# Ethics and Semiogenic Construction of Other Animals:

# Cetology and Crustaceology in *Moby-Dick* and "Consider the Lobster"

By

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**Abstract**

This thesis brings together a ten-page essay on lobsters and a 700-page book on whales to scrutinize the semiogenic construction of creatures floating in the political animal menagerie. Herman Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* and David Foster Wallace's essay "Consider the Lobster" are texts that are fundamentally concerned with the ethical stakes of textual and historical representations of cetaceans and crustaceans. Both these works explore the intersection between the unknowability of nonhuman animal subjectivity and the industrial rendering of nonhuman animal bodies —an intersection paved and maintained by biopolitical agents that emphasize the former so that the latter can occur without criticism. Despite being published 154 years apart, both these works use the New England coastline to portray industries of death and devouring, both of which are centres of epistemological ambiguity for Wallace and Melville. By theoretically unpacking the political, cultural and historical portrayal of crustaceans and cetaceans in these two literary works, this thesis pursues some of the intra-active networks —in particular those of speciesist ideology— that encase and weave together the industrialized biocapital of nonhuman bodies to the aesthetic representation of them.

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Finally, thank you Herman Melville and David Foster Wallace. For the writer who was long-eyed and larger than himself. For the writer with a brief life and hideous death. You both lived intensely in man's cold darkness, hot guilt, and the lukewarm realities of our never realized fantasies. And, I'm sorry for that.

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# Introduction

## Amor Intellectualis quo Adam se Ipsum Amat

The exploitation of nonhuman animals for exhibitions, science, labour and consumption is perpetuated through biopolitical agents who "operate under a guise of peace, constructed more often than not within the rule of law" (Wadiwel 285). Drawing on the cautions outlined by Michel Foucault in his book *Society Must Be Defended,* Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel posits, "the sheer spectrum and magnitude of the legalized lethal violence that humans use against other animals" is evidence of sovereign power —that "we are at war with animals," a conclusion that echoes Derrida's earlier proclamation that a "war of the species" is ongoing ("Animal" 400). Even though our dominion over nonhuman animals "bears the unmistakable hallmarks of continuing warlike domination," as demonstrated by the colossal number of casualties, Wadiwel is wise to point out that this "war does not appear to be a war" (Wadiwel 284).

Characteristics of war that we find appalling —violence, apathy, mercilessness, gore, and so on— are blatantly present in very normalized activities: chick culling, bull fighting, horse racing, factory farming, whale hunting and even the Maine Lobster Festival. Herman Melville and David Foster Wallace brilliantly portray battles against oceanic creatures, in 700 and ten pages, respectively. They take flensing knives to their contemporary versions of the USA, carving nonhuman consequences from humanist cultural practices, positioning the reader to ponder the morality in denying nonhuman animals their reasonable preference for staying alive. They also assume the personae of humble, impartial narrators to articulate the anthropocentric strategies behind the war on cetaceans and crustaceans, furthermore, and uniquely so, both men document the resistance of the opposing side.

This thesis explores *Moby-Dick* and "Consider the Lobster" together, arguing that the representation and perceived "knowledge" of nonhuman animals reflect a capitalist and anthropocentric bias. Both texts share the same noble goal —to give access to inaccessible selves. Their futile voyages begin on the New England coast line and parallel on currents poised for cetacean and crustacean ontology; however, both narratives conclude at the same narrow coordinates of human limitation. Their exploration ceases at a confined locus squeezed tighter by a longitude of anthropocentrism and a latitude of capitalist influence because Melville and Wallace take language and ideology as their subjects when trying to render nonhuman animal subjectivity knowable. Focusing on metaphor, symbols, codes, imagery, language, hidden ideologies, and what is left unsaid in Melville and Wallace's texts, this thesis borrows from poststructural and ecocritical scholarship to ascertain whether "Consider the Lobster" and *Moby-Dick* detect, acknowledge and do something about anthropocentric prejudice. While scholars agree that nonhuman characters are most often humans in costumes, cloaks and disguises,[1] few have focused on the overt humility both narrators express in their incapacity to convey cetacean and crustacean ontology, a caveat this project centres on to suggest that by openly disclosing their —or any human's— incapacity to overcome the hermeneutical difficulty in comprehending nonhuman perspectives, Melville and Wallace create the ecocritical implication that there is something worth comprehending. Further, both Melville's novel and Wallace's essay provide a commodity history that "bring back to visibility, behind some product" ubiquitous enough "to be a precondition for everyday life, the forgotten process by which it has first been wrenched out of natural life, then worked or manufactured into a marketable good" (Brodhead 6). In this case, oil

[1] *Moby-Dick*, specifically. Due to its age, critical animal scholarship on "Consider the Lobster" is scarce.

and meat. By theoretically unpacking the political, cultural and historical portrayal of crustaceans and cetaceans in these two literary works, this thesis pursues some of the intra-active networks —in particular those of speciesist ideology— that encase and weave together the industrialized biocapital of nonhuman bodies to the aesthetic representation of them.

This introduction briefly discusses the ethical standing of nonhuman animals in Western philosophical thought, because the historical background of forced nonhuman subordination allows for a comprehensive analysis of the dominant anthropocentric ideology from which both works narrate. Part I focuses on the most infamous example of nonhuman resistance in literary history —Melville's character Moby-Dick, whom the book was named after and published in 1851. Narrated by an enigmatic protagonist, Ishmael, the plot follows a legendary white whale who resists his deadly pursuers while simultaneously resisting comprehension. I argue that *Moby-Dick* semiogenically constructs the whale in a way that obscures cetaceans in totality, replacing their being with humanist conquest, appetite, and the labour necessary to turn cetacean selves into commodities. Through the close reading of Ishmael's chasing, capture and dismembering of whales, I illustrate the ways in which cetacean capital and consumption triumph over all attempts to construe or contain whale ontology. The historical context is significant because *Moby-Dick* is a product of its socio-political climate, an era built on rewriting the definition of labour and resource in a way that further distances humans from other animals.[2] This orchestrated separation was complicated by the three metanarratives teaming at the time: "a still potent Christian theology, a dominant and expanding industrial capitalism, and an embryonic

[2] This occurred literally and ideologically; as summarized by Armstrong in *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*: "[i]ndustrial techniques were absolving farmers from close proximity to their livestock; assembly-line specialization of tasks was beginning, alienating workers from the material being processed; geographical and psychological gaps were widening between an increasingly urbanized human populace and most other species" (100).

evolutionary science" (Armstrong, *Fiction* 115). Because *Moby-Dick'*s conception occurred during the transition from "the Newtonian world-as-machine to the Darwinian world-as-organism," it pioneered a proposal of transposing nonhumans into human ethics, politics, policies and every other facet that governs the way humans operate (Bezanson 669). In stressing the differences and similarities between humans and sperm whales, Ishmael conveys the power of human projection on all things nonhuman, the exigent need to interpret nonhuman motives and the many and various obstacles that get in the way of doing so.

Part II assesses "Consider the Lobster"'s commentary on "knowledge" production and its rhetorical role in shaping cognitively dissonant consumer behaviour through Wallace's moralist contemplation of current culinary practices —specifically, the boiling-alive of lobsters for consumption. The piece was commissioned by *Gourmet Magazine* in 2003, and the many editorial demands Wallace had to oblige will be examined to showcase the paradoxical production of apathetic attitudes towards nonhuman suffering. In examining the magazine's editing and the Maine Lobster Promotion Council's marketing, it is made apparent that human authority and censorship are chiefly responsible for normalizing mass-violence in societies where the consumption of other animals is not a necessity, but a choice. Wallace's ethical claims are far from straightforward, but in braiding together his encyclopedic depiction of crustacean biology and history to a philosophical deconstruction of a lobster's vivid displays of preference, it appears he shares Ishmael's conclusion that our knowledge regarding nonhuman others is "but the draught of a draught" (Melville 157). The lobster's presence in human cultural history, its monetary value, and its "complex and diffuse neural network, which makes it both deeply sensitive to its environment and difficult to locate as a singular entity" make it impossible to

definitively place lobsters in anthropocentric indexes of determining whether or not they are worthy of our sympathetic consideration (Kaiser 54). In dismissing anthropocentric registers for gauging behaviour, which Wallace convincingly argues is entirely motivated by late-capitalist customs, he relocates his discussion of animal advocacy in broader narratives of crimes against humanity. A product of her analysis of Adolf Eichmann's trial in 1962, Hannah Arendt's conceptualization of the "banality of evil" illuminates the societal cognitive dissonance that "Consider the Lobster" exhibits and its consociation with consumer culture. In Wallace's words, "a big part of serious fiction's purpose is to give the reader[…] imaginative access to other selves" (McCaffery). This thesis suggests "Consider the Lobster"'s serious non-fictitious purpose is to give *Gourmet* readers ingress to selves withdrawn from access, what Timothy Morton would call "strange strangers."

Both Wallace and Melville's first-person narrators adopt multiple voices, narrate from dissonant spaces, and compile information from far-ranging places and moments in time in order to render the nonhuman animal into words, which is morally complicated by the fact humans render them into commodities. Both authors desperately try to make nonhuman ontology knowable by defining and explaining all the different ways lobsters what whales have existed alongside humans. Ironically, they try to make nonhuman victims known to us through anthropocentric epistemologies. *Moby-Dick* begs us to consider how aesthetic experience impairs ethical faculties by boasting the romance of whale hunting which depends on how much violence, blood and oil can spill from a harpoon wound. "Consider the Lobster" urges the same consideration through observing the classism and spectacle of the Maine Lobster Festival's key attraction —the world's largest lobster-boiling cauldron. These self-aware texts acknowledge that

nonhuman animal experience cannot be reproduced by humans, and their multi-dimensional articulations of the various forms of crustacean and cetacean representation suggest lobsters and whales have been snared into two-dimensional justifications of their forced captivity, cooption, and murder. Further, these works contest that "knowledge" about nonhuman others is dependent on scientific advancements which are not only inconclusive and rudimentary, but which also label these animals as knowable, a necessary step in the manufacturing and proliferation of such justifications. Because no human has the faculty of knowing the nonhuman, one must question —as Wallace and Melville do— the different ways we reproduce nonhuman animal experience and the consequences of such representations, which have been cruelly inconvenient for nonhuman animals.

Disputes concerning the ethical, moral and political standing of nonhuman animals have gone through a sweeping revaluation since the onset of poststructuralism in the 1970s. Such debates are gaining critical momentum in the age of the anthropocene, where the world is experiencing its sixth mass extinction largely due to human-driven habitat loss and greenhouse gas emissions.[3] Geologists, climate and earth systems scientists, archaeologists, historians, political economists, social theorists, philosophers, writers and artists have all acknowledged human interaction with other animals as having a significant impact on our current geological epoch —interactions such as the upsurge of farmed-animal population, the expansion of industrialized overfishing and an overwhelming loss of the planet's biodiversity (Malhi 78). Addressing the issue of human power over non-human life is of paramount importance when attending to pressing environmental issues like climate change. Recognizing the interdependence

[3] The term anthropocene has been adopted across a wide range of disciplines to denote our current geological age as one that has been dominantly influenced by human activities.

between humans and other animals, challenging restrictive environmental dualisms and encouraging ecological and non-reductive modes of interacting with non-humans are all cross-disciplinary initiatives proposed by ecocritics and animal advocates, all of which are intimately related to the conceptual framework of the anthropocene.

Human domination over other animals is a large part of our impending ecological crisis; therefore the harmful and reductive logic behind human supremacy over nonhumans requires dismantling. Although alternative ways of feeding, clothing and entertaining ourselves —ways that avoid the commodification of nonhuman animals— have long been introduced, discussed and offered, at this very historical moment "the scale and efficiency of factory farming has never been more nightmarish, in which the oceans are being overfished by advanced techniques such as purse-seine netting" to the point that it is unlikely we will see marine life in our oceans by 2050[4] (Wolfe, *Before the Law* 53). The way in which "knowledge" of nonhumans animals is generated, represented and circulated is largely controlled by capitalist economics, which influence the public policies that aid consumers in adopting a highly cognitively dissonant stance on their responsibility to nonhuman animals.

The behavioural pattern of violence towards nonhumans can only be broken by resisting cognitive schemas that rationalize such violence. Across wide-ranging fields, scholars acknowledge today's ecological emergency stems from the widespread proliferation of human/nature dualisms: "a system of ideas that takes radically separated reason to be the essential characteristic of humans and situates human life outside and above an inferiorized and

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[4] In a report released May 18th 2010, Head of the UN Environment Program's green economy initiative, Pavan Sukhdev, surmised "If the various estimates we have received... come true, then we are in the situation where 40 years down the line we, effectively, are out of fish".

manipulable nature" (Plumwood 4). Borrowing from eco-philosopher Val Plumwood, Kate Rigby explains how the conceptual structure of hierarchal dualism sunders "reason" from "nature" and "ordered their relationship in such a way as to guarantee the hegemony of the former" (Rigby 125). Institutionalized speciesism rationalizes the exploitation of nonhuman others "in the name of human and reason-cantered culture that is at least a couple millennia old" (Huggan and Tiffin 5). Both Herman Melville and David Foster Wallace draw upon Western traditions of rhetoric and logic; but, the fictional Ishmael and the humble reporter dismantle these philosophical practices through their examination of capitalism's toll on marine life. Societal failure to ethically situate non-humans has a long philosophical history that has been traced all the way to Aristotle.

