nonhumans share certain physical and conceptual capacities with humans, Murray's portrayal of the different experiential world of the nonhuman forces the human back into her body and her experience. In this way, Murray's practice generates a reconsideration of the otherwise preconceived boundaries that educators wish to preserve in nature writing. Murray's poems achieve Motion's pedagogical desire for writers to 'register the difference between themselves and creatures', but only through a process of perspective-taking that encourages new thought as to where humans and nonhumans compare and, ultimately, contrast. As this anthropomorphic style abandons anthropocentric thought and begins to attend to nonhuman consciousness and nonhuman priorities it becomes a style that responds to Cocker's intention for 'respectful attitudes'. This forms the basis for an alternative strategy that seeks to develop pedagogical approaches by raising further awareness of nonhuman lives.

Chris Kinsey, who designs and teaches courses entitled 'Becoming a Writer of Your Own Square Mile' and 'Writing from Nature', discusses an exercise she frequently uses that corresponds to Murray's practice. Analysing her exercise prompts the question as to whether anthropomorphism might not only foster respectful attitudes, but also responsible attitudes. Taking her students outdoors, Kinsey asks them to use 'the first-person voice' to speak 'from that environment' (Personal Interview). Explaining her use of the exercise with a group of writers on Bardsey Island in Wales, Kinsey asks her students to 'imagine being the island and speaking in the voice of the island'. Writing, for example, 'about a feature – a forest, an outcrop', Kinsey gives the following prompts to these writers who take nonhuman perspectives: 'how old are you? I nudge them not to give a numerical answer so they often answer in a kind of riddling form. What languages do you speak? What names are you known by?' Like Murray's *Translations*, Kinsey is clear that these anthropomorphic connections will go beyond human likeness and towards difference. In particular, Kinsey's mention of a 'riddling form' is refreshing in its instruction for a figurative style that playfully offers both opportunity for, and withdrawal from, identification.

However, in contrast to Murray's connective strategies, Kinsey's focus on age, language and name might be understood to create a detached, if not formal, approach that is comparable to the opening questions on a census form. As framed by Kinsey, the environmental entities, which students are to speak from, are not active entities but passive collections of data and this limits the exploration that can be made of them. This approach may well be because the features Kinsey draws attention to – a forest, an outcrop – are physically more fixed in their environment and thus less animate than Murray's fish or eagle. Yet, as demonstrated by Murray and Bennett in the next section, an outcrop and a forest *are* active, collaborative and responsive entities in an environment. The only prompt given by Kinsey that allows students to consider the experience of these entities is when she adds 'what do you dream of?' and 'I think another main prompt is what are you afraid of? Or, what do you fear for this place?'

As Kinsey explains, this final prompt 'helps to generate an ending' to the exercise. Whilst Kinsey's set of questions allows students a thoughtful introduction to anthropomorphism, when asked whether this focus on fear could invite more of an emphasis upon nonhuman experience in terms of environmental issues, she answered that 'It hasn't particularly'. This seems like an opportunity for further engagement given that Kinsey answers positively to whether she hopes her teaching will provoke or increase pro-environmental attitudes with 'I'd like to think that it did'. Consistent with further pedagogical examples explored in later chapters, a disparity exists between Kinsey's exercise and what Kinsey believes her teaching will produce. Although she appears verbally committed to raising environmental consciousness in her students, her exercise shows reluctance in making this strategic move. Kinsey goes on to say how this issue-led angle 'might suit' the exercise, given conflicts between fishermen and marine conservation projects on Bardsey Island. With these marine conservation issues in mind, it is not difficult to see how her exercise might be developed: for example, students could take the perspective of a fish, a crab, the shoreline, a fishing net or even the water itself and respond to her question of 'what do you fear for this place'. Not only would this anthropomorphic exercise have the potential to generate the kind of respect previously mentioned, but it could also 'remind us of our power and responsibility', which, paradoxically, Motion sees resulting from abandoning anthropomorphism.

Murray's 'Pigs' approaches the topics of meat consumption and factory farming and examining this poem raises further questions about pedagogical attitudes toward anthropomorphism by showing how the device might foster responsibility, as well as respect. Like Murray's 'Shoal', the pigs in Murray's poem speak from a collective 'we'. However, unlike 'Shoal', this collective 'we' reflects upon their ancestral past and, in doing so, recognises how that past contrasts to their present lives. In this way, Murray's use of the pronoun becomes comparable to Jorie Graham's projection into temporal frames to comprehend environmental change. 'Pigs' begins 'Us all on sore cement was we', which evokes modern farm environments before immediately turning to consider their once wild existence: 'Not warmed then with glares. / Not glutting mush', but

> Us back in cool god-shit. We ate crisp.
> We nosed up good rank in the tunnelled bush.
> Us all fuckers then. And Big, huh? Tusked
> The balls-biting dog and gutsed him wet.
> Us shoved down the soft cement of rivers (1, 2-3, 5-9)

Despite Murray's *Translations* conveying difference between human and nonhuman experience in most of the poems, Murray's depiction of the pigs disappointingly plays into cultural stereotypes of the pig as a brute. Evoking the previously discussed fabular forms of anthropomorphism, the pigs not only swear, but predominately speak in Anglo-Saxon as opposed to Latinate diction, which reflects a less sophisticated manner. However, Murray's imagining of the sensory capacity of the pigs introduces more surprising detail that continues to portray contrast between human and nonhuman worlds. The 'glares' that refer to the lighting on the farm convey a very different experience that is emphasised by the physical actions of the pigs that 'Tusked' and 'gutsed'. These details also create contrast between the pigs' lives at the farm and their previous lives in the wild. The pigs' food is 'mush' at the former and 'crisp' in the latter. Likewise, Murray contrasts the 'sore cement' of the farm to the 'soft cement' of the rivers.

This contrast between the past and present lives of the pigs becomes more provocative toward the second half of the poem. Remembering a previous time, the pigs explain

We sloughed, we soughed
and balked no weird till the high ridgebacks was us
with weight-buried hooves. Or bristly with milk.
Us never knowed like slitting nor hose-biff then.
Not the terrible sheet-cutting screams up ahead.
The burnt water kicking. This gone already feeling
Here in no place with our heads upside down. (11-17)

Murray's movement between past and present is made obvious by the way the 'sheet-cutting screams' loudly contrast against the softness of 'sloughed, we soughed' that evokes a lazy, muddy existence. The pigs' 'weight-buried hooves' in the mud is similarly replaced by weightlessness and a sense of disembodiment as their slaughter entails 'This gone already feeling […] our heads upside down'.

Murray's anthropomorphic attribution of voice to the nonhuman provokes sustained thought as to the pigs' experience. In doing so, it is possible that the poem fosters a sense of respect for the lives of these pigs. However, in focusing upon the way the lives of the pigs have been changed, and how their lives are ultimately threatened by factory farming and meat consumption leads to the possibility that such anthropomorphism might foster responsible attitudes. This use of anthropomorphism appears, then, to respond to the very task Motion believed an *anti*-anthropomorphic stance would generate: difference is registered through Murray's anthropomorphism and this anthropomorphism leads to an understanding that the 'responsibility lies with us'. With Murray's inclusion of the human world in the form of the factory farm in mind, the next section continues to make a case for rethinking pedagogical attitudes toward anthropomorphism by showing how the device can approach supposedly inert materials in urban environments. This focus helps to query further boundaries and enrich the concepts of respect and responsibility.

'Something's Decided to Narrate': Animate Matter

While Murray approaches a range of familiar animals with his strange anthropomorphic practice he also extends his practice to less animate entities within the environment. In *Translations*, Murray goes as far as giving a voice to a tree in 'Bole' and grass in 'The Masses'. Engaging with the difference of the

physiological processes of grass in the latter poem, Murray writes 'We thicken by upper grazing', before recognising a greater active agency in the grass that 'Tied in fasces, / dead, living, still we rule' (5, 11-12). While 'fasces' refers to the symbol used in ancient Rome to indicate power and jurisdiction, 'fasces' etymologically means 'bundle'. The question of how a bundle of dead grass might 'rule' can be answered by considering what a bundle of grass affords: it could, as is common in Australia, fuel a forest fire and so be deemed threatening. On the other hand, a bundle of dead grass might be interpreted as a hay bale that feeds animals and consequently feeds humans. As Murray concludes 'No god is bowed to like grass is' (12). Lastly, given Murray's regular phonetic play, 'fasces' may be a deliberate misspelling of 'faeces'. Despite seeming the very epitome of dead matter, manure (with a high grass content) certainly performs an active role in the environment.

Explaining his concept of the 'strange stranger', Timothy Morton describes that as the nonhuman is found to be 'uncanny, uncertain, she, he or it gives us pause' (81). Morton's pronouns also require pause and reconsideration as, by using 'it', Morton affords the opportunity of applying the concept of the strange stranger to nonlife. Jane Bennett, a political theorist in New Materialism, comes to these boundaries with a different, but complementary perspective in *Vibrant Matter*. Consistent with New Materialism's intention to reconsider matter by departing from anthropocentrism and highlighting material agency, Bennett believes that 'the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter' in contemporary society 'feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption' (ix). Bennett's argument is part of a New Materialist movement in environmental philosophy. This is recognisable in David Abram's proposal of modern day animism in *Becoming Animal*. Examined in Chapter One, Abram argues for the importance of returning to oral culture in participating with 'an animate, expressive world' (4). This movement is also evident in Manuel de Landa's *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* in which de Landa shows history to be shaped by such matter as rocks, winds and germs. He explains his 'chorus of material voices will, I hope, give us a fresh perspective on the events and processes that have shaped the history of this millennium' (22). Object-Oriented Ontology also forms a large part of this movement in its study of 'thinghood' (discussed with regard to Morton in Chapter Five). Challenging the post-Cartesian

view of agency and mastery as solely human qualities, Bennett aims to 'dissipate' the borders between 'human/animal' and 'life/matter' by drawing attention to the life of matter (x). Situating her argument within the theories of others and drawing upon their vocabulary: Bennett uses Bruno Latour's 'actant' and Deleuze and Guattari's 'assemblages' as key concepts in thinking about material agency.

To 'catalyse a sensibility' towards this vibrant, active matter, Bennett makes the significant, though seemingly reluctant claim that what is needed is 'a bit of anthropomorphism' (99). It is noticeable from the previous examples of pedagogical attitudes toward anthropomorphism that tutors were immediately concerned with its application to animals and seemingly unaware or unconcerned in using it to represent other entities. By focusing upon matter, rather than animals, Bennett's theory, and Roy Fisher's poems, demonstrate that there is further opportunity for anthropomorphism in nature writing than educators have so far indicated. As evident in the previous chapters, nature writing exercises focus upon, or take place within, pristine natural environments inhabited by wild creatures. This would include the trees and grass in Murray's poems, yet presumably would exclude urban environments and associated matter such as the styrofoam cup that Graham considered, or the 'pulverized glass and concrete' in Juliana Spahr's work. This is particularly surprising given how the 'new nature writing' often emphasises the interconnections of culture and nature. In *Edgelands*, for example, Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts explore where city and countryside converge in places such as wastelands, sewage plants and retail parks. However, John Tallmadge's nature writing exercise 'Giving Voice to the Voiceless', collected under a series of exercises entitled 'A Matter of Scale: Searching for Wildness in the City', does begin to make this transition between environments and, furthermore, advocates anthropomorphism. Unlike the exercises on place that predominantly sought observation of local birds and trees as examined in the previous chapter, Tallmadge asks his students to go out into their city. Here, he expects his students to take the voice of an 'object or creature' especially a 'creature more distant from the human scale, such as insects, protozoa, lichens, fungi' (65). Just as Morton who, in 'Thinking Ecology', realises the 'strange stranger' could include a virus, Tallmadge's understanding of a creature embraces less obvious creatures that are

invisible, almost invisible or seemingly invisible because of their relative inertia (271).

Tallmadge implicitly connects the practice of exploring the experiential worlds of nonhumans with respecting these worlds. Rather than an extensive attribution of human characteristics to these lives, Tallmadge desires an engagement with difference as he asks his students to 'speak to the group as if he or she were that object or creature witnessing to its life, experience, reality' (64). He explains how this exercise can develop by asking each student to create an 'autobiography' for a local creature or plant and respond to questions from the audience 'in character' (65). This open-ended exercise highlights the consciousness of other beings and may well engage with environmental issues affecting them: it is possible to imagine a question and answer session with a bee on the subject of habitat loss and domestic pesticides. However, despite Tallmadge's choice of location that responds to his aim to challenge the dualisms between 'culture and nature, home and adventure, wildness and civilization', his focus upon live creatures that comes at the expense of seemingly lifeless objects demonstrates a disposition to the wild in terms of the natural, not the manmade (61).

Tallmadge considers protozoa while Morton considers a virus, but Morton then goes a step further in recognising that the 'strange stranger' might also include a computer virus. This ecocritical departure into the realm of culture finds associated manmade entities also possessing 'life, experience, reality'. Bennett's intention to breakdown the boundaries between nature and culture echoes Morton's focus by attending to supposedly inert manmade materials. In the opening pages of *Vibrant Matter* she makes the short but significant claim that a pile of rubbish is not 'dead' matter, but 'a pile of lively and potentially dangerous matter' (viii). Given that Tallmadge's students are expected to go out into their local, urban environment and consider 'insects, protozoa, lichens', Bennett's attention to matter prompts reconsideration of the concept of wildness in a way that advances Tallmadge's intention to unite 'wildness and civilization' (61). Furthermore, Bennett claims that anthropomorphising matter can 'chasten my fantasies of human mastery' and 'expose a wider distribution of agency' thereby generating attention and respect for such matter (122). Consequently, recognising

life in matter brings new potential for engagements with the difference of nonhuman experience that provokes 'respect' in a way that complements examinations of Murray's anthropomorphic practice.

Roy Fisher's poetry provides some illustration of how an anthropomorphic literary style can address matter and what effect this may have on environmental attitudes. This examination into Fisher's work gives further support to the argument about how pedagogical strategies might be reconsidered in order to enrich conceptualisations of the environment. Fisher (1930 –), a British avant-garde poet, has published over ten collections of poetry with several long poems focusing exclusively upon his native city of Birmingham. Fisher's work demonstrates influences such as jazz music, the open form poetics of William Carlos Williams and, more broadly, the Black Mountain Poets. Critics have, in some cases, attempted to situate Fisher's work within British poetry by calling upon Fisher as a late Romantic.[40] In an interview, John Kerrigan asks Fisher 'why there's been no move to something like nature poetry' in his writing given the time he has spent in rural Derbyshire ('Roy Fisher in Conversation'). Fisher responds by stating that, although he sees 'there are many obvious poem-opportunities' of a 'celebratory' nature, these 'don't seem to me obvious at all'. 'As for the animals', Fisher continues, 'I get on with them fine, but don't project, or mix identities with them.' Though he may not 'mix identities' with animals, Fisher's approach to the city in *A Furnace* (1986) demonstrates an anthropomorphic approach to industrial materials. Echoing a Romantic ideology, Fisher explores an urban environment in which there are 'voices, / animist, polytheist, metaphoric, / coming through' (61). This receptive stance that Fisher takes is symptomatic of his greater practice to engage with 'what is outside the range of vision, to try to break or catch time or the limits of the perceptive field at its tricks in limiting consciousness of the world' (Interview with Jed Rasula and Mike Erwin 21). With this in mind, how might Fisher's practice extend perception toward matter in environments that has been neglected by educators so far?

Literary scholarship on Fisher has gone some way in identifying an animist quality in *A Furnace*. In his article, 'Coming into Their Own', Ralph Pite focuses

[40] Alongside the critics summarised in the next paragraph, see Neil Corcoran's overview of Fisher in *English Poetry Since 1940* (171).

upon the influence of the late Romantic novelist, John Cowper Powys in Fisher's writing. As Pite describes, Powys's novels recognise that 'animals and plants, even stones and minerals, are not only alive, but each kind of living thing possesses its own consciousness and seeks to become as completely itself as possible' (231). Pite finds parallel between this quality in Powys and certain passages from *A Furnace* that show 'fixities ambiguously breaking out of their entrapment' (243). However, consumed by this parallel with Powys, Pite does not question how, unlike Powys, Fisher applies this literary style to the context of an industrial city. William Wootten's article, 'Romanticism and Animism', pays further attention to the city environment in *A Furnace* as he argues that an 'industrial sublime' is present in Fisher's work (82). However, as Wootten gives another Powysian reading of Fisher, he spends more time contextualising passages from *A Furnace* than close reading them. For example, Wootten argues that Fisher uses Powys' understanding of 'fetish' that affords 'interaction with the dead […] and the notion of timeless extra-human entities to emerge' (88). Although these ideas are relevant to the subject of 'lively' matter and anthropomorphism, Wootten foregrounds the theoretical complications of 'fetish' rather than identifying exactly what 'the dead' and the 'extra-human entities' are, and how they relate to Fisher's focus upon the city.

Clair Wills approaches this 'interaction with the dead' in more detail in her article '*A Furnace* and the Life of the Dead'. Examining Fisher's conjurations of the life of the dead in terms of 'gothic', she describes *A Furnace* as 'being haunted by a buried past' (261). However, as Wills argues that 'Fisher's aim is to restore a sense of dignity of buried, occluded, everyday lives that swarm around us, yet are overshadowed by the immense material presence of the city itself', her statement reveals that she only interprets life in human terms (259). Wills's separation of the material presence of the city from the everyday lives of city inhabitants is surprising when considering Pite's description of the city's 'fixities ambiguously breaking out' as well as Wootten's mention of 'extra-human entities'. Consequently, to explore the potential of an anthropomorphic approach to matter, this study emphasises the life of matter in Fisher's work, addresses the particular material presences he represents and analyses them within the context of an urban environment. This necessitates a specific focus upon relevant passages in Fisher's long poem and a

subsequent series of close readings that help to investigate how physical matter is represented as both independent from, and associated with, a past society.

In his 'Preface' to *A Furnace* Fisher explains, 'A Furnace is an engine devised, like a cauldron, or a still, or a blast-furnace, to invoke and assist natural processes of change; to persuade obstinate substances to alter their condition and show relativities which would otherwise remain hidden by their concreteness' (vii). The industrial tone suits Fisher's particular address of Birmingham's development and his attention to corresponding materials such as iron, brick and glass. Evoking such matter he explains of the furnace, 'some of the substances fed in are very solid indeed' (vii). A literal furnace clearly has a role to play in altering the conditions of substances such as brick and iron, but there is also the sense that the poem itself is working as a furnace to alter perceptions of substances. After all, while these substances are obstinate, understandings of these substances as lifeless matter are also obstinate. Drawing attention to the role of the poem in this way, Fisher states that the cosmos is involved in 'the making of all kinds of identities' and 'those identities and that impulse can be acknowledged only by some form or other of poetic imagination' (vii).

Manmade materials are usually subjected to actions, as in the 'Iron walls / tarred black' (57). Yet, Fisher frequently frames these materials as active through his use of verbs. The opening of the poem finds 'the catenaries / stretching' and later 'the road […] beating in' and the 'ironworks / reared up' (52, 53). Unlike Murray's poems that recognised clear activity in animal behaviour, Fisher's verbs more inconspicuously identify life in matter. In 'Calling' Fisher attends to the 'face-fragments of holy saints / in fused glass' in a 'small / new window' of a church beside the River Dee (54). Contrasting the typically dignified quietness of a church, these face-fragments 'scream and stare and whistle' (54). Fisher's choice of verbs is unsettling. The glass has been broken and fused back together; a process which may well have created these expressions, yet their 'cobbled' quality may well mean that the wind screams and whistles through these faces. This active quality in the material continues when Fisher writes of the faces 'trapped and raving / they pierce the church wall / with acids, glances of fire and lenses out of the light' (54). The screaming of the previous description becomes associated with the brightness of the light that the windows shed, which in turn is indistinguishable from the

processes the materials of the window have undergone, involving a furnace and acids.

While Fisher conveys a sense of these processes continuing in the stained glass, he conveys another narrative dimension to the window. He explains

> A pick-handle or a boot
> long ago freed them
> to do these things
> or what was flung as a stone
> out of a cloudiness in the sea. (54)

In describing how the window has changed, and how the window continues as active, changeable matter, the potential for perceiving a material's 'life, experience, reality' (as Tallmadge described of creatures) becomes possible (64). A sense of narrative is afforded to material and Fisher's anthropomorphic use of verbs consequently gives way to a greater sense of activity that expands the productive effect of anthropomorphism in guiding new perspectives of environments. Pursuing the 'pick-handle or a boot' that liberated the glass 'to do these things', Fisher states that 'Whatever breaks from stasis'

> slides
> directly and fast on its way, twisting
> aspect in the torsions of the flow
> this way and that,
> then suddenly
> over,
> through a single
> glance of another force touching it or
> bursting out of it sidelong (58-59)

With 'burst' and 'glance' Fisher's vocabulary returns many of the active descriptions previously attributed to the window. However, by widening his focus to 'whatever breaks from stasis', Fisher acknowledges the possibility of addressing the active quality of other materials in other contexts.

As one entity interacts with another through 'a single glance of another force', Fisher acknowledges the change within these materials: that 'they cannot help but practise / materialisation' (59). The literal furnace that partly frames Fisher's poem would suggest that these materialisations are intended and

therefore predictable. In *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett explores the agency of fish oils in foodstuffs and the controversial debate on stem cells. When she approaches more industrial materials such as metal, Bennett explains that 'artists' and others working with particular materials 'encounter a creative materiality with incipient tendencies and propensities, which are variably enacted depending on the other forces, affects, or bodies with which they come into close contact' (56). In particular she describes how metal-workers must respect the 'loose atoms' between the 'grains' of metals because these can create cracks in the material (59). Bennett's discussion of this kind of collaboration seems in keeping with the certainty of feeding particular solid substances into a furnace. However, Fisher's description of matter and materialisation introduces a rather more chaotic process. He portrays how a process of materialisation

> fetches
> timeless identities
> riding in the flux with no
> determined form, cast out of the bodies
> that once they were (59)

Like Jorie Graham who identified the 'on – / goingness' of the woods, Fisher apprehends that the identities of materials are unstable and continue in different forms. In this way Fisher conveys less certainty regarding the lively nature of materiality than that conveyed in Bennett's discussion.

