

## Coming to Terms: The Poetics of More-than-human Worlds

It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.  
(Haraway, *Staying* 35)

Texts are fabricated fabrics. The Latin *textus* for “tissue” originally derives from the verb *texere*, meaning “to weave” (“text, n.”). Since classical antiquity, human and nonhuman characters and their respective environments have been woven into the tissue of Western narratives. Throughout the ages, animals and environments appear as either essential threads of literary texts, as a means to create the weaving patterns of a text, or even as the constituents of an entire genre: Be it Aesop’s fables or Thoreau’s nature writing; be it an internationally renowned poem such as John Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale,” an acclaimed prose text such as Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s “Novella” or a (children’s) classic such as Felix Salten’s *Bambi. A Life in the Woods*—animals and their environments abound in the fabrics of literary texts and the history of Western literature. In contemporary fiction, the textual presence of animals and environments is interspersed with concerns about global warming, climate change, factory farming, and species extinction.<sup>1</sup> Animals and environments are vital representatives and integral components of the “more-than-human world” (Abram) in and beyond literary representation.

Like texts, “animals” in this volume are emphatically conceived in the plural form. Most of the time, literature does not revolve around “the” animal as an abstract category but presents us with a variety of diegetic or semiotic-metaphoric species and animal individuals. Not least as a consequence of Derrida’s already canonical reflection on the human and, even more so, on Western philosophy’s hubris to categorize “the other” or “otherness” as “the animal” or “animality,” scholars have emphasized the need for acknowledging the diversity and heterogeneity of nonhuman animals. Even though speaking of “animals” instead of “the animal” is itself incapable of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf., for instance, Heise, *Imagining, Natur*.

doing justice to this diversity, it may highlight the plurality and acknowledge the abundance of species. Using the term “animals” in this volume, we not only intend to address and keep in mind the plethora of animal species, but we also want to reflect on how and why texts deal with nonhuman beings. Derrida introduced the neologism “*l’animot*” (cf., e.g., Derrida, *Animal* 47-51) to concede to the anthropocentrism of language and to simultaneously reflect its foundations and means of negotiation. *L’animot* morphologically conflates the general singular form “the animal” (*l’animal*) and “the word” (*le mot*) and is phonetically indistinguishable from the plural form of *l’animal* (i.e., *les animaux*). The neologism highlights the fact that even the plural is only a word, a “*mot*.” Using the term “animals” in the title of this volume, we try to address and give credit to the abundance of nonhuman animals, while also reminding ourselves (and our readers) of the violence and ignorance imposed by concepts such as “the animal” which “men have given themselves the right to give” in order to “corral a large number of living beings” (Derrida, *Animal* 32). Furthermore, using the word “humans,” we think of “humans” in the sense of “human animals,” a species which is part of and not superior to what has been conceived as the class of *mammalia*.

Since animals within and without literary contexts are never detached from or devoid of their environments, an investigation of animals *and* environments seems indispensable. In Uexküllian terms, an environment can be understood as “the sphere of influence *which is created by the individual* and in which surrounding things enter but which remains a distinctly individual realm *and which, moreover, can never be experienced in the same way by other living beings*”<sup>2</sup> (Herrmann 15). Animals live in and embody environments as their specific “milieus,” their “self-worlds.” These “subjective environments” are thus nothing less than individual “subjective realities” (Uexküll and Kriszat 93).<sup>3</sup> Bearing the plurality and heterogeneity of environments *and* animals

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<sup>2</sup> “Es handelt sich um einen Einflussbereich, der *vom Individuum gestaltet wird*, in den Dinge der Umgebung eintreten, der aber in jedem Falle ein ausschließlich individueller Bereich bleibt *und sich zudem grundsätzlich der Erfahrbarkeit durch andere Lebewesen entzieht*.” All following translations from the German are our own.

<sup>3</sup> Today, Johann Jakob von Uexküll (1864-1944) is hailed as a pioneer of ecology and bio-semiotics (cf. Tønnesen). Uexküll acknowledged the profound difference between the area surrounding (“Umgebung”) an organism and an individual or species-specific environment (“Umwelt”) as it is perceived *and* created by a subject. He maintained that “every subject lives in a world in which there are only subjective realities and in which the environments themselves only represent subjective realities. Those who deny the existence of subjective realities, fail to understand the foundations of their own existence” (“[J]edes Subjekt [lebt] in einer Welt, in der es nur subjektive Wirklichkeiten gibt und die Umwelten selbst nur

in mind, this volume explores the very acts and challenges of “weaving” animals and environments into narrative textures and cultural contexts. It investigates the significance of animals and environments for literary production and poetic form, for theory, epistemology, and culture more generally. What do animals and environments “do” in literature and how do they relate to each other? How does this relation pertain to our thinking about animals, environments, and artifacts as well as the supposed “divide” between nature and culture? And which role do animals and environments play in the poetics of a text? Are they merely interchangeable devices, a picturesque canvas on which “all too human” stories are painted? Or is there more to literary animals and environments than rhetoric and representation? To address these questions, the contributions to this volume probe the interrelations between ecocriticism and (cultural) animal studies and examine promising concepts such as ecopoetics and zoopoetics. The volume connects these two recently established but as yet most often independently working fields including their objects and methods. At the same time, the volume develops new ways to describe these connections theoretically.

### The Green Worlds of Starlings

The cover of this book shows a swarm of starlings at dusk. The birds fly up from a cornfield to settle on electricity pylons traversing an agricultural landscape. The words *Texts*, *Animals*, *Environments* foregrounding the evening sky, inscribe linguistic and textual materiality into the picture. Beneath the three nouns, two other words in the same green color as the field and the starlings are discernible: *Zoopoetics* and *Ecopoetics*. Title and subtitle are located on a specific photographic background which not only organizes them but also provides the viewer with a more specific meaning of this organization: *Animals* refers to the starlings, *Environments* to an agricultural landscape which is (trans)formed by the signposts of cultural institutions and technologies, indexing the electricity and farming industries which provide energy and nourishment for both humans and animals. These signposts also hint at other places where this nourishment is processed and consumed. In the context of this book, what is more important than the specific (and, in fact, not unproblematic) meaning of the words and their denotation beyond the

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subjektive Wirklichkeiten darstellen. Wer die Existenz subjektiver Wirklichkeiten leugnet, hat die Grundlagen seiner eigenen Existenz nicht erkannt”; Uexküll and Kriszat 93).

picture is their relationship to each other as well as the pictorial means of representation (and, certainly in this case, defamiliarization in terms of color). If the cover of this volume were to be analyzed from a holistic perspective, it would be necessary to elaborate on the relations between the starlings *and* the cornfield *and* the aesthetics *and* the technology rather than looking at each of these aspects separately.