In his book *Politics*, Aristotle proposes the much-cited statement that "man[…] is by nature a political animal" (10). "Man's" capacity for language and reason sets him apart from all things nonhuman, resulting in the denial of human kinship with other animals because man is "in a higher degree than bees or other gregarious animals[…] man alone of the animals is furnished with the faculty of language" (11). Furthermore, "man's" intelligence rightfully unionizes "the naturally ruling element with the element which is naturally ruled" to ensure "the preservation of both" which he acknowledges as a form of benevolent "slavery" (8). His opinion of enslaved animals "get[ting] the benefit of preservation" parallels his attitudes of "the relation of male to female" which he views to be "naturally that of the superior to the inferior, of the ruling to the ruled" (16). According to Aristotle, animals, like women, live to serve man: "plants exist for the benefit of animals and some animals exist for the benefit of others" (23). "In antiquity," Derek Ryan expertly surmises, "it seems that you must either be a man or exist for the

benefit of one" (6). Man summons other animals in order to subject them to man's command which fixes them under his authority.

This hierarchal human-animal order came to be known as the "Great Chain of Being" during the superseding Judeo-Christian era; several religious texts assert a "natural" system "where plants were thought to exist for animals, animals for man, and man in order to contemplate god" (Pritchard 123). The Stoic conception that the earth and its nonhuman inhabitants "was thus seen as designed for humans, and humans designed to be the highest being on this earth" influenced modern European thinkers (122). Humanity, particularly in the Western cultural tradition, propelled itself in designs of agriculture, irrigation, drainage, farming and other architectural endeavours. "Inherent in the idea of design is a designer" and thus the humanist emulation "of a designed earth became an important (if circular) proof for the existence of god(s)" (123). Through impersonating the gods' guardianship over the world, men were "seen to be unlike other animals by virtue of their relation with divine" (Basnett 290). The long historical processes of taming and domesticating nonhuman animals have engendered our current technological methods of mastering other animals through biological engineering and industrialized slaughter. The way we forcefully inseminate, genetically manipulate, and breed animals just to kill them is evidence that our self-proclaimed divinity has since only become modernized.

The notion that humanity's keystone is rationality was imperative to early Greek thought and remains an important crux in the ambiguous division between humans and other animals. Aristotle emphasized this dissension rigorously, stressing "the centrality of reason in human life" and insisting the rational ruled over the "animalistic" parts of the soul in the same way mind

rules over matter (Lennox 1). This dogma of humanist "superiority by way of rationality contributed as a metaphor for other divisions" (Pritchard 124), as Aristotle argued in *Politics*: "[w]here there is such a difference as that between the soul and body, or between men and animals[…] the lower sort are nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master" (34). This methodology of categorizing all species in dominant/subservient hierarchies "was applied to classification systems until Darwin and others introduced their non-teleological evolutionary theories" (Pritchard 123). Unveiling the way humans are descendants of nonhuman animals troubled our understanding of humanity because asserting primacy over one's ancestors problematizes "natural" order. These archaic attitudes offer the first recorded evidence of theories surrounding humanity's position above the natural world. This cognitive schema exaggerates the distance between humans and other animals and therefore minimizes our ethical obligations to them.

This intellectual conceptualization was then re-articulated in post-medieval thought by Rene Descartes[5] who exaggerated the distance between humans and other animals by focusing on humanity's faculties for conscious thought. The "first principle" of his revered work entitled *Discourse on Method* divides contemplative humans from mechanical animals: "I think, therefore I am." Only humans have access to the "I" (cogito) which is radically severed from any and all physical and social aspects of being. He believed the bodies of animals are nothing more than complex automata —living, organic creatures that cannot reason or feel pain, justifying his practices of experimenting on living animals. His publications amplified the seductive spell of Western enlightenment and the belief of humans existing on a plane far above the natural world

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[5] Frequently referred to as the "father" of philosophy.

became galvanized in every form of institution. Humans are subjects and never objects because of their divergence from other animals and the natural or material world. Homo sapiens are placed in the ontological centre because they possess a soul; we think and create due to a divine, immaterial essence. Descartes describes the severance of humanity from nature with dualisms that came to be named after him: cartesian divisions of the mind (res cogitans) and matter (res extensa). By barring any beings other than man from having a "mind," he reinforced his belief that the natural world is a machine that can be controlled through scientific reason. Through rationalist and scientific method, Descartes proposed it was possible to:

> discover a practical, by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we might also apply them in the same way to all the uses to which they are adapted, *and thus render ourselves the lords and possessors of nature*. (Descartes 49, emph. mine)

Centuries on, humans continue to climb the ladder of hierarchy because of our creations and self-creations, because we disembody from the material world by practicing intellect, culture and mastery over everything —and everyone— that is ratified as inferior.

As god-like beings, we destine the "animals to an experience of the power of man, *in order to see* the power of man in action, in order to see the power of man at work, in order to see man take power over all the other living beings" (Derrida, "Animal" 386). Jacques Derrida's observation of the way human subjectivity is defined and bolstered by our mastery of nonhuman subjects can be used to scrutinize Immanuel Kant's revision of a biblical scene that details his opinion of man's rational capacity and the gulf it creates between us and the rest of creation. In

*Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, Kant ventriloquizes Adam to stage humanity's coming into reason through a perplexing speech act:

> The first time he said to the sheep: Nature gave the skin you wear not for you but for me, and then took it off the sheep and put it on himself (*Genesis* 3:21), he became aware of a prerogative that he had by his nature over all animals, which he no longer saw as fellow creatures, but as means and tools at the disposal of his will for the attainment of the aims at his discretion. (Kant 114)

Kant's early man shears the sheep because his self-described privilege requires the assertion of authority over someone who has none. He bequeaths himself as superior because who he deems inferior cannot contest this self-acclamation using a language he understands. Then, why does he choose to speak to the silenced sheep? This impulse stems from the desire of telling the nonhuman animal that they do not have language, a humiliation that elevates Adam's self-conception. A lot of nonhuman animal suffering is

> born out of this muteness[…] but also out of and by means of the wound without a name: that of having *been given a name*. Finding oneself deprived of language, one loses the power to name, to name oneself, indeed to *respond* to one's name. (As if man didn't also receive his name and his names!) (Derrida, "Animal" 388)

Fixing the nonhuman animal as deprived and impoverished is foundational to the widespread conception of nonhuman animals as lacking anything to express, or worse, lacking a self to express.

Throughout history, attitudes towards nonhuman animals are born, manifested and perpetuated in the language used to describe them. Language surrounding nonhuman animals has

been formulated to explicitly state the inferiority of nonhuman animals or the utility of their bodies for human purposes. The insights provided by critical animal studies, such as Derrida's foundational work *The Animal That I Therefore Am*, help illuminate and deconstruct the representations of other animals by showing how, in our dominant culture, logocentrism serves as a facet of speciesism which undermines the human relationship with other animals. Nonhuman experience is fundamentally unknowable to humans, and because dominant Western ideologies have deemed them to be silent, we can only imagine and sympathize with nonhuman experience by comparing it with our own.[6] When representing nonhuman animals, we appropriate their experience as an index of humanness and create imagery, signifiers and symbols for them because the difference between human and nonhuman experience is actually the difference between human and nonhuman communication systems.

*Moby-Dick* and "Consider the Lobster" insist human limitation prevents us from understanding other animals, and the widely held misbelief that there is little to understand feeds human hubris to an egotistical height of favouring domination over coexistence. Melville and Wallace evoke the sublime, as their texts fully develop whales and lobsters into creatures who inspire awe. The protagonists are not awe-struck by cetology and crustaceology, but by how little

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[6] For this reason, critical animal scholars either deplore or willfully employ anthropomorphism. For some, it is a betrayal of truth in the sense that one is superimposing humanist interpretation atop of genuine nonhuman experience. On the other hand, what better way to encourage humans to treat other animals with more dignity and compassion then by making nonhuman suffering relatable to humans through anthropomorphic representation? Many acknowledge that anthropomorphizing nonhuman animal suffering is not the most truthful method of representing the phenomena, but campaigns such as PETA, Mercy for Animals, and the Animal Liberation Front show that anthropomorphizing tactics have been highly effective in encouraging people to renounce speciesist privilege. If one's goal is to make a profound enough impact to subvert a subject's established and deeply ingrained carnist ideology, then, we can presume such individuals are much more invested in results than the methodologies employed to achieve them. That is why many animal advocates rationalize this practice by focusing on the desired outcome —the likelihood this methodology will permanently change the consumption habits of a subject. Humanizing nonhuman suffering may not be the most accurate representation, but it is highly effective in inspiring humans to abstain from nonhuman-derived products, which, in turn, benefits nonhuman animals intended for slaughter or enslavement. Because this is the average animal advocate's key objective, they presume anthropomorphic strategies are justified.

either breach the inaccessible membrane of whale and lobster ontology. The more we know about the two-million-year-old biology of lobsters, the less we know how to treat them. We have determined "lobsters do have nociceptors, as well as invertebrate versions of the prostaglandins and major neurotransmitters via which our brains register pain" (Wallace 63). Despite this knowledge, it is the lobster's lack of cerebral cortex that allows for their casual boiling-alive. Because "lobsters do not, on the other hand, appear to have the equipment for making or absorbing natural opioids like endorphins and enkephalins," then, perhaps, they feel more pain than we are ready to admit. Strangely, while bringing nonhuman animals into focus, they become intensely obscured —the more we "know," the less we understand. Whales, our mammalian kinsmen, are equally enigmatic; we cannot follow them into the watery depths where they thrive, the medium of our suffocation. Because most of cetology is founded on the dissection of dead specimens, Ishmael stresses the whale, "scientific or poetic, lives not complete in any literature[…] his is an unwritten life" (Melville 147). The way in which language and epistemology have founded dire consequences for nonhuman others is precisely why Herman Melville and David Foster Wallace feel ethically inclined to contest the dominant optic of anthropocentrism and associated conceptualizations of power.

## Part I

### Considering Cetaceans with Herman Melville

> Dissect him how I may, then, I but go skin deep; *I know him not and never will*.
> (Melville 428, emph. mine)

> It is not natural for nature to be known. Thus, between the instincts and knowledge one finds not a continuity but, rather, a relation of struggle, domination, servitude, settlement. In the same way, there can be no relation of natural continuity between knowledge and the things knowledge must know. There can only be a relation of violence, domination, power and force, a relation of violation. *Knowledge can only be a violation of the things to be known, and not a perception, a recognition, an identification of or with those things.*
> (Foucault "Truth and Juridical Forms" 9, emph. mine)

During Herman Melville's lifetime, the capitalist movement transitioned from combatting feudal monarchies and systems to becoming the regime under which the whole world would come to operate. *Moby-Dick* reflects the epoch in which it was written as evinced by Ishmael's anatomization of cetaceans, which is more accurately the anatomization of a global extractive industry. Emerging industrial capitalism encapsulated every aspect of life; therefore it is unsurprising that Melville's protagonist engages with "whales as symbols rather than whaleness as such" (Buell, *Writing* 207). Ishmael is inspired to board as crew the *Pequod*, given "all the honor and the glory [in] whaling," a satirical sentiment that resounds repeatedly and loudly in a narration that is largely concerned with the nobility in whaling and the social homo-bonding it facilitates (Melville 122). And yet, through Ishmael's specific use of irony, our attention is slyly drawn to the "living beings that must be sacrificed for its attainment" (Azzarello 56). In his attempt to comprehend and portray whales, Ishmael draws on literature, religion, and scientific studies to centre the narration in a humanist version of cetology, but with wavering confidence. He repeatedly expresses the impossibility of conveying cetacean ontology, which suggests he is

straddling two opposing point of views —first, a rigidly anthropocentric one shaped by romantic promises of egocentric and economic fulfillment, and second, a less obvious ecocritical perspective that is awe-stricken by the unknowability of the white whale. An analysis of Melville's semiogenic construction of the whale suggests economics and masculine bravado come together to superimpose the representation of human experience onto the representation of a nonhuman character. Yet, this superimposition is incomplete, apparent in the novel's displays of paradoxical parody surrounding the navigation and expression of "truth" and the particular hermeneutical difficulty of comprehending the other-than-human world. Rendering the whale to a commodity piece by piece, bone from flesh, oil from body, and romance from reality "allows the entirety of the beast to escape once again" into its sea of incomprehensibility, but a reading of these multi-dimensional dismemberments offers an auspiciously ecological analysis (Armstrong, "In Moby-Dick" 94).