This uncertainty becomes more evident when Fisher declares that 'Something's decided / to narrate / in more dimensions than I can know' (53). In suggesting that materials have their own narratives, Fisher corresponds to Murray's belief that 'living things do all talk […] but they don't talk human language, or always speak with their mouth.' Indeed, although Fisher attributes narrative to these materials and thus creates similarity between the human world and the material world, he is aware that these narratives go beyond the dimensions of human thought. Fisher's recognition that material narratives take place 'in more dimensions than I can know' evokes the often unpredictable narratives of causal chains. Like the festive bulbs Fisher finds no longer festive as they 'buck and fail' in the night, matter physically 'rides over intention, something / let through in error' in *A Furnace* (56). By attending to this sense of unpredictability, Fisher conveys

further contrast with Bennett's understanding of the collaboration between metal and metal-workers. Fisher recognises that there are interactions between 'incipient tendencies and propensities' of materials of which humans are less aware or less able to control.

A Furnace focuses upon materials involved with industrial development in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Yet, Fisher's awareness of the unpredictable narratives of this materiality speaks strongly to materials used in contemporary industry such as oil, coal and nuclear energy. These materials are not only active in affording power to light and heat homes, fuel transport and business, but these materials are also active in polluting the atmosphere and warming the climate. As these materials demonstrate a good example of contemporary matter that 'rides over intention', these materials also convey narratives of their own. The potential for an anthropomorphic style that engages with the narratives of such materials would seem particularly significant for those seminar leaders wishing to engage their students with environmental issues.[41] In view of Murray's perspective-taking of nonhumans, it is possible to imagine students taking the perspectives of oil, coal, or plastic in their writing and exploring their narratives.

Establishing the narrative capacity of matter develops Tallmadge's pedagogical exercise as it not only shows the potential of speaking from industrial materials in the city, but also suggests a strategy for engaging with environmental issues. However, as anthropomorphism was said to create respect for nonhuman experience in Murray's animal poems, does addressing the 'life, experience, reality' of manmade matter necessarily continue these parallels? The title of Tallmadge's exercise, 'Giving Voice to the Voiceless', indicates an intended ethical consideration of other life forms such as fungi, yet how does giving a voice to a plastic bag compare? [42] Bennett argues that matter 'can aid or destroy, enrich or disable, ennoble or degrade us, in any case call for our attentiveness, or even

[41] An example of an anthropomorphic engagement with matter can be examined in Primo Levi's 'The Story of a Carbon Atom' in *The Periodic Table*. Further example might be found in Jenny Price's essay 'Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in L.A.' in which Price considers the 'story' of a 'mango body whip' cosmetic product.

[42] See 'Future States: Plastic Bag' a film directed by Ramin Bahrani in which a plastic bag speaking from its experience and, in doing so, anticipates the following section of this chapter by criticising societal behaviour.

“respect” ’ (ix). According to Bennett then, respect is provoked by encounters with ‘lively’ matter, as such matter challenges anthropocentric understandings of mastery and agency. As Fisher delves into the life of industrial matter that ‘rides over intention’, Bennett’s argument is certainly evoked. Yet Bennett’s dismissive use of ‘in any case’ to usher in this claim on the relationship between material agency and respect needs to be questioned, and her previous claim of matter that ‘destroys’ and ‘disables’ examined. Clearly, materials such as oil and plastic involved in environmental issues might not only destroy or disable us, but also destroy and disable ecological systems. Consequently, these materials not only call for our respect, but also, perhaps, our responsibility. Bennett claims that considering active matter might provoke questions toward societal ‘patterns of consumption’, yet this remains something that Bennett does not fully explore in terms of environmental issues (viii). To investigate this possibility further necessitates study of the relationship between active matter and the human provocation of matter’s particular actions. After all, oil would not contribute to climate change if it were not extracted and refined first. This examination provides further evidence as to how anthropomorphism helps to provide an approach with which to overcome the aforementioned disparity between pedagogical intentions to engage with environmental issues and the lack of exercises currently achieving this engagement.

‘Inseparable from All Other Things’: Anthropomorphism and Human Responsibility

Fisher reveals a more human dimension inherent to the active materials in *A Furnace*, as he follows the description of the ‘timeless identities’ that were ‘cast out of the bodies that once they were’ with ‘or out of / the brains that bore them’ (59). Fisher’s introduction of ‘the brains’ suggests a human vessel that initially seems at odds with the material forms discussed previously. These ‘brains’ renders Fisher’s use of ‘bodies’ ambiguous as it suggests the changeable nature of both material bodies and human bodies. This ambiguity also affects the ‘timeless identities’ Fisher depicts: are these material identities or human identities? Fisher’s ambiguity here serves his belief that human and material identities are almost

indistinguishable. The generations of people that were part of the industrial development of Birmingham are long dead, yet their influence lives on in the materials of the city. Society is

> trapped into water-drops,
> windows they glanced through
> or had their images
> detained by and reflected
> or into whose molten glass the coloured oxides
> burned their qualities (59)

In describing humans as 'trapped into water-drops', Fisher draws attention to the hydrological cycle and society's contribution to it (in terms of, for example, sewage, domestic and industrial chemical products). Human identity thus continues in a medium that is in constant change. Fisher suggests that a similar relationship occurs between society and industrial development as these human identities continue in 'windows they glanced through'. Later in *A Furnace*, Fisher describes how pasture and scrub were 'suddenly printed across with […] the roller / dealing out streets of terraces' and it is these terraces that 'reflect' the society that built and inhabited them (60). However, as Fisher's description of 'coloured oxides' creates a parallel between this window and the earlier description of the church window that was smashed and cobbled back together again in a new form, Fisher suggests that such industrial development is not stable but also subject to change.

Fisher's societal approach to environmental change complements Jorie Graham's approach in Chapter Two. Rather than projecting into a changed future in order to consider present actions, Fisher explores how the present city is changed by past actions. In contrast to Clair Wills's interpretation, the dead are not 'overshadowed by the immense material presence of the city', but continue through the city's materiality. Although it was said that nature writing pedagogy neglects consideration of urban environments, Mitchell Thomashow's work on ecological identity, examined in Chapter Two, does consider past and present perceptions of neighbourhoods and how such perceptions appreciate environmental change. However, despite this exception, Thomashow's exercise gave little guidance into thinking about how or why this environmental change has occurred. Susan Karwoska approaches these questions in her nature writing exercise entitled 'White

Clouds and the BQE' [Brooklyn-Queens Expressway], included in *The Alphabet of the Trees* anthology. She explains that such an exercise was born out of the ongoing split between nature and city and the question of 'how these two worlds come together' (17). Seeming to address the reasons underpinning environmental change neglected by Thomashow, Karwoska states that the exercise's premise is 'to explore my students' understandings of how such a magnificently complex place as New York City arose from the primordial ooze, how the natural world begot skyscrapers and steel bridges and the world with which they are familiar' (26). Unlike Tallmadge, who designated 'life, experience, reality' to biological creatures and asked students to create their autobiographies, Karwoska blurs the boundaries between life and matter as she asks students 'to tell the story' of 'the buildings […] the cars' as well as 'the trees, the animals' (26).

However, as Karwoska uses creation myths as models for students to tell the story of the city's development, Karwoska introduces a third, spiritual world that creates an obstacle in uniting the 'two worlds' of culture and nature. The samples of student writing that Karwoska exhibits as results of the exercise are fantastical and frequently religious. Consequently, Karwoska's exercise loses sight of the material processes that have afforded such urban development that originally seemed to instigate the exercise. Exploring creation and change, Fisher's focus upon 'timeless identities' manages to retain this material dimension. The timeless identities do not simply belong to the materials themselves, but to the society that were associated with these materials. The lives of industry and the lives of society are entangled in Fisher's perspective as he depicts the 'foundries' and 'stamping mills' as having 'short lives' and later describes the 'timeless identities' of people 'seeming long like Achilles or short, like William Fisher'; a jeweller in 'Great King Street' (61, 62). Evoking a mythic quality in considering how identities persist over time, Fisher reveals the inseparability of society and the industrial city in more subtle ways, such as when he turns to the life of 'Ann Mason' whose very name conjures 'the masons […] quarrying for Christminster' in the lines that follow (62).

Recognising the mutual lives of society and industry leads Fisher to consider how the relationship is part of a larger system. Evoking cyclical concepts of endurance, change and renewal, Fisher describes how this merging of human and material is a practice 'Of encoding / something perennial / and entering Nature

thereby' (60). Subtly reversing the common metaphor that describes nature as a machine, Fisher likens the generative force of industry to the generative force of Nature. In doing so, Fisher provides a way of thinking that responds to Karwoska's exercise that intended to cultivate 'a larger view of nature as a generative force' in her students' perceptions of the city (26). Indicating a meeting of industrial and natural worlds, Fisher uses plant vocabulary in 'encoding something perennial' to suggest the relevance of industry to life cycles. Yet, simultaneously, Fisher's capitalised use of 'Nature' moves toward a more abstract concept that refers to the wider laws of nature and so evokes the mention of causality pursued in the previous section.

Fisher illustrates the way in which the relationship between human and matter performs 'the entry into Nature' as he focuses upon 'a gentleman / in black'

> he having lately walked
> through a door in the air
> among the tall
> buildings of the Northern Aluminium Company
> and become inseparable
> from all other things, no longer
> capable of being imagined
> apart from them, nor yet of being
> forgotten in his identity. (60)

Echoing Morton's sense of 'the paradoxes and fissures of identity', Fisher's blending of society, industry and Nature refuses one, fixed identification (41). Like the inhabitant of one of Birmingham's built terraces who lives on through its window, so the man that walks through the door of the newly erected Company building becomes identified with the company, that in turn is identified with other entities, until he becomes 'inseparable from / all other things'. Examination of nonhuman material finds a human identity 'encoded' in a material identity that is ultimately 'encoded' into Nature's system of perpetual continuance and change.

Fisher's understanding of the entanglement between human and material identities has significant repercussions when considering an anthropomorphic literary style with which to rethink pedagogical instruction. The possibility of speaking in the first-person from the perspective of matter was studied in view of Chris Kinsey's pedagogical exercise, yet the intimacy Fisher perceives between

people and matter suggests that matter involuntarily speaks of the society associated with it. Rather than a figurative projection into the body of a future human as analysed in Graham's writing, or into the body of a nonhuman animal as in Les Murray's work, Fisher's writing suggests that societies cannot help but enact a literal projection into the materials they use. Educators such as Andrew Motion praise writers who take a stand against anthropomorphism in order to productively realise that 'they are hopelessly trapped in their humanity'. However, in view of Fisher's writing, humans are anything but trapped in their humanity given their inevitable shaping role in matter.

Motion equates liberation from our human form with an escapist tendency that neglects recognition of human power and responsibility. Yet Fisher's view of materiality in *A Furnace* leads to the formation of an anthropomorphic style that contests Motion as it recognises the influence of society on matter. Fisher's approach creates a model with which to think about the relationship between contemporary society and matter. Like the humans that are 'trapped into water-drops, / windows they glanced through' in Fisher's poem, humans today may well be considered as 'encoded' in the carbon released from cars, planes, factories as well as in the aforementioned Great Pacific garbage patch. An anthropomorphic style thus affords a strategy to conceive of the life of matter, apprehend its threatening potential and, crucially, realise that society is frequently accountable for such. Contesting Motion's view of anthropomorphism as a 'predatory' device, this nuanced reconsideration of anthropomorphism has the potential to lead toward a greater understanding of society's 'power' and 'responsibility' as described by Motion.

*

This chapter has identified persistent pedagogical distrust of anthropomorphism and has challenged this distrust with a more thorough understanding of the figurative device. Analysing Timothy Morton's ecocritical theory of the 'strange stranger' provided a starting point from which to create a more nuanced reading of anthropomorphism. Likewise, by studying Jane Bennett's work on 'lively matter' it was possible to examine how this understanding of anthropomorphism might apply

to matter as well as animals. The poetry of Les Murray and Roy Fisher illustrated these capacities of anthropomorphism and close readings of their work demonstrated how such uses of anthropomorphism might develop current teaching strategies.

The anthropomorphic practices of Murray and Fisher identify human likeness in animals and materials and use this likeness as a point of departure in order to explore difference. Exploring human-like sensorial, conceptual and narrative capacities in nonhumans generates the opportunity to explore nonhuman experience otherwise neglected by pedagogical approaches that supported preconceived boundaries between humans and nonhumans as well as boundaries between 'wild' and urban environments. Furthermore, the emphasis that has been placed upon the way anthropomorphism can appreciate the contrast between human and nonhuman experience has established that the pedagogical fear of anthropomorphism as a process of identification that dismisses boundaries is unnecessary. Drawing attention to the ways in which anthropomorphism engages with nonhuman experience has led to an understanding of these nonhuman lives as both threatened and threatening. This has enabled examination of how such an understanding can heighten awareness of significant environmental issues. Progressing beyond John Elder's sense that 'animals are interesting', an appreciation of how animal experience differs from our own, guided through anthropomorphism, may lead towards respect and responsibility. This latter effect is expanded and advanced by analysing matter's relationship with society in terms of potentially detrimental causal chains. Responding to the intentions of educators such as Chris Kinsey, Mark Cocker and Andrew Motion who hope to generate pro-environmental behaviour in their students, this reconsideration of anthropomorphism highlights its capacity to provoke thought on human responsibility for the environment. In turn, this chapter advances the argument of the thesis in establishing another strategy in which figurative language can help rather than hinder the conceptualisation of environments and environmental issues.

Disturbing pedagogical assumptions of anthropomorphism and dualisms between animal/human and life/matter has established two main points with which to approach environments with figurative language in the following chapters. By

emphasising how nonhuman experience differs from human experience, this chapter has developed an understanding of nonhumans in terms of Morton's ecocritical argument that values hesitation and uncertainty in environmental engagements. The next chapter pursues the productive potential of uncertainty with regard to pedagogical prescriptions for wonder, the 'is/is not' dynamic of metaphor and indeterminate or irreducible environments. Furthermore, rather than solely focusing upon supposedly 'natural' entities in an environment, this chapter has emphasised the importance of approaching manmade materials in the environment. As this chapter has established the active role of these materials in contemporary environmental issues, this enables exploration of the shape-shifting character of climate change in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

The Importance of Wonder: Uncertainty and Metaphor in Mark Doty's Environments of 'Shine // and Seem'

Teachers such as Chris Kinsey declare the importance of 'wonder and curiosity' in approaching environments, while Kerry Ruef states that 'the *first, most important step* to learning is wonder' and desires a 'wonder curriculum' (Personal Interview, Ruef 220, 3). Yet, these pedagogical prescriptions remain broad and crucially unexplained as to what kind of wonder they aim to foster. As I will show, these broad prescriptions have the potential to disengage students from the materiality of the environment – the same materiality that educators primarily endeavour to cultivate awareness of, if not a relationship with. This chapter argues for a literary style based on metaphor that, responding to recent conceptualisations of the environment, develops pedagogical calls by reconsidering wonder in terms of uncertainty. As an epistemological stance, uncertainty currently stimulates much discussion in environmental thinking. Building upon the previous chapter, Timothy Morton exemplifies this movement in aiming for a greater sense of hesitation and uncertainty in approaches of the environment in order to challenge appropriation, establish awareness of difference and thus foster a more ethical position toward the environment. This chapter establishes how metaphor is key in expressing this kind of uncertainty as it explores 'seeming' qualities in environments and refutes the possibility of straightforward representation. Furthermore, in showing how environmental issues present similarly 'seeming' qualities, I demonstrate the capacity for a metaphorical literary style to engage with, in this case, climate change. This latter argument tackles the way teachers often approach environmental issues with the very antitheses of their positive calls for wonder and curiosity (with anxiety and despair) and consequently proposes more productive engagements to take place in nature writing.

This chapter begins by examining the desire for wonder expressed by educators and sketching the tradition of wonder frequently obscured by educators. Responding to this issue, this chapter proposes an understanding of wonder in

terms of uncertainty by drawing upon Adam Dickinson's ecocritical argument. Challenging first-wave ecocritics, Dickinson argues for the 'material metaphoricity' of matter: he apprehends how matter evades definition and how metaphor represents such irreducibility. Close readings of contemporary US poet Mark Doty develop Dickinson's focus on matter and metaphor. Analysing the way in which Doty approaches the environment in *My Alexandria* (1993), *Atlantis* (1995), and *Sweet Machine* (2012) guides two complementary arguments. The first argument identifies particular qualities in the materiality of environments that create uncertainty and, examining Doty's metaphorical strategies, establishes the significance of metaphor in representing such uncertainty. The second argument explores how this approach can be extended to consider environmental issues; in particular that of climate change. Investigating Morton's claims on climate change as an uncertain 'hyperobject', I show how climate change might be approached through metaphor. By drawing attention to how environments and environmental issues pose a challenge to identification (and so expanding the challenge discussed with regard to nonhumans in the previous chapter) this chapter responds to an increasing sense of representational challenge in arguing for the ways in which metaphor can develop environmental thought.

Reconsidering Wonder

Paul Evans, who teaches upon the 'Travel & Nature Writing' Masters course offered at Bath Spa University, describes how his 'teaching in the field' exercises are intended to foster some knowledge of particular species and ecosystems, but 'more than the knowledge, it's the sense of excitement and wonder' he intends to foster (Personal Interview). Although both Evans and Ruef believe wonder to be key, both educators use the term loosely. Sheryl St. Germain's instruction to her students at Chatham University to 'Leave me with mystery, but not too much' is similarly problematic as it implies a kind of scale of wonderment that a student is expected to follow ('Conjuring Place' Handout). What exactly is 'too much' mystery? These teachers go no further in situating their instructions within literary traditions of wonder. Obscuring this tradition creates a limitation as to how students are to consider and engage with wonder in their writing. Sophia Vasalou exposes

the many meanings of wonder in her work of philosophical history, *Wonder: A Grammar*. Beginning with Philip Fisher's definition of wonder as 'a sudden experience of an extraordinary object that produces delight', Vasalou quickly acknowledges that 'this pleasured response often shades dangerously into others – to a look of pained confusion, or frozen anxiety, or awed terror, before a spectacle that disturbs our expectations […] as we confront the grandeur and enormity of the world that surrounds us' (3).

Examining the kinds of wonder that can be found in key works of environmental literature that, to some extent, presage Doty's work, further demonstrates the diverse meanings of wonder. Transcendentalist texts such as Ralph Waldo Emerson's well-known essay 'Nature', conveys a particular sense of wonder that arises from considering the environment spiritually. Describing himself in nature, Emerson writes that 'all mean egoism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God' (39). For Emerson, this understanding of the environment has pedagogical repercussions: 'Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact […] who looks upon a river in a meditative hour, and is not reminded of the flux of all things?' (49) In *Walden*, a text listed as suggested reading on Paul Evans's Bath Spa course, Thoreau expresses a similar spiritual wonder at the environment. Fishing on Walden Pond, Thoreau describes 'It seemed as if I might cast my line upward into the air, as well as downward […] Thus I caught two fishes as it were with one hook' (159). Read in the context of the Transcendentalists then, wonder is defined by turning to nature 'as a barometer of and stimulus to the speaker's spiritual development' as Lawrence Buell describes of Thoreau (*The Environmental Imagination* 123). Yet, as argued in Chapter Two with regard to Margaret McFadden's exercise, 'The I in Nature Writing', approaching the environment to consider the relationship of 'human to divine' puts the physical environment at a remove (102). Exploring the environment for such a 'pilgrimage in self-awareness' suggests wonder might be held in the self or in God, rather than in the actual environment.

Alongside this spiritual reverence, another understanding of wonder might be understood in the Romantic exploration of the sublime. Echoing her earlier description of wonder that is sourced in the environment's 'grandeur and enormity',

Vasalou explains that Edmund Burke's writing on the sublime 'revived the memory of wonder's darkness' in the context of a long philosophical tradition on the subject (60). Evoking terror and horror, Burke wrote that 'Astonishment […] is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect' (53). In *Ecocriticism*, Greg Garrard notes how Wordsworth engages with the sublime in his poem 'To – On Her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn' (71). In response to the view of the summit, Wordsworth conveys a certain amount of terror: 'What a vast abyss is there!', which his series of nine exclamation marks serve to accentuate (10). Although attempts have been made for an ecocritical 'reconfiguration' of the sublime, concerns persist as to whether the sublime represents an ethical engagement with the environment (Hitt 603). The sublime's emphasis upon pristine wilderness that is unrepresentative of contemporary environments, and the sublime's sense of conquest over nature, cause anxiety. Furthermore, concerns similar to those expressed toward McFadden's spiritual quest arise as to whether the sublime gives preference to the psychology of the observer above the environment itself.[43] Consequently, is this the kind of wonder educators hope to generate?

Amongst these more dominant examples of wonder in environmental literature that certainly have a legacy in contemporary writing,[44] other forms of wonder continue to suggest that it is a loaded term that might need to be used with more care by educators. Influenced by W.B. Yeats's use of mythology in his early works, Ted Hughes's mythic explorations of landscapes and their inhabitants contribute to the discussion. For example, in his well-known poem, 'Wodwo', collected in *Wodwo*, it remains ambiguous as to whether the form of Hughes's speaker is human or nonhuman: 'What am I doing here in mid-air?' (6). Hughes's work has been described as shamanic by a number of literary critics and this 'superhuman mode of being' (as described by Stuart Hirschberg) conveys another kind of wonder that can be traced into more recent environmental poetry (11). Examined in the previous chapter, Les Murray's explorations of Australian

[43] See William Cronon's essay 'The Trouble with Wilderness' and Greta Gaard's chapter 'In(ter)dependence Day' in *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*.
[44] For example, spirituality and the mystery of the Creation guides wonder in Wendell Berry's writing. Comparable to Emerson and Thoreau, Berry finds life in the natural world 'passing lordly through the earth' ('Grace' 9). Likewise, as discussed in the Introduction, John Elder describes how the poetry of Mary Oliver echoes Thoreau.