Two approaches corresponding to the respective fields of research invoked by the title can be distinguished: While scholars working in the field of ecocriticism primarily adopt a systemic-relational approach to explore phenomena related to the environment, those in the field of cultural animal studies are mainly focused on the study of individual or species-specific aspects; ecocriticism pays attention to ecological contexts and environmental issues; cultural animal studies looks at animal collectives or individual animals in specific, often socio-cultural, contexts. Undeniably, however, animals—be it those in or outside literature—cannot be fully grasped without their environments, whereas, in turn, environments cannot be conceived without the animals living in and affecting them. Interpretations of the starlings on the cover which ignore the birds' environmental context would not only neglect to acknowledge the complex interactions between the animals, the power poles, and the agricultural spaces but would also fail to grasp the dynamics of “environing,” i.e., the process of shaping and imprinting a surrounding, performed by the animals as well as the energy sector and industrial farming. In turn, analyzing the environment of the birds without acknowledging their participation in policies and techniques of keeping electricity, corn, and birds apart would disregard the animals' role in shaping and constituting this environment. Furthermore, it would underestimate the relationship between the starlings and their environment for the poetics of the text and the photo-optical background.

In this book, the authors are concerned with literary texts and cultural spaces in which animals *and* environments are created and reflected in ways which negotiate and underscore the relations and co-dependencies between animals and environments. Both animal studies and ecocriticism have emerged as responses to political and ethical challenges, not least since concepts such as “the anthropocene” (Zalasiewicz, Crutzen, and Steffen), the human-made geological age, have come under scrutiny. From the very start, scholars of both fields discussed the status, the possible impetus of literature as well as the political and ethical agenda of the fields. Can literature make a difference? “What’s in a word?” when it comes to pressing issues such as animal ethics and environmental crises? And what kind of agency

do texts, animals, and environments have in this matter? The volume in hand addresses these and closely related questions but does not propose to give final answers. It is concerned with the inquiry into the relationships between animals, environments, and texts and encourages further research and discussions; it studies the connections between animals, environments, poetics, and politics; and it comments on the dynamics of animals, environments, media, and space.

### The Poetics of Animals and Environments

Texts are essential for ecocritics and cultural animal studies scholars in at least three ways. (1) They represent cultural knowledge and conceptions of animals and environments; (2) they reflect (implicit) ideologies pertaining to how and why humans deal with animals and environments; and (3) they are themselves productive elements shaping the environment and the socio-cultural structures in which animals live. At the same time, animals and environments may play specific roles within a text. They can appear as (main) protagonists and characters with agency in works of fiction (the whale in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*; the weather in Adalbert Stifter's *Nachsommer*), as metaphors and semiotic agents within figurative speech or in idiomatic expressions (*homo homini lupus*; to steal someone's thunder; to kill two birds with one stone etc.). Finally, they can appear as basic elements within (non) fictional poetics (the ape as a means to illustrate mimesis; "nature" as the archetype of literature in Romantic poetics).

Using the concept "poetics," this volume investigates the relations between texts, animals, and environments. Both cultural animal studies and ecocriticism have adapted the concept of a "poetics" to their specific fields of research. "Poetics" stems from the Greek *poiesis*, the noun is derived from the verb *poiém*, "to make" and "to create" ("poem, n."). As Kate Rigby reminds us in her approach to "ecopoetics," this process of human "making" and "creating" is not solipsistic but "reframe[s] human creative and emancipatory endeavor as a mode of participation in the more-than-human song of an ever-changing earth" (Rigby, "Prometheus" 251). Similarly, Aaron Moe envisions nonhuman species beyond a paradigm of poetic objects for human "poiesis." With his concept of "zoopoetics" he acknowledges that "nonhuman animals (*zoion*) are makers (*poiesis*)" and that their participation in the composition of a poem can be conceived as "a multispecies event" (Moe, "Toward Zoopoetics" 2). These conceptions of zoopoetics and ecopoetics highlight the fact that both cultural animal studies and ecocriticism not only

take an interest in the same objects but also share fundamental assumptions about poetics, and methodological approaches. The volume aims to explore the link between zoopoetics and eco-poetics and thus provide new ways and theories to advance and deepen the work of both ecocriticism and cultural animal studies.

### Marking and Re-weaving Territories

Since around 2010, scholarship has begun to investigate the associations between the concerns of ecocriticism and animal studies. Contrary to Scott Slovic's prediction of a break between the two fields (7), animal studies has developed a keen interest in looking at animals from ecocritical perspectives, while ecocriticism has discovered animal studies as a viable lens to contemplate relations of place, the concept of "the nonhuman", and interspecies engagements. Thus, a complex dialogue between the two fields has unfolded. In their outline of the objects, concerns, and relevance of "literature-environment studies," Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber discuss "ecocriticism's complex attentiveness to ... the ethics of relations between humans and animals" (417) in an article dating back to 2011; Gabriele Dürbeck's first German introduction to ecocriticism of 2015 includes an article on "Cultural Animal Studies" (Borgards); a 2016 issue of *Ecozon@* focuses on *Animal Humanities* (Past and Amberson); and Hubert Zapf's *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology* includes Axel Goodbody's analysis of "Kafka's Animal Stories," in which he concludes that "[a]nimal studies ... reveals itself as a field in which literature serves as a prime medium of cultural ecology" (269). In turn, in the *Oxford Handbook of Animals Studies* Anita Guerrini elaborates on "Animals and Ecological Sciences"; the *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies* features Philip Armstrong's and Annie Potts' article on "The Emptiness of the Wild"; and Roland Borgards' first German cultural studies handbook *Tiere* includes an article on "Tiere und Umwelt" ("Animals and Environment") by Catrin Gersdorf.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, scholars are expanding their respective fields. Stephanie Posthumus has not only published articles on eco-approaches in francophone literature and thought but also edited *French Thinking about Animals* in 2015. The same interest in and engagement with approaches stemming from both

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<sup>4</sup> Cf., among other pertinent projects combining animal studies and ecocriticism, Nelson; Milne; Moolla.

ecocriticism *and* animal studies is discernible in the work of Kate Rigby, Axel Goodbody, and Benjamin Bühler. The volume in hand furthers the dialogue between ecocriticism and animal studies and is dedicated to the enterprise of weaving zoopoetics and ecopoetics into what might be termed “eco-zoopoetics,” i.e., the study of the relationships between and the agencies of literature, animals, and environments. But what exactly do concepts such as “zoopoetics” and “ecopoetics” offer? How can they challenge conventional notions of poetics? And what kinds of “zoopoetics” and “ecopoetics” have emerged? Both terms are currently being used in and beyond the academic world and are examined for their theoretical and practical potential. As such, they are still in a phase of conceptualization. In the following, we provide a glimpse at the current state of this phase. Indicating the methodological assets of the different concepts and their common grounds, we would also like to point toward our volume’s contribution to this current state of affairs.