The thrust of this thesis, then, is to explore Ishmael's contradictory methods of coming to understand whale-ness. He draws heavily on established "knowledge" regarding cetaceans, citing —at great length— "taxonomic, historical, eulogistic, epic, legal, naturalistic, bibliographical, geologic," biblical and "phallic" interpretations of whales (Guetti 15). Much of this is recited tongue-in-cheek, and Ishmael expresses modest diffidence in forecasting the un-knowability of the whale because cetacean beings are "strange strangers": entities "whose existence we cannot anticipate" (Morton, *Ecological* 42). In his comprehensive study of whales, *The Whale: In Search of the Giants of the Sea*, Philip Hoare quotes marine biologist Hal Whitehead and "the world's foremost expert on the sperm whale" who explains how "[i]t's sort of strange. Really, the closest analogy we have for [the sperm whale] would be ourselves" (358). According to

Whitehead, "we may yet discover that sperm whales, the oldest and possibly most evolved of any cetacean, have developed emotions, abstract concepts and, perhaps, even religion" (Hoare 358). The white whale is "uncanny, familiar and strange simultaneously," "we might never know them fully —and we would never know whether we had exhausted our getting-to-know process," try as Ishmael might (Morton, "Queer" 277, *Ecological* 42). As a result, the bulk of Ishmael's reflections on whale-ness revolves around rhetorical inquiries because he is fully aware "we wouldn't know what we did not know about them" (42). Ilana Pardes posits that these questions are inspired by the divine, and her exegetical postulations are convincingly made through framing Ishmael as Job pondering God's rhetorical questions.[7] The way Ishmael pairs cetacean ontology to quests for other forms of truth suggests an ecocritical reconfiguration of space that invites nonhumans into realms of inquiry that have, since the influence of enlightenment, by large barred those who do not meet Kantian definitions of personhood. A close reading of satire in *Moby-Dick* further complicates Ishmael's garrulous pondering of cetacean ontology, as it illuminates capitalism's influence on all mentioned methodologies by which Melville's narrator seems astutely conscious of how humanist manipulation of "knowledge" muddies any "truth" that can be drawn from interacting with or understanding the other-than-human world.

In his doctoral dissertation on both fictional and non-fiction whaling texts, Gregory Pritchard articulates how "*Moby-Dick* reveals some of the environmental attitudes of Western society at the time of its production" —a production shaped by the tenacious development of capitalism (203). North American culture in the early to mid-1800s "was one in which the industrialization of the cities and cultivation and exploitation of the country were wholeheartedly

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[7] *Melville's Bibles*. University of California P, 1st ed. 2008.

embraced" by its population and government (Pritchard 204). This culture idolized economic power and accepted its capacity to exploit, degrade and marginalize those it marks as inferior in its hierarchization as inevitably corollary. This "intellectual history" of ecological imperialism manifested itself "in the dominant culture;" those driven by the promise of wealth and power instilled in Euro-patriarchal capitalist modes of operation readily excluded others on the basis of difference to subsequently instrumentalize them in the name of commerce, industry and profit. Ishmael's considerations are informed by contemporary mythologies that reverberated throughout a "particularly important period in the larger narrative of America" —his narration is deliberately woven together by Euro-western "historical, religious and social" matrixes that emphasize human/nature binaries (203).

"By 1850 the supremacy of American Whaling had been established beyond question," a supremacy ignited by globalization and years of political crisis caused by the reconciling of "opponents and proponents of the slave economy" (Hohman 6). Ergo, the *Pequod*, as has been argued by many scholars, can be viewed as a stage for showcasing the growing signification of globalizing commerce.[8] Ishmael's patriotic sense of self-worth takes form in international economics, as he informs the reader that American whalemen outnumber "all the rest of the banded whalemen in the world" and that the product of their labour brings "$7, 000, 000" into American harbours (Melville 119). Importing this kind of wealth proves there is "something puissant in whaling," and therefore the declining practice of "honoring whalemen" is something Ishmael finds distastefully offensive and he assertively addresses the issue in chapter twenty-four, "The Advocate." Pride may be chiefly responsible for Ishmael combatting snobbish disdain

[8] See Stephen Ausband's "The Whale and the Machine: An Approach to Moby-Dick," Charles Olsen's *Call Me Ishmael* or Richard Wixon's "Herman Melville: Critic of America and Harbinger of Ecological Crisis."

that deems his trade to be “unpoetical and disreputable”; he contends whaling is no more a “butchering sort of business” than any other. One can speculate Ishmael’s condescending tone might actually be chastising those who haughtily belittle whale-labourers of failing to recognize their own implications in cetacean suffering. Whalemen only lubricate the capitalist system Melville’s contemporary readers partake in —it is, after all, consumers who sway market demand. Perhaps Ishmael is advocating against those who arrogantly believe they are ethically or morally superior to whalemen, because all who participate in the commercial consumption of cetacean products are “unwittingly” responsible for the whales’ destruction (Melville 119).

The industrial revolution could have no way occurred at such a pace without the oil and spermaceti extracted from hunted whales, and Ishmael is adamant that the whalemen's —and the consumers’— contribution be recognized (Roman 66). While defending his occupation as a nautical “butcher,” Ishmael informs his contemporary readership that they “unwittingly pay [whalemen] the profoundest homage; yea, an all-abounding adoration” by burning “tapers, lamps, and candles that burn around the globe, burn, as before so many shrines, to [whalemen’s] glory!” (Melville 119) The narrator justifies his deep sense of whale-hunting pride by rhapsodizing “the contributions made to America’s economy” (Armstrong, *What Animals Mean* 110). Such contributions are not overstated; indeed, whale oil, bone, and baleen took place in every household in the shape of illuminants, perfumes, umbrellas and corsets, pushing the whaling industry to its stellar height, enough to make it the “fifth largest sector of the economy in America” during the mid-19th century (Thompson 1). The nobility in whaling is entirely dependent on the commercial rendering of the animal; therefore the dignity of whaling replaces the dignity of the whale, whose material presence is only valuable after being hacked apart and

boiled in order to fuel city lights, lubricate industrial machinery, support the clothing worn by nineteenth-century Americans and provide oil for the "coronations" of "kings and queens" (Melville 123).

Through the *Pequod's* voyage, Ishmael explores the American capitalist project and as a result *Moby-Dick* "approaches the natural world historically, politically, through religion and epistemologically" (Pritchard 204). Every character in the novel overtly professes or acts in accordance to a "utilitarian acceptance that whales have to be killed to provide oil for American industry" (14). In *Moby-Dick,* the ocean is a frontier —the blood drawn from its depths is deemed an ineluctable byproduct of the unrestrained expansion of America. "Ishmael situates humanity" as an agent of an innate and logical cruelty that is part and parcel with the global adoption of Euro-western capitalist ideology (Pritchard 205). However, "in much of Ishmael's narration," there lies the "intuition that the real world is inadequately described by linear, anthropocentric and atomistic metaphors" (206).[9] *Moby-Dick* chronicles the killing of whales and their objectification, but Ishmael's sympathy for them extends his humanity by bequeathing whales with a bit of their own. Further yet, Ishmael conflates the philosophical morass of what constitutes "nature" with the unknowable immaterial aspect that confers behind human masks: "soul of man!" He continues: "how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies; to the smaller of atom stirs or lives on matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind" (Melville 340). This discernment reflects a deep ecological sense of an "expansive sense of self as possible in a world in which selves and things-in-the-world are conceived as processes" —an ecocritical conceptualization of oneself and nonhuman others (Fox 197).

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[9] See Markels, Julian. *Melville and the Politics of Identity*. University of Illinois Press, 1993.

That the whale —dead, dismembered and divorced from itself— stands centre-front of Melville's rendition of whaling culture should come to no surprise considering these historical and economical shifts during the early 19th century. With commercial practicality, Starbuck emphasizes capitalism's influence on how humans interpret other animals: "I am here in this critical ocean to kill whales for my living, and not be killed by them for theirs" (Melville 125). In chapter thirty-six, "The Quarter-Deck," Ahab reveals to his crew that the *Pequod* has left New England's coast with one over-arching intent: "This is what ye have shipped for, men! To chase that white while on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out" (177). Starbuck alone appears soberly unmoved by his captain's emphatic call to arms: "But what's this long face about, Mr. Starbuck," asks Ahab; "wilt thou not chase the white whale? art not game for Moby Dick?" "I am game for his crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death too," replies Starbuck, "if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it[…] it will not fetch much in our Nantucket market." Ahab, disgusted by Starbuck's reference to market value, declares that his "vengeance will fetch a great premium *here*!" while smiting his chest (Melville 178). Not totally unlike the contradictory perspectives teaming in Ishmael's narration, Ahab and Starbuck represent very different points of view.

The *Pequod*'s enigmatic captain is quite explicit about what he feverishly hates in Moby-Dick: "I see in him outrageous strength," he confesses to Starbuck, "with an inscrutable malice sewing in it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate" (Melville 178). This inscrutable malice is more than aimless antagonism; it gestures towards the peculiar violence and dialectical opacity of capitalism's self-undoing contradiction. Perhaps Starbuck's reference to the Nantucket market

infuriates Ahab's incoherent recognition and resistance towards capitalism's internal fallacy of disavowing the being of commodities —be they human or other animals— that it simultaneously feeds upon. Ahab's monomania might be a deranged symptom of glimpsing into the interdependent mesh we are all woven into: "the ecological thought," writes Morton, "creeps over us to deliver a message of unbearable intimacy" (*Ecological* 31). This might even account for much of Ahab's moodiness, as Morton adds, "[a]wareness of the mesh doesn't bring out the best in people!" The captain's ivory leg is testimony that whales are not faceless resources, considering the "outrageous strength" in the resistance they offer (Melville 178). Ahab's swinging gait and clumsy prosthetic are perpetually insulting to him and his blind anger may be an allegory for the fury that capital might direct at the source of its wealth when that source fights back. Capitalism is equally responsible for the resistance it generates as are the forces of resistances themselves. Essentially, capitalism bites its own leg off, but between mouthfuls it is determined to assign blame to the others provoked into revolutionary opposition —may that be organized union workers, a mob of 18th century French peasants, an uprising of enslaved Africans, or furious whales.

This is why, despite everything, one may still prefer mad Ahab to the cold and calculating Starbuck: the latter faithfully follows the dictates of economic market value and articulates a rigid Christian domination of other animals. Starbuck remains blind to the ecological thought and to the revolutionary potential figured by the whale's capacity for self-preserving violence. His role in *Moby-Dick* fits neatly into Melville's ironic diagrams because Starbuck represents the voice of sanity on the *Pequod* while being an aggressive humanist —piously devoted to altars of Christianity and economic profit. After hearing Ahab's focus has strayed from collecting

spermaceti to collecting revenge, Starbuck responds: “Vengeance on a dumb brute!… that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous” (Melville 178). To him, all other animals are “dumb” and “blind” “thing[s]” that do not deserve to be treated as capable of intending the retaliation to their own appropriation. Ecological thinking would mean to resist absolute opposition between the conscious intentionality we only associate with humans and the “blindest instinct” of a nonhuman animal. “Does consciousness have to be intentional?” asks Morton; “it might seem like a paradox” heavy enough to sink the *Pequod* (*Ecological* 72). Ecologically thinking suggests “one can act spontaneously and consciously” and deconstructing human/nonhuman hierarchies and the oppositional binary between spontaneous and conscious/intentional thought is necessary to theorize and precipitate a resistance to capitalism (99).

*Moby-Dick* represents an epoch in which industrialization was rewriting labour structures in a way that engendered environmental degradation on a scale that had never been seen before. This reconfiguration catalyzed the re-shaping of the relationship between humans and other animals in a way that drastically increased the exploitation of the latter. For that reason, Lawrence Buell posits Melvillian whales are signifiers of human domination of whales and by implication the nonhuman world as well (Buell, *Environmental* 4). Whales during Melville’s era were rarely conceived of outside the context of whaling; therefore his protagonist’s point of view and centre of reference for cetacean reality is limited to how whales relate to human endeavour. Because Ishmael is narrating within a time period marked by the economical shift from mercantile to industrial capitalism —which redefined the relationship between labour and capital — it appears “Melville’s interest in whales was subordinate to his interest in whaling” (Buell,

*Environmental* 4). *Moby-Dick* is undoubtedly an anthropocentric novel, and because "Melville's environmental imagination was too homocentric," Ishmael's method of engaging with the whale is limited to how much the engagement benefits his humanist pursuit of profit and glory. Buell drastically revises his earlier position, and makes note of the way Melville intertwines "humans with whaleness and by implication all other nonhuman creatures as well[…] the species boundary is perpetually blurred, and the reader is pulled back and forth across it" (Buell, *Writing* 207). Because Ishmael humanizes whales through his descriptions of their social and emotional lives, many scholars insist *Moby-Dick* reflects an interconnection between humanity and animals based on the emotional and social kinship we share.[10] There is much evidence to support and discredit such claims, however, the torment Ishmael feels when wrestling the sublime unknow-ability of cetacean ontology is more difficult to refute —and this torment may very well be a symptom of brushing up against "strange strangers," something/someone not fully beholden to human comprehension. In his "radical intimacy," dependency and "coexistence" with whales, Ishmael's enmeshed modes of operating with cetaceans offers him glimpses of their recondite subjectivity through refracted paradoxical prisms of Euro-Western epistemology, reductive humanism and ecological thinking (Morton, *Ecological* 8).

