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The history of classical studies has always been, in part, about the narcissistic promotion of Western, human superiority, which is what makes Payne’s poised contribution to animal studies, or to the labyrinth of projects being developed under the rubric ‘posthumanism’, all the more intriguing. The human as mammal is just one aspect in an emerging ontology of the ‘posthuman’: the categories of both human and animal, or of life itself, are being urgently re-examined across the humanities in response to new techniques in industrial farming and to radical advances in areas from cognitive ethology to biotechnology. In the real world, we might say, the deconstructionist critique of being as self-identical, hypostatized and non-relational has barely made a dent, yet one of its most palpable repercussions has been the cracking open of a series of ethical questions which are perhaps most radically dissected in the field of animal studies. What do we, our institutions and social structures look like, what do we come to know, when we attempt to insert ourselves into the subjectivity or vital becoming of the ‘repressed other’?

This debate is not new, of course. It has a history, in both philosophy and literature, and this history is what Payne sets out to trace. He chooses his texts eclectically, and his selection works, creating weird juxtapositions and suggestive blurrings which make this the kind of book that lingers and rewards re-reading. Despite its quiet elegance and light brush strokes, this is a provocative book: although I get Payne’s arguments throughout, I often wanted to ask the author more questions and prod him to make more subtle philosophical distinctions. Readers of this review should take my spirited criticisms, however, as an index of the book’s success.

Our path into ‘The Animal Part’ (we are to read ‘part’ as both ‘role’ and as ‘aspect’ of human as just-another-animal, as well as a nod to Aristotle’s *Parts of Animals*) takes us via Lake Michigan. The book is framed by snippets of first person, autobiographical nature writing which announce the project’s ecopoetic/feminist parentage. I suspect this is meant as a pleasant walk in/out rather than the horns and tail of a difficult beast, but it was around page three that I began to wonder whether this would have been a different book, philosophically, had it been written by a vegan. While Derrida’s ‘The animal that therefore I am’ begins with an uncanny meeting of gazes between said (trouserless) philosopher and his pet ‘girl pussy’, Payne’s incipit is altogether more butch, and much, much less French. He is camping by the lake at sunset, beer in hand, when he spies a beaver in the water. ‘He’(?) appears to want to come ashore, but is put off by the rowdy campers and eventually gives up, reminding Payne of himself trying in vain to find a book in a library. The beaver’s activity is ‘not a symbol or image of mine, but a behaviour we share’, he concludes. The difference being that when Payne gets library rage he’s not scared some large hu-males brandishing bottles of Becks are going to kill him if he insists on pursuing that elusive Pindar commentary. I can see what Payne wants to achieve with his metaphor (a hinted play on Derrida’s animot provides the book’s contours), but he struggles to get away with just the kind of anthropomorphist arrogance that animal studies lays bare and wants to move beyond. One of the overarching concerns of the book is the perception of emotional continuity between humans and other animals. I didn't see this here, though I did feel sorry for the beaver. Ditto the rabbits and pigeons in the *Dexter*-style flashback to boyish slaughter-
beaver. Ditto the rabbits and pigeons in the *Dexter*-style flashback to boyish slaughter-scenes that follows.

We return to the beaver in the epilogue, in the context of another curious (non)encounter with animals. Payne knows that tiny blue fish swim deep in Devils Hole in the middle of the Nevada Desert, and although (or because) he can’t see them, he is in awe of their ancientness. The pupfish, their name and location symbolic of how close to and how distant from their pale, two-legged cousins all non-human animals are - at once cute ‘puppies’ and thermophilic aliens inhabiting a Derridean ‘abyss’- evoke a deep intuition of the interconnectedness of all species, and the pain we all suffer when one species is lost. But then Payne cites (and agrees with) Roosevelt, who compares the destruction of an entire animal species to the loss of a great writer's works. This would be a great analogy in almost any other book (the point being that human beings destroy things as easily as they blink), and we might want to debate the extent to which poetry is ‘alive’, yet no person in their right mind would compare human genocide to the disappointment that we don’t have more of Sappho, and Payne ends up reducing animal life to fodder for ‘the human’ imagination.

The body of the book is split into four chapters, plus a lengthy introduction and short epilogue. The introduction, which moves on to discuss hunting narratives, Derrida on animals, and Thomas Nagel's paper 'What Is it Like To Be a Bat' in contrast to Elizabeth Costello's perspective in the J.M.Coetzee novel, winds up with William Carlos Williams' poem 'The Lobster', read alongside David Foster Wallace’s essay on lobsters. How can it be so easy to zone out or even deny animal suffering in the face of irrefutable evidence, Payne asks, such as a lobster thrashing about as it is boiled alive? Because, leaving aside dodgy arguments about nervous systems, human suffering is considered superior, because lobster tastes yummy, and because we cannot conceive of a lobster's awareness of its own durationality, which permits us to imagine its life as relatively meaningless. Although isn't it interesting that many culinary delicacies (veal, foie gras, lobster) are a product of what we might want to call 'torture'? In Michelin starred restaurants worldwide, animal pain/life is both concealed and elevated to an exquisite, narcissistic confirmation of human vitality. There is, nowadays, something illicit and ritualistic (quasi-sacrificial?) about these foods: caviar and smoked salmon just don't have the same je ne sais quoi.