### Zoopoetics

One of the first scholars to refer to a “zoopoetics” was Jacques Derrida who brought the term up in a 1997 lecture on “The Autobiographical Animal.” This lecture became his last book, now a pioneering text in animal studies theory. When Derrida used the term “zoopoetics” to speak about and contextualize the bathroom encounter with his cat, the word was surely not a concept yet, although in later accounts which pushed its conceptualization forward, scholars have often felt obliged to quote Derrida’s lines. Even if Derrida used the word (only) to describe his cat as a “real” cat in opposition to cats in literature and in the arts more broadly, it is rather doubtful that Derrida wanted to disqualify “literary animals” in general, not least because he always felt the need to question the very separation between “world” and “text,” “language” and “being.” Yet it remains unclear whether the cat in Derrida’s bathroom really was not part of “zoopoetics” after all, or whether it must instead be considered a distant relative of *Le maître chat ou le chat botté*. The paragraph reads as follows:

I must immediately make it clear, the cat I am talking about is a real cat, truly, believe me, a little cat. It isn’t the figure of a cat. It doesn’t silently enter the bedroom as an allegory for all the cats on the earth, the felines that traverse our myths and religions, literature and fables. There are so many of them. The cat I am talking about does not belong to Kafka’s vast zoopoetics, something that nevertheless merits concern and attention here, endlessly and from a novel perspective. (Derrida, *Animal* 6)

Derrida performs the differentiation between reality (“a real cat”), truth (“truly”) and conviction (“believe me”) on the one hand, and figurative speech, allegory, mythology, religion, fables, and “zoopoetics” on the other hand. Repetition, affirmation, and negation unfold the act of differentiation in language, exposing the effects of anthropo-technique and anthropocentrism as always already effective in language. By incessantly repeating that his cat is real and not literary, Derrida, in fact, highlights that both reality and literature are not only intertwined in his perception of the real cat but also in the perception of literary texts like Kafka’s. Hence, Derrida can assert that “Kafka’s zoopoetics” is something that “nevertheless merits concern and attention here, endlessly and from a novel perspective” (6).<sup>5</sup> The interconnection of “real” and “literary” animals does not mean that both are identical. Instead, it becomes apparent—also from the perspective of Derrida’s last seminars (Derrida, *Beast*)—that neither element can be considered independently of the other.<sup>6</sup>

Aaron Moe provides another conception of zoopoetics:

Zoopoetics—a theory I introduce—recognizes that nonhuman animals (*zoion*) are makers (*poiesis*), and they have agency in that making. The etymology also suggests that when a poet undergoes the making process of poiesis in harmony with the gestures and vocalizations of nonhuman animals, a multispecies event occurs. It is a co-making. A joint venture. (“Toward Zoopoetics” 2)

In his articles as well as his 2014 monograph, Moe develops “zoopoetics” as a theoretical approach which stresses the plurality of nonhuman beings “who exhibit agency within environments” (“Zoopoetics” 28). Moe’s work brings together the two areas that “zoopoetics” combines: “*zoion*” and “*poiesis*” underline that zoopoetics is most pertinent in modern poetry. In poems—e.g., in those of E. E. Cummings or W. S. Merwin—literary animals are not simply described as objects. Cummings and Merwin, as Moe shows, were attentive to and affected by animal *poiesis*. Animals must be acknowledged as agents who participate in the material and creative productions of poetry. In this respect, “[z]oopoetics is the process of discovering innovative breakthroughs in form through an attentiveness to another species’ bodily *poiesis*” (Moe,

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Danta 152-68.

<sup>6</sup> “Without asking permission, real wolves cross humankind’s national and institutional frontiers, and his sovereign nation-states; wolves out in nature (*dans la nature*) as we say, real wolves, are the same on this side or the other side of the Pyrenees or the Alps; but the figures of the wolf belong to cultures, nations, languages, myths, fables, fantasies, histories” (Derrida, *Beast* 4-5.; cf. also Kling 20-21).



*Zoopoetics* 10). Literature, therefore, can display and include the agency of non-human others; zoopoetics relies on animal makers and “is best understood as a poetry that revisits, examines, perplexes, provokes, and explores the agency of the nonhuman animal” (Moe, “Zoopoetics” 30). While Derrida performs and simultaneously questions the act of differentiation between reality and literature, expressing a need for a “novel perspective” of “zoopoetics,” Moe reminds us of the etymology of poetics which does not exclude animals from processes of “poiesis.”

Kári Driscoll’s work on “zoopoetics” is the third and last position which shall be sketched out in this introduction. Driscoll defines “zoopoetics” as

concerned not only with the constitution of the animal in and through language, but also the constitution of language in relation and in opposition to the figure of the animal. Zoopoetics thus also always involves the question of zoopoiesis, of the creation *of* the animal as much as the creation *by means* of the animal. In a sense, zoopoetics may be regarded as the most fundamental form of poetics, in that it incorporates the primary distinction between human and animal on the basis of language. (Driscoll, “Sticky” 223)

Compared to Moe, Driscoll’s approach organizes differently the two elements brought together in “zoopoetics”. This combination of zoo-poetics creates an additional perspective for both “animal” and “language.” Not only does Driscoll’s concept juxtapose both elements, but it also comprises the “constitution of the animal in and through language” *and* the constitution of language in relation to “the animal.” In this sense, Driscoll’s conception of “zoopoetics” also touches the question of anthropological difference and the limitation of language. Language can be the medium used to differentiate between humans and animals, and, at the same time, language can also be the medium of a skepticism concerning the sharp distinction between humans and animals. As a result, “zoopoetics” is a term that simultaneously raises questions about animals and the operating modes of language. It is a term with two suggested meanings which can denote an “attribute of literary and theoretical works” that are concerned with animals, and, “a methodological question” (223) about the value of animal studies for literary studies and vice versa.

It is now possible to distinguish between three “definitions” of zoopoetics. First, Derrida subtly indicates that however hard we try to sever “real” from “literary” cats, we cannot conceive of the one without the other. Second, Moe develops “zoopoetics” as a theory that expands the realm of creative agents in the making of poetry. Third, Driscoll proposes “zoopoetics” as a method and an object of study; a concept which—like a chiasmus—addresses both

the zoology of poetics and the poetics of zoology. In a recent edited volume, Eva Hoffmann and Driscoll have reflected the challenges posed by thinking about and working with “zoopoetics.” The question “What Is Zoopoetics?” raised in the title of the volume provokes not one but a variety of possible answers. The chapters of the volume agree, however, that “zoopoetic texts are not—at least not necessarily and certainly not simply—texts *about* animals. Rather, they are texts that are, in one way or another, predicated upon an engagement with animals and animality (human and nonhuman)” (4). Arguably, zoopoetics marks a consciousness concerning the precarious meanings of animals in and for literature. The term currently raises questions about the relationship between texts and animals rather than giving finite answers.