Aboriginal culture inform a similar exploration of the boundaries between species, and the spirit worlds of nonhumans. Examining John Burnside's poetry raises further examples. David Borthwick argues that Burnside combines 'Christian and pagan images to describe and accentuate unclassifiable states of being' (97). In many cases these 'states' are suspended between beings, as when in 'Geese', collected in *Asylum Dance*, Burnside describes geese migrating, compelled by the 'purer urgency / of elsewhere' and feels their rhythm in the 'meat of his spine' (77-78, 66).

While this summary cannot do justice to the rich complexity of this tradition of wonder in literature, it establishes wonder as a difficult term that requires further explanation and guidance in a pedagogical context. Chris Kinsey goes some way in fulfilling this latter point as she states that 'I think wonder is the key; to be amazed by things' and evokes John Keats: 'Negative capability is keeping open to wonder' (Personal Interview). Kinsey's 'Writing from Nature' handout for students pursues this notion of wonder as it asks students to 'Aim for what Keats called: "Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason—" '. Keats's theory seems to underpin other aspects of Kinsey's teaching: Keats's intention to step outside of his own perspective and take part in the existence of a sparrow outside his window has parallels with Kinsey's exercise on perspective-taking on Bardsey Island analysed in the previous chapter. Yet, Kinsey's use of negative capability to situate her instruction of wonder becomes more questionable as she later states 'if you want people to take an interest you should get it right' when writing about environments. Contrasting her praise of negative capability, she continues her argument by quoting a phrase one of her students uses that values the certainty of field-guides; 'look it up don't make it up' (Personal Interview). Like Sheryl St. Germain who desires 'mystery, but not too much', it appears Kinsey wants to have it both ways as she states 'I'm not really with Keats when he says –' and goes on to quote the lines from Keats's 'Lamia' that criticises science's reduction of nature's beauty (Email Correspondence 2).

Analysing Adam Dickinson's recent ecocritical argument in *Lyric Ethics* helps to guide otherwise fuzzy or fickle pedagogical calls for wonder towards contemporary discussions of uncertainty in environmental thinking. Dickinson

explains his dissatisfaction with first-wave ecocritics such as Lawrence Buell, who Dickinson believes is a 'proponent of realism' (48). Suggesting that as realism 'assumes the logic of faithful representation [it] runs the risk of objectifying matter', Dickinson calls for other literary styles that convey an ethical relation to environments by apprehending how the environment 'escapes our capacity for systematic understanding' (269). Like Timothy Morton's emphasis upon nonhuman strangeness and his scepticism at whether this strangeness can be fully known and represented, Dickinson believes that the environment resists identification through its 'distinctness' (3). He is particularly interested in 'elemental' environmental matter as the 'deep time' and future of particular environmental entities escape present day perception. Yet, Dickinson goes a step further in his description of these materials. Indeed, as he sees these materials not as fixed and stable, but as presenting plural temporalities, Dickinson describes them as examples of 'the material metaphoricity of bodies or things' (39). This claim is part of Dickinson's broader argument on metaphor. Directly challenging ecocritics such as David W. Gilcrest who, as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, see metaphor as representative of a poetics of 'more self', Dickinson argues that metaphor presents an 'is/is not' dynamic: an 'articulatory dynamic where connectedness is posited at the same time as distinctness' (3).[45] In showing how this metaphorical dynamic is presented by materiality itself, Dickinson recognises metaphor as a device with which to ethically 'stand in relation' to environments that escape full identification (90).

Despite focusing on the timelessness of environments, Dickinson's argument is readily adaptable to other ways in which materiality evades 'systematic understanding'. Through close readings of Mark Doty's poems that ask in view of the environment 'How can I say what it is?', this chapter develops Dickinson's concept of 'material metaphoricity' towards the irreducible and shape-shifting qualities of environments explored by Doty; from the iridescence of a fish to the indeterminacy of a marsh landscape. This focus upon materiality that is difficult, if not impossible to pin down emphasises uncertainty as an unassuming stance or

[45] As noted in the Introduction, Dickinson's argument on the 'is/is not' dynamic of metaphor is based on Paul Ricoeur's identification of how metaphor 'preserves the "is not" within the "is" ' in *Rule of Metaphor* (294).

position that can define otherwise vague pedagogical prescriptions for wonder. Exploring this over the next two sections enables the final section of this chapter to consider how Dickinson's 'material metaphoricity' applies to climate change. Showing how metaphor can play a role in engaging with climate change presents an alternative strategy in light of pedagogical shortcomings concerning teachers' approaches of environmental issues. By establishing further ways in which the environment challenges perception and representation, and how figurative language is apt to respond, this chapter continues the argument of the thesis in showing how metaphor enables key engagements for writing about environments.

Environments of 'Shine // and Seem':
Redefining Wonder through Uncertainty

Mark Doty (1953 –) is best known as an American poet of twelve collections, but has also written extensively as a memoirist and essayist. Gay identity and AIDS are prominent subjects in his work, and he is not generally identified as an environmental poet. Doty is frequently compared (and compares himself) to Walt Whitman and his writing on male beauty and sensuality rather than Whitman's writing on nature.[46] Throughout his collections, however, Doty expresses a consistent fascination with the natural world. Like certain Transcendentalist traditions, Doty's poems frequently turn to the natural world for spiritual lessons on the human condition: a sunflower in 'The Community Garden' prompts Doty to consider the transience of life, however bright and bold that life might be (*Atlantis*). Yet, Doty's keen attention to environmental materiality through metaphor, that precedes his focus upon the self, situates his work slightly differently.

Frequently deploying metaphors concerning Tiffany lamps, jewellery and glamorous clothing, his style has been criticised by reviewers for being too flamboyant. Yet, consistent with the other poets examined in this thesis, the self-reflexive quality of his work frequently provides the reason for such a style, and thus contributes to my argument on metaphor. In his poem, 'Concerning Some

[46] Sarah P. Gamble argues that Doty, like Whitman, writes 'queer landscapes of desire' in her article in *The Body and the Book*, which I go on to discuss (145). Doty presents this connection himself in his poem 'A Letter to Walt Whitman' in *Source*.

Recent Criticism of His Work', collected in *Sweet Machine* (2012), Doty defends his figurative style by asking 'What's the world but shine // and seem?' (29-30). Suggestive of appearances and ambiguities, Doty evokes Elizabeth Bishop's sense of majesty and reverie at the natural world demonstrated in her poem 'The Fish'. Indeed, Doty highlights Bishop's poem in his nonfiction commentary, *The Art of Description: World into Word*, for the way her use of simile deliberately fails to familiarise the 'alien gaze' of the creature that has been caught (20).

Doty's interest in the 'seeming' environment evokes Dickinson's theoretical conceptualisation of the environment as escaping 'systematic understanding'. 'Seem', after all, suggests the very 'is/is not' dynamic of metaphor that Dickinson discusses. Doty pursues this line of thought as he expresses his concern that 'environmental poetry' as a term 'immediately calls up a conventional idea of praising nature' that in turn suggests 'the problems have been solved, our relation to the environment is clear, and we know just how we should proceed' (Email Correspondence). In his own words, Doty argues that an awareness of environmental 'strangeness' is key in challenging these ultimately naive approaches, and, in doing so, Doty's stance shows some correspondence to recent ecocritical conceptualisations of the environment. Doty's suggestion that 'the problems' have *not* been solved and that 'our relation to the environment' is *not* clear suggests the importance of uncertainty as an ethical position in view of environmental issues faced today.

Doty's use of metaphor is discussed by literary critics who respond to Doty's work chiefly through themes of sexuality, gender politics and AIDS. In her article, ' "A Poetics of Erasure": Mark Doty's Queer Coast', Sarah P. Gamble challenges critics who have dismissed Doty's flamboyant style described above. She cites John Hartley Williams's review that criticises Doty's style for being hyperbolic, sentimental, insincere and his use of metaphor that 'happily compare[s] anything to anything' (142). Gamble opposes such a view by interpreting Doty's style in terms of a deliberate practice of 'queer aesthetics' that expresses sexuality in terms of style in the difficult time of the AIDS epidemic (144). In *Hurt and Pain*, Susannah B. Mintz provides an angle on Doty's work that focuses more emphatically upon the issue of AIDS. Referring to Doty's partner, Wally, who died of HIV in 1994, Mintz argues that Doty 'makes sense of his lover's illness' through metaphor's 'qualities

of transformation and beauty' (176). While these interpretations go some way in focusing upon metaphor in Doty's work, these critics discuss the environments in Doty's work as settings for his human subjects and so neglect to realise their own significance.

Hugh Dunkerley's article, 'Unnatural Relations?: Language and Nature in the Poetry of Mark Doty and Les Murray', provides what appears to be the only ecocritical perspective on Doty's work. As cited in the previous chapter, Dunkerley is interested in whether it is possible to have 'a poetry of presence which, at the same time, *is* aware of language's contingency and embeddedness in human value systems' (76). Interested in this gestural attempt by language to reach beyond itself, Dunkerley looks at Doty's poem 'Description' and concentrates upon one of the first lines that, in response to a marsh, asks 'how can I say what it is?' Dunkerley explains that Doty's question acknowledges 'that language is always an attempt to grasp what is beyond it, in this case the experience of the marsh' (78). Furthermore, Dunkerley interprets Doty's use of metaphor as a 'self-reflexive awareness of the act of description' (79). However, by neglecting to fully consider the materiality of Doty's marsh, Dunkerley's post-structuralist argument that recognises the limitations of language is heavy-handed. After all, the marsh characteristically shape-shifts and so inherently poses the problem of 'how can I say what it is?' Rather than metaphor as a self-conscious device that gestures beyond itself, examining the shape-shifting 'is/is not' dynamics of metaphor realises its immediate suitability for considering the marsh's own shape-shifting materiality.

Consequently, the state of scholarly research on Doty requires further study of the environments in his poems and a more analytical approach towards Doty's exploration of the qualities of 'shine // and seem' in environments. This is paralleled by the need to pay more attention to the range of metaphorical strategies Doty deploys in response to these qualities in environmental materiality.

Interviewing Doty, Katie Bolick raises the types of reviews mentioned previously that have criticised Doty's work 'for being overly concerned with adjectives and "word stitchery" […] Do you pay any heed to the charges?' ('Fallen Beauty'). Doty responds to Bolick by explaining

> There is an interesting bias toward the plain, the unadorned; what is plain and straightforward is often equated with what is true. I have real doubts about this; I don't think it's necessarily the case that the best way to describe reality is by stripping things down to essentials

Doty's statement builds upon the argument in Chapter One that challenged the pedagogical formula in which plain language is understood to create more accurate, 'honest' representations of the environment. However, where Chapter One focused upon nuance and biodiversity in environmental materiality, Doty conveys a broader understanding of how materiality challenges the bias. Giving a material foundation for pedagogical prescriptions that may otherwise risk compromising materiality in calling for mystery, Doty's argument invites consideration of the environment as elaborate and irreducible.

Collected in Doty's *Atlantis* (1995), 'A Display of Mackerel' opens upon the fish that lie 'in parallel rows, / on ice. Head to tail, / each a foot of luminosity' (1-3). Illustrating his fascination in the 'shine // and seem' of the world, Doty attempts to explain this 'luminosity' through metaphor. Likening the stripes of the mackerel to the 'seams of lead / in a Tiffany window', Doty goes on to state

> think abalone,
> the wildly rainbowed
> mirror of a soapbubble sphere,
> think sun on gasoline.
> Splendour and splendour
> and not a one in any way
>
> distinguished from the other. (7-8, 10-16)

Paralleling his response to Bolick, Doty finds the fish to be anything but plain themselves. Doty recognises how the fish are 'iridescent, watery' and it is these qualities that challenge the act of representation and create a sense of uncertainty (9). Doty expresses the inability to strip the mackerel down to essentials through a series of four metaphors. Indeed, by using *four* metaphors (or six, when considering the '*rainbowed mirror* of a soapbubble sphere') Doty demonstrates his uncertainty at how to represent the fish. This inability to define the fish is accentuated by his caesura in the latter two lines of the excerpt: the fish are 'not a one in any way' given their seeming qualities that serve to challenge definition. Yet,

this irreducibility is present uniformly across all of the mackerel as suggested by the line that follows. Doty's description here echoes Les Murray's 'Shoal' in which the fish speak of being 'Eye-and-eye eye an eye / each' and similarly provoke uncertainty as to how to identify this nonhuman presence. The question of how to define the fish also guides the metaphorical vehicles Doty chooses for the fish. Emphasising the 'iridescent, watery' qualities of mackerel, the majority of Doty's metaphors refer to the surface shine of matter such as mirrors, the ephemeral quality of soapbubbles and petrol run-off.

Holly Masturzo describes the importance of wonder in her nature writing exercise, 'With My Artist's Eyes I See', collected in *The Alphabet of the Trees*. Masturzo explains that 'Observing the natural world can be a wondrous experience' and goes on to evoke Doty's concern regarding the 'bias toward the plain' by explaining that this wonder is frequently short-lived because students are too

> anxious to show off their knowledge, to assimilate a new encounter with nature into a conventional framework. Their initial written responses often are demonstrations of what they have learned to identify, details of food chains, habitat, "natural law" etc. – observations that are more "recognition" than discovery (132)

Masturzo's argument challenges educators such as Allison B. Wallace who argues that a student who moves from saying 'bird' to 'towhee' is a more attentive, placed student (see Chapter One and Chapter Three). As Masturzo explains, even when directly perceived, 'sightings of squirrels, birds, and trees seemed too easily explained or understood' (133). In order to overcome this problem and produce more productive environmental engagements through wonder, Masturzo draws upon Viktor Shklovsky's *Theory of Prose* for Shklovsky's theory of *ostranenie or* 'defamiliarization'.

Masturzo draws attention to the problem that she sees concerning Shklovsky as it concerns her students. She quotes a passage from Shklovsky:

> After being perceived several times, objects acquire the status of "recognition". An object appears before us. We know it's there but we do not see it, and, for that reason, we can say nothing about it…The achievement

> of art is the transformation of the object, describing it as though for the first time, communicating its particularities… (132)

Masturzo's use of Shklovsky returns previous concerns regarding the passivity of identifying environments examined in Chapter One. It appears that students are too certain of what they see and Masturzo wants her students to attend to details and realise new ways of describing their encounters with the environment. In order to foster this perception in her students, Masturzo introduces Kjell Bloch Sandved's *Butterfly Alphabet*. 'Here was the "defamiliarization" I was looking for', declares Masturzo (133). Sandved's book comprises photographs; on one page a butterfly is pictured and on the adjacent page Sandved presents a close-up of part of the butterfly's wing that suggests a letter or number in its pattern. Masturzo makes clear that 'while students recognize the A, seeing it in a vibrant orange in the feathering of a butterfly's wings transformed their expectations not only of butterflies, but of letters and words' (134). In doing so, Masturzo, like Doty, demonstrates the importance of metaphor in recognising that things are not what they first seem.

However, as Masturzo's exercise continues, it begins to depart from studying the natural forms that were initially so central to her argument. In an attempt to 'push the defamiliarizing experince [sic] even further', Masturzo asks her students to create their own butterfly wings from coloured inkblots pressed between paper (134). The students are then expected to find patterns within these 'butterfly wings' and write about their findings. Consequently, rather than affording the 'wondrous experience of observing the natural world', Masturzo's students are guided into observing their own artworks. In view of some of the results of this writing, Masturzo appears aware of this problem: she states in response to one example, 'the butterfly wings have become virtually untraceable', yet does not seem to realise why this has occurred (138). Masturzo concludes that the process of defamiliarisation is productive as it 'highlights the existence of multiple perspectives', and although this echoes Doty's belief that the natural world is anything but straightforward, Masturzo's departure from the material environment makes it difficult to know what it actually is that these multiple perspectives address (139). While intending to stimulate a greater attentiveness to the environment,

Masturzo's exercise perpetuates particular problems surrounding pedagogical instruction for 'wonder': it lends little time to exploring the qualities in materiality that might create a sense of wonder and ultimately departs from writing about the environment itself.

As art begins to take the place of the environment to be written about, Masturzo's exercise uncomfortably implies that the environment does not hold the kind of strangeness she first indicated. Art is positioned more as a tool with which to create estrangement rather than as a tool to respond to and express estrangement. Doty's poetry that explores the 'shine // and seem' of the world proposes an alternative to Masturzo's approach that pays closer attention to the strangeness of things, how this strangeness defies straightforward representation, and how metaphor responds to this challenge. Pursuing this argument with further response to Bolick, Doty describes how the world is 'too complex, too shifty, too difficult to know and to say. I think that reality can be approached, pointed to, suggested, and that the more stylistic means one has at one's disposal the better' ('Fallen Beauty'). As Doty goes on to explore environments that are even more 'shifty' in the following section, close readings draw attention to how metaphor forms one of Doty's most effective 'stylistic means' to express seeming qualities in environments. Analysis of how metaphor works in Doty's poetry demonstrates how metaphor responds to pedagogical intentions for wonder by valuing uncertainty and how this uncertainty sustains engagements with environments.

'Nothing but Trope': Shape-Shifting Materiality

Doty's understanding of the world as 'too complex, too shifty' is key to his poem 'Difference', collected in *My Alexandria*. The poem's progression clarifies how metaphor is central to responding to indeterminacy in the material environment. The poem begins by describing how 'The jellyfish / float in the bay shallows / like schools of cloud' (1-3). Already suggesting an elusive quality in the matter of the jellyfish, Doty continues with a question:

> is it right
> to call them
> elaborate sacks

of nothing? All they seem
is shape, and shifting,
and though a whole troop

of undulant cousins
go about their business
within a single wave's span,

every one does something unlike (4-13)

As with the mackerel that held a 'seeming' quality because of their iridescence and therefore challenged straightforward representation, so the jellyfish poses another type of seeming through its shape-shifting character. Once again, this seemingness leads Doty to explore the environment with ideas of singularity and multiplicity: Doty recognises that the jellyfish are all cousins: there are a 'dozen identical' (4). Despite this, and despite moving together in 'a *single* wave', they become different from one another (emphasis added). Even the meaning of 'unlike' begins to shift as Doty immediately follows it with a list of various likenesses of the jellyfish:

this one a balloon
open on both ends

but swollen to its full expanse,
this one a breathing heart,
this a pulsing flower.

This one a rolled condom,
or a plastic purse swallowing itself,
that one a Tiffany shade,

this a troubled parasol. (14-22)

Although praising wonder in nature writing, the majority of tutors refrain from suggesting how wonder might be expressed in nature writing. Chris Kinsey is the one exception as she claims that it is 'similes and metaphors' that 'convey the writer's enthusiasm, excitement, wonder, desire to explore' (Email Correspondence). However, this is contrasted by her aim to 'discourage fanciful or whimsical language […] and all tacky attempts to "humanise" '. These warnings

may aim to guard against bad writing in general. Yet, as these concerns resonate with the kind that the previous chapters have continued to scrutinise regarding the potential abandonment of the environment for representations that are anthropocentric, these misgivings are of particular significance to nature writing. Doty's prolific use of the figurative device and its anthropocentric quality (condom, purse and Tiffany shade), becomes problematic in view of Kinsey's concerns. However, despite the fact that Doty's language might be deemed whimsical, the structure of his language proves otherwise as it responds to the shape-shifting quality of the jellyfish. Echoing the series of four metaphors that were deployed in response to the mackerel in an attempt to describe their irreducibility, Doty puts less emphasis upon the particular metaphors themselves than on the process of metaphor that is prompted by the illusory entity. The particular comparison of the jellyfish to a 'rolled condom' or a 'Tiffany shade' becomes secondary to the act of comparison itself. Dickinson's identification of the 'is/is not' dynamic of metaphor is central here as it corresponds to the 'is/is not' shape-shifting of the jellyfish. This emphasis upon metaphor-making gives value to a practice that will, as John Hartley Williams criticised, 'happily compare anything to anything' in order to show the indeterminacy of the subject at hand.

Doty goes on to describe the jellyfish as a 'submarine opera' that is 'all subterfuge and disguise' (23-24). While the content of this metaphor clearly stresses the shape-shifting materiality of the jellyfish and the uncertainty of the observer in encountering it, it leads to further parallels between the structure of metaphor and the jellyfish. After Doty recognises the jellyfish as performers wearing 'disguise', he finds them to be part of an operatic 'plot' that is 'a fabulous tangle / of hiding and recognition: / nothing but trope' (25-27). Etymologically, 'trope' means to turn and so describes how these jellyfish physically turn into other shapes. However, 'trope' more keenly suggests metaphor itself and so indicates a comparison between jellyfish and the literary device. This is confirmed when Doty later describes the jellyfish as 'recognizable only as the stuff / of metaphor' (32-33). Developing Adam Dickinson's argument on 'the material metaphoricity of bodies' toward other, shape-shifting bodies, Doty's description helps to overcome Kinsey's concern by demonstrating how language that might appear fanciful can relate to the seeming qualities of environmental materiality through its structure. The

correspondence between the jellyfish and the process of metaphor-making continues as Doty asks

> What can words do
>
> but link what we know
> to what we don't,
> and so form a shape?
>
> Which shrinks or swells
> configures or collapses, blooms
> even as it is described (33-39)

The 'shape' in Doty's question might initially seem to echo pedagogical concern about metaphor's imposition explored in Chapter One and Chapter Four, which may well underpin Kinsey's distrust of whimsical language. However, Doty's recognition of how this figurative shape is half formed by uncertainty – of what we don't know – suggests otherwise. Furthermore, the 'shape' that refers to metaphor refers also to the jellyfish: the shrinking and swelling applies to the figurative language as well as to the sea-creature. In creating this two-way description, Doty denies any possibility for imposition as he highlights the changeable nature of the jellyfish and the uncertainty of metaphor in response to it.