Ishmael's simultaneous callousness towards and compassion for slaughtered cetaceans may be the product of being in a cognitive bind described by Timothy Morton: humans cannot "in good faith cancel the difference between humans and nonhumans. Nor can we preserve it. We're in a bind" (*Ecological* 76). This torn perspective permeates the irony surrounding Ishmael's capricious allegiance to both humanism and ecology which speaks directly to Morton's

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[10] See, for instance, Armstrong's "Moby-Dick and Compassion," Schultz's "Melville's Environmental Vision in *Moby-Dick*," and Zoellner's *The Salt-sea Mastadon: A Reading of Moby-Dick.*

reading of "The Walrus and the Carpenter." Ishmael swims in pairing currents of "cuddly closeness" to whales while maintaining a "cold, sadistic gaze" when implementing their torture and extermination (Morton, *Ecological* 75). Lewis Carroll's Walrus "weeps for the oysters as he pours them down his greedy throat," not unlike Melville's narrator or the many consumers of animals and their by-products. Ishmael and the Walrus' moral dissonance show "pity for the living world is an aspect of a sadistic relish for devouring it" (75).

*Moby-Dick* creates a world where nonhuman animals, though inaccessible because they are "strange strangers," become relatable and sympathetic characters. Their humanity[11] is especially felt in chapter eighty-seven, "The Grand Armada," which begins with a chase; Malay pirates are in pursuit of the *Pequod*, forcing captain Ahab to press on all possible sail. Adding a certain irony to the predicament, the desperately fleeing *Pequod* hurries into the presence of an enormous herd of whales, causing harpooners to cheer "loudly" and parade "their weapons" proudly despite their seemingly perilous circumstances (Melville 418). From a whaleboat, Ishmael and his hunting comrades spear a whale but their victim wrestles out of his harpoon causing them to accidentally glide "between two whales into the innermost shoal" due to the "tapering force of his parting momentum" (422). They find themselves in a "serene valley lake" hemmed by adult whales who consciously and intentionally protect the most vulnerable: "the women and children of this rousted host" (423). The whalemen look down into the suddenly tranquil and "enchanted" water which sheens a stranger still unexpected mirage of peace, harmony, and community. Ishmael, Queequeg and even the most unfeeling character, Starbuck,

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[11] This thesis analyzes the anthropomorphizing of nonhuman animals while acknowledging the fact it is impossible for humans to inhabit the consciousness of another animal. For many reasons, anthropomorphism is a problematic practice, but it can also be used as a method of understanding beings outside of ourselves. It can also be used to trigger our faculty for sympathy and fellow-feeling.

are visibly touched when witnessing “innocent” cubs “calmly suckling” “mortal nourishment” from their mothers in their “submarine… nurseries,” one of which is still umbilically “tethered to its dam” (Melville 424). The boundary between humans and other animals becomes unintelligible, because just as “human infants” “spiritually feast unto some unearthly reminiscence” while nursing, “so did the young of these whales.” Humanizing future victims of the whaling trade undercuts the traditional hunter-prey relationship that inspires much of the “Honor and Glory in Whaling.” Tender intimacies between cetaceans are humanized by the author overtly when Ishmael peeks into the “bridal chambers” of “young Leviathan amours in the deep”; these levels of anthropomorphism emphasize the essential humanity in this erotic exchange. Cetaceans mate belly to belly —in a missionary position, if you will— and in a footnote Melville concludes that “[w]hen overflowing with mutual esteem, the whales salute *more hominum*” (Melville 424). When describing cetacean anatomy and dismemberment, Ishmael’s narration is rich with satire and parody, but when describing cetacean psychology and social behaviour, his sentimental prose feels deeply genuine. “The Grand Armada” explicitly “demonstrates the appalling effects of human greed upon cetacean life” and Elizabeth Schultz suggests “Melville’s extensive elaborations” on “cetacean-human kinship” is a veritable “commitment to persuade his readers” to contemplate “humanity’s implications in cetacean suffering and destruction” (*Melville’s*, 102).

Narrating from the first person, Ishmael’s sympathy for whales is also realized through a specific uses of irony. In the chapter “The *Pequod* meets the Virgin,” Ishmael’s narration parodies humans —specifically, their moral objectives and ideas. He describes an aged, ill and

crippled whale that is mercilessly "rolling in his [own] blood" after becoming an easy hunting target:

> His eyes, or rather the places where his eyes has been, were beheld. As strange misgrown masses gather in the knot-holes of the noblest oaks when prostrate, so from the point which the whale's eyes once occupied, no protrude blind bulbs, horribly pitiable to see. But pity there was none. For all his old age, and his one arm, and his blind eyes, he must die the death and be murdered, in order to light the gay bridals and other merry-makings of men, and also to illuminate the solemn churches that preach unconditional inoffensiveness by all to all. (Melville 391)

In a display of sadism, Flask targets an ulcer in the frail whale's hide and in "sufferable anguish" the "cruel wound" began "spouting thick blood… bespattering them and their glorifying crews all over with showers of gore, capsizing Flask's boat and marring the bows" (391-2). Descriptions of appalling acts of barbarism and inhumanity typically reserved for describing the nonhuman world and its inhabitants are gorily observable in humanity. This passage might represent the height of Ishmael's tongue-in-cheek commentary on the wanton butchery of whales considering how the grisly killing of an old and blind whale appears to be "horribly pitiful" and "most piteous," yet, still, "pity there was none" (Melville 391, 392, 391). Further, this abusive war on a kindred species actually makes for the "merry-makings of men" and "gay bridals." Most sarcastically of all, Ishmael deduces that "for all his old age, and his one arm, and his blind eyes, he must die the death and be murdered[…] to illuminate the solemn churches that preach unconditional inoffensiveness to all" (392). This slaughtering, in turn, casts an ironic light on

Ishmael's prophetic effort to bolster "The Honor and Glory of Whaling." Melville's view of "the natural man is not that of the innocent Adam, but the fallen Adam" (Antoine 43). Scenes like this uncannily portray the way "natural" men, when mastering nature, are apt to become disturbingly animal-like.

Because of the socio-economical context Ishmael is enveloped in, it is little wonder he stands with one foot in two worlds, and peers into the nonhuman world with contradictory perspectives. He is described by Philip Armstrong as a "romantic adventurer," yet simultaneously a "prototype of the industrial labourer, farmer and meat-processor" (*Fiction* 98). His occupation onboard the *Pequod* alternates between extremely "dangerous encounters with the vast materiality" of the whale, and then reducing that materiality to a "collection of partial and dead resources," in a state of Fordist assembly-line detachment. Ishmael oscillates "vigorously between apparently opposed attitudes to the whale: wonder and contempt, mundane nonchalance and transcendental awe, humanized fellow-feeling and the calculus of market value and profit" (99). In all his eccentric bi-polarity, Melville's hero brings whales to life symbolically, by evoking cultural, scientific and economic appropriation of whale bodies in his text. Society's instrumentalization of the whale for its own benefit becomes "the whale," impeding one's vision in seeing realities felt by cetaceans and thus traps both narrator and reader into anthropocentric methods of interpreting the nonhuman world —an interpretation Ishmael yearns to glance around.[12] Anecdotal, metaphorical and zoological layers of speculation replace the nonhuman with human experience of the nonhuman.

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[12] The term "anthropocentric" is used in Warwick Fox's frank, guileless sense: "anthropocentrism represents not only a deluded but also a dangerous orientation toward the world" (13).

The very title of Melville's masterpiece insinuates humanist symbolism takes precedence over cetacean ontology. When first published in England, the novel was simply titled *The Whale,* but in the title of the American and all following editions, Melville uses the name assigned to his infamous white whale and the novel has been known as *Moby-Dick* ever since. The albino sperm whale earned the name "Moby Dick" by violently dodging the persecution of whale-ships, as did other "famous whales enjoy" such "great individual celebrity" (Melville 222). The sperm whale's plight is particularly apparent in chapter forty-five, "The Affidavit," as it explains how a whale's individuality is ironically only recognized through his or her violent opposition to being killed. There lies a certain sarcasm in claiming whales who contribute to the death of sailors in order to evade their own are awarded with "rights, privileges, and distinction of a name." Ishmael facetiously notes how the "immortal[lity]" acquired through earning a humanist name does not protect a whale from an early, inhumane death at the hands of those who personalize them with a singular name (223). Precisely because these whales' individuality was registered by whalemen, they were "systemically hunted out, chased and killed by valiant whaling captains" (223). Whales are finally recognized as individual beings under the false understanding that these particular whales are "murderous" while it is quite obvious their only aim was to avoid being murdered. Once captured, these "celebrity" whales are again reduced to anonymous commodities; as illustrated by Ishmael, whales that become "marked" by their hunters are recognized through "bodily peculiarities as distinguished from other whales; for however peculiar in that respect any chance whale may be, they soon put an end to his peculiarities by killing him, and boiling him down into a peculiarly valuable oil" (222). "Moby Dick"'s history with humans is what prompts Ahab's melodramatic hunt, which is what propels the entire

narrative. The whale's celebrity status, assigned by those economically invested in his death, is what spurs a whale-ship from the Atlantic ocean and into the Pacific —for the sole purpose of exterminating "Moby Dick." The white whale did not, of course, name himself and the nineteenth-century custom of bestowing titles to specific whales pins them with unflattering anthropomorphic traits, situating them in a distinctly human context. "*Moby-Dick*," the cetacean's symbolic significance and testimony to humanist appetite for domination and adventure is how we are to recognize the novel —"*or, The Whale,*" a signifier more aligned with cetacean actuality, is a mere optional afterthought, or, perhaps, a coy invitation for alternative interpretation.

Once past the title page, "Etymology" is the first text the reader encounters. Elucidating the linguistics behind and around the world "whale" is how Melville chooses to preface his novel. Its pronunciation, origin, and its signifier in thirteen different languages together invite an endless range of different cultural perceptions of what a whale is. In his book *History, Ideology and Myth in American Fiction,* Robert Clark contests that this multi-lingual induction supports "the contention that in adopting the method of discursive heterogeneity" Ishmael extends the "critical position from one contained within the epistemic individual to a self-reflective criticism of his own textual politics" (144). In becoming a "true democrat in linguistic relations," Melville lucidly exposes "the arbitrariness of all semiological systems." Ishmael leaves the interpretation of the "whale" to one's preferred linguistic discretion, and by making the whale semiotically available to us nominaly, Ishmael slyly suggests whale ontology is not communicable, much like other "truths." The "irreducible dilemma of language" signifies "the ineffability of the whale," and Clark illuminates how because of language, regardless how "valiantly the user tries," one

"can neither escape the reproduction of meanings nor avoid the assignation of identities" (Clark 140). A close reading of "Etymology" and the narrator's second thoughts, guesses and comments incites a questioning of the viability of telling. This may suggest Melville adopts an apprehensive view of language because it disintegrates any ability to answer questions about those who speak without it.

The way in which Ishmael uses language suggests that while telling his story he simultaneously reflects on the meaning of telling, which prompts the reader to do the same. His testimony is plagued by incessant doubting, qualifying, reviewing and self-defeating reflection, all of which question the validity of what was put forward first. Language is the primary means of mediating our lives, yet, as evinced by Saussure, the relation between words and what they stand for is far from straight forth because the words we summon to express ourselves are already coded with meaning that is outside our control.[13] This coincides with Ishmael's apparent belief that the whale has not yet been accurately or fully represented in words and alerts "to the anthropocentric compulsion to name and catalog any living being and simultaneously to the inevitable human failure to find any all-encompassing, fully descriptive nomenclature for any living being" (Schultz, *Humanizing* 107). His lack of faith in language or science to fulfil its duty in expressing whale-ness creates a narrative aposiopesis that enlarges the gulf between established "knowledge" and cetacean ontology. All the "special languages" Ishmael invokes are "essentially artificial ways of talking about whales," says James Guetti (15). As a consequence, "the special vocabularies of *Moby-Dick* communicate in a primarily negative manner" because

[13] Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia U P, 2011.

Ishmael's "language functions to display its insufficiency" (Guetti 41). Melville's narrator toils through the novel "destroy[ing] as he must the verbal forms a perceptions of reality" (28).