### Ecopoetics and Environmental Poetics

Finding an answer to the question “What Is Ecopoetics?” is likewise not an easy task. First, it depends on who is asked—writers or literary scholars, poetic practitioners or theorists.<sup>7</sup> Instead of a unified response, there are several approaches to thinking about the intersections of ecology and poetics or, more broadly, the relations between environmental phenomena and literary texts. Second, we must at least address the question of whether there is a conceptual difference between “ecopoetics” on the one hand, and “environmental poetics” on the other. This distinction begs yet another, no less fundamental question: What do we mean when we use (and possibly misuse) the prefixes “environmental” and “eco-” as the foundations of a concept?

Like “zoopoetics” in animal studies, ecocriticism has coined the terms “environmental poetics” and “ecopoetics” as theoretical and methodological approaches for discussing the relationship between texts and more-than-human worlds. In the German-speaking community, both terms have been conceived as more or less interchangeable and translated as either “Umwelt-poetik” (Morton 93, 160) or “Ökopoetik” (Mackenthun 83). This indicates not only that English-speaking scholarship has made use of the terms in varied contexts, but it also points to issues of translation and transfer. As

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<sup>7</sup> For conceptions advanced by poets and novelists, cf. Sherry; Gander and Kinsella; Hume; Skinner, “Ecopoetics”; “Why Ecopoetics”; Hume and Osborne. Skinner points out that “[r]ather than locate a ‘kind’ of writing as ‘ecopoetic,’ it may be more helpful to think of ecopoetics as a form of site-specificity—to shift the focus from themes to topoi, tropes and entropologies, to institutional critique of ‘green’ discourse itself, and to an array of practices converging on the *oikos*, the planet earth that is the only home our species currently knows” (“Ecopoetics”).

Benjamin Bühler, echoing Florian Sprenger, notes in his monograph on ecocriticism: “The English word *environment* cannot simply be translated by *umwelt*.... What’s characteristic for the term *environment* ... is the dyade *organism* and *environment* by means of which the organism becomes the center of attention”<sup>8</sup> (36).

The issue revolving around the proper prefix had already been haunting “first-wave” ecocriticism in the early 1990s when scholars were discussing a name suitable for what they were doing and what they were interested in. Cheryll Glotfelty was one of the first to side with the proponents of ecocriticism. In her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, she points out: “Some scholars ... favor *eco-* over *enviro-* because, analogous to the science of ecology, ecocriticism studies relationships between things, in this case, between human culture and the physical world. Furthermore, in its connotation, *enviro-* is anthropocentric and dualistic, implying that we humans are at the center, surrounded by everything that is not us, the environment” (xx). Not holding to Glotfelty’s “eco-” preference, Lawrence Buell argued that “‘environmental’ approximates better than ‘eco’ the hybridity of the subject at issue—all ‘environments’ in practice involving fusions of ‘natural’ and ‘constructed’ elements” (Buell, *Future* vii). Suffice it to say, that ecocriticism has become what Buell calls “an umbrella term” referring “to the environmentally oriented study of literature and (less often) the arts more generally, and to the theories that underlie such critical practice” (138); nevertheless, the terminological issue runs through the conceptual maze of what we are supposed to consider “environmental poetics” and “ecopoetics.” The following section will provide a brief discussion of the terms “ecopoetry” and “environmental poetry,” “ecopoetics” and “environmental poetics” by illustrating key aspects which affiliate and those which divide the concepts.

In *Sustainable Poetry*, Leonard Scigaj argues that environmental poetry and ecopoetry can be distinguished in terms of the way “nature” is conceived of and represented in poetry: “[E]nvironmental poetry reveres nature and often focuses on particular environmental issues, but without the ecopoet’s particular concentration on nature as an interrelated series of cyclic feedback systems” (37). In this sense, and with Bühler’s remarks on the term “environment” in mind, it can be argued that environmental poetry and environmental poetics focus on the interrelations between and mutual effects

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<sup>8</sup> “So lässt sich das englische Wort *environment* nicht einfach mit ‘Umwelt’ oder ‘Milieu’ übersetzen.... Kennzeichnend für den Begriff *environment* ... ist die Dyade *organism* und *environment*, mit welcher der Organismus in das Zentrum der Betrachtung rückt.”

of dyadic systems (i.e., organism and, or versus, environment), while ecopoetry and ecopoetics are interested in the associations and exchanges beyond two-component structures.

David Gilcrest has tried to theorize and contextualize “environmental poetics.” Acknowledging Buell’s well-known definition of an “environmental text,”<sup>9</sup> Gilcrest points out: “Buell’s criteria raise several intrinsically related issues.... The first issue is *epistemological*: what can we know of the nonhuman, and how is our knowledge constructed? The second issue is properly *aesthetic*: how can we integrate the nonhuman into human poetic discourse? Strictly speaking, these two issues taken together circumscribe *environmental poetics*” (4). Ethics of knowledge and representation stand at the fore of the environmental poetics Gilcrest investigates in the works of writers he terms “the contemporary nature poet[s]” (7). In contrast to the poetics of traditional “nature poetry,” contemporary environmental poetics, according to Gilcrest, distinguishes itself not only by exhibiting and simultaneously cherishing the differences between human and nonhuman entities but also by conceding to the limits of linguistic and mimetic representation.

Gilcrest regards “nature,” “environment,” and “environmental issues” as a theoretical perspective but primarily as a component as well as an attitude of some literary texts (poems) negotiating the role of humans, language, and aesthetics in relation to human-nonhuman-environments and environmental concerns (cf. also Hutchings); a poetics which is suspicious of mimetic thinking, averse to synthetic ontologies, and which relishes in tropes, figures, and recyclable topoi; a poetics which probes aesthetic means—form, sound, and meter—to explore the role of humans embedded in and yet distinct from their specific *Umwelten*.

If we compare Scigaj’s notion of ecopoetry with Gilcrest’s understanding of environmental poetics, it becomes evident that they are not completely dissimilar. They appear complementary or rather as two sides of a coin. Both highlight the role of aesthetics, reciprocity, and representation in terms of how literary texts (i.e., poems) reflect ecological connections and the relationship between humans and the nonhuman world. Arguably, however,

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<sup>9</sup> Buell’s “rough checklist” includes four (mainly thematically and ethically related) “ingredients” (Buell, *Environmental Imagination* 7) for an “environmental text”: “1. *The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history....* 2. *The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest....* 3. *Human accountability to the environment is part of the text’s ethical orientation....* 4. *Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text’* (7-8).

environmental poetics seems more likely to foreground a dualistic concept of human-nonhuman relationships.