The threat of figurative imposition returns toward the close of Doty's poem, but, again, Doty negotiates it. Echoing pedagogical arguments of anthropomorphism as necessarily appropriative of the nonhuman in the previous chapter, Doty draws attention to how

> we look at alien grace,
>
> unfettered
> by any determined form,
> and we say: balloon, flower,
>
> heart, condom, opera,
> lampshade, parasol, ballet. (51-56)

However, with a question that appears more like a declaration Doty continues,

> Hear how the mouth,

so full
of longing for the world,
changes its shape? (57-60)

Corresponding to the pedagogical concerns of appropriating the environment through language, Doty initially appears to be saying that 'alien grace' is fettered by his metaphorical terms for it. Moreover, a quick read of the final four lines might leave the impression that it is the mouth, speaking these terms, that changes the shape of the world. However, the arbitrary nature of the terms that Doty repeats – ranging from the 'condom' to the high art of 'ballet' – attests to the problem of defining the jellyfish. Consequently, metaphor does not impose a determined form but rather expresses the indeterminate quality discovered in the jellyfish through an indeterminacy of its own. The commas in Doty's final question supports the interpretation that it is the mouth that must change its shape if it is to respond to the world that is obscure. His understanding of metaphor thus counters pedagogical attitudes towards certain types of language while demonstrating how the figurative device can develop prescriptions of wonder in teaching nature writing.

As Doty's use of metaphor emphasises a literary uncertainty as to how to describe indeterminate materiality, his practice contrasts with Kerry Ruef's exercise in *The Private Eye*. Proposing a series of perceptual exercises for a range of educational disciplines, Ruef aims to bring students closer to the environment through a practice that generates 'Wonder Fuel' (220). The basis for these exercises is a magnifying loupe with which Ruef wants her students to focus upon, say, a leaf or seashell – a practice that Kinsey also suggests in her own nature writing classes. However, Ruef also prescribes 'a second magnifier' formed of two questions: 'What else does it remind me of? What else does it look like?' as a way of provoking analogy (4). Echoing Doty's writing in which metaphor expresses uncertainty in view of the environment, Ruef reflects upon her own experience in stating 'This looking-by-analogy, I realized, kept me looking a long time: I was seeing worlds intense and intriguing' (6). Yet, as Ruef explains the effect of this practice of analogy, the similarity between her approach and Doty's approach ends. Ruef states that the analogies 'have the immediate effect of making the

world personal' and 'sort the unfamiliar into a familiar pattern, in short, they make the invisible *visible*, they make the unfamiliar *comfortable*, they make all sort of outside things fit easily *inside*' (6). Ruef's claims of familiarity, visibility and comfort contradict her intention for wonder and suggest a manipulation of the environment as the analogies '*make* all sort of outside things *fit*' (emphasis added). Her understanding of analogy echoes Juliana Spahr's understanding of 'the problems of analogy' examined in Chapter Three that forced similarity to detrimental effect. Rather than encourage wonder and intrigue, Ruef's use of analogy inhibits it as the figurative device becomes a tool to systematically order the environment.

Despite Ruef initially implying that this engagement will keep her students looking in the same way it has kept her looking, the fact she fosters the kind of familiarity that Masturzo explicitly challenged in her own exercise means that Ruef's approach is more likely, ultimately, to limit the engagement. Returning to Doty's practice that finds the environment consistently 'intense and intriguing' helps to show how his use of metaphor – which expresses uncertainty in how to represent these environments – has the capacity to continue, rather than limit the engagement, and thus enrich pedagogical approach. Addressing Doty's wider focus upon particular shape-shifting landscapes that develops from his focus on jellyfish contributes to the discussion. In 'Description', collected in *Atlantis*, Doty concentrates upon a salt marsh, and after only six lines Doty appears uncertain as to how to proceed: 'how can I say what it is?' (7). He goes on to write a metaphorically-rich passage:

> Sea lavender shivers
> over the tidewater steel.
>
> A million minnow ally
> with their million shadows
> (lucky we'll never need
>
> to know whose is whose).
> The bud of storm loosens
> watered paint poured
>
> dark blue onto the edge
> of the page. Haloed grasses,
> gilt shadow-edged body of dune… (8-18)

Following this range of images, Doty admits ‘I could go on like this’ (19). Recalling the prolific use of metaphor in ‘Difference’, Doty suggests that the act of comparison never gets tired; that it can never be completed. This ongoing act of description is necessary for an environment that, as Dickinson describes, ‘cannot be captured’ because, as Doty identifies, the environment has ‘ten thousand aspects’ (21).

With this challenge to literary representation provoked by the irreducible nature of what is around him, Doty declares ‘what I need to tell is / swell and curve, shift / and blur of boundary’ (29-31). Doty’s explanation of the qualities he needs to describe highlights the shape-shifting character of the marsh upon which he is focused. A salt marsh is, by definition, tidal and so it is easy to imagine how different tides dramatically affect what is seen of a marsh landscape by swelling, shifting and blurring boundaries between land and water. Clearly, this shifting and blurring does not help Doty’s question of ‘how can I say what it is?’ All Doty can do in response is to present his own ‘shift / and blur of boundary’ through metaphor. Indeed, as if the obvious choice, Doty goes on to state ‘A metaphor, then’ (34). The mixed metaphor Doty goes on to make in ‘Description’ compares the marsh to ‘jewellery’s / lush grammar, / a whole vocabulary / of ornament’ (42-45). Doty’s mixed metaphor multiplies the ‘is/is not’ dynamic of metaphor to create an uncertain representation of the marsh in view of its ‘shift / and blur’.

While representing the environment’s ‘intense and intriguing’ qualities through the structure of metaphor, the shiny quality conveyed by Doty’s metaphors also refuses to define the environment. Echoing his challenge to the act of ‘stripping things down to essentials’ (‘Fallen Beauty’), Doty states

> And that
> is the marsh essence –
> all the hoarded riches
>
> of the world held
> and rivering, a gleam
> awakened and doubled
>
> by water, flashing
> off the bowing of the grass (55-62)

Despite Doty's tone of certainty, accentuated by the iambic nature of the line – 'and *that* / is the marsh essence' – the essence Doty goes on to identify contradicts the meaning of essence as something invariable (emphasis added). Instead of proposing an essence that sharpens or concludes the description, Doty's identification of this essence, over a number of stanzas, ultimately realises the inability to identify a definite essence: the marsh is 'a gleam', 'doubled' and 'flashing'. This recalls his description of the mackerel through 'abalone', the 'wildly rainbowed mirror of a soapbubble sphere'. The luminous, reflective quality of the marsh is shared by jewellery and language as he lists and summarises them all as 'things that shine' (64). In doing so, Doty discerns how the marsh presents an illusory quality that language cannot explain or define as language conveys an illusory quality of its own. Acknowledging this uncertainty in language in view of the marsh's indeterminate, irreducible qualities leads Doty to contemplate the act of description and ask 'What is description, after all, / but encoded desire?' (65-66). This point challenges Ruef's approach that ultimately aimed to make entities familiar through analogy and so limited engagements with the environment. Doty's understanding of description as an unsatisfied longing after its seeming subject apprehends how uncertainty fosters ongoing engagements. In turn, approaching the environment with this understanding of description as desire has the potential to extend engagements with environments as this approach suggests the implausibility of one, conclusive definition.

By apprehending the qualities in environmental materiality that challenge description and create uncertainty – such as iridescence, luminosity and shape-shifting indeterminacy – and showing how metaphor is central in approaching them, Doty's work provides a literary style with which to develop pedagogical intentions for wonder. As Doty demonstrates how metaphor conveys uncertainty at these seeming, changing environments, he suggests how this literary style finds the environment to be continually captivating. After all, this uncertainty creates an invitation to do what Ruef had originally hoped of her exercise using analogy: to keep a student looking at the environment. However, another pedagogical question remains: what role can wonder play in engaging with environmental issues? As explored in previous chapters, educators exhibit a marked hesitancy in actually

making this engagement. To achieve this transition, the following section continues to examine Doty's work in view of the parallels between Dickinson's argument on 'material metaphoricity' and Timothy Morton's argument on climate change in *Hyperobjects.* This comparison affords an opportunity to investigate how Doty's understanding of metaphor provides a model with which to engage with the shape-shifting, obscure nature of the issue and thus augment existing approaches in teaching.

'Visible Uncertainty': Approaching Climate Change

Mary Swander, who teaches upon the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University, declares 'I'm kind of sick to death of people churning out creative writing that – in these programs – has no substance to it' (Personal Interview). She explains that 'the ultimate goal is to get them to do creative writing that is informed by environmental science in terms of issues'. However, as previous chapters have suggested, educators who frequently express their intention for students to become conscious of these issues fail to actually approach these issues in their exercises. It appears that many educators are concerned at how to approach and express these issues through literature. Sheryl St. Germain highlights this concern as she explains with regard to her own teaching that there is 'a part in the class that is political and looks at particular issues […] but I don't want them to feel depressed in this class' (Personal Interview). Similarly, John Elder describes that 'habitat reduction, extinction and loss of biodiversity of all kinds […] in the educational context could be a burden for students to think about this stuff too much' (Personal Interview). Considering environmental issues with such negative attitudes, which are the very antithesis of their positive call for wonder's amazement and curiosity, means that educators often sidestep the significant topic. Mary Swander caricatures this gap between issue-led writing and wonder as she explains 'you need to have a "tough edge" in nature writing poetry because people think of it as "oh look at the lovely daffodils" ' (Personal Interview). However, having defined wonder in terms of uncertainty in the previous sections and showing how metaphor apprehends the 'shine // and seem' of environments, it is possible to examine how environmental issues present

similar qualities and thus address Swander's call for 'a tough edge' through a similar strategy. Challenging notions of these issues being a burden in nature writing pedagogy, this argument attests to an alternative approach that finds intrigue in the subject of climate change by valuing uncertainty in a similar way as to how Doty values longing and desire in 'Description'.

St. Germain, who expresses concern that an engagement with issues will make her students 'depressed', outlines one pedagogical approach she makes in which

> I had them research a particular environmental problem and had them form groups and they had to present their research on some environmental problem that was close to Pennsylvania – so some of them did fracking, some of them did mountaintop removal, some climate change, but they didn't like it: some of them complained they didn't like the presentations and the truth is they're not scientists (Personal Interview)

St. Germain's exercise echoes Swander's 'tough edge' as it parallels the kind of work expected from modules in environmental science and sustainability that students can often take in conjunction with courses dedicated to nature writing.[47] However, given that these students are expecting to write creatively about the environment in St. Germain's class, it is perhaps not surprising that they dislike the role of scientist that St. Germain appears to set. Although research on issues is clearly important and presentations help to convey this research, the fact that this exercise does not lead to further discussion or exercises on how it can influence nature writing remains a limitation that needs to be addressed.

Rather than solely directing students towards the facts and figures associated with these issues in order to produce presentations, examination of how the issue exhibits qualities that challenge perception prompts thought as to how the kind of uncertainty analysed so far might assist alternative engagements. In turn, this affords further investigation of metaphor as a literary style that could be used to approach the subject of environmental issues. Focusing upon the issue of climate change is a good place to start. A sense of mystery emerges when

[47] The University of Essex offers optional modules in, for example, 'Sustainability' and 'International Environmental Politics'. Iowa State University offers classes on 'Watershed Management', 'Controversies in Renewable Resource Management' amongst others.

considering how difficult it is to directly perceive climate change as a thing in itself. Climate change can often only be suggested through other entities such as retreating glaciers, 'drunk trees', storms, heat waves and flooding. Seen through St. Germain's local focus that echoes her emphasis upon place examined in Chapter Three, the warming climate is at once the decline of certain species and the proliferation of others, the emergence of a non-native bird, and, perhaps, the sudden difficulty of buying shellfish at the supermarket. As the range of indicators show, the issue of climate change evades straightforward definition and so echoes Dickinson's understanding of matter that 'escapes our capacity for systematic understanding'. Practices of representation are necessarily challenged by the complexity of the causal chains involved in climate change that make the issue irreducible. Climate change is simultaneously one thing and another and so corresponds to this chapter's recent arguments that have developed Dickinson's 'material metaphoricity' towards the indeterminacy of environments in Doty's work.

Morton's argument on the 'transdimensional' character of climate change in *Hyperobjects* emphasises the perceptual problem climate change presents and so advances the investigation of how a strategy that values uncertainty might guide an engagement with the issue (70). As explained in Chapter Four (and briefly in this chapter's introduction), Morton's environmental philosophy conveys a postmodern scepticism towards traditions of thought regarding the environment. This scepticism guides his theory on the 'strange stranger' and also his first mention of hyperobjects (objects distributed through time and space) in *The Ecological Thought*. Indeed, both theories arise from the same principle that other beings are ultimately unknowable. Morton's most recent book, *Hyperobjects*, takes these claims a step further as he examines climate change as one of these unknowable beings. Morton situates his study in Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO): a growing New Materialist movement that, as noted in the previous chapter, focuses upon the interactive world of objects. Led by philosophers such as Graham Harman and Ian Bogost, OOO speaks to environmental discourse as it aims to work against anthropocentrism and put 'things' at the centre of discussion. Considering climate change as a hyperobject through OOO enables Morton to reflect upon the qualities of climate change, the challenge they present to human perception, and the limitations of human perception in face of ecological catastrophe.

Morton's discussion of climate change as a hyperobject stresses the huge scale of the issue, but, more than this, it draws attention to the illusive qualities of the issue. The latter, after all, is central to discussions in OOO that maintain all objects are inevitably withdrawn and are therefore termed sensual objects that 'appear "as" what they are *for an experiencer or user or apprehender*' (118). This emphasis upon appearances strongly resonates with Doty's focus upon the environment's seeming qualities. Indeed, Doty's approach of indeterminate materiality can be seen as conceptualised by Morton's argument in which objects 'seem to contain more than themselves' (78). With these parallels in mind, it is possible to consider how Doty's metaphorical approach that engages with such indeterminacy might be seen as a literary model with which to study the hyperobject of climate change and so develop pedagogical engagements with environmental issues.

Collected in *Sweet Machine* (2012), Doty's poem 'Fog Suite' begins by describing 'a five panelled screen'

> Fog-lacquered,
> varnished in thin
> pearl glaze,
>
> the high dunes unfold,
> a smudged sketch
> for a folding screen,
>
> panels inlaid
> with cloudy ivory,
> irregular patches
>
> of grassy jade.
> (The wide bay's
> oddly still this morning (1-12)

Although conveying a simple metaphor between a folding screen and a bay, the degree to which the metaphor is extended generates uncertainty as to what is being seen. The figurative use of artistic practices and materials dominate the tercets to the point where it might be questioned whether the poem does in fact refer to an environment or, literally, to a folding screen. The explication of the subject is deferred by Doty: it is only confirmed when the 'wide bay' is referred to in

the seventh line – and even then this acknowledgement of the subject is delivered within parenthesis.

Having set the scene, Doty continues to focus upon the fog. This obscure quality in the environment leads Doty to describe it through a range of metaphorical comparisons. He writes of ‘damp scarves / (unhemmed, like petals / of a white peony)’ and how they

> slide and tear
> across the portion
> of sky, sheets
>
> of smudged paper
> hung from heaven.
> Trope on trope!
>
> What I’m trying to do
> is fix this impossible
> shift and flux (19-21, 22-30)

More complex than the mixed metaphor in ‘Description’, Doty describes the fog in terms of scarves that are then like peony petals and, as these scarves ‘slide and tear’, they become ‘sheets of smudged paper’. Doty’s next line, ‘Trope on trope!’, serves as a self-reflexive turn that considers the series of metaphors he has produced in terms of his intention to ‘fix this impossible shift and flux’ of fog. Drawing attention to the inability to make one stable identification of the fog prompts thought on how Doty’s metaphors ‘shift and flux’ themselves. Like the relationship between metaphor and jellyfish in ‘Difference’, Doty’s description cannot help but shape-shift in response to the shape-shifting fog as one definition becomes impossible to make.

Many poets have written on fog and outlining a few of these works helps to establish how Doty’s writing differs in its approach. Carl Sandburg’s well-known poem, ‘Fog’, compares the phenomenon to a cat. Unlike Doty’s use of metaphor that expresses an inability to identify the fog, Sandburg’s metaphor familiarises the fog not only by figuratively deploying what appears to be a domestic cat given its ‘little cat feet’, but also by continuing with the same metaphor over the six lines of the poem (2). ‘Boats in a Fog’, by Robinson Jeffers, focuses upon a scene in which

fishermen progress through fog as a metaphor for the purposeful nature of other creatures against the elements of nature, and so cannot be said to focus upon the fog's own qualities to any great extent. Amy Clampitt's 'Fog' begins by studying the disappearance of the environment that results from fog, yet the thrust of Clampitt's poem is in drawing attention to how fog, conversely, draws attention to immediate sights and sounds by blocking others out. Doty's 'Fog Suite' approaches fog differently by drawing attention to its shifting quality. He does this through a series of metaphors that, through their variety and number, convey uncertainty at how to represent this atmospheric phenomenon.

In using metaphor to express uncertainty in representing the fog's shape-shifting character, Doty's approach contributes towards pedagogical strategies for engaging students with climate change as the latter subject presents a comparable perceptual challenge. Climate change presents indeterminacy as problems arise when trying to pin it down to one definition. Morton accentuates this indeterminacy when he describes experiencing the issue 'as a lava-lamp fluidity – flowing and oozing metaphors abound in the New Materialism – […] a symptom of our less than adequate perception of higher dimensions of structure' (70). Morton's initial metaphor describes climate change in a way that is similar to Doty's own sliding and tearing metaphors to describe the fog's 'shift and flux'. The indeterminacy of the subject necessitates a representation that is based upon fluidity. Furthermore, reflecting upon his own lava-lamp metaphor, Morton joins Doty in identifying how these flowing metaphors do not bring conclusive definition, but maintain perceptual uncertainty.

Doty's 'Fog Suite' raises further correspondences between how both environmental materiality and climate change challenge perception and prompts further investigation into how metaphor responds to the issue. Describing how a certain green in the bay is intensified 'by sunlight filtered / through the atmosphere's / wet linens', Doty makes clear that it is 'No trick of light / I'm talking about / but defiant otherness' (33-35, 37-39). Doty recognises that an identification of this environment is impossible and that this impossibility is not owing to some kind of artificial illusion, but owing to the environment's defiantly different character. This recognition is continued in Doty's perception of the sky, which in holding threatening rainclouds, is described as 'gorgeous trouble' (41). These lines go

some way in producing a new strategy to frame engagements with climate change. The defiance suggested by Doty corresponds to the perceptual challenge climate change presents. As already noted, Morton explores the 'withdrawn' quality of objects, but he later exaggerates this withdrawn quality in stating that 'The object is a liar' because 'We never see the hyperobject directly' (153). Climate change, therefore, can also be thought of as 'defiant otherness', perhaps even 'gorgeous trouble'. The 'is/is not' dynamic of metaphor that was discussed in terms of Doty's jellyfish and their shape-shifting 'disguise' becomes applicable to perceiving climate change as it, too, is an entity that creates uncertainty.

Doty attempts to define the fog that moves across the bay in 'Fog Suite', but he is also aware of how this fog makes it difficult to define what would be considered more tangible, concrete entities in the bay itself. Writing of the shoreline in the third section of the poem, Doty finds that 'Clapboards lose their boundaries, / and phantoms of summer's roses / loom like parade floats lost at sea' (69-71). Not only is the fog an indeterminate entity, but the fog makes other entities indeterminate too. Like the fog that accentuates uncertainty in Doty's perception of the rose, so climate change accentuates uncertainty in the perception of a raincloud, news story, or the daffodil blooming in January. Rather than presenting only themselves, each subject suggests the broader subject of climate change. As this dynamic in climate change (in which one thing refers to another) indicates another kind of 'material metaphoricity', it reinforces the capacity of metaphor's 'is/is not' dynamic to respond. Morton draws attention to this peculiar tension between singularity and multiplicity in climate change. He explains 'A flock of birds on a lake is a unique entity, yet it is also part of a series of hyperobjects: the biosphere, evolution, global warming' (78). This gives a very different context to Doty's much earlier statement of mackerel as 'not a one in any way' that contested the literary practice of 'stripping things down to essentials', and anticipated the productive potential of metaphor to respond to irreducibility.

Aiming to reconsider pedagogical engagements with environmental issues, this analysis demonstrates how climate change shares many of the seeming qualities identified in environmental materiality. The issue presents both indeterminacy and irreducibility and such qualities have repercussions when considering how to represent them. Realising this, Morton states that 'Art, then,

must attune itself to the demonic, interobjective space in which causal-aesthetic events float like genies, nymphs, faeries and djinn' (176). In alluding to the seeming quality of climate change, Morton's language emphasises the relevance of wonder by conjuring magical and mystical beings. However, rapt in his own declaration, Morton does not explain how to express this wonder through literary style – unless, of course, he expects a revival of the fairy tale genre. In foregrounding the act of metaphor-making – of 'Trope on trope' – Doty speaks to the issue of climate change as metaphor responds to indeterminacy and irreducibility via its expression of uncertainty. Yet, the content as well as the structure of metaphor is important. Many of the metaphors created by Doty deploy figurative vehicles that are associated with 'shine // and seem': the 'rainbowed / mirror of a soapbubble', or folding screen of precious stone accentuate a sense of illusion that continues to convey uncertainty in view of the subject. Holly Masturzo and Kerry Ruef both control the metaphors that their students are to create in view of environmental entities. Masturzo instructs her students to find numbers and letters in butterfly wings, and Ruef sets particular questions to provoke analogy. In turn, a metaphor-making process that engages with 'seeming' subjects is key in addressing the topic of climate change. Returning to Doty's much earlier figurative reference to 'gasoline' prompts thought toward other forms of seeming that might even hint towards their contribution to the issue of climate change.

'Is that what it is? / visible uncertainty?', asks Doty after describing the roses through metaphor in 'Fog Suite' (72-73). Doty presents an oxymoronic quality, especially in view of his confident opening 'Is *that* what it is', deployed similarly in 'Description'. Doty's line, pursuing his belief that materiality evades full identification, speaks to the issue of climate change as the term 'visible' invites expectation of something apparent and obvious only to undermine this expectation with uncertainty. As Doty goes on to imply the positive impact such uncertainty generates, it becomes possible to suggest the role of uncertainty in helping to extend an engagement with climate change. Developing his understanding of description as a kind of longing in 'Difference', Doty follows his practice of 'Trope on trope' by asking

> Do we love more

what we can't say?