Next, the reader is presented with "Extracts," where the text quotes influential literatures that mention whales. It is made apparent that Ishmael is not the first to paint the whale in human strokes. Human scale and metaphor are used to measure inhuman anatomy, as we are told a whale's liver is comparable to "two cart-loads" and that the "aorta of the whale is larger in the bore than the main pipe of the water-works at London Bridge" (Melville xxvii, xxxi). Very early on —before being introduced to the narrator himself— the semiogenic construction of the whale is contained to how whales relate to humans —not what cetaceans are independent unto themselves. Also made clear is how valuable a cetacean corpse is to a human, because their "bones" are "of great value" and render a "vast quantity of oil" and sometimes their "jaws" are installed to "stand for a gate" in renowned gardens surrounding Pitfirrane castle (xxix).[14] Anthropocentric hermeneutical conditions of presuppositions and pre-understanding connect in how Melville chooses to initiate the reader into his narrative. This stresses the lacuna in what cetaceans *mean* outside of the epistemological and ideological contexts of capitalism and, therefore, anthropocentrism.

The capacity to think beyond oneself and the human is untapped by Ishmael and taunts him like a mirage, but his remarks on the impossibility of conveying cetacean ontology may suggest he is on the threshold of adopting an ecological way of thinking. He discloses that not only his, but all of humanity's rendition of the whale is incomplete: "As yet, however, the sperm whale, scientific or poetic, lives not complete in any literature[…] his is an unwritten

[14] An expensive estate in Scotland which housed nobility and royalty, but has since become a country club and golf course.

life" (Melville 147). The "Cetology" chapter compartmentalizes breeds in accordance to their appearance, how many barrels of oil their corpse would yield and how palatable their flesh is, implying Ishmael is aware that economic motives chiefly fuel such classifications. This speaks directly to literary animal criticism, in the sense "that epistemologies concerned" with nonhuman animals "will always be invested in[…] consuming and representing them," and such "interests should be subject to analysis" for very the reason the "Cetology" chapter explicates (Armstrong, "In Moby-Dick" 94). The "Cetology" in *Moby-Dick* semiogenically constructs whale-ness in between the narrow parameters of human profit and appetite through focusing on the profitable parts of cetacean anatomy and hunting. Rendering what is classified as wholly other as subordinate allows the subordinated figure to become a means to an end, a tool integral to capitalism's global succession. This might explain Ishmael's insistence that cetaceans are fish and not mammals. Cold-blooded, gilled creatures are considerably more alien to Ishmael, and this falsely orchestrated distance allows him to give whales less consideration than he would afford to a fellow mammal. Jane Bennett conjectures "the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies," which grimly resonates with *Moby-Dick's* depiction of nonhuman suffering at the hands of Euro-western "conquest and consumption" (Bennett ix). When reduced to quantities, bodies become ripe for instrumentalization, and Ishmael's dark yet humourous quantification of cetacean bodies "is a joke with a long genealogy in European and American culture" (Otter 136). Objectification strips subjects from their will, interests and feelings —features inherent in the conceptualization of consciousness and intentionality. By surmising all "knowledge" on cetaceans is viciously

objectifying, Ishmael makes known how this "knowledge" brings one paradoxically further, and not closer, from gaining substantial insight on whale ontology.

Ishmael rejects the "law of precedents" and challenges verdicts made by an array of experts by claiming they simply echo their predecessors (Melville 337). Chapter thirty-two is brimming "with jokes about the encrustations of precedent," "the elusiveness" of cetacean features, and seems to flaunt "the arbitrariness of names" (Otter 134). This skepticism is later reiterated in chapter sixty-nine when Melville's narrator openly mocks the "obstinate survival of old beliefs" and the "silly sheep" who oblige "orthodoxy" and the "utility of traditions" (Melville 337). In his book *Melville's Anatomies*, Samuel Otter eruditely proclaims: "Authority gains its authority from the reproduction of error. Fact becomes fact with repetition" (134). Ishmael underscores these sentiments by appearing to conjure every known fact and citing every known authority on the matter of cetology while cautioning his reader, through employing irony and self-reflexive humility, he cannot render the whale knowable "or ever will" (Melville 428).

Ishmael cites over thirty different authors "who have at large or in little[…] written of the whale" (Melville 146). The "Cetology" chapter takes much of its details and arguments from surgeon Thomas Beale, who Ishmael quotes to confirm his belief that "'[u]tter confusion exists among the historians of this animal' (sperm whale)" and Melville's narrator feels quite tortured by "[a]ll these incomplete indications" (145). "There are only two books," says Ishmael, that "*pretend* to put the living sperm whale before you" (emph. mine, 146). He appreciates Beale and his fellow whaleship surgeon Frederick Bennett's meticulous efforts, stating they are "reliable men" and their work is "of excellent quality," but, like Ishmael's own inquiry, their mission falls short of its objective because their objective analysis is "confined to scientific description," and

Ishmael's ecological understanding recognizes this approach skirts the possibility of a comprehensive understanding of whale-ness (Melville 146-7). The first few pages of chapter thirty-two are soused in skepticism in science's capacity to tell truth due to the limitations of the human condition. "[B]ecause any human thing supposed to be complete," Ishmael cautions us, "must for that very reason [be] infallibly faulty" (147). With humble humility for himself and mankind, he does not strive to provide a comprehensive depiction of cetaceans, his "objective" is instead "to project the draught of a systematization of cetology." Rhetoric of incompletion begins and then seals the chapter through Ishmael's famous admission that *Moby-Dick* is merely "but the draught of a draught" (157).

The seventy-three chapters between "Cetology" and "Does the Whale Diminish" pilots readers "on a fantastic voyage around the surface" of the whale (Otter 134). As we plunge further into Ishmael's corporeal quest for certainty, the more apparent his obsession becomes. His compulsive categorical structuring is a manifestation of his appetite for cetological ontology, but his modesty and incessant irony about the endeavour would suggest he never reaches satiation. Indeed, he deeply desires "[t]o grope down into the bottom of the sea after them; to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world" (Melville 147). One cannot know the whale because one cannot follow them into the great quandary of their depths; to "grope" the whale "is to lay one's hands on the framework of the cosmos" (Otter 135). This ecocritical hunger for "truth" is amplified by the whale's unknowability; Ishmael's visceral and intimate proximity to whales and their destruction teases his appetite "because getting to know" strange strangers only "makes them stranger" (Morton, *Ecological* 15).

Ishmael's primary means of gaining, processing, analyzing and categorizing knowledge on cetaceans is restricted to the confining intersection of where whales impact human endeavour. When trying to convey whale-ness to his reader, Ishmael relies on anthropocentric critical thinking that emphasizes the whale's difference, rather than similarity to himself —he even insists they are not mammals, but instead warm-blooded "spouting fish[es] with horizontal tail[s]" and "lungs" (Melville 148). The "systemized exhibition" placed before the reader is void of any real engagement with whales; therefore, Ishmael presents little more than comestibles and buckets of oil. Melville's narrator communicates the anthropocentric impulse to compartmentalize creatures into similarities and differences, which in turn subjects them to nonsensical hierarchies that deem their level of worthiness of our attention, care, protection, etc. Anatomical features of the species has rendered them as expendable, interchangeable resources. He correlates knowledge with appropriation, "representing the ways in which anatomy enables commodity," as though the whale-ness can only be recognizable to his readership when it becomes vendible (Otter 132).

The twenty chapters that comprise *Moby-Dick*'s cetological centre ballast the whaling narrative through "features of ethnological discourse: the excess, literalization, catalogues, analogies, personification, synesthesia and catachreses" (Otter 133). The anatomy chapters, writes Samuel Otter, enact "an intimate and substantial, rather than tangential, digressive" and "parodic" role in the narrative. Several critics aptly surmise this anatomization is Melville's verbose line of reasoning to resist the scientific method because he exhausts the whale's expendable surface to showcase its inaccessible philosophical depth. Ahab's impassioned monologue in "The Quarter Deck" alludes to how socially-constructed realities can serve as

discursive prisons that prevent one from facing the unknown. “All visible objects,” proclaims Ahab, “are but pasteboard masks[…] there, some unknown but still reasoning things puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask[…] How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall?” (Melville 178). For different reasons “the white whale is that wall, shoved near” Ishmael and his captain due to their dangerous proximity and obsession with it. Because Melville’s epic offers exponential angles of interpretation and no definitive answers, it is not clear what lies behind the mask —God, nothingness, a higher power, the cosmos, truth, the mesh, or unfathomable strangeness? Nevertheless, Melville’s point is clear: one must thrust “through the wall,” “strike through the mask,” and challenge the unknown at whatever cost (Melville 178).

A critical judgment which nearly all scholars share is that, given *Moby-Dick*’s major concern with metaphysics, a running ‘theology/cetology’ pun permeates throughout the narrative.[15] Like many critics, Shannon Antoine states it is not an exaggeration to claim that *Moby-Dick* is a religious novel because the employment of every metaphor and symbol “contributes to the identification of whaling with a search for religious truth. Most particularly, a systematic correspondence is established between the whale and the power of God, based on Biblical paradigms” (Antoine 116). In his book *Melville’s Quarrel with God*, Lawrence Thompson insists the novel is testimony to Melville’s dissatisfaction with Calvinistic religious interpretation. The novel’s drama follows man’s frustrated venture to cope with a world beyond his experiences; whether the reader interprets the whale as an “embodiment of God,” an “agent of Fate” or as an actual whale, Melville insinuates that the darkness, ambiguity, mystery and

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[15] See, for example, Braswell’s *Melville’s Religious Thought: An Essay in Interpretation*, Pardes’ *Melville’s Bibles* or Herbert’s *Calvinist Earthquake: Moby-Dick and Religious Tradition*.

ambivalence associated with the sublime "cannot be overcome through man-made symbols and constructs; man's attempts to fathom the unknown lead him in pointless circles, and he does not have the insight to recognize 'Truth' when he encounters it" (Antoine 69). Humanist pursuit becomes purblind and tactless when institutionalized and systematized; religion, faith, metaphysics, literature, science or art are proven to be untrustworthy or undependable tools during one's quest for truth. The hunt for religious "truth" becomes oddly paralleled to the search for cetacean ontology and, through Ishmael, "Melville suggests satirically that though it is easy to expose inadequacies, it is far more difficult to achieve certain knowledge in any field" (Antoine 80).

The cetological centre of *Moby-Dick* is comprised by Ishmael's many attempts at "some systematized exhibition of the whale in his broad genera," but he cautions the reader his attempt will never be fully actualized, not just because it is "no easy task" but because Ishmael is attempting "nothing less" than "the classification of the constituent of a chaos" (Melville 145). Robert Azzarello's close reading of chapter eighty-six, "The Tail," addresses the reoccurring "problem of knowing and representing the other-than-human world" (Azzarello 68). Ishmael admits the more he considers "this mighty tail," the "inability to express it" becomes more pronounced (Melville 414). He continues:

> At times there are gestures in it, which though they would well grace the hand of a man, remain wholly inexplicable. In an extensive herd, so remarkable, occasionally, are these mystic gestures, that I have heard hunters who have declared them akin to Free-Mason signs and symbols; that the whale, indeed, by these methods intelligently conversed with the world. Nor are there wanting other

> motions of the whale in his general body, full of strangeness, and unaccountable to his most experienced assailant. (Melville 414)

According to Ishmael, the whale's ability to communicate is not questionable —"there *are* gestures in it" (emph. mine). Here we see Ishmael's fleeting ecocritical outlook, as he not only acknowledges cetacean capacity to communicate, but alludes to mankind's deafness in interpreting whatever they may have to say. Because Ishmael calls to attention the issue of telling truth, there is a wholesome recognition that it is not the whale who cannot speak —"the problem surfaces in the human audience's inability to interpret these gestures" (Azzarello 68). Hence, he uses the allusion to Free-Masonry, an international order that communicates through hidden methods unknown to outsiders of their cryptic collective. What makes their methods of communication incomprehensible to non-Free-Masons is not their incomprehensibility, but is a product of the outsider's inability to read or hear such gestures. Ishmael concludes this chapter by expressing "his realization that no matter how much he knows about whales, he can never completely comprehend them" (Calkins 46). He knows and explicitly states, "[d]issect him how I may, I go but skin deep I know him not and never will" (Melville 414). Ecological thinking motivates Ishmael to embark on an impossible mission to "[tell] the truth that can't be told" (Renker 66). *Moby-Dick* is haunted by a paradox, one that Elizabeth Renker articulates artfully: "the truth is incomprehension. The paradoxical nature of this assertion lies in the fact that one cannot help but to appeal to the concept of truth even when it is truth itself that is called into question." In other words, incomprehension is a truthful comprehension —"a kind of truth all in itself" (66).

Melville's creatively skillful "layering of paradox and ambiguity" makes the hunt for absolute meaning taxingly difficult, "if not all together impossible" (Pritchard 204). Lawrence Thompson's reaction to the first "few pages of the first chapter" of *Moby-Dick* succinctly sums the futility of searching for definitive denotation: "I thought I noticed that Ishmael was particularly fond of sarcastically saying two things at once: of insinuating a meaning which was quite contrary to the superficial sense of the overt statement" (7). In *Moby-Dick*, every Euro-western character has the capacity to hold two antithetical ideas simultaneously in their mind. For example, Captain Peleg calls Ahab "a grand, ungodly, god-like man" (Melville 83). Apparent contradictions serve more than delightful comedy or ironic diagrams —Melville's satirical subversions are sources of indirection that manipulate point of view. Ishmael exposes the failures of his own Western culture when he describes his world in caricature within radically different environments or when compared to radically different societies.[16] In *Moby-Dick*, the untamed, uncivilized and unrefined natural world strangely foils the more familiar realm of Euro-western humanity. Mockery undercuts the tragic dimension of most characters; Ahab's war with god is, after all, fought with a sperm whale, a lumbering, not entirely god-like scavenger. The vast, rich and diverse body of critical literature focused on *Moby-Dick* has a lot to do with the plurality of voices teaming in the novel.