It is this dualism which scholars and writers engaging with “ecopoetics” have questioned in the light of ecological theory. Even though the term is used to denote both a variety of literary texts and diverse theoretical approaches to thinking about literature and ecology, ecopoetics is based on a premise which takes ecological and phenomenological relationality and systemic linkages into account. Jonathan Bate gave a first, tentative definition of ecopoetics. Working with Heidegger’s idea of poetry as a form of dwelling and a means of uncovering, Bate maintains: “Ecopoetics asks in what respects a poem may be making (Greek *poiesis*) of the dwelling place—the prefix eco- is derived from the Greek *oikos*, ‘the home or place of dwelling’” (75). For Bate “ecopoetics should begin not as a set of assumptions or proposals about particular environmental issues, but as a way of reflecting upon what it might mean to dwell with the earth” (266). In this respect, ecopoetics and environmental poetics can be said to intersect, emerging as ways of thinking about and engaging with the multiple ways of how we (want to) live with “the nonhuman.”

In addition, Bate surmises that “it could be that *poiesis* in the sense of verse-making is language’s most direct path of return to the *oikos* ... because metre itself ... is an answering to nature’s own rhythms, an echoing of the song of earth itself” (76). Instead of a focus on (dyadic and, most often, asymmetric) relations between human and nonhuman worlds, Bate envisions ecopoetics as an engagement which is both intellectual and poetic—a sort of biosemiotic theory and practice pondering the significance of how and why it matters to dwell *with*, not *on* the earth.

Both Bate’s definition and his preference for *ecopoetics* as *ecopoetry* has been complemented and challenged since the publication of his book. Many scholars use ecopoetics as a conceptual frame or a methodological tool to acknowledge, mainly contemporary, ecologically and ethically informed literature which assesses the entanglements of human and nonhuman worlds and which self-reflexively probes the supposedly abyssal relations between world and word.<sup>10</sup> Others identify and elaborate on the ecopoetics of specific

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<sup>10</sup> Cf., among others, Keller; Ergin; Nolan. Poststructuralist and posthuman theory, however, has challenged notions conceiving of worlds and words, “the real” and “the imaginary,” “fact” and “fiction,” (active) agents and (passive) objects as fundamentally different concepts or phenomena; cf., for instance, Derrida, *Grammatology*; Latour, *We*; *Politics*; Haraway, *Staying*.

writers and artists, such as John Cage, Walt Whitman, and even Thomas Malory and Geoffrey Chaucer.<sup>11</sup>

In *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, Rigby enriches Bate's conception of ecopoetics by defining it as "an ecocritical neologism referring to the incorporation of an ecological or environmental perspective into the study of poetics, and into the reading and writing of (mainly) literary works" (Rigby, "Ecopoetics" 79). Similar to zoopoetics, ecopoetics is concerned with ecological references and relations in literary texts but also has to be acknowledged as a means of reading and interpreting literature more generally. Besides, Rigby foregrounds the fact that *poiesis* "is by no means an exclusively human practice" (79). Numerous other species create objects or are involved in non-human creative processes. Thus, ecopoetics, both literally and figuratively, has animals in mind.

Additionally, as Rigby reminds us, it might also be worthwhile to consider the fact that "[t]he natural systems that have enabled the emergence of these diverse creative practices might also be regarded as *poietic* or, rather, *autopoietic*." Hence, as Rigby observes "[h]uman 'poesy' is thus both continuous with that of other species and sustained by what the early German Romantics referred to as 'unconscious poesy' of the Earth" (79). For scholars of literature and culture, this means an opportunity to integrate the study of biosemiotics and ecosemiotics into the study of poetics.

As this brief conceptual history of environmental poetics and ecopoetics reveals, the concepts cannot be conceived of as oppositional nor as deadlocked patterns. Instead, they complement each other and might best be regarded as fluid, productive points of departure for various projects thinking about the entanglements of texts, environments, and ecology, the connections between poetics and *oikos* as well as the common grounds of environmental and literary studies. At the same time, the concepts invite us to reflect on the scopes, values, and pitfalls of our terminology, of our theories and translations of "environment(al)," "eco(logy)," "*poiesis*," "*umwelt*," and "*oikos*." Ideally, this leads to a heightened awareness of the specific theoretical frameworks in use but also to fruitful new ways of engaging with concepts such as ecopoetics and zoopoetics.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf., for example, Normandin; Jaeger; Knickerbocker; Siewers; Killingsworth. The distinction between "ecopoetics" and "ecocriticism" is touched upon by Killingsworth, for example. Ecopoetics, Killingsworth maintains, has "primarily phenomenological significance," while ecocriticism implies "a sharply political turn, invoking issues on the current environmentalist agenda." (6) Most scholars, however, seem to acknowledge ecopoetics as part and parcel of ecocriticism (cf. Bate; Rigby, "Ecopoetics").

### Thinking Eco-Zoopoetics

As outlined above, both eco-poetics and zoopoetics have emerged as ways to describe literary poetics on the one hand, and as theoretical perspectives on the other, thus including dimensions of writing (representation) and reading (interpretation); both concepts are concerned with sensing, signifying, and making sense of the various forces of *poiesis* at work in contexts transcending human creative powers and artifacts. The volume in hand contributes to the ongoing discussion and the yet unfinished conceptual formation surrounding “eco-poetics” and “zoopoetics” and pinpoints the usefulness of combining and thus mutually illuminating the respective theories. It asks how and why the idea of an “eco-zoopoetics” is needed and how ecocriticism and animal studies can cater to and profit from each other.

In light of Donna Haraway’s work, animals and their respective environments in literature can be regarded as “material-semiotic generative nodes,” as literary agents created and affected by the dynamics within and beyond language. As such, these nodes enmesh what we are used to calling “the real” and “the figurative,” the boundaries of which are not given but rather “materialize in social interaction” (“Situated Knowledges” 595). Literary representations of animals and environments are never independent of the meanings we give to “real” animals and environments, and, in turn, literary animals and environments play a vital role in the way we approach and think about “real” animals and environments.