As if what we wanted
were to be brought
that much closer

to word's failure,
where desire begins (44-50)

It would be mistaken to suggest or hope that addressing the uncertainty of climate change through metaphor leads to 'love' of climate change, not to mention unjust given the destruction the issue creates. However, following Doty's reflection in 'Fog Suite' suggests that a greater engagement comes from an approach that values uncertainty. This provides an alternative strategy to St. Germain's exercise that prescribed scientific-style presentations on the issue in her nature writing class, while overcoming wider pedagogical concerns that engaging with issues risks bringing 'depression' into the class. A literary style such as Doty's that is based on metaphor focuses upon the seeming qualities of entities, conveys an uncertainty as to how to represent them, and in doing so has the potential to prompt curiosity and 'desire' for further understanding of the subject, or issue, in question.

*

This chapter has analysed pedagogical prescriptions for wonder and drawn attention to the way educators do not contextualise and define these calls for wonder. Explaining how this might prove problematic, I analysed Adam Dickinson's ecocritical argument on 'material metaphoricity' to demonstrate the potential for redefining wonder in terms of uncertainty and to establish the role of metaphor in this alternative approach to the environment. Close readings of Mark Doty's poems enabled exploration of the qualities in environmental materiality that challenge perception and generate uncertainty. The examination of how Doty's metaphorical practice expresses uncertainty at the 'shine // and seem' of materiality through its structure and content developed Dickinson's argument on 'material metaphoricity' and established the potential of this alternative strategy to sustain an engagement with the environment: to keep students looking and desiring definition. This

argument enabled an exploration of how such a strategy applies to the issue of climate change. Showing how the issue presents its own seeming qualities that can also be approached through metaphor has helped to acknowledge the unnecessary limitations arising from pedagogical belief that engaging with environmental issues will depressing. Advancing beyond these, a metaphorical literary style has been shown to engage with the shape-shifting qualities inherent to climate change and to draw further attention to the issue by appreciating the difficulty of defining the issue.

Having questioned the vague and potentially misleading instructions for wonder in nature writing pedagogy in view of ecocritical ideas on uncertainty and Doty's figurative practice, this chapter continues this thesis's argument on how environmental thinking can be developed through metaphor. This chapter has established three points that inform and provoke further study in Chapter Six; the final chapter of this thesis. First, as this chapter has challenged pedagogical attitudes to engagements with environmental issues, it has established a new strategy of exploring climate change that utilises, rather than inhibits, literary creativity. This development is largely due to this chapter's argument that has advanced discussions on the capacity of metaphor to respond to environmental materiality, and such defines a second point. Emphasising the act of comparison (rather than only focusing upon the content within the comparisons) provokes further study as to what other structural dynamics metaphor might offer to further environmental engagements. Lastly, by apprehending the indeterminate, obscure qualities of environments, this chapter has developed an understanding of how environmental materiality challenges identification. This is pursued in the next chapter's examination of pedagogical calls for authenticity and the potential of self-reflexive metaphor to represent linguistic non-identity with the environment.

Chapter Six

'On the World's Terms': Authenticity in Nature Writing and the Self-Reflexive Metaphors of Don McKay and Jen Hadfield

This chapter argues for a new strategy with which to question and reimagine the notion of 'authenticity' in representing the environment. In Chapter Three, Mark Cocker was shown to describe the importance of writing about the environment with 'some monitor, some tester of authenticity' (Personal Interview). Although this was discussed in relation to anthropomorphism, Cocker's statement is indicative of greater pedagogical calls for authenticity as a literary quality that accesses and expresses reality. Yet, this claim to reality is understandably problematic, particularly in view of ecocritical arguments discussed in the previous chapter regarding the difficulty of defining the environment. Indeed, as examined in this chapter, Kate Rigby takes this representational difficulty a stage further in her ecocritical argument that claims the environment is ultimately 'unsayable' (437). Rigby's argument influences other ecocritics such as Timothy Morton who explores the 'radical nonidentity' between representations of the environment and the environment itself (*Ecology without Nature* 96).[48] Making the notion of an easily accessible authenticity untenable, this chapter searches for a literary style that develops pedagogical calls for authenticity with these ecocritical arguments in mind. This chapter argues that using anthropocentrism in metaphor increases the self-reflexive potential of metaphor and that this kind of self-reflexive metaphor productively engages with the concept of authenticity by questioning it. Using metaphor in this way guides a new understanding of reality outside language. Furthermore, this strategy affords an approach of environmental issues. Examined at the chapter's conclusion, metaphor's self-reflexivity fosters awareness of the

[48] The decision to frame this chapter with Rigby's argument rather than Morton's argument has been made on the basis that Rigby's argument is situated within literary representations of the environment, which makes it particularly applicable to a discussion of nature writing pedagogy, rather than Morton's argument that speaks to a broad range of mediums (literature, film, music, art). 'Unsayability' and 'non-identity' are, however, both terms used in this chapter to denote the inability of language to represent the environment.

environment beyond language, but also has the potential to reflect upon literary and physical appropriation of the environment.

This chapter first investigates teachers' prescriptions of authenticity, alongside their corresponding discouragement of anthropocentrism and metaphor, and the arguments underpinning such instructions and warnings. Identifying the problems arising from these arguments outlines the need to rethink pedagogical approaches to representing the real. To pursue this, analysis of ecocritical claims by Kate Rigby explores the relevance of 'negative ecopoetics' as a poststructuralist strategy that emphasises a shift beyond language to acknowledge the different nature of the environment. Determining how metaphor's tensions might lend themselves to practising this theory leads to close readings of poetry by Don McKay and, to a lesser extent, Jen Hadfield, to demonstrate this metaphor at work. After examining the relationship between metaphor and anthropocentrism in McKay's work, these close readings compare the approaches of both poets in order to generate two claims in response to pedagogical desires for authenticity. The first argues that a particular use of anthropocentrism creates incompatible metaphors that become self-conscious of themselves and/or invalidate themselves and, in doing so, draw attention towards the environment beyond language. The second claim demonstrates how anthropocentricity in metaphor can be deliberately humorous and how this humour develops the self-reflexive potential of metaphor. These investigations establish that as metaphorical reflexivity apprehends environmental non-identity with language, it becomes aware of literature's capacity to appropriate environments. In turn, this affords a concluding point on the self-reflexive metaphor as a literary strategy with which to address the subject of physical appropriation of environments arising from societal behaviour. Supporting these claims, this chapter examines the work of metaphor theorist James E. Seitz, whose work on composition pedagogy is influenced by post-structuralism. Focusing upon the boldest challenge to representation the environment might pose – that of 'unsayability' – generates a significant final chapter to this thesis's argument on rethinking nature writing teaching through metaphor.

'On the World's Terms and Not My Own': Authenticity, Anthropocentrism and Metaphor

Despite nature writing teachers repeatedly prescribing the importance of authenticity, they do so without providing a clear definition for such a quality. John Elder explains his desire for 'strongly voiced, authentic, personal stories; reflective stories', and although the same statement was studied in Chapter Two in terms of its prescription of a 'personal' style, Elder's sense of authenticity deserves further examination (Personal Interview). Seeming like a synonym for 'true' or 'genuine' in this statement, he later explains that 'The word authenticity has something to do with accuracy but it's not quite the same thing'. Elder goes on to discuss the term in the context of 'knowing and understanding natural patterns' and so demonstrates authenticity's correlation to fact. Yet, his later description of an 'authentic' literary style as 'instructive, nourishing, and […] grounding' goes beyond fact. The troubling ecological cliché here treats the text as an environment itself that offers a breath of fresh air amongst other wholesome properties. Elder's belief in authenticity as 'grounding' expresses the desire for a literary style that demonstrates close proximity with the physical environment.

The literary styles that educators deem authentic or inauthentic support this understanding of authenticity as a literary embodiment of the real world. Jim Perrin's concern about 'forced images, forced metaphors' in nature writing is of particular relevance here (Personal Interview). Explaining that in the 'new nature writing', exemplified by Robert Macfarlane, 'you can identify a particular creative writing lexis and register and they're false', Perrin goes on to call upon the concept of authenticity by stating that such language is not only 'unnatural', but 'isn't particularly accurate either'. In 'The Case against Metaphor', Brenda Miller, co-author of *Tell It Slant* (her guide to creative nonfiction), concentrates upon critiquing metaphor's forceful identification of the environment. As a case study, Miller describes her observation of migratory birds and her perception of 'their restlessness' (116). In perceiving the birds she states, 'already I can feel it, like a tickle in my throat, that strangled mandate: *Must*… *Make*… *Metaphor*' (116). Challenging this impulse, she writes 'I don't want to make that inevitable connection between migratory fervor and my own vast restlessness' (116), and explains that such a metaphor is 'too assembled, and I want the world to just remain as it is, firmly itself' (117). The sense that a metaphor is 'too assembled'

provides another angle from which to scrutinise Perrin's concern for 'forced metaphors'. There is an understanding that metaphor is anthropocentric and thus disrespectful of the environment's real character and, as discussed in Chapter One, a plainer diction might be more respectful. Miller accentuates this tension as she states that if 'my job is to pay attention, why can't I do it on the world's terms and not my own?' (117). Miller's desire to write about the world as 'firmly itself' develops Elder's sense of authenticity as 'grounding' and, as it does so, raises further problems. First, her prescription suggests a practice of self-effacement that appears highly inauthentic given that it denies the human role essential to the observation. Second, Miller's intention to describe the environment as 'firmly itself' through 'the world's terms' lends itself to much interrogation. Not only does Miller's sense of 'the world's terms' suggest an objective, widely-accepted sense of reality, but the fact that the environment does not share the capacity for language also means the 'world's terms' are impossible to identify and reproduce.

These critiques of pedagogical notions of authenticity can be taken a step further by examining Kate Rigby's influential ecocritical theory of 'negative ecopoetics' in her book *Topographies of the Sacred*. Furthermore, exploring this theory provides a framework with which to identify metaphor's potentially productive tensions that will consequently underpin a strategy with which to rethink pedagogical instruction. Rigby, an Australian ecocritic, surveys the influence of English and German Romanticism in contemporary attitudes toward the environment. Rigby's argument aims to develop Jonathan Bate's focus on the Romantics and challenge Bate's Heideggerian model of ecopoetics that asserts that language can 'give voice to the song of the earth' (Rigby 123). After all, Rigby believes that language can have an adverse effect. She explains that as language speaks for an environment 'it does not thereby exploit, [but] it may well open the way to exploitation' (124). Unlike educators such as Miller, Rigby is deeply sceptical of the prospect of representing the reality of an environment through writing. Advancing beyond ideas discussed in the previous chapter regarding uncertainty in view of the environment, Rigby's perspective is based upon an understanding of 'the earth as unsayable' as a better strategy for protecting the earth ('Earth, World, Text: On the (Im)possibility of Ecopoiesis' 437). Taking such a view would seem to eliminate language from consideration. However, in her essay

‘Earth, World, Text’, Rigby deploys a Heideggerian vocabulary to ask ‘How then does the work of art “save” the earth by disclosing it as unsayable? It does so, I would suggest, precisely to the extent that it draws attention to its own status as text and hence as a mode of enframing’ (437). She describes that one way of performing negative ecopoetics’ keenly poststructuralist ‘nonequation of word and thing’ is through textual ‘moments of incoherence’ (437).

Rigby’s argument is comparable to the claims of Gillian Beer and Hugh Dunkerley that have been criticised in Chapter Four for their rather premature and relatively untheorised interpretations of Les Murray’s nonhumans as ‘beyond language’. However, while Rigby clearly recognises that ‘the world’s terms’ are ‘unsayable’ or ‘beyond language’, her attention to the ways in which a text might become self-conscious of itself, and how incoherence might have a role to play here, demonstrates a rather more detailed consideration of how to provoke an understanding of the environment ‘beyond language’. This attention to the possibility for language to become self-conscious of itself through incoherence has the potential to guide a new metaphorical strategy that highlights the environment’s non-identity or ‘unsayability’. This strategy is indicated, but by no means examined, in *Ecopoetics*, previously discussed in Chapter One. Here, Scott Knickerbocker attends to the writing of Richard Wilbur as a poet who uses poetic artifice as a way ‘to relate meaningfully to the natural world’ (2). He writes

> Only by observing the distinction between art and nature can the poet feel, in Wilbur’s view, what Stevens calls the “pressure of reality” pushing back against the poem: “I like the world to resist my ordering of it, so that I can feel it is real” (94)

Wilbur’s use of poetic language provokes the world to resist it, therefore creating a certain self-consciousness or reflexivity within the language that consequently affords a new appreciation of the world’s reality. Although Wilbur is not necessarily discussing metaphor, his understanding of poetic language as an ‘ordering’ of the environment has clear correspondences with the qualities of metaphor that concerned Miller and Perrin, such as its ability to ‘assemble’ or ‘force’ an image. Consequently, it becomes possible to consider how deliberately forcing metaphor – perhaps even to the point of Rigby’s suggestion of ‘incoherence’ – might cause the

metaphor to become self-questioning, self-reflexive, and prompt reconsideration of the real environment beyond language. In this way, self-reflexive metaphor responds to pedagogical calls for authenticity as it questions the concept of authenticity and suggests how authenticity might be reimagined as 'unsayability'.

Close readings of Jen Hadfield and Don McKay demonstrate the ways in which anthropocentrism plays a key role in producing self-reflexive metaphor. Jen Hadfield (1978 –), winner of the T.S. Eliot Prize in 2008, is a Shetland-based poet whose three poetry collections approach place and its nonhuman inhabitants. Writing as a T.S. Eliot judge, Andrew Motion describes Hadfield as having a 'jaunty, energetic, iconoclastic – even devil-may-care' attitude in her poems in his endorsement printed on the collection's back cover. However, Hadfield's playfulness is far from reckless. Rather, interviewed by Susan Mansfield, she explains that one guiding principle in her work is to explore 'those places where we overlap with the wilderness doing its own thing, messily usually' ('Northern Light'). Hadfield believes it is important to be honest about her own human perspective while being attentive to the independence of the environment. This is partly due to the writers who influence her: Scottish poets such as Edwin Morgan and Norman MacCaig who Hadfield sees as 'honest and humane' ('Abebooks Interviews Jen Hadfield'). Don McKay (1942 –) is a Canadian prize-winning poet with sixteen poetry collections to his name, and a well-regarded essayist. His literary influences come from Romantic and Chinese poetic traditions. However, these influences are often to be argued against by McKay, rather than followed. In his collected essays, *Vis à Vis*, McKay defines the problems, rather than the prospects of inheriting an 'Aeolian harpism' as it celebrates the imagination at the expense of the environment (26). Shown later in this chapter, McKay's approach to the environment and his thoughts on anthropocentrism reveal many correspondences with Hadfield's writing. Speaking to the discussion on pedagogical advice for authenticity and against metaphor, McKay states that 'Poetry is when language, which usually is our supreme tool for controlling and manipulating the world, reverses itself and becomes a listening post' ('Spring Collections'). As McKay's sense of reversal anticipates, his approach to language is key in developing the concept of a self-reflexive metaphor that is keenly receptive to the environment, rather than manipulative of it.

Given Hadfield's relatively recent emergence as a poet, literary critics have yet to provide a scholarly approach to her work. Reviews of Hadfield's work do, however, reveal interpretations of her writing that find her use of metaphor unfavourably anthropocentric, a perspective which this study seeks to challenge. In contrast, McKay has received much critical attention, including articles that frame his work in an ecopoetic context and focus upon his use of metaphor. In his book chapter, 'Translating Wilderness: Ecopoetics and the Poetry of Don McKay', Hugh Dunkerley establishes a parallel between McKay's use of language and Rigby's previously discussed work on negative ecopoetics. However, this parallel does not extend to examine the particular use of metaphor in McKay's writing, but rather comments broadly upon McKay's poems and essays. In his thesis, *Lyric Ethics*, Adam Dickinson focuses upon McKay's use of metaphor. Dickinson considers how McKay's use of metaphor casts an environment 'in the structures of a logic that is always insufficient', and so acknowledges the potential for metaphor to become self-conscious of its limitations. However, as Dickinson's argument discusses the 'is/is not' dynamic of metaphor in the larger context of McKay's style and subject matter, Dickinson neglects to examine the 'self-canceling' interactions inherent within McKay's actual metaphors (Rigby 437). Like his interpretation of Jorie Graham's phrase 'meanwhile' as metaphor (noted in Chapter Two), Dickinson interprets metaphor in McKay's writing upon the centres and 'unobserved margins' of places (45).

On first impressions, Kevin Bushell's essay 'Stretching Language toward Wilderness' appears to take a more theoretical approach to McKay's metaphors by attending to metaphor theorists such as Max Black. However, Bushell merely mentions theorists in passing and this lack of rigour anticipates Bushell's disappointing conclusion that neglects to explore the intricate inner-workings of McKay's metaphors. After arguing that McKay's metaphors problematise the act of translating environments, he concludes with a paradoxically positive assertion that his 'gift for metaphor […] helps us make this translation with conviction and delight' (78). McKay's act of translation of environments is rightly understood as problematic in Sophia Forster's article, 'Don McKay's Comic Anthropocentrism: Ecocentrism Meets "Mr. Nature Poet" '. However, Forster refrains from drawing key parallels between her brief analysis of metaphor and her more extended analysis

of humour in McKay's work. Arguing for the relationship between comedy and McKay's anthropocentrism in the most part of her essay, Forster remarks upon how McKay's use of humour deflates literary pretence in a similar way to his use of metaphor that engages with an extra-linguistic realm. However, deciding not to analyse the correspondence further appears to be a missed opportunity given that much of McKay's comic anthropocentrism is delivered through metaphor.

Hadfield's work deserves scholarly attention in general, but particular consideration needs to be paid towards her metaphors that compare and ultimately contrast human and nonhuman worlds. The state of scholarly research regarding McKay's use of metaphor necessitates a more thorough examination of his use of metaphor in view of ecocritical conceptualisations of environmental 'unsayability' and in terms of metaphor theory. In contrast to Adam Dickinson, these approaches also need to be carried out with close evaluation of the metaphors themselves. Furthermore, as suggested by the review of Forster's study, an analysis of how humour cooperates with metaphor in McKay's work is needed in order to identify the ways McKay accentuates metaphor's self-reflexive potential.

Opening McKay's recent collection, *Paradoxides* (2013), McKay's poem 'As If' introduces his understanding of metaphor. Describing the phrase 'as if' as 'unfurling fast and / fernlike', McKay suggests a plant-like action in which the likening process of metaphor is rooted, extendable and yet also able to recoil (4-5). He then goes on to describe an event that becomes the focus of the poem. He writes,

> Last winter, from a cliff
> along the coast, I saw a Milky Way
> strewn lavishly across the cove,
> twinkling in the chop (5-8)

However, as the speaker uses a pair of binoculars, the speaker finds that the Milky Way is not the Milky Way but 'eiders' that subsequently dive under the water:

> like this: as if, as if, as
> if that surface were the border - -
> suddenly porous - -
> between yes and no, so
> and not so (17-21)

As McKay creates an analogy between the eiders that are ultimately *not* the Milky Way and the physical disappearance of the eiders under the water, McKay draws attention to the simile as a literary device that only creates partial identification. Such a view sets up an attitude to metaphor that immediately contrasts the concerns of educators who claimed metaphor to be possessive.

This partial identification may be explained by the fact that McKay uses a simile that already appears self-conscious of the comparison it makes by not hiding its crucial 'like' the way metaphor does. However, McKay recognises how simile's hinge of 'yes and no' – of identity and non-identity – also applies to metaphor as, describing his writing of 'As If', he explains that metaphor 'allows us to be in a place where language is not asserting, it's not controlling' ('Spring Collections'). This comment might initially seem to be consistent with the previous chapter's examination of metaphor's 'is/is not' dynamic. However, in McKay's essay, 'Remembering Apparatus', collected in *Vis à Vis*, McKay takes his view of metaphor a stage further by explaining that 'Metaphor, and its related figures, use language's totalizing tendency against itself' (68). Moreover, McKay sees metaphor's challenge to language as a practice that ultimately 'un-name[s] its subject, reopening the question of reference' (69). As McKay increasingly finds metaphor to produce linguistic non-identity with its environmental counterpart – to come down more heavily on the 'no' or 'not so' of metaphor's hinge – metaphor becomes a reflexive means with which to reconsider the reality of the environment and apprehend what Rigby understands as reality's 'unsayability'.

McKay's 'Twinflower' collected in *Apparatus* (1997) illustrates how McKay's use of metaphor conveys linguistic non-identity with the environment. Close reading this poem helps to set up how self-reflexive metaphors can revise pedagogical understanding of authenticity by questioning the ability of language to define reality. The poem concentrates upon the act of naming the plant *Linnaea borealis* that is easily recognised by its small, usually pink, paired flowers. McKay draws attention to the first act of naming performed by Adam: 'Then God said, ok let's get this show / on the road, boy, get some names / stuck on these critters' (8-10). McKay's Adam is shown as 'testing his parent's / limit' as he takes his time observing the twinflowers:

engrossed in their gesture,
the two stalks rising, branching, falling back
into nodding bells, the fading arc
that would entrance Pre-Raphaelites and basketball.
Maybe he browsed among the possibilities of elves (23-24, 15-19)

This figurative exploration of the twinflower ends, and McKay turns to the later act of naming by Linnaeus, which leads McKay's speaker to 'find them in the field guide, and the bright / reticulated snaps of system will occur / as the plant is placed, so, among the honeysuckles' (39-41). The 'snaps' of system take on a threatening tone, particularly given that the subject is a delicate and presumably growing plant. McKay anticipates this threatening tone as he describes walking with field guides and binoculars as 'working on the same old problem, how to be both / knife and spoon' (30-34). McKay's use of 'knife' echoes Wordsworth's 'The Tables Turned' in which it is stated that 'Our meddling intellect / Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:— / We murder to dissect' (26-28). In comparison, McKay's 'spoon' suggests an openness to the thing itself. Sharply contrasting the pedagogical beliefs in factual engagements with environments examined in Chapter One, McKay finds the preconceived botanical understanding of the twinflower possessive and ultimately restrictive.