Chapter one, 'The Beast in Pain' (pun intended?) begins with the preface to Wordsworth's lyric ballads and the concept of the poet's 'psychic labour', and preludes a lovely analysis of the biopoetics of Williams' *Paterson* with a discussion of the animal aggressiveness of Greek iambic verse. The anti-social energies and 'deformed' iambics of ancient abuse poetry, Payne argues, are about enabling or imagining a transcendence of the human. There are points in these fragments, such as the amazing line in which Archilochus professes to 'hate and harm like an ant', where we can spy a kind of empathetic 'cathexis' to non-human animals, yet it seemed to me that Payne's subtle reading of Carlo Williams' investigation into animal subjectivity got mapped back too simply onto Archilochus' 'poetics of deformity'. Here and throughout, I felt that Payne should have distinguished more between texts which, for example, employ a series of conventional animal metaphors, and texts which aim to move towards or hint at an understanding of animals as beings in themselves.

Chapter two ('Destruction and Creation') takes us from Melville's *Moby Dick* and Flaubert’s short story ‘La légende de saint Julien L'Hospitalier’, through Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Milton to Gerald Manley Hopkins and Ezra Pound. The focus of attention is the clash between human destructivism (based as it is on a misunderstanding of human difference) and biophilia that emerges when these texts meet. Payne manages this dazzling array of material brilliantly. His summaries and discussions are always fascinating, but more significant, I think, are his elliptic concluding comments on the function of poetry and on the forms, or ways, of knowing that poetry (like philosophy) can reveal. Payne proposes that poetry which articulates a transformed understanding of the human via direct observation of other life forms points towards a different mode of *poiesis*. He takes up Heidegger's notion of poetic reflection as ultimately 'the work of the heart', which, he implies, is precisely what
modern critical theory has neglected. I assume that he is gesturing here towards a mistaken understanding of deconstructive analysis as destructive when in fact it is (should be) all about life. We might even want to extrapolate a more general comment on the continued fetishizing of quasi-scientific clarity in the interpretation of classical texts, a 'restraint' which is contingent on a rigid delimitation of interconnectedness (of which the bond between human and other animals is just one example).

Chapter three ('Beyond the Pale') launches us into part two, which is concerned with humans voluntarily or involuntarily becoming animals, in Aristophanes' *Birds*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, to which we return, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Rigadoon*. Again the linking theme is that the desire to know (the other) fuels outstanding human invention. *Rigadoon* and *Birds* are interestingly intersected at the end of the chapter. This is followed by the final chapter ('Changing Bodies') on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Semonides' poem on beastly wives. I found the reading of Semonides 7 powerful but strangely unsettling: Payne seems to want to read very similar ideas (in particular, a recognition of emotional or behavioural continuity between human and other animals) into the majority of his texts, and although I appreciate the Osborne-inspired point about disgust-as-desire, Payne could have got to the same point, I felt, without suggesting that the erasure of female subjectivity through the perception of woman as not-human/animal amounts to a fuzzily positive contemplation of the wondrous heterogeneity of 'the human'.

Ovid's myriad of perspectives on hybrid bodies and on the relationship between inner guts and outer appearance rightly plays a culminating role in the book, although it is the frame of Payne's analysis which is original, rather than the content. The doctrine of metempsychosis in *Met*.15 segues neatly into the human cries of suffering animals in Oppian’s *Cynegetica*, followed by four pages on a recent H.P.Lovecraft story and the way in which it is informed by evolutionary theory, and on the Darwin-inspired work of Charles Kingsley (*Glaucus: Or, the Wonders of the Shore*, 1890), a striking exploration of the desire to experience the nonhuman.

Bill Viola's video *I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like*, a highly poetic meditation on the 'beyond' of non-human consciousness made while the artist was in residence at San Diego Zoo, lights up the book's epilogue. This is a fascinating choice, a way of visualising an idea or problem implicit throughout the book: that the late twentieth century's obsession with the linguistic sign has often spun the illusion that because all aspects of experience are permeated by culture, nature is therefore purely discursive. But do we really 'possess' language at all? Is human language just one 'technology' in a much larger, polymorphous universe of relations? Viola's work touches what cannot be articulated through language, and it is this impossibility of communicating the specificity of embodied experience using only the soiled words of others that is, essentially, poetry's (and moreover, Payne wants to say, criticism's) endeavour - one that is all the more overt in the case of literature that yearns to imagine the (human as) animal.

Payne, like Viola, necessarily deletes much more than he leaves in. The laconic shapes of his arguments will frustrate some. But there is much to treasure and mull over in this book - it is a brave contribution to an exciting body of work and a stimulating assertion of the continued rewards of studying classical literature, even, and especially, in a post-humanist era.
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