Haraway’s idea of a “sympoiesis” at work in global multispecies contexts might also help us to rethink the relationships between literature, animals, and environments beyond the dichotomous patterns of “real” *or* “literary,” “animals” *or* “environments,” “zoopoetics” *or* “eco-poetics.” In this respect, it might be worthwhile to investigate the various forms of entanglement and co-production at work when species, environments, and aesthetic practices meet. Haraway describes these collaborations as forms of “sympoiesis” because the term

means “making-with.” Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing. In the words of the Inupiat computer “world game,” earthlings are never alone. That is the radical implication of sympoiesis. Sympoiesis is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company. Sympoiesis enfolds autopoiesis and generatively unfurls and extends it. (*Staying* 58)

Furthermore, a simplistic, conventional thinking which remains focused on species lines and on the boundaries separating specific environments might benefit from Haraway's notion of "worlding." For Haraway, "the world is a verb, or at least a gerund" ("SF"); the world is a space, an association, a context which is constantly being produced and transformed by agencies transcending human powers and bringing forth what Haraway conceives as "terrapolis":

Terrapolis is a fictional integral equation, a speculative fabulation.  
 Terrapolis is  $n$ -dimensional niche space for multispecies becoming-with.  
 Terrapolis is open, worldly, indeterminate, and polytemporal.  
 Terrapolis is a chimera of materials, languages, histories.  
 Terrapolis is for companion species, *cum panis*, with bread, at table together—not "posthuman" but "com-post."  
 Terrapolis is in place: Terrapolis makes space for unexpected companions. Terrapolis is an equation for guman, for human, for soil, for ongoing risky infection, for epidemics of promising trouble, for permaculture.  
 Terrapolis is the SF game of response-ability. (*Staying* 11)

Science and fiction, figures and characters, worlds and words, *bios* and *graphiein* are interrelated in complex ways. Rather than starting out from the dividing lines between text and *hors-texte*, between animals and environments, zoopoetics and eco-poetics, the chapters in this volume pay attention to the specific forms of how these agents, concepts, and spaces interconnect.

Looking at the relations of animals and environments within literature, we can identify three main relations. Animals might be (1) *part* of the environments depicted in a text. Nineteenth-century realist literature, for example, quite often has animals appear as constitutive elements of a specific locale. In Theodor Storm's poems and novellas (e.g., "Meeresstrand"; "Eine Halligfahrt"; *Der Schimmelreiter*) set at the North Sea coast, for instance, seagulls are an explicit component of the poetic-picturesque environment; nature writing usually represents animals as integral parts of a specific environment (cf., for example, Aldo Leopold's chapter "The Geese Return" in *A Sand County Almanac*). These animals can indicate the fact that humans (writer and readers) are not only part of literary environments in the process of writing and reading but (like literature in general) also actively involved in ecological contexts: *Texts, animals, and humans are part of and take part in environments.*

Additionally, animals and environments can serve as (2) *signifiers* of each other. This relationship can be described as *metonymical* (rather than metaphorical). Animals and environments are always and necessarily contiguous with each other; hence, they must be regarded *in relation* to each other—lit-



erally and semiotically. Literature can highlight or reflect this contiguity of animals and environments. Even if a text is reluctant to describe or define the relations between the two in detail, animals and their environments remain interdependent and interrelated—be they represented explicitly or referred to implicitly. Rilke’s encaged panther, for instance, is not only physically linked to a specific Parisian zoo setting but also reminds us of those non-European habitats where panthers “naturally” live. In this sense, Rilke’s panther (as well as, e.g., Kafka’s ape Rotpeter) is also indicative of the history of colonialism and the commercial trade of “exotic” animals. Thus, Rilke’s lyrical panther is *pars pro toto* for a specific European (domestic, urban) zoo environment and simultaneously refers us to a (rather unspecific or vaguely imagined) non-European (“natural”) environment as well as to the colonial power structures linking both environments. Literary animals can even serve as signifiers for the entire biosphere, i.e., for all living (non-human and human) beings in general or for certain threats to the biosphere. This becomes most pertinent in literary texts featuring extinct species, like “the Dodo” in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. In turn, specific environments can stand in for animals as *toto pro pars*, insofar as these environments allude to specific animals living in them. Descriptions or visual material of a city park or a riverside might make us “see” the birds, fishes, frogs, etc. inhabiting and shaping these spaces; literary representations of the land- and soundscapes of jungles can signify the animals creating these spaces and sounds. *As signifiers, animals and environments are mutually inclusive or appear as metonymically related entities.*

Finally, (3) animals and environments can serve as *ambassadors* for each other. Literary animals can raise awareness for ecological complexity and environmental issues, not least due to the performative capacities of animal agents. Getting in touch with animals (literally and figuratively) can advocate a change of perspectives, relativizing anthropocentric views by bringing us in contact with the place and the world (*oikos*) we share as well as with the multiple phenomenological worlds we perceptually live by; animals make the world come to the writers’ and readers’ minds and experiences. Likewise, literary environments can remind us of the animals living in them and animal issues more generally. Texts about deforestation, oil spills, and pesticide loads are obvious examples. Another is Melville’s protagonist Moby Dick in the eponymous novel. Moby Dick appears as a representative but also as an ambassador-avenger of all those whales hunted and killed in the long and humiliating history of whaling. As an ambassador for those disappearing animals and all the environments damaged by human exploitation, Moby

Dick provokes ethical questions concerning animal welfare, overfishing, and ecological issues connected to the global oceans and—more broadly—to the earth that we inhabit. *As ambassadors, literary animals and environments confront us with our response-ability toward the nonhuman in and beyond literature.*

The volume in hand sheds light on the dimensions of this provisional typology and encourages further research into how literary animals and environments are entwined in and with texts. In this respect, *Texts, Animals, Environments* addresses four crucial questions: First, how do literary animals relate to their literary environments (and vice versa), how do poetics relate to animals and environments? Second, which rhetorical and semiotic relations can be found and distinguished when looking at animals, environments, and ecological formations in and beyond literary texts? Third, how can we describe the connections and the differences between literary animals and environments on the one hand, and “real” animals and environments on the other? Fourth, what difference does it make to look at ecological relations in and beyond texts informed by animal studies scholarship? The sections structuring this volume have these questions in mind and probe their scopes with contributions including case studies, hypothetical approaches, and theoretical proposals.

The first section of the volume (*New Perspectives: Eco-Zoopoetics*) assembles theoretical concepts of dealing with the connections of texts, animals and environments and extending the notions of zoopoetics and ecopoetics in innovative ways. While the dialogue between animal studies and ecocriticism has already been initiated, the development of common methodological tools and theoretical lines is still in process and in need of inspiring approaches. The chapters of this section offer new perspectives on and means of engaging with animals, environments and the poetics of literary texts. They take into account how texts contribute to our understanding and conceptions of animals and environments and provide us with new perspectives to describe more-than-human poetics as well as the relationships between texts, animals, and environments.