These snaps of system contrast to the figurative associations made by Adam between the twinflower and 'Pre-Raphaelites', 'basketball' and 'elves', and which continue later in the poem as McKay describes the twinflower as 'a shy / hoister of flags, a tiny lamp to read by, one / word at a time' (35-37). Like Mark Doty, McKay's proliferation of comparisons suggest the impossibility of fixing one stable description to the plant. Yet, focusing upon the anthropocentric quality within the metaphors affords an important step forward in terms of considering how metaphor becomes reflexive of the environment's 'unsayability'. Despite the variety of figurative associations, each association – such as basketball – is radically disconnected from common understandings of the natural world and consistent, instead, with Western popular culture. The odd juxtapositions seem to correspond to McKay's discussion in his essay, 'Remembering Apparatus', that metaphor 'reopen[s] the question of reference' through a metaphorical 'leap' that 'always says (besides its fresh comparison) that language is not commensurate with the

real, that leaps are necessary if we are to regain some sense of the world outside it' (69). Although it might be thought that all metaphors contain a leap by their creation of a category-mistake, McKay suggests that the leap can be exaggerated in order to question the description it is making. 'Twinflower' illustrates this possibility as it makes a deliberately unlikely leap between the natural world and the human world. This leap has a slightly jarring effect, prompting a sense of reflexivity that refocuses upon the reality of the thing – the twinflower – in question. As the very antithesis of the 'snaps of system', the leap performs a liberating linguistic act as it apprehends the environment's non-identity with language.

McKay's proposal of the leap is comparable with that proposed by Robert Bly, a poet from the US who redeveloped the Deep Image Movement into a school of poetry marked by its intense imagery that often has a dreamlike progression. In *Leaping Poetry* Bly argues for literature to return to leaping 'from the known part of the mind to the unknown part', and illustrates this with Surrealist writers such as Federico García Lorca and Pablo Neruda (1). '[T]he ability to associate fast', according to Bly, is key in leaping between the conscious and unconscious mind (4). McKay's practice corresponds to Bly's to some extent as it desires to move from what is known – or more precisely, assumed – via language, to what cannot be fully known. Yet, McKay has more points of contrast than points in common with Bly's leap. After all, McKay's aim is to draw attention to the limitations of language in representing the world. Furthermore, as 'Twinflower' suggests, the leap is not generated from the speed of the association but from a deliberate assembling of entities from different domains. As will be shown, in making the juxtaposition between human terms and the world's terms central to the leap, McKay's practice illustrates his statement in 'Baler Twine' that 'nature poetry should not be taken to be *avoiding* anthropocentrism, but to be enacting it, thoughtfully' (*Vis à Vis* 29).

In contrast to the argument so far, it could be said that the jarring effect created by these metaphors is only an unfortunate symptom of bad writing. As Ali Alizadeh is shown to argue in the next section, anthropocentrism in metaphor may simply lead to careless representation. However, given that McKay and Hadfield are deemed talented contemporary writers it is short-sighted not to ask whether these strained metaphors are deliberate, why and how these occur, and what productive effect might come from their contrariness. This point is accentuated

when considering how these writers frequently theorise their practice through interviews and essays and how the poems that contain the jarring metaphors are often self-reflexive poems that are about (or at least signal in other ways) the difficulty of representing the environment. Examining Hadfield's work with the latter point in mind affords the opportunity to explore her own approach to metaphor and anthropocentrism. This examination defends Hadfield's writing from possible accusations that it is simply 'bad', and leads to the discovery that particular aspects of metaphor criticised by educators are actually metaphor's opportunities to create Rigby's 'moments of incoherence'. Explaining how such linguistic incoherence provokes self-reflexivity towards the environmental subject in question, this metaphorical strategy develops pedagogical desires for authenticity by providing a new way of considering the real.

'Reaching Too Far': Incompatible Metaphor and the Question of Reference

As will be shown over the following pages, reviewers and interviewers responding to Hadfield's work have critiqued an anthropocentric quality in her poems. In contrast, the analysis of McKay's work has so far demonstrated that using human terms in figurative representations of the environment has the potential to provoke reflexivity and bring the reality of the environment to the fore. To develop this argument, it is important to assess how Hadfield approaches anthropocentrism and metaphor in terms of her fascination with wild creatures doing their 'own thing' despite human behaviour ('Northern Light').

'Daed-traa', collected in her second collection *Nigh-No-Place* (2008), introduces Hadfield's approach to these matters through her rather complex figurative comparison of a rockpool with the qualities of poetry that is undertaken through the medium of popular culture. The title of the poem is a Shetland dialect term that refers to the 'slack of the tide'.

> I go to the rockpool at the slack of the tide
> to mind me what my poetry's for.
>
> […]
>
> It has its theatre –

hushed and plush.

It has its Little Shop of Horrors.
It has its crossed and dotted monsters.

It has its cross-eyed beetling Lear.
It has its billowing Monroe. (1- 10)

Hadfield's mixed metaphors are difficult to pin down in 'Daed-traa' as they appear to 'leap' in a similar way to McKay's metaphors for the twinflower. The cinematic reference of the 'Little Shop of Horrors' suggests a comic violence to be found in the rockpool's creatures, which is made more specific by the 'crossed and dotted monsters' that invite consideration of the patterns of rockpool plant and animal life. Yet, this latter description also refers to writing as it presents an anthropomorphism of language by referring to the crossing of t's and dotting of i's in the writing process. The ambiguity and anthropocentricity of these metaphors increases: the 'cross-eyed beetling Lear' suggests a crab in the rockpool as well as madness in her writing practice that in turn evokes Shakespeare's Lear, Gloucester's speech on vision and blindness in *King Lear*, or even Edward Lear's love of nonsense. As Hadfield goes on to compare what might be a jellyfish to Marilyn Monroe, Hadfield's poem increasingly becomes the antithesis of Brenda Miller's pedagogical instruction to write 'on the world's terms and not my own'.

Hadfield defends her use of cultural reference points in her poems when she argues that it is important to be 'honest about the present tense that you live in' when looking at the environment (quoted by Ben Wilkinson). Challenging Miller's attempt at self-effacement, Hadfield draws attention to how disregarding a human point of view (perhaps involving Monroe and the *Little Shop of Horrors*) is dishonest, inauthentic and thus contradicts pedagogical intentions. Yet, conscious of Hadfield's use of these human terms for the environment in her metaphors, Zoe Brigley asks Hadfield in an interview 'How close do you think human beings are to nature? In poems like 'Daed-traa' […] nature seems to be a microcosm of human worlds?' ('Interview with the Poet'). Understanding this question as a potential critique of anthropocentrism in her work, Hadfield responds by stating 'That makes it sound like an inexcusable (on my part) extension of the pathetic fallacy'. Answering Brigley more fully, Hadfield is keen to explain that

> I certainly don't think of nature as a microcosm of the human world. But we maybe meet it as we do people from other cultures. We ask each other about our likenesses and our differences. We are obsessed with our likenesses and differences. At least when we are not afraid; and get beyond taking advantage…

Hadfield's discussion helps to provide a departure from pedagogical understandings of metaphor. As Hadfield's analogy for her use of metaphor in 'Daed-traa' helps to distinguish between exploring likeness and 'taking advantage', Hadfield argues that metaphor is not, as Miller sees it, an exclusively appropriating practice. Rather, by comparing her use of metaphor to the act of meeting people from other cultures, Hadfield suggests that the device can be deployed to explore 'differences'.

This sense of difference becomes more prominent in Hadfield's use of metaphor and anthropocentrism in 'Hedgehog, Hamnavoe'. Closely examining the poem contributes to the exploration of the self-reflexive metaphor and its ability to revise teachers' instructions for authenticity by considering the environment beyond language. Like 'Daed-traa', Hadfield's 'Hedgehog, Hamnavoe' uses a set of human terms to describe a particular creature. The speaker, returning from a night out, finds a hedgehog on the verge of a road and picks it up, 'Flinching in my hands' (1). Hadfield goes on to describe the hedgehog as 'a kidney flinching on a hot griddle / a very small Hell's Angel, peeled from the verge / of a sweet, slurred morning' (4-6). Like the implications of Brigley's interview question, Ali Alizadeh, who reviews *Nigh-No-Place*, comments that in this poem 'Hadfield's speaker has absolute power over the animal, and treats the powerless mammal like a plaything' ('Ali Alizadeh Reviews Jen Hadfield'). Alizadeh believes Hadfield is identifying the hedgehog in human terms and thus 'taking advantage' of the hedgehog. Yet, there is more to be drawn out from Hadfield's poem that challenges such an interpretation. Alizadeh states that the coddling of the hedgehog is enough to 'make anyone remotely sympathetic to animal rights cringe', but Hadfield's metaphor of the hedgehog 'flinching' on the 'hot griddle' of her hands already implies an uncomfortable dynamic at work. Furthermore, although the hedgehog is made into 'a very small Hell's Angel' by Hadfield (and Hadfield sanitises the term by adding an unnecessary apostrophe, presumably accidentally), this

anthropomorphic association has obvious resonances with counter-culture. Consequently, an identification is proposed between the hedgehog and the Hells Angel, but the identification is one that hints at unpredictability and possible rebellion.

This use of metaphor that hints at the hedgehog's own discomfort and resistance is taken a step further in Hadfield's conclusion that deliberately creates reflexivity in the figurative language proposed:

> Drunk, I coddle it like a crystal ball,
> hellbent the realistic mysteries
> should amount to more than guesswork
>
> and fleas. (7-10)

Using a simile that is, as previously mentioned, already self-conscious of the comparison it makes, Hadfield likens the hedgehog to a crystal ball. However, as Hadfield extends the figurative comparison by looking into the crystal ball, her comparison becomes questionable: it conceptually breaks down and physically breaks out of the otherwise consistent tercet form. The hedgehog resists further comparison to Hadfield's crystal ball and so produces a bathetic engagement with the different nature of the hedgehog that is represented by 'guesswork / and fleas'. Alizadeh argues that with such metaphors that liken animals to manmade things, Hadfield is expressing a 'desire to capture, own and control the wildlife for her, and her reader's amusement'. However, by utilising what Perrin criticised as a 'forced metaphor' and forcing the metaphor between the hedgehog and the crystal ball further, Hadfield creates a self-reflexivity in the metaphor that draws attention to the different and unknowable reality of the hedgehog.

The nature writing guidance given by David Petersen, who was shown to acknowledge the potential for metaphor to be egotistical in Chapter One, does concede that metaphor can 'add spice to the stew' (117). However, no sooner than agreeing to the prospect of metaphor, Petersen warns 'Beware the temptation to over-season […] Beware the metaphorical color purple […] Too many writers, reaching too far too fast […] Beware the mixed metaphor' (118). These criticisms of metaphor are, of course, nothing new: they present concerns about bad writing. It is possible that such uses of metaphor make the writing difficult to understand, or

produce an overly fantastic quality that works against the desire to produce a representation that is 'grounding', authentic. However, as 'Hedgehog, Hamnavoe' demonstrates, metaphors that are 'reaching too far' between the natural world and the human world have the potential to produce self-reflexivity that brings the different reality of the environment to the fore. This analysis of Hadfield's metaphor introduces the way in which metaphor can express Rigby's 'moments of incoherence'. After all, as Hadfield's simile strains, 'hellbent' on continuing the likeness between hedgehog and crystal ball, the comparison becomes incompatible. Drawing attention to the text that attempts and fails to order the subject, underlines what Rigby calls the 'otherness of the earth' (*Topographies* 119).

Examining other criticisms of metaphor enables further analysis as to how the figurative device might not simply create bad writing, but might create further forms of incompatibility that increase self-reflexivity and foster new considerations of the real. James E. Seitz's theoretical and pedagogical arguments in *Motives for Metaphor* assist this study. His work, seemingly neglected by pedagogical theory, aims to benefit composition studies by bringing it closer to literary studies and creative writing. Seitz believes this can be achieved through a particular understanding of metaphor. This understanding is informed by his reading of Roland Barthes's appreciation of fragmentation that, moving towards post-structuralism, challenges narrative coherence in order to produce further interpretation. Seitz makes clear that his own research is prompted by his position as a teacher of composition in the US and his frustration with the pedagogical impulsion for students to learn 'seamless coherence' (49). He argues that this coherence is often unrepresentative of reality: 'Multicultural textbooks, for instance, tend to organize their readings by way of "universal" themes – such as Family, Work, Death, etc. – that ultimately deny the significance of the very cultural differences that these textbooks ostensibly reveal' (95). Seitz goes on to explain that a way of challenging this coherence is through metaphor that deliberately combines 'things that are otherwise considered incompatible' and so necessitates consideration of inconsistency and, as will be shown, even dissimilarity (95).

In complaining about the pedagogical compulsion to identify and create coherent representations, Seitz remains aware of pedagogy's mistrust of

metaphor. According to Seitz, many guides to composition are, like Petersen's nature writing guide, careful to outline metaphor's potential to create bad writing. Sampling a number of these guides, Seitz pulls together several critiques of metaphor as ' "Trite," "overblown," "wrong," "incompatible," "laughable" – that's quite a list of reasons to keep away from metaphor altogether' (33). But these criticisms prompt Seitz to ask, 'how does one obey decorum with a figure whose very nature is to do otherwise?' (36). Stating that metaphor 'represents language at its most vulnerable moment' Seitz corresponds to McKay's understanding of metaphor as using 'language's totalizing tendency against itself' (41). With this in mind, Seitz goes on to discuss the productive pedagogical capacity of metaphor that uses this linguistic vulnerability and 'values the difference between its terms' (103).

Seitz's understanding of metaphor's engagement with difference provides further support in developing the concept of a self-reflexive metaphor to rethink pedagogical instruction and draw new attention to environments. Arguing against the Literalist School of metaphor that, as explained in the Introduction to this thesis, believes metaphor presents a likeness that can be paraphrased in literal terms, Seitz explains

> If the act of identification "goes all the way," without any recognition of the differences between this and that, then the dialogue between reader and text has ended before it even begins, with no space for the exploration of further relationships: this simply is that – and nothing more need be said. (125)

Seitz recognises that a full identification between two entities curtails the potential for students to explore the compared entities further. In contrast, metaphors that do not create a coherent identification can provoke further dialogue between the reader and the text. In turn, the very criticisms of metaphor that Seitz collected – such as metaphor as 'wrong' or 'laughable' – transform into qualities that provoke perceptions of difference, dissimilarity, and thus allow dialogue with the referent to be kept open.

However, Seitz does not explain how this dialogue between reader and text (prompted by an incompatible metaphor) is comprised of another dialogue within the text itself. Returning to the metaphor theory of Max Black helps to clarify the

dialogue between the metaphorical vehicle and tenor that underpins Seitz's understanding of dialogue, and anticipates further examinations of metaphor's self-reflexivity in the following section. Initially examined in Chapter One, Black argues for an interactive theory of metaphor: he gives the example of 'describing a battle in words drawn as largely as possible from the vocabulary of chess' and finds that in this figurative process 'The chess vocabulary filters and transforms: it not only selects, it brings forward aspects of the battle' ('Metaphor' 289). Yet, depending upon the entities compared, this interaction does not always work. As seen in Hadfield's 'Hedgehog, Hamnavoe', the vehicle of the crystal ball can only go so far in filtering and transforming the hedgehog tenor. In turn, the attempted interaction results in more incoherence than coherence. This incompatibility between the vehicle and the tenor is taken to an extreme in McKay's poem ' – deer', collected in *Long Sault* (1975) and presented here in full:

> and came that morning down the dusty road
> into the deer's
> virginity –
> gone, white flag flashed
> did you see it flashed
> like a
> like a fridge left crisp & clean in the mind
> all day (1-8)

The 'white flag flashed' has several ways of linguistically filtering the deer's tail, such as through colour and speed. Yet, McKay appears to find this comparison inadequate and wants to describe the flashing of the deer's tail further. His repetitive 'like a / like a' expresses hesitance or frustrated desire in representing the deer's tail. The comparison he finally settles upon, between the deer's tail and a fridge, brings the human world and the natural world together, but the metaphor has minimal interactive potential. Once again, this could simply be symptomatic of bad writing: a careless metaphor. However, the way in which McKay anticipates this metaphor with a sense of frustration at language (like a / like a) suggests that this incoherent metaphor is a realisation of language's non-identity with the environment. McKay's enormous leap between the metaphor's vehicle and tenor means that the metaphor challenges Miller's belief that metaphor creates representations that are 'too assembled'. Indeed, McKay's incompatible vehicle

and tenor means the metaphor disassembles itself. In prompting thought as to whether a deer's tail *really* is like a fridge and realising there is little to hold this description together, the metaphor prompts thought on what the deer's tail is actually like in the real world outside of the text.

This understanding of how language might invalidate itself and produce consideration of the real world corresponds to a nature writing exercise proposed by Mark Cocker. Furthermore, focusing upon metaphor as a key device with which to create this self-reflexivity provides a literary style for Cocker's exercise that is otherwise lacking. Describing the priorities of a nature writer, Cocker states 'you've got to strive for an observation that is authentic' and explains that in order to do so 'you've got to move beyond what is immediately to hand, [what] immediately arises to you'; in particular 'fight against cliché and received ideas' (Personal Interview). In order to do this Cocker recalls an exercise he believes Ted Hughes first deployed in which students were asked to 'look at a cow until the word cow became utterly meaningless, until they'd moved beyond the word to the thing itself'. Although Cocker's conceptualisation of authenticity as 'that beyond language' is surprisingly close to Rigby's understanding of the 'unsayability' of the environment, Cocker's exercise remains a perceptual exercise that cannot be transferred to the page. McKay's use of metaphor provides this bridge as, ultimately invalidating itself through its incompatible comparison of natural and domestic subjects, it draws attention to the representational limitations of the text, and provokes thought upon the 'thing itself' – in this case, the deer's tail.

These analyses of Hadfield and McKay have established how metaphoric incompatibility can afford reflexivity between the text and its subject in a way that recovers the real world beyond language. This provides a new way of approaching authenticity; a concept that teachers hope will guide students' writing about the environment. Yet, what has not yet been examined is how humour often works in these metaphors by McKay, and how humour encourages self-reflexivity to take place. Furthermore, while metaphor's self-reflexivity has been analysed in terms of how it illuminates the 'unsayability' of environments and their inhabitants, attention needs to be paid to how this self-reflexivity also draws attention to the anthropocentrism deployed in the metaphor. Attending to this point affords an opportunity to explore how the self-reflexive metaphor can increase awareness

about environments and the issues affecting them.

'Laughable' Metaphor and Reflecting upon Anthropocentric Attitudes

As established, most nature writing strategies in pedagogy warn against metaphor in striving for an authentic observation in which the world can 'remain as it is, firmly itself'. In turn, this suggests that a plainer diction might be closer to identifying the real environment. However, the belief that even this plainer language cannot fully identify the 'world's terms' is apparent not only in Rigby's ecocritical argument and Cocker's exercise, but also echoed in Mary Edwards Wertsch's exercise, 'What Is the Voice That Whispers?', collected in *The Alphabet of the Trees*. Contrasting Allison B. Wallace who, as previously examined, asks her students to match their observations of birds to *The Audubon Society Field Guide*, Wertsch makes clear that she wants to make a poem 'made of questions' rather than identifications (168). Wertsch models her exercise upon Pablo Neruda's *The Book of Questions* and draws attention to lines such as

> Are they birds or fish
> in these nets of moonlight?
>
> At what does the watermelon laugh
> when it's murdered? (169)

Instructing her students to go outside and explore their environments, Wertsch is keen for them to return with 'questions that are exciting, that get you to think. The kind of questions I mean are wondering questions that spin a bit in your head, perhaps surprise you, and are certainly not easy to answer' (169). Like Cocker who wishes his students to repeat the word 'cow' until it becomes meaningless and thus approach environmental authenticity, Wertsch values an engagement with the environment that goes beyond 'received ideas and cliches' and towards a dizzying sense of uncertainty. As Wertsch hopes that such questions will invite 'the reader to reflect on the words' and 'get you to think', her exercise suggests a subtle correspondence with the explorations into language's potential to deny a full

identification with its subject and, in doing so, prompt reflection upon the subject beyond language (171, 169).

However, Wertsch does not seem to recognise the level of uncertainty that her exercise fosters in her students' observations of the environment. This is not helped by the lack of context she gives Neruda that could have explained how his writing, including *The Book of Questions*, is influenced by Surrealism. After all, rather than the questions being 'not easy to answer', the questions that are to be modelled after Neruda's questions are likely to be impossible to answer. Moreover, Wertsch does not fully comprehend how this uncertainty is created. Wertsch asserts that it is the 'compelling form of a question' that prompts an 'invitation to the reader to reflect on the words' (171). However, as the analysis of Hadfield and McKay – helped by the theory of Seitz and Black – has shown, the words themselves can produce incoherence or incompatibility that provokes consequent reflection. Wertsch attempts to clarify that 'the combination of concrete images and abstract questioning is inherently powerful' (172). However, with this explanation, Wertsch fails to communicate the abstract quality of the highly figurative *images*. After all, if the content of the question were literal then it would not invite any of the reflection that Wertsch intends, but merely afford a literal response.

Wertsch emphasises the device of the question as she asks her students to consider journalism's ' "Five W's" (Who? What? When? Where? How?)', and reminds her students of phrasings such as 'Does it seem?' and 'Will I?' (170). This attention to the possibilities of using questions neglects the possibilities of the language contained in the question. Furthermore, Wertsch's sampling of Neruda's work fails to recognise how humour features in Neruda's figurative language. Other examples from *The Book of Questions* demonstrate this, such as when Neruda writes 'where did the full moon leave / its sack of flour tonight?' and 'Why do leaves commit suicide / when they feel yellow?' (1, 5). Although the question mark catalyses the act of reflecting upon these lines, the subtly humorous tension between the full moon and the flour that plays with the contrast between cosmic and domestic subjects provokes reflection in itself. Humour also plays a role in Neruda's anthropomorphic attempt to describe the leaves. There is a comic tension between human terms and 'the world's terms' as societal preconceptions regarding colour and mood jar with the environment.