This paradoxical problem ignites the terror Ishmael feels at "the whiteness of the whale" —a response to the unnerving frustration in trying to understand the other-than-human. He is troubled not just by the hue, but how "vague" and "nameless" the "horror" appears to him

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[16] This thesis focuses on manufactured human/nonhuman animal dichotomies, but to read further on Melville's staging of "civilized" white men in contrast to "primitive" nonwhite others, see Robert Levine's *The Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville* and Michael Rogin's *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*.

(Melville 204). It is obvious Ishmael is at a loss for words, because despite being deeply appalled, he admits there is something "so mystical and well nigh ineffable" that he feels "almost despair" when trying to put "it in a comprehensible form" (Melville 204). The source of his aversion does not bring him to the brink of despair; it is his inability to articulate the "vague" nameless-ness of the other-than-human. Ishmael's expressed discomfort is a symptom of confronting a being that is "at the limit of our imagining" (Morton, *Ecological* 17). Like a many number of chapters, "The Whiteness of the Whale" is an erratic stream of abstractions and qualifications that are punctuated with second thoughts and guesses. Ishmael repeatedly compiles information from far-ranging places and moments in time in "hope[s] to explain" every dimension of the whale, but recognizes "all these chapters might be naught" due to the "indefiniteness" nature of the topic he yearns to explicate (Melville 204, 212). "The ecological thought makes us aware of how interdependent everything is," writes Morton; and this may precipitate Ishmael's schizophrenic response in striving to capture true whale-ness in his narrative (*Ecological* 30). Perhaps this is why Ishmael's display of knowledge on cetaceans brushes up against multiple corners of the globe and far-ranging moments in time. Under an ecological cognitive framework "everything seems threateningly meaningful, but [we] can't pin down what the meaning is" (30), therefore Ishmael compiles a encyclopedia's worth of international art, culture and economic histories to procure each one's opinion of whale-ish reality in an effort to bring forth a meaningful answer to a question he does not know how to ask.

Evinced by chapters like "Epistemology," "Extracts" and "Cetology," Ishmael's depiction of whales is conceptualized by their industrial, scientific and artistic significance in humanist domains because he juxtaposes "the epistemologies of natural history, art and commerce in order

to confound each one's version of cetacean reality," all of which miss the mark of cetacean material reality (Armstrong, "In Moby-Dick" 97). Melville's narrator grounds his depictions of cetaceans in anatomical descriptions and their presence in human cultural history —preventing the opportunity to approach the whale as themselves. Such cognitive schemas unjustly push cetacean —and other nonhuman— individuals into liminal or even invisible spaces. Although, now and then, the wind above Melville's ocean changes direction; the *Pequod*'s sails are poised for spermaceti but from the crow's nest Ishmael spies ecological inquiry. The *Pequod*'s voyage navigates a bay where whales inspire human emotion and conquest. Even though Ishmael addresses the tether with good humour, he resents this epistemological anchor; his tireless anatomization of cetology is testimony you cannot render the whale knowable. Established methodologies of knowing are not applicable to the other-than-human world, therefore he gestures towards the deconstruction of any manufactured absolute dichotomy between humans and other animals. Melville helps his reader to identify with whales, indicating a co-constitutive interdependency between species. Robert Zoellner illuminates the connection between cetaceans and humanity in his book *The Salt-Sea Mastadon* —he argues that in the narrative arc of *Moby-Dick* Ishmael instils "a growing feeling of fraternal congenerity regarding the whale[…] which leads in turn to more subtle feelings of tragic affinity and metaphysical consanguinity with this unbelievably vast taxonomic relative" (vi).

Ishmael sees the world much like he suspects the whale does: "one distinct picture on this side, and another" not so "distinct picture on that side" (Melville 361). Anthropocentric egotism beams through one unobscured eye, and out the other, an ecocritical inquiry so out of focus he compulsively anthologizes an array of answers to a question he cannot formulate. "How is it then

with the whale?" asks Ishmael in chapter seventy-four, and try as he might, he can only record and tell what is perceived through his humanist lens, polished crystal clear by economic desires of self-fulfilling romanticism. Each human being looks "'to nature' for different reasons and therefore see[s] different things" (Marx 9). Questions themselves are far from neutral, "but rather active ideological agents governing the possibility of reply" (Azzarello 58). One's "perspectival look 'to nature' produces in a very real sense exactly what one can see," and in Ishmael's case, he sees what he sought after when embarking on his whaling adventure —a noble quest of human ferocity against animalist nature. Still, Ishmael's weaker eye wanders, and it glimmers through the text through acknowledging the unknow-ability of the other-than-human world. Self-aware, Ishmael recognizes that conveying the truth of the whale cannot be done through his humanist perspective, and his overt humility when attempting to portray cetaceans for what they are may be fuelled by a vague yet fundamental sense that he is missing something —a sharper way of thinking ecologically. "Truth, for Melville, is a question, not an answer," and his protagonist makes aware the impossibility of relaying any sense of cetacean truth because most truthful is the question Ishmael cannot address (Seelye 10).

Ishmael lacks an "ecocentric" imagination and therefore cannot find "better ways of imagining nature and humanity's relation to it" (Buell, *Environmental* 2). His humanist insight creates a gravity that only invites anthroparchal significance to orbit his narrative, but through his self-reflexive sensitivities —detectable to the reader through his sense of humour and perpetual second-guessing of the know-ability of cetaceans— he acknowledges the hermeneutical difficulty of comprehending the other-than-human world —which implies there is something worth comprehending. Foundational to the deconstruction of humanism is adopting a

consciousness that nurtures “ecological relationship[s] between species” and thus taking into sincere consideration “the interests of the beings which comprise those species” (Azzarello 58). When asking “How is it then with the whale?” Ishmael might be inviting us to consider what would the whale say. When affording some cerebral steam into that conundrum it would not take long to deduce that the whale would prefer to be left alone, and that request is worth respecting.

## Part II

### Considering Crustaceans with David Foster Wallace

> Evil comes from a *failure to think*. It defies thought for as soon as thought tries to engage itself with evil and examine the premises and principles from which it originates, it is frustrated because it finds nothing there. That is the banality of evil.
> (Arendt 81, emph. mine)

> It is, at any rate, uncomfortable for me, and for just about everyone I know who enjoys a variety of foods and yet does not want to see [themselves] as cruel or unfeeling. As far as I can tell, my own main way of dealing with this conflict has been to *avoid thinking* about the whole unpleasant thing. I should add that it appears to me unlikely that many readers of *Gourmet* wish to think hard about it, either.
> (Wallace 62, emph. mine)

"Consider the Lobster" was commissioned by *Gourmet Magazine,* but came very close to never appearing in the issue. During the summer of 2003, David Foster Wallace was hired to report on the convivial happenings of the Maine Lobster Festival, and upon his return submitted "a rigorous, heavy-hearted inquiry into why so many people think it's okay to boil lobsters alive" (Neyfakh). Besides being too long —over 8000 words— it "was unlike anything *Gourmet* had ever published before" because it was "dark and confrontational in a way that the magazine's readers," and arguably most consumers, "were not used to." The article seems more in sympathy with lobsters and agreement with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals than the targeted audience of upper-middle-class subscribers to the latest trends in gastronomics. As a publication of *Condé Nast,* it is unsurprising Wallace's elaborations on philosophical ethics was not entirely appreciated, and he was was asked to soften some passages and the "flattering portrayal of

PETA" (Neyfakh). Wallace was reportedly very "resistant" but after tough negotiations with chief editor Ruth Reichl, the article was published the following year in August 2004.[17]

In his essay, Wallace chooses to contemplate the festivities as they might be perceived from the lobster's point of view. As Paul Giles puts it, Wallace questions "the received wisdom that [lobsters] cannot feel anything and wonder[s] whether the lobsters' apparently desperate attempts to avoid being submerged alive in boiling water should not raise uncomfortable questions about the implicit power structures coded into traditional ideas of human authority" (328). Not only does Wallace record and complicate a lobster's resistance to being boiled alive, he elucidates the countless ways contemporary consumers resist acknowledging the authoritative power and privilege in both causing and ignoring a subject's resistance.[18] "Consider the Lobster" surveys the way philosophies of ethics and moral dissonance are embroiled and inextricable from seemingly benign and mundane goings-on, in this case, a "mid-level country fair with a culinary hook" (Wallace 55). This thesis zones in on Wallace and Melville's significant and deliberate vocabulary, social commentary, and methods of bringing an ontological lobster or whale within view to explicate why ethical deliberations concerning nonhuman animals are difficult given the way they are threaded together with epistemological and hermeneutical entanglements that obfuscate one ability to think critically. Wallace's scrutiny of the discursive power and presence of capitalist self-governing agents —in this case, the Maine

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[17] Some of the editorial changes will be discussed in further detail, particularly replacing "Mengele's experiments" with "Aztec sacrifices" and compromises made concerning the depiction of PETA.

[18] Especially his own preference to resist thinking about the ethics of nonhuman animal agriculture and consumption.

Lobster Promotion Council— showcases how individuals are discouraged from thinking about their omnivorous habits by the rampant and unchecked nature of contemporary consumerism.

The negation of animal needs under the logic of capitalism has been discussed at length, notably in Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*; this thesis parallels his insight that the domination of nature required for capitalist production is violent. The logic of accepting institutionalized violence as a product of gaining capital translates a consumer's understanding of nonhuman animal subjectivity to a less honest dialect. Consumerism denies the fact that other animals feel pain, or, at least, their felt pain does not weigh much during the capitalist calculations of cost, profit and personal satisfaction. Hannah Arendt's conceptualization of the banality of evil helps illuminate how little effort is required in becoming complicit in actions that are morally troubling when observed from a different perspective. In exposing the fallacies of what we know about lobsters, Wallace concludes that we know too little to correctly situate crustaceans in anthropocentric indexes of who or what is ethically deserving of our consideration. Banality accompanies a type of mindlessness that becomes capitalized — thoughtlessness helps lubricate systems of consumer culture, but Wallace and Melville's texts create friction between these overlapping strategies. By focusing on the countless individuals who are tossed into industrial steaming vats to become anonymous masses of whale oil or seafood entrées, Wallace and Melville invite us to think, or, unthink our social orientation to other animals and the consumptive pleasure taken from their destruction.

Wallace's unflinching and profound self-awareness challenges, shocks and beguiles his readers. His clever speaker is not a vegetarian or vegan; his self-depreciating criticism pokes holes into the omnivorous affect community he ascribes to. Wallace's persona sports the same

costume of faux naivety that Ishmael wears. This demeanour is designed to look innocently inquisitive, but may very well be a strategy to "strike through the mask" without ever appearing to do so (Melville 178). Wallace defends his stance on imploring consumers to consider a lobster's interest by deliberately aligning himself with utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer. He quotes Singer's *Animal Liberation*, which "is more or less the bible of the modern animal-rights movement," to support his claim that it is not overly sentimental or anthropomorphic to posit lobsters have "interests" (Wallace 63). The title of chapter 105 in *Moby-Dick*, "Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish? —Will He Perish?", suggests the vulnerability of the species in question, yet Ishmael uses this section to strike through anthropocentric misconceptions by arguing cetacean intelligence demonstrably works for the species' survival.

These strategic reorientations differ from most examples of animal advocacy, because the sources of these narratives typically come from vegans making an observation of the dominant meat culture from which they have removed themselves. The ostensible ambivalence within Wallace's critique of meat while openly enjoying its consumption is ironic. Like Melville, Wallace is well-versed in the rhetoric of irony, and it amplifies his critical stance against the self-absorbed nature of late-capitalist consumption. "Consider the Lobster" is only one of his many essays that uses self-referential irony to illuminate the harmful dissonance of consumer culture; it is a tactic that has earned him a devoted following as it gives a redemptive quality to his

writing.[19] The philosophical ethics pronouncing Wallace's stance against the happiness offered at the Maine Lobster Festival exposes the way capitalism and consumption influences subjects through self-referential systems of pleasure. Wallace recasts social rituals of late-capitalist culture as mindless, "ignorant," and "greedy for something you cannot ever have" (Wallace 56). His repellent descriptions of mass-tourism mirror the Maine lobster's predicament. "[A] tourist," Wallace explains, is "economically significant" but "existentially loathsome" (56). The "enormous, pungent and extremely well marketed" happiness advertised by the Maine Lobster Promotion Council is entirely dependent on the commercial rendering of the animal (50). The lobster is only valuable after being boiled alive and hacked apart; their dignity is replaced by their material presence in "lobster rolls, lobster turnovers, lobster sauté, Down East lobster salad, lobster bisque, lobster ravioli, and deep-fried lobster dumplings." The lobster simply exists "prior to whatever labor process the capitalist" exerts on them (Morton, *Hyperobjects* 111). "Surely here we the see the problem" because, to the capitalist, raw materials are just "lumps that only" achieve "definition as valuable product" after labor has been forced on it —or them. The material processed through capitalism's superstructures is only as valuable as the capital it generates.