AARON MOE’s “Holding on to Proteus; or, Toward a Poetics of Gaia” explores new ways to think about and acknowledge processes of *poiesis* within and of the world. Analyzing and interpreting modern poetry and prose in dialogue with contemporary posthuman theory, Moe introduces a Gaiaen poetics and discovers shape-shifting energies transcending human *poiesis*. In “Eco-Animal Assemblages in Contemporary French Thought,” STEPHANIE POSTHUMUS invites us to approach and understand the more-than-human world with the support of two concepts taken from French theory (*le vivant*

and *l'habitabilité*) which she discusses in line with contemporary French fiction. Her transversal approach pinpoints the prospect of connecting animal studies and ecocriticism and underlines the key role of cultural and literary diversity to rethink the relationship between animals, humans, and “nature” beyond national and academic boundaries. MARIE CAZABAN-MAZEROLLES also draws on the concept of *le vivant* to develop her argument. In her chapter “Narrating *le vivant*: The *Zoe*-Poetical Hypothesis,” she introduces “zoepoetics” as a poetics which encourages post-Darwinian, non-distinctive thinking and writing about the biosphere. Her article constructs “zoepoetics” as a bridge between animal studies and ecocriticism, yet also pays attention to the challenges posed by a literature venturing beyond anthropocentric traditions. ALEXANDER KLING’s “Action, Framework, and the Poetics of “Co-Making”: A Testing Device for Ecological Narratives” closes the section. A look at Barry Commoner’s first law and Lawrence Buell’s first precept of ecology helps Kling to develop a method of testing literary texts in terms of their ecological narrativity. Taking actor-network-theory (Latour) and narratology (Genette) into account, he illustrates the testing device by analyzing two works of German *Heimatliteratur*.

The chapters in the second section (*Theory and Genre*) focus on theoretical concepts, poetics, and specific literary genres which appear to favor an engagement with animals and environments. Formal and conceptual approaches to representing animals and environments depend on the genre as well as the epistemological and aesthetic background of a text; in many canonical theoretical and literary works, animals and environmental phenomena play an essential role in the poetical and axiomatic foundation of the texts. At the same time, the respective theories and poetics are affected by the animals and environments taking part in the *poiesis* of the texts. Narrative structures, poetic forms, rhetorical elements, and key arguments are related to the agency and predominance of animals and environments. The chapters in this section do not only highlight the importance of thinking about texts, animals and environments in relation to each other but also stress the fact that zoopoetics and eco-poetics have to be considered in the light of the characteristics and conventions of specific theories and literary genres.

The section starts with ROLAND BORGARDS’ “The Beetle Is in the Eye of the Beholder: Animal Ecologies, Situated Poetics and the Poetry of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff.” Borgards analyzes how Droste-Hülshoff’s nature poetry can be read as a situated poetics which takes into account the material and semiotic presence of animals and their environments. In addition, Droste-Hülshoff’s “zoo-eco-poetics” anticipates a proto-ecological perspective

acknowledging the entanglement of the human subject perceiving (and getting in touch with) the animals and the respective environments he or she is corporeally and poetically sharing. While Borgards revisits nature poetry in the context of nineteenth-century knowledge about animals and environments, SEBASTIAN SCHÖNBECK's "Return to the Fable: Rethinking a Genre Neglected in Animal Studies and Ecocriticism" is an appeal to reconsider the fable beyond its reputation as a purely anthropomorphic and unduly anthropocentric genre. By investigating how Rachel Carson, Michel Serres, and Jacques Derrida make use of fables to develop a theory about animals and environments, he argues that animals and their environments in these fables cannot be reduced to mere signs for anthropocentric ends. The genre of science fiction takes center stage in BENJAMIN BÜHLER's contribution to this section. In "Other Environments: Ecocriticism and Science Fiction," he analyzes the ways in which science fiction allows for the invention and reflection of alien environments, nonhumans, and the multiple ways in which humans are affected by them. In his engagement with texts by Stanisław Lem, J. G. Ballard and Dietmar Dath, Bühler shows that the literary animals are always already embedded in their environments so that one cannot take them into account as separate components of the diegetic world. Finally, WINFRIED NÖTH's "Peirce on the Continuity between Human and Nonhuman Minds" concentrates on the history of pragmatism and draws our attention to Charles Sanders Peirce's writings. Nöth argues that Peirce anticipates important ideas of contemporary animal theory in general, but, in particular, Brian Massumi's thoughts on what animals can teach us about politics.

The contributors of the third section (*Epistemology and Aesthetics*) examine the ways in which animals and environments are invested in aesthetical and epistemological theories and concepts such as "taste," "perception," "beauty," "knowledge," and "representation." At the same time, they probe the extent to which these concepts are influenced by animals, environments and their complex relations. Literature, the natural sciences, philosophy, and phenomenology may turn to animals and environments to not only illustrate but also to develop an argument or theory. Looking at fictional and factual texts, the chapters trace epistemological, phenomenological, and aesthetical concerns framing and determining conceptual perspectives on animals and environments in science, philosophy, and literature.

KÁRI DRISCOLL's "Il n'y a pas de chats': Feline Absence and/as the Space of Zoopoetics" opens this section. He draws our attention to felines as paradigmatic animals for theoretical efforts in animal studies. Looking at Rainer

Maria Rilke, Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jorge Luis Borges, and Jacques Derrida, Driscoll analyzes the economy of representation and knowledge of felines that inhabit the same but simultaneously very different world of (non)human animals. JESSICA GÜSKEN's article revisits eighteenth-century philosophy. In her chapter "Blooming Flowers, Fish in Water, Amphibians, and Apes: Herder's Environmental Aesthetics of Nature," she outlines Johann Gottfried Herder's intellectual dispute with Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory. Güsken elaborates on the meanings of specific flora, fauna, and environmental contexts in Herder's and Kant's discussion on beauty and ugliness, finding that both philosophers heavily rely on animals and environments as essential sources for their theories. VERENA MEIS turns to a specific aquatic species. Her "'The jellyfish must have precedence!': The Diaphanous Animal as an Optical Medium" is concerned with the jellyfish as a paradigmatic figure of ecopoetics, thus combining concerns of both animal studies and ecocriticism. With its various contexts of jellyfish narratives, Meis' article not only traces the role of siphonophores in the history of knowledge and media but also takes the *poiesis* of jellyfish as a methodological and poetic guideline of her own investigative approach. DAN GORENSTEIN brings us back to land animals with his "Ants and Battlefields, Beetles and Landscapes: Rudiments for a Naturalistic Reading of Ernst Jünger's Interwar Essays through the Lens of His Later Entomological Hermeneutics." He proposes a contextual reading of Ernst Jünger's oeuvre and its periodization in light of Jünger's epistemological and aesthetic engagements with animals and their environments. Looking at Jünger's writings on beetles, Gorenstein develops a theory of "entomological hermeneutics" the principles of which can shed light on Jünger's interwar essays and the coherence of his entire work more generally. DOMINIC O'KEY closes this section with "W. G. Sebald's Zoopoetics: Writing after Nature." In his analysis, he acknowledges Sebald's writings as both zoopoetic and ecopoetic and argues that Sebald challenges anthropocentrism in and through nature writing. Sebald's zoopoetics, O'Key shows, is sensitive toward issues of representation and style when it comes to animals and environments.