Questioning Wertsch's exercise in this way not only clarifies the importance of figurative language in creating self-reflexivity, but also apprehends how humour in this figurative language assists self-reflexivity. Humour is, after all, also present in the leaps McKay makes between the twinflower, basketball and the Pre-Raphaelites. In her essay on McKay, Sophia Forster apprehends the comic quality of McKay's anthropocentricity. She argues against ecocritical arguments on comedy's integrating force,[49] and claims that, as comedy recognises 'incongruity or disjunction', it is accompanied by 'a mental readjustment that never quite familiarizes that incongruity' (112). Discovering that this incongruity serves to disrupt the literary representation, Forster asserts that this humour deflates literary pretence. Quite simply then, the comic quality of the representation means the representation is not to be taken seriously. However, Forster does not fully identify how these claims are also pertinent to metaphor. This is surprising given that comic incongruity is not so far away from metaphorical incoherence and, moreover, because McKay's metaphors frequently express this humour. Forster seems aware of this latter point as she explains 'McKay's humour often depends on his use of outlandish metaphors' and goes on to state that 'such metaphors remind us that we are not *discovering* meaning in, but *making* meaning of the world around us' (127). From this point of view, Forster might be anticipating how humour and metaphor work together to create self-consciousness of the artificiality of the representation. However, Forster does not clarify this correspondence and does not go far enough in explaining what effect this self-consciousness might have (127).

In 'Morning Prayer Ending with a Line Borrowed from the Holiday Inn', collected in *Birding, or Desire* (1983) McKay describes

> a treeful of starlings, speckled and
> oily as comic book germs or high school wiseguys, mocks
> the whole dumb enterprise –
> words!' (11-14)

This is a good example of how humour and anthropocentrism are practiced through metaphor and how humour helps to provoke the self-reflexivity of the

[49] See Joseph Meeker's ecocritical argument on 'comic integration' in *The Comedy of Survival*.

metaphor. There is a ridiculous quality to the metaphor that is set up by the metaphorical vehicles that have inherent associations with comedy (comic book, wiseguys). If McKay were to compare the starlings to 'germs' or 'teenagers' the metaphor would be quite different: perhaps taken with a little more sobriety. Instead, by using these comic terms, McKay's metaphor creates an exaggeration that draws attention to its own artifice. The following line of McKay's poem invites further interpretation in this vein. McKay's description could be indicating that the starlings mock the dumb (i.e. mute) enterprise of words because of the garrulous sounds they make. On the other hand, McKay's description suggests that it could be the figurative description of the starlings that mocks language. Pursuing the latter point, the figurative description involving comic books and wiseguys draws attention to itself as a text – an exaggeration, an artifice – and in doing so realises the environment is elsewhere. This interpretation of McKay's metaphor is given further support when considering how McKay describes humour and metaphor in his aforementioned essay 'Baler Twine'. Here he explains his belief that nature poetry should involve 'an extra metaphorical stretch and silliness of language as it moves toward the other, dreaming its body' (31). The humour, or 'silliness', is involved with a metaphorical 'stretch' or 'leap' and so is a quality that assists the process of reopening the question of reference. In turn, the 'laughable' quality of McKay's metaphors accentuates the metaphor's reflexive potential to consider 'the other': the real environment outside of language.

So far the effect of mocking the 'whole dumb enterprise – words!' via self-reflexive metaphor has been scrutinised in terms of renewing attention to the reality of environments and nonhuman animals outside of language. This corresponds to the outcome outlined by Rigby's arguments on 'unsayability' in a way that questions and reimagines pedagogical calls for authenticity. However, the question of how this self-reflexivity of metaphor might also reflect upon the anthropocentricity involved in the metaphors remains to be addressed. After all, although these metaphors might be described in Rigby's terms as 'self-canceling' (437), up until that moment of self-cancellation or disassembly, they provoke a tussle between their terms (as suggested previously in the discussion of Black's interaction theory and McKay's metaphor between the deer's tail and the fridge). Pursuing the question of how the self-reflexive metaphor might reflect upon its

human terms affords the opportunity to point out how the self-reflexive metaphor might lead to consideration of environmental issues. As has been shown across the chapters of this thesis, and most pertinently in the previous chapter, seminar leaders are often apprehensive of this engagement with issues while simultaneously hopeful that their students will leave their courses with their attitudes changed.

The potential for the self-reflexive metaphor to reflect upon its anthropocentric content comes to the fore when returning to Seitz's previous discussion of dialogue in metaphor. After explaining the significance of engaging with difference and dissimilarity (and not with a full identification) in metaphor, Seitz describes how this emphasis on difference requires students to be '*spectators of their own forms of participation*' (126). Seitz draws attention to the way in which students become conscious of their own involvement in the metaphor; of where they see the metaphor working and where they see the metaphor going 'too far', of where it is apt and where it is inappropriate. Seitz's conceptualisation of the student as spectator has repercussions for the earlier discussion on anthropocentrism as it suggests how McKay's poems might prompt consideration of where the human terms in the metaphor go too far and become inappropriate in relation to the environment they are trying to represent. Thus, rather than metaphor playing into pedagogical fears of metaphor's appropriation of environments, the self-reflexive metaphor provides a way of engaging with these tensions. The comparison between the deer's tail and the fridge, or the starlings and the comic book germs, engenders a kind of awkwardness and discomfort at the identification proposed. This awkwardness has so far been examined with regard to its ability to provoke thought on the real world outside of language, but in order to understand where this awkwardness comes from, and attempt to resolve it, an understanding of where the metaphor's human terms dominate and conflict with the environmental subject is required.

In prompting consideration of this tension, McKay's metaphors not only highlight the environment outside language, but also highlight the capacity of human terms to be appropriative of the environment. With regard to the latter, it is possible to interpret the self-reflexive metaphors by McKay as models with which to think about environmental issues in which societal behaviour imposes upon the

physical environment. Chapter Three's analysis of Juliana Spahr's exploration of 'the problems of analogy' has some bearing here. As examined, Spahr reveals the capacity of analogy to assume likeness and neglect difference and records the detrimental effects of this in the context of Hawai'i's colonisation. Spahr's use of the online translation machine was shown to enact analogy and demonstrate its distortive power. With a different, but complementary approach that apprehends the tensions in forcing likeness between two different entities, McKay's metaphors bring similar concerns to light. As the self-reflexive metaphor increases awareness of how human terms conflict with the environment, it offers a prompt to think about how this conflict takes place physically. Examples of this are not hard to find all over the world: industrial developments radically alter existing nonhuman habitats, and chemical changes to the water resulting from a range of practices (from birth-control to agriculture) change the gender of marine life. In becoming self-conscious of how human terms clash with the environment in literary representations, McKay's metaphors have the potential to foster self-consciousness of how human behaviour might uncomfortably encroach upon the environment. McKay's metaphor between the deer's tail and the fridge is particularly useful in illustrating this possibility as it evokes fly-tips in natural environments.

Of course, this interpretation of McKay's poems that finds likeness between linguistic and physical tension also relies on metaphor and this should not be forgotten. There are, after all, many differences between a metaphor forcing human terms upon the environment and, say, a community polluting a nearby river. However, in establishing the potential for the self-reflexive metaphor to introduce thought on these environmental issues apprehends a creative way of developing pedagogical instruction. Chris Kinsey states that her students often 'cute-sify things and I will challenge that' (Personal Interview). She explains this problem further as 'seeing things in human terms or appropriating or giving qualities that aren't there – like one student who responded to wolves with ' "aw cute" '. As mentioned previously, these factors have the potential to produce bad writing. Yet, McKay and Hadfield show how taking these human terms to an extreme in their writing about the environment can prompt reflexivity that refocuses upon the environment and realises how these human terms cause conflict with the environment. As this linguistic conflict has been examined in terms of physical conflict, these metaphors

respond to pedagogical intentions to engage their students with issues.

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This chapter has identified a recurring instruction for authenticity in nature writing. Questioning its claim to reality and the literary styles that teachers both advise and warn against in order to create authenticity, I analysed Kate Rigby's ecocritical argument on negative ecopoetics to find further support for an alternative approach to the environment. Through examination of Rigby's description of textual incoherence, it was possible to consider how the tensions in metaphor might be manipulated in order to create a self-reflexive metaphor that draws attention to the reality of environments outside language. Close readings of poetry by Jen Hadfield and Don McKay afforded a demonstration of how anthropocentrism and humour create productive tensions and enable the self-reflexive metaphor to occur. Consequently, this chapter has offered another alternative strategy to those frequently offered by teaching which, based on metaphor, affords a new understanding of the environment.

Investigating the productive tensions that anthropocentrism can generate in metaphor has challenged pedagogical views held by educators such as John Elder and Brenda Miller who proposed somewhat naïve and thus problematic prescriptions for authenticity in nature writing. This investigation of anthropocentrism in metaphor has led to the examination of incompatibility and humour as qualities that emphasise reflexivity and thus develop pedagogical ideas of authenticity by recognising reality as different, non-identifiable through language, 'unsayable'. As the latter stages of this argument have shown, the incompatible or laughable qualities of metaphor also reflect upon the anthropocentrism that causes such tension within the metaphors in the first place. Suggested as a model for consideration of physical acts of imposition upon the environment, the self-reflexive metaphor has the potential to approach discussions of environmental issues in which human behaviour detrimentally interferes with the environment. These findings not only extend Rigby's understanding of negative ecopoetics to include metaphor, but in doing so they greatly develop the productive effects of Rigby's interest in linguistic 'moments of incoherence'.

Establishing that the pedagogical criticisms of metaphor are potentially productive qualities has cleared a space to examine metaphor's tensions more thoroughly. The argument has determined three points to assist further scholarship beyond this thesis. The first of these points has shown how the concept of authenticity might be questioned and redefined in terms of 'unsayability' as a new way of representing reality. This is complemented by a second point that has identified how this awareness of non-identity does not attempt to write humans out of the environment, but, rather, reflects upon the differences between the human world and the natural world and the capacity for human terms to impose upon the environment. A third and final point demonstrates the significance of metaphor as a 'self-canceling' device that, far from being unaware of its process, highlights its own tensions.

Conclusion

In what follows, I provide an overview of what this thesis has established: revisit the chapters, highlight what they have demonstrated, and then explain how this work speaks to current debates. This thesis has addressed an omission within nature writing pedagogy. While educators are intent upon drawing attention to the environment and fostering responsibility of it, this research has explored the limitations of their recurring instructions and, using ecocriticism, established how these approaches might be revised in order to enrich environmental engagements. This research has focused upon challenging predominant prescriptions in pedagogy that depend, broadly speaking, upon 'direct perception', and so dismiss metaphor as an appropriative and fantastical device. In addition, it has taken issue with the disparity between teachers' desires to raise awareness of environmental issues and their misgivings that inhibit this process. Having questioned current prescriptions for fact and authenticity, as well as local and personal approaches to nature writing, this thesis has proposed alternative strategies that, based on the rich capacities of metaphor, serve to develop new perspectives of environments and thus expand environmental thought.

It has been possible to make this contribution through an integrated approach that brings together different fields that have little, if any, existing dialogue. By examining material from a range of teachers I was able to answer the first of my research questions that asked what prescriptions dominate pedagogy and what are their shortcomings. It has been argued that pedagogical advice for 'direct perception – not creative, but precise' has continued an unnecessary dualism between a kind of scientific writing and writing that draws from the imagination. Mark Cocker continues the prescription as he explains the need 'to make the lines between you and the outside world as short as possible and direct as possible' (Personal Interview). Yet, as demonstrated by this thesis, a direct line to the environment is impractical when considering how the environment and the issues affecting it challenge the very acts of perception and representation. Answering my second research question has accentuated this latter point. Having asked how recent ecocritical thought can offer alternative approaches to

environments, this thesis has demonstrated the ways ecocritics focus upon a range of environments and explore the representational challenges they pose, which in turn necessitate new literary styles. Exploring ecocriticism in this way has afforded a series of starting points from which to depart from current pedagogy and build alternative strategies.

These strategies are underpinned by the belief that 'We need to look again and find language' for the world, as Charles Tomlinson was shown to describe in Chapter One. Through close readings of twentieth and twenty-first century poets, I have been able to answer my third and final research question on how metaphor affords new understandings of the environment. These close readings focused upon the poets' self-conscious uses of metaphor that respond to the 'variegated excess' (Tomlinson) and 'ongoingness' of environments (Jorie Graham); narratives and interconnections within environments; environments that 'seem' (Mark Doty); and environments beyond language, in order to establish alternative strategies to those currently proposed by educators. By identifying continuities in the way metaphor is used within an otherwise unusual group of poets, this thesis demonstrates the importance of challenging the pedagogical canon of nature writing and explains what might be learnt from writers who have not, in the case of Tomlinson, Fisher and Doty, been previously thought of as 'environmental'. Through analysis of these writers, existing arguments on metaphor in recent ecocriticism by Scott Knickerbocker and Adam Dickinson have been developed. Furthermore, by complementing these studies with metaphor theory, it has been possible to formulate a clear set of claims on the potential of metaphor in environmental writing.

The introduction of this thesis summarised pedagogy's short history and current state, the development of ecocriticism, and the problems and prospects of metaphor in representing the environment. This informed Chapter One, which highlighted the dualism that exists in nature writing education between factual accuracy and 'narcissistic' metaphor. This dualism has been challenged by establishing the referential capacity of metaphor to produce accurate representations of environments, and, in Tomlinson's words, create 'the improvement of truth' by responding to nuances within the environment that might otherwise go unnoticed. Tomlinson's metaphorical practice demonstrated an

attention to the particularity of environments: the sea that is ‘pine-branch’ blue, or ‘A leek – or apple-green chalcedony’. Far from egotistical, Tomlinson suggests that finding such figurative language for the world is an act of servitude. Responding to pedagogical hopes and fears for addressing environmental issues in the classroom, this study established that using such a practice of metaphor to represent nuances in the environment might prompt engagement with ideas on biodiversity. Chapter Two questioned pedagogical emphasis upon the personal ‘I’ in nature writing for its potential to distract from the environment and introduce the very egotistical imposition that teachers fear of metaphor. Suggesting the way the ‘I’ might potentially change the environment by misrepresenting it, this study has argued for the importance of figuratively becoming other ‘I’s in order to conceive of changes happening in environments. Studying how Jorie Graham figuratively casts her ‘eye out / to see’ into the future, and how apostrophe becomes central to much of this work, attested to the potential for another metaphorical strategy that could address environmental issues. Moving from the personal, present ‘I’ to addressing and becoming a future human demonstrated a strategy for engaging with future environments affected by pollution, extinction and climate change.

Having described a strategy with which to extend perception from the present to the future, Chapter Three focused upon extending perception from the local to the global. Challenging the emphasis tutors put on engaging with local environments without foregrounding the connections between local place and other places, close examination of Juliana Spahr’s poetry has shown how both synecdoche and analogy create (or reveal) connection between places. This argument on perceiving the connections between places develops the kind of responsibility that educators hope to generate for local places. Indeed, highlighting links between the local and the global enables consideration of environmental issues that cross such spatial frames through their causal chains. Having analysed interactions between temporal and spatial frames, Chapter Four examined the potential for interactions between humans and nonhumans through anthropomorphism. This study contested widespread pedagogical disapproval of anthropomorphism as a figurative device that wrongly identifies animals and humans. It was then argued, conversely, that anthropomorphism can apprehend the difference between human and animal experience. Studying the

anthropomorphic practices of Les Murray and Roy Fisher showed how animals and materials can be shown to have different voices and narratives to those of humans. This prompted examination as to how anthropomorphism might enrich educators' ideas on responsibility as imagining animal voices can prompt thought on how animals are threatened, and imagining material narratives enables consideration of the threatening capacities of matter, which societies are often accountable for.

Chapter Five questioned what educators mean when they call for 'wonder' in nature writing and highlighted the possible shortcomings of this unexplained instruction. The study proposed defining these prescriptions for wonder with ecocritical calls for uncertainty that stress how the environment escapes human logic and language. Close readings of Mark Doty's poems, that attend to indeterminate and shape-shifting environments through metaphor, demonstrated how metaphor's 'is/is not' dynamic expresses uncertainty. The argument was taken a step further by suggesting how it might apply to climate change. Identifying pedagogical anxiety about engaging students with environmental issues, a strategy that utilised metaphor to recognise climate change as a shape-shifting entity was proposed. Chapter Six took this concept of uncertainty further as it deployed ecocritical ideas on the 'unsayability' and 'non-identity' of environments in view of literary attempts to represent it. These theories were used to question the concept of authenticity advocated by educators. This enabled discussion on the possibility for a self-reflexive metaphor that uses deliberate anthropocentrism and humour to invalidate itself and recognise the environment as beyond language. In analysing self-reflexive metaphors in the poetry of Don McKay and Jen Hadfield, it was argued that the self-reflexive metaphor not only draws attention to the environment outside language, but also prompts valuable thought on both literary and physical attempts to appropriate the environment via its anthropocentric quality.

This thesis has not claimed to be an exhaustive study, but has sought to identify predominant prescriptions in pedagogy and to open up new ways of writing about environments. The alternative engagements based on synecdoche and analogy, for example, might foster a new awareness of environments outside of the writing process, or they might structure a piece of prose. Likewise, the self-reflexive metaphor could punctuate a piece of creative nonfiction, or inspire a poem. Further studies might focus upon other recurring instructions by educators, such as their

seemingly unchecked prescription to write about the 'wild' that was touched upon in Chapter Four's argument on anthropomorphism. Similarly, additional studies could be made on figurative devices that challenge 'direct perception': for instance, hyperbole and oxymoron might be examined in terms of what they can offer to environmental thought. Indeed, a sense of oxymoron might be interpreted in the work of US poet Linda Russo, whose recent collection, *Meaning to Go to the Origin in Some Way*, contrasts preserved grasslands in Idaho with Walmart construction sites and so challenges understandings of the wild. Metaphor causes such suspicion and concern in pedagogy that it begs to be questioned and demands careful reconsideration in the manner of this thesis. However, to some degree the suspicion of metaphor and the argument to reconsider it represent a wider suspicion of creativity in pedagogy and the need to rethink this creativity in a more positive light. In turn, it is expected that the contribution this study makes will not only influence educational attitudes toward metaphor, but also prompt wider examination as to how other forms of literary creativity have the potential to reconceive of environments – without necessarily misrepresenting them. This broader sense of literary creativity might range from rhythm and rhyme to storytelling and myth – the latter of which Nancy Campbell's recent poetry collection, *Disko Bay*, uses to engage with the shores of Greenland. Likewise, pedagogical strategy might be examined and developed by considering the potential of fantasy writing and science fiction. Recent novels such as *The Water Knife* by Paolo Bacigalupi demonstrate techniques to imagine the socio-economic effects of environmental issues. Lastly, Jonathan Skinner's views on ecopoetics could be pursued and expanded to show how other educators might include more experimental practices to inform nature writing and how these practices might draw attention to environments and foster new relationships with them.

The study I have conducted comes at a time when the need to write about the environment is greatly discussed, but the question of how to do so is much debated. The 'new nature writing' movement, led by Granta in 2008, and discussed briefly in this thesis, leads some of this debate in the UK. Due to the popularity of recent texts, such as Helen Macdonald's *H Is for Hawk*, the new nature writing has had much exposure in the national media. As explained in Chapters One, Two and Four, 'new nature writing' has made some departure from traditional nature writing

in its choice of theme and, to some extent, its style. Yet, much misgiving arises from these choices. In May 2015, Richard Smyth expressed antagonism toward lyricism in nature writing in his article, 'The Limits of Nature Writing', published in the *Times Literary Supplement*. He criticises the way 'Page after page is dotted with too-carefully chosen "lyrical" words'. Although the words he draws attention do not quite evoke this thesis's argument on metaphor (he draws attention to words such as 'sluice' and 'knapped'), the notion that it is possible to 'too-carefully' choose words in nature writing oddly suggests that a lazier kind of writing might be preferable. Likewise, in describing the popularity of the new nature writing movement two months earlier in *The Guardian*, Jamie Doward quotes Richard Mabey, the influential nature writer, who calls for literary 'restraint' in this movement: 'The highest objective', according to Mabey, 'is to let what is out there speak to us clearly in its own terms' ('Hawks, Butterflies, Coasts and Footpaths'). Here, Mabey is worried by writing that is not about nature, but about the self. While this resonates with Chapter Two's discussion about the personal 'I', Mabey's objective also claims that it is possible to write on nature's 'terms' and so resonates with Brenda Miller's angst regarding metaphor when she wanted to write on 'the world's terms'. Contested in Chapter Six, it was established that such an intention is impractical. Having distinguished between metaphor and the ego, and disputed the possibility of writing on 'the world's terms', this study offers some clarification to this current debate.

There also remains a question as to whether the 'new nature writing' is doing enough to engage with climate change. In June 2015, Mark Cocker called the movement 'tame' and declared 'Nature writers must ponder and engage with these troubling realities. Otherwise, we are just fiddling while the agrochemicals burn' ('Death of the Naturalist'). This call for writing about environmental issues has been paralleled by ecocritics, who, in Winter 2014, in the chief US ecocritical journal, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, made an explicit 'Call to Writers' that asked for writers to respond to environmental crises. This call comprised several options for writers to follow. Evoking the argument in Chapter Two and Four, one option suggested empathically taking the perspective of another. Yet, the prescriptions offered by this 'Call' were dominated by polemic: 'the drum-headed pamphlet' and the 'broken-hearted hallelujah' (6). This thesis has

taken issue with the belief that an engagement with issues necessarily prompts polemic, as Robert Macfarlane has also critiqued. Weary of the potential for environmental polemic that he sees Mark Cocker proposing in his earlier article, Macfarlane states that an engagement with issues that 'must be noisily game-changing [is] wrong' ('Robert Macfarlane: Why We Need Nature Writing'). Having challenged Jim Perrin's pedagogical presumption that attending to issues would create 'polemic' in Chapter One, and Sheryl St. Germain's concern that focusing on these issues will be 'depressing' in Chapter Five, this thesis offers strategies to engage with environmental issues that arise subtly from other engagements. Moreover, the strategies proposed by this thesis aim to deliver a more positive approach to issues in emphasising a creative response to the issue by, for example, using metaphor to engage with ideas on biodiversity and to appreciate the shape-shifting uncertainty of climate change.