The ostensibly countless ways lobster flesh can been incorporated into appetizing comestibles speaks to the relationship of bodily ethics and capital. In citing sought after-menu

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[19] In his collection of essays published in 1997, *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*, Wallace regularly uses aesthetics of disgust and repulsion to bring readers to self-reflective thresholds that confront the alarming effects of consumerist pleasure. "E Unibus Pluram" elaborates in great detail the way television consumption has turned North Americans into a mass of "sweaty, slack-jawed voyeurs" all while Wallace confesses he falls into comatose lapses in front of his own television set (152). In "Shipping Out: On the (near lethal) comforts of a luxury cruise," Wallace shares his opinion on the way "mass-market Luxury" cruises are a reminder that consumers are "small and weak and selfish" while he cruises around the Caribbean for a piece commissioned by *Harper Magazine* (35).

options available at the Maine Lobster Festival, while emphasizing the "extreme" amount of marketing that corrals herds of tourists towards the coast and its annual lobster extravaganza, Wallace discretely critiques the food-supply chain within capital by having us focus on the economics that steams from every participant's plate. The "lobster industry" is one of the two "main industries" in the state —homophonic pun intended (Wallace 50). *Gourmet*'s designated correspondent is not entirely impressed by the tacky strategies used to economically glean attendees; he is irked by an array of "little downers," such as having "to pay $20 extra for a folding chair if you want to sit down" during "the Main Stage's headliner shows" (Wallace 55). There is a "mad scramble" to snatch "NyQuil-cup-size samples" of celebrated dishes conjured from the emphatically endorsed "Cooking Competition." The "much-touted Maine Sea Goddess pageant finals" is not much more than "endless thanks and tributes to local sponsors." To make monetary connections even more blatant, Wallace details the extensive merchandise being sold at the festival: "lobster T-shirts and lobster bobblehead dolls and inflatable lobster pool toys and clamp-on lobster hats with big scarlet claws that wobble on springs" (Wallace 50). These items are deliberately listed with "and" instead of commas "to give the impression of an ultra-lengthy list in which finality is promised, only to be deferred, thereby deploying a deliberate rhetorical strategy to stress the extent of the festival's commercial nature and to situate the event within a capitalist/market framework" (Eve 7). According to Wallace, he has been commissioned to report on a "teeming commercial demotic event"; his diction underscores the very ordinary and popular approval of the grand-scale commodification of once-living beings (Wallace 50).

The convergence of nonhuman animal and food commodity is correlated to related forms of ecological damage. The adverse effects of global capitalism are detailed not only through the

lobster's demise, but also as the ways in which its body —now product—is served to consumers. The conspicuous presence of non-biodegradable containers, cups and utensils shows a broader lack of consideration for the environment: "The suppers come in styrofoam trays[…] the coffee is convenience-store coffee in more styrofoam, and the utensils are plastic" (Wallace 55). Under optimal conditions, the corporeal waste of lobster shells will decompose and return its carbon back to earth in a matter of months (Ilangumaran). On the other hand, styrofoam never loses its inherent chemical properties and plastic requires between 450 and 1000 years to decompose (Wright, et al.). Martin Paul Eve reminds us "that the history of synthetic plastics in bound up with IG Farben, the company that manufactured Zyklon B gas for the Holocaust" (16). The ecology of plastics, capitalism, and violence is intimately bound to Wallace's observations on global industrialization and its impact on marine life.

*Moby-Dick* showcases similar displays of carelessness, greed, and how either attitudes are adopted with indifference. In chapter sixty-four, "Stubb's Supper," a whale is killed "some distance from" the *Pequod*. Ishmael emphasizes capitalism's capacity to dismember not only the resources it depends on, but its peons, too. He is one of "eighteen men" and with their labouring "thirty-six arms, and one hundred and eighty thumbs and fingers" the whalers "slowly toiled hour after hour" to tow the harpooned "trophy" towards the Fordist whale processing plant aboard the *Pequod* (Melville 317). Workers are mere cogs in machinery; they are dispensable, like appendages. We learn men who work in the ship's "blubber-room" become "blubber-men" and "toes are scarce among" them, due to the sharp spades used to separate whales from their fat (458). The division between humans and other animals becomes porous again, as the hellish factory hacks apart not just its cetacean victims but the labourers mining for corporeal capital.

Capitalism is divorced from ecological modes of operation that work bilaterally; it is strictly hierarchal, as we can hear the way the *Pequod's* second mate addresses those with lesser standing. Stubbs calls out to Daggoo, an African harpooner: "A steak, a steak, ere I sleep! You, Daggoo! overboard you go, and cut me one from his small!" (318). Stubbs is entitled to privileges awarded to few, and wielding such positions does not necessitate hesitation around harmful practices. He forces the aged, African Fleece who is afflicted with poor hearing and decrepit knees to cook his celebratory whale steak. It was not until the late hour of "midnight" that the "steak was cut and cooked and lighted by two lanterns of sperm oil" (Melville 319). During the 19th century, burning oil to eat at night was no small extravagance; Stubbs' evening was not the product of necessity but the result of one's entitlement to decadent luxury. "Default capitalist economics is rational choice theory," explains Morton, "which is deeply a self-interest theory" (*Hyperobjects* 123). Where one resides in their social hierarchy has entirely to do with the amount of self-referential pleasure and waste one can procure.

Wallace convincingly advocates on behalf of crustaceans by illustrating humanist "knowledge" of lobster anatomy and neurology, documenting their visceral resistance, all while highlighting the long history of humanity's inability to establish an ethical system in which the violent commercialization of a socially sanctioned inferior is "defensible instead of just selfishly convenient" (Wallace 64). The thrust of his article is "to work out and articulate some of the troubling questions that arise amid all the laughter and salutation and community pride of the Maine Lobster Festival." Like Melville —but with brevity— Wallace deconstructs the mysterious marine creature who begs for our consideration. Through speculating on the unknowability of a lobster's perspective, Wallace explores the American late-capitalist project

and approaches the question of crustacean ontology through epistemologies of history, science and culture; his essay seems directly modelled on *Moby-Dick*.[20] Before drawing from established historical and scientific "knowledge" regarding crustaceans, Wallace gestures towards the unknowability of lobster ontology, as he warns his readers: "there's much more to know than most of us care about—it's all a matter of what your interests are" (Wallace 55). Indeed, what one "knows" about lobsters depends on if one is interested in learning how to impress dinner guests or prepare a PETA pamphlet for distribution —ironically, "Consider the Lobster" does both. In his satirical pondering of a lobster's interest, Wallace acknowledges the unknowability of nonhuman others which teases the already fraught morality in implementing their destruction —or worse, their suffering.

First, lobsters are defined taxonomically: "a marine crustacean of the family Homaridae, characterized by five pairs of jointed legs, the first pair terminating in large pincers claws used for subduing prey" (Wallace 55). It is worth noting that, despite their difference in size, lobsters have a thing or two in common with sperm whales, as they "are both hunters and scavengers." Both animals can be considered "garbagemen of the sea, eaters of dead stuff." Lobsters, however, "like most anthropods," predate cetaceans, as they "date from the Jurassic period" and are "biologically so much older than mammalia that they might as well be from another planet." These creepy sea critters crawled out on all eights from the primordial soup 200 million years before we bipedalled out of it. These descriptions cast crustaceans as fascinating subjects of

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[20] Wallace had read *Moby-Dick* several times. In "Shipping Out," he admits to writing "three different papers" on chapter ninety-four, "The Castaway," while attending university. He was deeply moved by Pip falling overboard and driven mad "by the empty immensity of what he finds himself floating in" (35). Further, he confesses to teaching nautical narratives in order to inspire students with "the same marrow-level dread of oceanic" he "always felt, the intuition of the sea as a primordial nada, bottomless depths inhabited by tooth-studded things rising angelically toward you."

scientific inquiry, not as something —or someone— that tastes good after being dipped in melted butter. Because of their wildly different anatomy and honing inaccessible, communicative systems —while predating our own existence— lobsters are entities "whose existence we cannot anticipate"; they are "strange strangers" (Morton, *Ecological* 42). As a result, the thrust of Wallace's essay becomes a rhetorical reflection on how, again to borrow Morton's phrasing, "we wouldn't know what we did not know about" lobsters (42). Their evasive antediluvian exoskeletons slip from any comprehensive grasp, allowing their interests to slide out of our critical consideration and into searing hot cauldrons.

Second, Wallace elucidates the linguistic history of the word "lobster." His explanation is more brief than Melville's "Etymology" chapter: "'lobster' comes from the Old English *loppestre*, which is thought to be a corrupt form of the Latin word for locust combined with the Old English *loppe*, which meant spider" (Wallace 55). Here, it is not Wallace's choice of words but language itself that "dissociates[s] his readers from their preconception of delicious lobster" —to most Americans, attending a locust-spider food festival would not seem enticing (Oritz 22). Wallace's encyclopedic knowledge of lobsters is quite persuasive in deterring their consumption: "A crustacean is an aquatic arthropod"; the Anthropoda "phylum covers insects, spiders, crustaceans, centipedes/millipedes, all of those whose main commonality, besides the absence of a centralized brain-spine assembly, is a chitinous exoskeleton composed of segments, to which appendages are articulated in pairs." In other words, "lobsters are basically giant-sea insects" (Wallace 55). Needless to say, their terrestrial kin do not appear in the North American diet. This is another point of comparison between "Consider the Lobster" and *Moby-Dick*, as they emphasize how euro-Western modes of understanding are founded on classification and

hierarchal systems. Both Wallace and Melville pave epistemological routes into the sea to reveal how our "knowledge" of these sea creatures is the necessary first step in commencing their horrific experiences of maiming and killing, as well as the eventual usage and wastage of their corporal materiality.

Wallace's subjective opinion of lobsters does, occasionally, appear amidst the categorical, objective scientific rendering of lobsters. He surmises that "they are—particularly in their natural brown-green state, brandishing their claws like weapons and with thick antennae awhip—not nice to look at" (Wallace 55). A lobster's slightly menacing and not-nice appearance may, unfortunately, play a hand in how readily humans can become deaf to their loud behaviour upon being submerged in boiling hot water. It might be for this reason that Wallace's speaker focuses on the many marvels and mysteries that lurk behind their eerie eyestalks.[21] Few share his respect for these Jurassic critters, as he notes a "Midcoasters' native term for lobster is, in fact, 'bug,'" a title that wins them little sympathy. The third mate from the *Pequod*, Flask, "a native from Tisbury in Martha's Vineyard" —which lies less than 300 kilometres south of Maine— carries similar attitudes of disdain towards his deep-sea victims (Melville 129). In Flask's "poor opinion, the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse, or at least water-rat." As Melville puts it: "Only a little circumvention and some small application of time and trouble" is required "to kill and boil" creatures classified as vermin, such as sea-bugs and water-rats (129).

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[21] Factoid: the age of a lobster is determined by counting the growth rings in their eyestalks, as is done with trees.

Demeaning caricature of groups targeted for capture, enslavement and extermination has a long and ongoing history for both human and nonhuman populations.[22]

Next, he examines the cultural significance of lobsters by mapping the fluctuating and arbitrary trend of its value in the North American market place. "Up until sometime in the 1800s," writes Wallace, "lobster was literally low-class food, eaten only by the poor and institutionalized" (Wallace 55). This fact contradicts our modern perspective of lobster, as he notes, "[n]ow, of course, lobster is posh, a delicacy, only a step or two down from caviar…In the US pop-food imagination, lobster is now the seafood analog to steak, with which it's so often twinned as Surf'n'Turf on the really expensive part of the chain steak house menu" (Wallace 55). Marketing lobster as "luxe or rich" seems deluding when told "some colonies had laws against feeding lobsters to inmates more than once a week because it was thought to be cruel and unusual, like making people eat rats" (55). Wallace makes known how the economic value of crustacean flesh is determined by those invested in its profitability; the Maine Lobster Festival's manipulation of the discourse surrounding seafood cuisine is blatantly apparent when chronicling the oscillating cultural opinion of lobster meat. At "the Main Eating Tent, you can get a "quarter" (industry shorthand for a 1 1/4-pound lobster), a 4-ounce cup of melted butter, a bag of chips, and a soft roll w/butter-pat for around $12.00, which is only slightly more expensive than supper at McDonald's" (55). The commercialization of New England's crustaceans is coupled with America's favourite fast-food venue, a juxtaposition that might benefit the Maine Lobster

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[22] In his book, *Less Than Human*, David Livingstone Smith explains why these forms of degrading epithets are much more than superficial metaphor-slinging —they are integral to the processes of colonization, genocide, world wars and other crimes against humanity. He illustrates his claims by examining the way Jewish persons have been referred to as rats, how Hutus called Tutsis cockroaches and the manner in which slave owners throughout history considered enslaved persons to be animals.