The fourth section of this volume (*Space and Agency*) investigates the spatial, medial, and existential impact of animal and environmental *poiesis* in and beyond literary contexts. Real and imagined spaces, as well as the relations and interactions between humans, animals and environments, stand at the fore of these contributions. The authors study the agency of texts, animals, and environments, exploring the *poiesis* of non-human agents and their capabilities to initiate, create, and bring about change. In these contributions,

animals and environments come to light not as objects of representation but as subjects affecting the means and medias of representation.

MARGO DEMELLO opens the section with her chapter on “The Rabbits of Okunoshima: How Feral Rabbits Alter Space, Create Relationships, and Communicate with People and Each Other.” Examining the zoopoetical agency of rabbits inhabiting and shaping a small Japanese island, DeMello shows how the rabbits of Okunoshima modify the environment of the island and how they manage to influence the behavior of the human visitors coming to the island. The agency of organic matter stands at the fore of SARAH BEZAN’s “A Darwinism of the Muck and Mire: Decomposing the Eco- and Zoopoetics of Stephen Collis and Jordan Scott’s *decomp.*” Bezan revisits Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in her analysis of Stephen Collis’ and Jordan Scott’s poetic-photographical work *decomp.* Bezan examines *decomp.* as a creative contribution and sequel to Darwin’s evolutionary theory as a theory of life that circulates between bodies and milieus. MATTHIAS PREUSS’ chapter “How to Disappear Completely. Poetics of Extinction in Max Frisch’s *Man in the Holocene*” presents a reading of the relations between (a) man, animals and environments in the context of Frisch’s novel in which they act and meet. Preuss proposes to describe the relationship of ecopoetics and zoopoetics in terms of erosive and prosopopoetic effects that together shape Frisch’s (anti)novel. While Margo DeMello examines the rabbits of Okunoshima as real animals that live and communicate with humans on a daily basis, CLAIRE CAZAJOUS-AUGÉ’s chapter “The Traces Animals Leave: A Zoopoetic Study of Rick Bass’ ‘Antlers’” turns to literature for an investigation of the spaces in which animal absences and presences come to light and can be traced. In the writings of North American writer and eco-activist Rick Bass, Cazajous-Augé considers the traces animals leave as animal *poises* and as an encouragement to pay attention to other forms of life and their ways of inhabiting the world.

Thinking about *Text, Animals, Environments* implies ethical concerns and questions pertaining to why and how literature deals with animals and environmental issues. The fifth section (*Ethos and Ethics*) is thus dedicated to the ways in which “ethos” (from the Greek *ethos* for “character” and “personal disposition”) and “ethics” (the study of morals) relate to texts, animals, and environments (“ethic, n.”). The authors of this part explore how novels and factual narratives represent and reflect animals and environments in the context of negotiating and exposing ethical issues. Perspectives from both zoopoetics and ecopoetics serve as fundamental approaches to dealing with the intricacies and dilemmas of living in a world shared by texts, (nonhuman) animals, and various environments.

The section begins with KATE RIGBY's "Piping in their honey dreams': Toward a Creaturely Eco-poetics" which combines the perspectives of animal studies and the environmental humanities by focusing on apian poetic representations from ancient idylls, Romantic counter-pastoral to contemporary poetry. Rigby thus maps out a "creaturely eco-poetics" highlighting both the affinities of and the commonly shared impacts environmental exploitation has on human and nonhuman animals. Bees also play the leading role in SUSAN MCHUGH's chapter "Cross-Pollinating: Indigenous Frictions and Honeybee Fictions." McHugh starts out from the diagnosis that the perception of honeybees as constantly changing collectives is paradigmatic for the current challenges posed by the intertwinement of human and animal collectives. Revisiting a variety of contemporary honeybee narratives, she demonstrates how literary texts process and problematize human-avian encounters and relationships in postcolonial contexts. Another animal agent whose return has been occupying the European media is at the fore of AXEL GOODBODY's chapter. In "Wolves and Wolf Men as Literary Tropes and Figures of Thought: Eco- and Zoopoetic Perspectives on Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* and Other Wolf Narratives," Goodbody interprets wolf narratives in and beyond contemporary Chinese literature. Focusing on Rong's *Wolf Totem*, he is concerned with the question of how the text deals with political questions concerning wolves in the grassland steppes of Inner Mongolia and what a zoopoetic and eco-poetic perspective can bring to a reading of Rong's novel and wolf narratives more generally. GABRIELE DÜRBECK's chapter on "Memory, Loss and Guilt in a Girl-Chimp Experiment. Karen Joy Fowler's Novel *We Are Completely Beside Ourselves* (2013)" asks how literature can challenge human-animal dichotomies in general and hierarchical thinking about humans and primates in particular. Dürbeck explores how contemporary novels, and most prominently Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, interrelate ethology and ethics and thus shed light on the complex issues pertaining to the affinities and the co-habitation of humans and primates. Finally, FREDERIKE MIDDELHOFF's "(Not) Speaking for Animals and the Environment. Zoopoetics and Eco-poetics in Yoko Tawada's *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*" investigates Yoko Tawada's latest novel as a work of fiction which reflects both animal and environmental concerns. Tawada's eco-zoopoetics negotiates and gives voice to both polar bears and environmental issues by impeding the reader's immersion into the bears' minds, by aligning human and nonhuman agency, and by exposing the various ways in which humans try to instrumentalize polar bears for anthropocentric ends.

*Texts, Animals, Environments* thus assesses the concerns and complexities of the interplay between texts, animals, and environments from the perspectives of zoopoetics and eco-poetics. It maps out the relations between the poetics of animals and environments, between individual organisms and organic contexts, between “real” and “fictional” agents. The volume is not only a substantial contribution to the theory of both ecocriticism and cultural animal studies but also offers a more comprehensive idea of what animals and environments mean in specific cultural contexts. The chapters in this volume illuminate the textual connections between animals and environments and make evident that an analysis failing to take these connections into account will miss crucial aspects of a textual, cultural, or even geographical fabric.

The authors of this volume illustrate that the concepts “zoopoetics” and “eco-poetics” can illuminate these connections and reciprocal structures. Both concepts can be useful to understand the extent to which animals and environments take part in the poetics of a text and how they are interwoven in the fabrics of literature more generally. Therefore, zoopoetics and eco-poetics might also help us to find out more about the effects animals and environments have on writers, readers, theories, and genres. Texts organize the intricate relations between humans, animals, and environments and stress the fact that nonhuman agents can be (co)authors. This volume demonstrates that eco-zoopoetical readings which start from the premises of both animal studies and ecocriticism not only relativize human agency but also foreground the relationality and interdependency of humans, animals, and environments in literary texts and nonliterary contexts.

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