Poetry and fiction are also deeply involved in the call for writers to engage with environmental issues. Since the publication of several ecopoetry anthologies, with the most recent including *Entanglements: New Ecopoetry* (2012) and *The Ecopoetry Anthology* (2013), the genre of ecopoetry continues to grow in prominence. The Resurgence Trust – an educational charity that encourages environmental debate on the arts, as well as on social and political action – opened the first international ecopoetry prize in 2015. As stated in their publicity material, the Resurgence Ecopoetry Prize aims to provoke 'concern for the ecological imperatives of our time' and is expected to continue annually. The growing genre of climate change fiction, or 'cli-fi' as popularised by literary commentator Scott Simons in 2013, [50] stresses the need for fiction to engage with the issue of climate change. The emergence of this genre has, however, not been without concern as to how to represent the issue. As Benjamen Kunkel claimed in *The New Yorker* in October 2014, engaging with climate change poses 'tremendous problems for imaginative literature' ('Inventing Climate Change Literature'). Ecocritics have also joined the discussion here: Adam Trexler argues in *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*, much cli-fi takes a 'parochial' view in 'describing the collapse of the global economy and a return to village localism'

[50] See 'Global Warming: the Rise of "Cli-Fi" ' by Rodge Glass on the debate concerning the origin of the term 'cli-fi'.

(10). Furthermore, he argues against the term 'cli-fi' that suggests a narrow view of the issues faced today, and proposes the need for 'anthropocene fiction' that responds to a number of environmental crises connected with, and distinct from, climate change.

While speaking to these debates, this thesis chiefly aims to contribute to the ways in which nature writing is taught. Nature writing courses have continued to appear during the writing of this thesis and, given comments by the educators I interviewed, these courses will continue, and potentially expand, in the future. For example, in the UK the University of Kent, Glasgow University, and Sheffield Hallam University have begun to offer, or have developed, classes and courses in nature writing. Likewise in the US, the University of Utah, the University of New England and Eastern Oregon University are now offering nature writing as an option. Furthermore, Sheryl St. Germain discusses how Chatham University hopes to expand the program and offer a class on sustainability that will complement her teaching on nature writing. Yet, these developments do not exhibit any particular shift in pedagogical strategy that would contrast the courses represented in the thesis, or acknowledge any of the recent developments summarised above, such as the emergence of cli-fi. Indeed, at the most recent UK-Ireland conference for the Association of Study of Literature and Environment in September 2015, Harriet Tarlo who teaches nature writing at Sheffield Hallam raised concerns over the 'lyric ego'. Moreover, a panel comprised of the seminar leader, James Canton, and students from the Wild Writing Masters course at the University of Essex criticised the current state of 'new nature writing' and suggested a return to the writing of William Burroughs.[51] As noted in Chapter One and Chapter Four, Burroughs emphasised scientific accuracy and condemns the 'witchery of words' in writing about the environment (*Wake-Robin* xiv). If students are to become environmentally-conscious through these courses and, ideally, produce publishable writing that might similarly raise the consciousness of its reader, the imagination's creative and conceptual capacity is crucial and must not be discouraged. Moreover, given the way the environment is constantly changing – and how current societies are increasingly responsible for these changes – this is the time to rethink

[51] With regard to the 'Wild Writing' panel, I refer to Melinda Appleby's paper entitled 'Rethinking Our Relationship with Nature: The Role of Literature in Raising Awareness and Changing Attitudes'.

established ways of seeing the world, and to press for new ways of engaging with environments.

Appendix One

Replacings: A Collection of 25 Poems

This collection takes the environment as its chief subject – from barnacles to streams, sloths to clouds, the hearts of toads to the bioluminescence of algae. These poems explore interactions within the natural world and examine how, for example, these symbiotic, parasitic interactions are paralleled by the interactions that metaphor presents. By dwelling upon the tensions within these interactions, the poems evoke the pedagogical and ecocritical arguments for and against metaphor that are examined in the thesis. However, introducing the human world of relationships, these poems introduce further questions regarding these interactions and tensions in a way that brings their consequences closer to home. How do predatory and mutually-beneficial relationships in nature and in metaphor also exist in the human world? What effect do these relationships have on our own lives and identities? By making this three-fold comparison between environmental interactions, metaphor and human relationships, it becomes possible to explore further problems and possibilities offered by metaphor. In this way, this collection of poems demonstrates a creative practice complementary to that of the critical thesis.

Writing these poems has helped me to develop an awareness of the kinds of tension that inform not only the pedagogical criticisms of metaphor, but also the work of the metaphor theorists that I have discussed in the thesis. The work has grown alongside my examination of these attitudes. The earliest poems I wrote responded to the harshest criticisms of metaphor that I challenged in the thesis, such as Andrew Motion's disapproval of anthropomorphism's 'predatory' quality. This influences 'Bond' and 'Toad', although the latter poem takes metaphor's appropriation to a much greater degree in describing the effects of perceiving likeness without perceiving difference. I began to explore common metaphors both in environmental and human contexts, such as that of a 'grass-blade' and 'love as fire' ('Together'), and at once considered the absence of tension in dead metaphor and attempted to revive it by extending the dead metaphor in new directions. By taking a fresh look at the comparison between the human heart and a bird in the

title poem of this collection, ‘Replacings’, I began to depart from focusing upon metaphor in terms of appropriation and developed an understanding of how one entity filters and transforms another, as Max Black describes. This approach of metaphor is pursued in ‘Say *Heart*’, as Black’s belief that metaphor generates new perceptual opportunities through metaphorical interaction is reimagined within the context of a new relationship and the different experiences it brings.

Given the concerns expressed in the thesis regarding anthropocentrism, it might seem surprising to bring the human world into such regular comparison with the environment. As noted in Chapter Six, Don McKay believes anthropocentrism is unavoidable, but that it should therefore be enacted thoughtfully: a premise that I believe is reasonable because it acknowledges the inevitability of anthropocentrism, provides an ethical route into exploring anthropocentrism and, with such a nuanced approach, McKay does not shut down creative opportunity. A degree of self-reflexivity in the poems I have produced aims to counteract, and produce awareness of, the potential for anthropocentrism to dominate at the expense of the environmental subject. Furthermore, I have tried to remain faithful to the environmental interactions I portray by researching them and consciously avoiding exaggeration. Certain poems in this collection such as ‘Say *Heart*’, ‘Girl and Father’ and ‘Seahorse’ meditate principally upon human relationships, but still include references to relationships in the environment. I was concerned that by keeping these references to the environment in poems that predominantly explore human relationships, I would attribute human behaviours to the natural world. Consequently, I have tried to ensure that where these references are included they are doing the opposite: animal behaviour is helping to recognise human behaviour in these poems. Moreover, this human focus develops further explorations of metaphor. For example, in ‘Girl and Father’, taking a human focus afforded the opportunity to consider Adam Dickinson’s interest in metaphor’s ‘is/is not’ dynamic in terms of genetic relations. Likewise, in ‘Seahorse’ I was able to explore metaphor in terms of camouflage and disguise.

Whilst I was keen to make studies of these interactions, I did not want these studies to remain static or isolated throughout the collection. This was prompted by my awareness that such would be unrepresentative given the creatures and humans in the poems, and also by my curiosity in how one interaction produces

another. To some extent, I was able to create this sense of flux by returning to particular species in different contexts. Perhaps more importantly, however, this curiosity led me to start thinking about causality in a way that was somewhat influenced by my examination of temporal and spatial relations in the thesis. I was keen to draw attention to how a robin hopping along the ground, and materials that surround us everyday, are in fact central to much larger, ongoing narratives at first imperceptible. I explored how far I could go with representing these narratives without explicitly explaining the connections that created them: for instance, how much I had to explain about the transportation of tin around the world and its use in different objects ('Dartmoor Tinners'). This led me into considering riddles and their figurative language. For example, from reading Les Murray's *Translations from the Natural World* as well as excerpts from *The Exeter Book Riddles*, I started experimenting with kennings and parataxis.

Despite writing these poems on causality and despite parts of the thesis focusing upon causal relations with regard to climate change, I wanted to approach the subject of climate change differently. I was interested in examining the subject through my previous examination of human relationships. This offered a new way of engaging with the subject and one that I felt was far from, if not the opposite of, Jim Perrin's concern that engaging with such issues would only generate polemic. Timothy Morton's use of language in *Hyperobjects* was partly responsible for this turn. His suggested anthropomorphism: 'Global warming doesn't go golfing at the weekend', and his argument on climate change as a 'sensual object' invited me to think about how the subject might be brought into closer relation to the everyday (76, 118). Consequently, I produced a series of poems that ask how the fears, seeming intangibility, and ongoing transformations that climate change presents might be figured in terms of desire, attachment, memory and domestic co-habitation.

Throughout the collection, I have been keen to use rhyme in different ways to identify the different tensions that metaphor presents, and this led me to further considerations of how rhyme might subtly weave and disrupt the metaphor between climate change and love. I hoped to draw the subject of climate change closer to people's lives through this metaphor. Yet, at the same time I was interested in using the love poem as a kind of disguise that might create an ethical

disturbance, or even intrusion, as Juliana Spahr generates in *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs*. More poems in this vein have been left out of the collection than are given here as I found this metaphor difficult to manage without obscuring the facts of climate change. However, this is a series I intend to continue with and which I hope will form a centrepiece for my first full collection of poems, building on my first pamphet *Dazzle Ship* from which most of the poems here are taken.

Several points informed the ordering of these poems. I felt that presenting them with some sense of the chronology in which I wrote them would afford the poems to speak to one another, and for an understanding of metaphor to carefully develop over the course of the collection. I also, however, wanted certain poems to argue against one another in their approach of metaphor's tensions. To some degree this contributes to my aim for a certain self-reflexivity in the collection. I was pleased to be able to arrange poems so that the reader can move between environments: forests, meadows, rockpools, oceans and, indeed, the domestic home. Moving across these poems in this way conveys a sense of simultaneous interaction that is uninhibited by one particular scale or context. 'The Ash' signals a turn in the collection from which I present poems on climate change. This felt particularly apt given how the ash faces its own sense of threat in terms of ash dieback, but also because of the short poem's themes of distortion and loss. It was important to group these poems on climate change together as the metaphor extends across them and so conveys a strong and uninterrupted argument for the place of climate change in our lives.

Replacings

Acknowledgements

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The majority of poems in this collection have been published in my debut pamphlet, *Dazzle Ship* (Worple Press 2014), and in some cases first featured in *Poetry Review*, *Poetry London*, *Entanglements: New Ecopoetry* (Two Ravens Press 2012) and *The Arts of Peace* (Two Rivers Press 2014). 'The Butterflies' was commissioned by Bristol Festival of Ideas 2015 for the project 'New Lyrical Ballads'.

Petal & Stream

When I say a petal is like a stream
this is a match-maker's introduction
rousing a chemistry.

The stream considers how to belong
to the colour, the blooming, the bees;
the petal tries on the stream's surname,
a life of rushing transparency.

Neither can see how this will work
till one touches the other's soft face
and instantly both agree.

Forest

One thing is liked by another:

snake and creeper,
leaf and green frog –

they try to complete
each other’s sentences.

It shouldn’t go further
than this flirt and rumour:

the sloth who takes her own limb
for an algae-furred branch

drops through the tangle
of the forest canopy

holding only onto herself.

Bond

What can be said of the bond between sea anemone and crab? The sting of the first defends the other and, in return, the pincers feed the squat jelly-mouth. Is this so unlike the clerk and housewife? She wears a pink apron and prepares fish dinners to keep his embrace. And what can be said of this metaphor—is the symbiosis between image and matter as mutual as that under the water? Or does it suck the roar out of nature as when man claims he’s a lion, a tiger?

The Smallholding

When he weeded or dug the beds
to sow swiss chard or turnip seeds
or painted or fixed the whitewood fence,
fruit would fall with small hushed thuds.
Hearing each drop he could've said
its name – whether Gala or Cox –
how sweet or green it was, and when
his wife's foot lands into the house
after her morning trip into town
from heel against the stone he'll know
whether the heels of an army will follow.

Girl & Father

This girl sitting on her father's shoulders
is and is not her father:

they are one small giant
with four arms two stacked heads,

they are simply two different people together.

Two different people,
but one is carrying another –

one carries the form of the eyes,
the contempt for pineapple
and the walk that prioritises toe over heel
years after they disassemble.

Replacings

The way a heart isn’t
because today it is a bird.
How much offered, how much withdrawn
by wings & migratory instinct.
The way a bird isn’t
because today it is a heart.
How much offered, how much withdrawn
by keeping pace & devotional instinct.

My head upon a pillow
where your hand would rest.
How much offered, how much withdrawn
by what my head already holds.
The way my legs aren’t
because yours are so outstretched.
What offered, what withdrawn
by these, atwitch with your dream.

Together

the heart aflame no longer
shines any light on love
because they are always together –

because they are always together
it's hard to see them apart
like the blade in the blade of grass –

two lovers grew so close they became
too fluently familiar
having lost what makes fire fire

Cycle

after Francis Ponge's 'Le Cycle des Saisons'

A bud comes forth from the throat
and stuffs the mouth with an expression:
a dandelion head about to burst open,
a leaf furled like a new shaving brush.

The buds think they say everything afresh.

By the same unfolding and bright yellow gesture
they only say *leaf*, they only say *flower*.

Believing they've failed to make themselves heard
they grow taller and bigger and so lose their form.

They tire. The mouth that opened for them
dries up. That which was said, so eagerly,
now discolours, withers and drops.

Harvest

After stripping the branches of berries
the robin held a handful of seeds
in her stomach: the robin carried a tree
– in fact she secretly sowed a whole forest –
a store of bows and arrows and shields.
Years found the bird had planted a battle,
her tiny body had borne the new king.

Men looked up to the skies and blessed
or blamed the planets moving overhead.
A blackbird, meanwhile, started to pick
at the fruit both armies had left.

A Toad

Because of its size and lurch
a toad is likened to a man's heart – but
what happens to the heart of the toad

that's bean-shaped yet intricate
where want writes into the muscle
as water sculpts stone?

Does it become vestigial –
irrelevant within this human frame
or can the toad's heart persist

like the conch shell trumpet
blown, but filling again
with its own sea-sound.

The Crab

Sunbathing on basalt,
the crab is a miniature
cedarwood stage
moving upon pincers
and ginger-haired legs –
empty of actors,
this stage casually
bears a backdrop;
a skywash of sea,
a suggestion of birds,
how its scale frames
an old local story
with these barnacles
empty, ashen
as blown volcanoes.

Dartmoor Tinners

Candlesticks, organ pipes, bells
came downriver in fits and starts.
The tailings, the what-isn't-tin,
we threw back in – silting the ports

so the ships were built smaller
and yet still hauled what would become
the sound of a bronzy Venetian Mass,
some buttons, some cups.

Now we unwrap the moor
and burrow deeper than the long-ears
to raise Wheal Jane, Wheal Prosper:

we'll be drawing out the idea of a lamp
that won't surface for two-hundred years
when, among our singing, the candle's first
to realise the bad air and black out.

A Rose

has folded itself so it can unfold,
has put on a haematine colour,
put on a little weight
so you'll call it a human heart –
and presuming this an invitation
the rose climbs in behind your sternum.

Everywhere, roses are doing this now.

The roses steal fragments of conversations
we barely realise we have with ourselves
tapping the calls from various hurts
to restyle their wooden claws.

Cracked Walnut and Cup

The cracked walnut
beside the porcelain cup

is not a porcelain walnut
and a cracked cup

but as she who finds
her lover’s words in her mouth

and their friends who discover
their faces alike

the walnut shell seems
another drinking vessel

and the cup appears
ever more breakable.

I’m doing you an injustice

It’s like I’ve invited you to a party
of people I know but you don’t –
I see you fitting into the erratic
spaces between people talking
till I only see parts of you
like the nude beneath the willow
she doesn’t look quite herself
dappled by the shadowings
from what is given light first.

Barnacle

Barnacle, the author’s intention, wears
a little ivory hat. In the sea-dark he captains
a solid idea from the depths.
Other intentions cluster:
a kind of rugby scrum occurs,
and while they argue back and forth
about what the ball represents
the rock they cover begins to move
like a wave with a life of its own.
Barnacle & friends become hitchhikers
but not one will notice until
they reach waters of knifejaw and gemfish
or beach upon a blank coast.

I believed I was like

the rockpool’s tuft
of ale-brown algae
that exclusively blushed
luminescent blue
when poked by that
boy with a stick
who was really hoping
to poke a starfish –
only to find
that I can, all night,
by any breath’s ripple,
perform my own borealis.

Seahorse

Isn’t it shocking how he speaks for her?
His thin voice wavering across the restaurant –
she’ll have the cod artichoke bake.

A giggle of bubbles comes from behind them:
a fish tank curtained with seagrass
where a seahorse is tying itself
to one of these slim, tweedy forms

like a hand shaping itself inside another’s
the way my hand tucks into his
like a difference pretending it’s not.

A Cloud

looks like a tortoise but
a tortoise doesn’t look like a cloud.
There’s something in this
of a dinner invitation
taken and not returned.
The tortoise keeps on snapping
its tortoise-small jaws,
eating all that’s laid on
without looking up.

Say *Heart*

They say it's because I'm afraid to be alone.

What good is saying *heart*
when you can say *heart like a wine barrel,*
or *heart like a red squirrel*.

I am most like myself when likened.

He, for example, has made me realise
I can climb, jump between trees.

The Ash

like a single branch of ash
honed to the handle of an axe
and made to take the hand
of a woodsman as he throws
his bodyweight to fell
all the ash has sown,
I turn your words although
the line you spoke was simple

Butterflies

This strange heat arrives —
it quietly sweeps these butterflies north
where the meadows are empty of nectar:
their numbers wither

and wither our words?
One understanding of grace is gone —
what's *fluttering* without butterflies?
From the tongue a common movement is taken:

Bristol, Leicester, Blackpool, Edinburgh
slur their speech like drunks.

In the night sky, a top floor room
is lit inside with lovers —
what lands so lightly from their lips
can't land without this word, this creature.

One doesn’t like to explain

exactly why it came to an end;
so we’ll say something like

we took the road as far as we could, and fast
until we ran out of gas

– but what fuelled us hasn’t ceased to exist
we know it continues uncontained in the air.

The way you’ll enter my mind
unwanted, harmful now

and yet still bearing heat –
the kind love songs describe as reaching

unmeasured depths of oceans,
melting the ice on the highest mountains.

The Fabulous Blue

A pale blue glacier is dangling
from the kitchen hook like a dish cloth.

Your feet fall about the house
the way apples have knocked the ground all June.

Did you do something new with your hair?
I'm asking, do you want some coffee? as I roll out

pastry for a *tarte tatin* –
your voice returns from another room

different as the fabulous blue
the bee-eater's brought to our hedge.

The Unobtainable Girl

The unobtainable girl
and the end of the world:
glimpsing either produces
this angsty deferral
of how to approach her –

it's like returning to school
she twirls her hair
and squashes miniscule
rainforest frogs; you assume
you'll turn away miserable.

Appendix Two

Three Samples of Interview Questions

This appendix includes three examples of the questions posed to educators in three separate interviews. These samples demonstrate how the semi-structured interviews functioned by showing the parallels and divergences in the subject matter explored.

Interview with Andrew Motion

- Can you tell me how this course came to be offered at Royal Holloway?
- Are there particular exercises you have used throughout your teaching on this course?
- What do you look for in students' writing?
- In the course handbook I saw you have a focus on 'Journals & Field Guides' and I was wondering whether there is a level of factual knowledge that you expect your students to have?
- You also have some mention of climate change – are environmental issues raised in the course and if so, how?
- Can you tell me about the backgrounds of the students and what they are writing now?
- [responding to interviewee's comments on students environmental interests] and does their writing reflect that urgency?
- Given this is an inner-city course, do you lead any field trips? Is there a particular place you focus on?
- [responding to interviewee's comments about the importance of getting students into the countryside] Do you think nature writing can do that for writers and for people reading nature writing?
- Do you feel there have been any instances with your students where you have felt there have been missed tricks, or traps they've fallen into with their writing?

- [responding to interviewee's comments about lyricism] I think this is something that came up in my interview in Swansea regarding an imbalance between the self/ego and the environment – what do you think?
- [responding to interviewee's comments about humans and animals] so would you be concerned about anthropomorphism?
- Can you tell me whether ecocriticism has influenced any part of the course?
- Do you have any learning objectives and if so, what are they?
- Would you like to add any further points?

Interview with John Elder

- Can you say something about where you have taught nature writing previously?
- Are there particular exercises you have used throughout your teaching?
- What do you think is achieved from these exercises both in terms of the writing and the students' relationship to the environment?
- [responding to interviewee] It seems authenticity is important to you in terms of voice. Is it important for there to be an authenticity of natural fact in the writing?
- Do you feel students have had any preconceptions about nature writing or fall into any traps in their writing?
- In early ecocriticism there seems to be an opposition between mimeticism and metaphorical literary styles of writing about nature. What's your opinion?
- What are your feelings on literary anthropomorphism?
- [responding to interviewee] Would you ever use that as a prompt for your students?
- Are these student writers hoping to be environmental writers of the future?
- You mention climate change – could you say more about how such issues can be brought into nature writing, if they can?
- [responding to interviewee] do you think celebration is important?

- Given your ecocritical monograph, *Imagining the Earth*, and your role as president of ASLE, do you think ecocriticism has influenced your teaching?
- Would you like to add any further points?

Interview with Chris Kinsey

- How did you begin to teach nature writing?
- Are there any particular exercises you have used throughout your teaching on these different courses?
- I would also like to know what kind of writing is fostered through your courses – is it prose, poetry, both?
- Could you say something about the different groups of students you work with and their writing?
- From the handout I see you engage your students with Keats' 'Negative Capability' – how are you hoping this will influence students?
- In terms of the exercises, does 'Becoming a Writer of Your Own Square Mile' or 'Writing from Nature' involve a lot of fieldwork or outdoor writing?
- [responding to interviewee's comments about the importance of wildlife identification] So do you expect your students to have a kind of scientific knowledge?
- [responding to interviewee's comments on scientific voice as disembodied] Can that disembodied voice be interesting for nature writing?
- Do you think your courses foster pro-environmental feeling?
- [responding to interviewee's comments] Do you think wonder is a useful tool?
- [responding to interviewee's comments] Does that potentially invite more issue-led comments to be made in their writing?
- Do you think there are any traps that students fall into in their writing? Is there any guidance you find yourself repeating?
- How do you feel about the first person 'I' in nature writing?

- What’s your approach, as a teacher, towards metaphor and anthropomorphism in nature writing?
- Would you like to add any further points?

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