Festival considering it makes it accessible to a wider array of income-earners and, therefore, increases attendance. Wallace uses historical information to display the evolution of our anthropocentric understanding of crustaceans to show that intuitive associations with the animal are in no way intrinsic to the animal's ontology —our understanding of nonhuman others is almost as uninformed as our opinion of their dietary value. Further, he underscores the way economic motives chiefly fuel the classifications of nonhuman others by framing lobster as the cuisine of "the poor and institutionalized." Such information may puzzle Maine Lobster Festival attendees enough to reconsider the value of their purchase.

On the last page of "Consider the Lobster," Wallace's speaker asks "whether a true connoisseur would" be socially invested in values outside of aesthetic pleasure: "isn't being extra aware and attentive and thoughtful about one's food and its overall context part of what distinguishes a real gourmet? Or is all the gourmet's extra attention and sensibility just supposed to be aesthetic, gustatory?" (Oritz 24, Wallace 64) "In deconstructing the cultural context of lobster" cuisine, Wallace strikes through our masked conception of what constitutes good eating (Oritz 24). The information Wallace provides sucks the "gourmet" feature straight out of the freshly boiled lobster's shell. In demonstrating the slipperiness of the advertised aesthetic pleasure of haute seafood dining, it would seem humans buy into information offered by economic stakeholders —marketers, retailers, fishermen, farmers, governmental regulators— much too easily. Matthew Cole quotes the European Union-funded Welfare Quality project to affirm that "[s]uch individuals are eager to delegate responsibility for animal welfare to other actors, such as supermarkets or the state" (Cole 90). That Maine Lobster Festival attendees deny or choose to not think "about the conditions of" lobsters' "lives and deaths is the norm among

consumers" who indulge in nonhuman animals and their bodily secretions. Wallace would have us know that our willingness to delegate moral responsibility and obligations to self-governing agents, such as the Maine Lobster Promotional Council, is irresponsible, indefensible and seriously inconvenient for nonhuman animals.

"Consider the Lobster" details the processes of industrial fishing along New-England's coastline, 154 years after Melville did so in *Moby-Dick*. The two texts showcase the hunter-prey logic behind the commercial capture of marine creatures. What we know about lobsters is used against them, as we understand they "tend to be hungriest and more active (i.e., most trappable) at summer water temperatures" (Wallace 56). Aquacultural science focuses on information that can be weaponized against the animals they profit from; we know lobsters migrate closer to shore during the summer months, which informs the calculability of how much capital a dead lobster can yield. For tactical, logistical and economic reasons, lobstermen do not follow Maine lobsters after they "migrate out into deeper water" once autumn comes. There is no motivation to pursue "knowledge" of lobsters that does not affect the profit margins of their bodily materiality. Wallace reveals the aposiopesis between established "knowledge" and crustacean ontology when he muses over the contesting theories that aim to explain why "Maine lobsters migrate out into deeper water" (Wallace 56). It may be "for warmth or to avoid the heavy waves that pound New England's coast all winter. Some burrow into the bottom. They might hibernate; nobody's sure." Despite our appetite for and proximity to crustaceans, there is still a whole lot about them we are not "sure" of. Like a lighthouse erected to protect crustaceans instead of the ships that hunt them, "Consider the Lobster" becomes a beacon illuminating the unknowability of crustacean ontology,

opening ecological consideration for those who do not meet definitions of personhood —and yet who react to boiling water the same way a human person would.

When outlining lobster neurology and behaviour, Wallace makes a convincing case for their substantial capacity for preference and suffering. After being captured, lobsters' "claws are pegged or banded to keep them from tearing one another up under the stresses of captivity" (Wallace 60). According to Wallace, humans have become desensitized and indifferent to causing and witnessing the stress experienced by crustaceans in internment tanks considering "most of us have been in supermarkets or restaurants that feature tanks of live lobster" where picking "out your supper while it watches you point" is a supposedly enticing feature of displaying lobsters on death row. This aesthetic speaks to the "lobster's modern appeal: It's the freshest food there is" (Wallace 56). False promises of gourmet cuisine create a hyperesthesia that occupies and distracts consumers from considering anything outside of their own immediate consumptive satisfaction.

The privilege in witnessing the transition of fresh, live lobster to a vibrantly boiled red one teams with the texture and taste of their flesh to create an aesthetic experience of delicacy. Eating lobster in this manner aligns seamlessly with existing cultural norms —but, "in questioning the morality" of these practices, Wallace "disrupt[s] the cultural conventions that many take for granted" (Oritz 23). Cooking lobsters at home maximizes "the intimacy of the whole thing," "which of course is where most lobster gets prepared and eaten" (Wallace 62). He strikes through the purported comfort that euphemisms offer by highlighting his own "semiconscious" use of the word "prepared," as he underlines that the term: "in the case of lobsters," prepared "really means killing them right there in our kitchens." In a footnote, Wallace

once again mines for etymological meaning-making by musing over euphemisms reserved for more relatable nonhuman animals. He wonders if it is

> significant that "lobster," "fish," and "chicken" are our culture's words for both the animal and the meat, whereas most mammals seems to require euphemisms like "beef" and "pork" and "venison" that help us separate the meat we eat from the living creature the meat once was? Is this evidence that some kind of deep unease about eating higher animals is endemic enough to show up in English usage, but that the unease diminishes as we move out of the mammalian order? (And is "lamb"/"lamb" the counterexample that sinks the whole theory, or are there special, biblio-historical reasons for that equivalence?) (Wallace 62)

Although inconclusive, this brainstorming enables us to see the irony of offering a kind of tokenism in which nonhumans classified as similar enough to humans have their transformation from sentient individual to anonymous foodstuff acknowledged —at least, linguistically. Further, the etymological development maps the transition of resource to product. There is a distinctly capitalist appellation from being to commodity, from *a* cow to beef, *a* pig to pork, *a* fowl to poultry, and so on. Articles are not necessary when describing palatable bodily remains; unthinking nonhuman subjectivity is amplified through the words we use to describe their rendering.

In the culinary portion of his essay, our informant makes clear that omnivores have been *conditioned* to boil lobsters alive despite feelings of cruelness and objection that might arise along with the scolding hot steam that plumes skywards after lifting a lid off "2.5 quarts" of scalding hot water (Wallace 62). Wallace says that, after being thrown into a pot of boiling water,

"the lobster acts as if it's in terrible pain, causing some cooks to leave the kitchen altogether and to take one of those little lightweight plastic oven timers with them into another room and wait until the whole process is over" (62). "Cooking a lobster evokes a visceral reaction" that urges many people to take additional dissociative measures, such as decreasing one's proximity to a zone they cannot fully rationalize (Oritz 22). In taking all the necessary precautions to mitigate one's discomfort —purchasing and using a portable timer in order to enter a different room— one can deduce that humans acknowledge or at least realize that lobsters feel pain. "Consider the Lobster" "draws attention to those unarticulated feelings" by recording the last moments of a lobster's life (Oritz 23):

> However stuporous the lobster is from the trip home[…] it tends to come alarmingly to life when placed in boiling water[…] Even if you cover the kettle and turn away, you can usually hear the cover rattling and clanking as the lobster tries to push it off. Or the creature's claws scraping the sides of the kettle as it thrashes around[…] the lobster acts as if it's in terrible pain. (Wallace 62)

To be boiled to death is an unthinkable form of torture —but by detailing the lobster's protest to this cruelty and the way it mirrors our own reaction to drowning in 100°C degree water, Wallace makes it thinkable.

Using Samuel Beckett's "Dante and the Lobster," Katherine Ebury explores "debates around capital punishment reform and the direction of the" Irish Free State (2). Her criticism of the "arbitrary divisions between rational and emotional arguments for ethical behaviour" can be adapted to scrutinizing the Maine Lobster Promotion Council's[23] methods of neutralizing any

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[23] In 2013 the Maine Lobster Promotion Council was replaced by the Main Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC).

uncomfortable feelings seafood enthusiasts may foster (Ebury 10). The opening short story to Beckett's collection of short prose entitled *More Pricks than Kicks* "features a protagonist who shares Wallace's seeming horror at the way in which lobsters are cooked" (Eve 6). The protagonist, Belacqua, accompanies his aunt as she prepares dinner:

> "Christ!" he said "it's alive." His aunt looked at the lobster. It moved again. It made a faint nervous act of life on the oilcloth. They stood above it, looking down on it, exposed cruciform on the oilcloth. It shuddered again. Belacqua felt he would be sick.
>
> "My God" he whined "it's alive, what'll we do?" The aunt simply had to laugh. She bustled off to the pantry to fetch her smart apron, leaving him goggling down at the lobster, and came back with it on and her sleeves rolled up, all business.
>
> "Well" she said "it is to be hoped so, indeed."
>
> "All this time" muttered Belacqua. Then, suddenly aware of her hideous equipment:
>
> "What are you going to do?" he cried.
>
> "Boil the beast" she said, "what else?"
>
> "But it's not dead" protested Belacqua "you can't boil it like that." She looked at him in astonishment. Had he taken leave of his senses?
>
> "Have sense" she said sharply, "lobsters are always boiled alive. They must be." She caught up the lobster and laid it on its back. It trembled.
>
> "They feel nothing" she said. In the depths of the sea it had crept into the cruel pot. For hours, in the midst of its enemies, it had breathed secretly. It had survived

> the Frenchwoman's cat and his witless clutch. Now it was going alive into scalding water. It had to. Take into the air my quiet breath. Belacqua looked at the old parchment of her face, grey in the dim kitchen.
>
> "You make a fuss" she said angrily "and upset me and then lash into it for your dinner." She lifted the lobster clear of the table. It had about thirty seconds to live.
>
> Well, thought Belacqua, it's a quick death, God help us all. It is not. (Beckett 14)

The lobster's shuddering, trembling and "faint nervous act[s] of life" undermine the aunt's conviction that "[t]hey feel nothing." Unlike his pragmatic aunt —but much like Wallace— Belacqua "enters the lobster's perspective to remind us that humans are 'it's enemies.' The Biblical-sounding language —which recalls, for example, Psalm 110— of being 'in the midst of its enemies' makes us think of the lobster as a prisoner-of-war or hostage or rebel, rather than an animal about to become food" (Ebury 6). The unnamed aunt stands in the place of dutiful executioner and her rational responses aim to rebuke Belacqua's emotionalism. After observing the animal's vivacity, Belacqua exclaims "You can't boil it like that" (Beckett 14). The aunt's cool response echoes Hannah Arendt's conclusion that carrying out cruelty is easy when repeating the necessary prescribed rationalizations: "have sense," she tells her nephew, "lobsters are always boiled alive."

Hannah Arendt is best known for a strange phrase, "the banality of evil," the subtitle to her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, which consists of five detailed articles originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1963. *Eichmann in Jerusalem* reports a detailed account of Adolf Eichmann's trial in Israel which culminated in his execution —his punishment for helping orchestrate the transportation of non-Aryan populations toward their death during the second world war. Her

analysis of the sensationalized tribunal was unique to all other accounts of globalized reporting because of its focus on the banality of Eichmann. She argued the evil committed by the former SS Senior Assault Unit Leader did not stem from any motivation or intention to do evil. Observing Eichmann's testimony from the confines of a glass box in Jerusalem's newly established courtroom, she concluded that he was not sadistic or perverted, but the quintessential bureaucrat who "was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché" (Arendt 199). "The longer one listened to him," writes Arendt, "the more obvious it became his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*, namely from the standpoint of somebody else." Reasoning with Eichmann was not possible because "he was surrounded by the most reliable of all safeguards against the words and the presence of others, and hence against reality as such" (198). Arendt, who, due to her Jewish ethnicity, was forced to flee from Germany to the United States for safety, was astonished by Eichmann's petty superficiality; he interpreted his occupational responsibilities as being nothing more than the overseeing of transportation arrangements —not as murder.

It is not outlandish to assume the suppliers and logistics personnel organizing the Maine Lobster Festival view their responsibilities similarly. "Murder" may seem too emotional or anthropomorphic to describe the killings of crustaceans, but rationalizing one's implicit role in the grand-scale destruction of another species also requires a limited capacity, or willingness, to perceive their actions from the standpoint of someone else —namely, their victims. It is the hairsplitting of terms like "murder," "kill," "execute," "assassinate," "slaughter" and "sacrifice" that allows for events like the Maine Lobster Festival to exist. The heated political discourse concerned with one's ability to fit such verbs to appropriate subjects is testimony to humanist

fine-tuning of "sensible" or "rational" responses to acts of violence. It also reveals how readily moral panic is incited when the boundary between humans and other animals is questioned — after all, all these terms amount to the same thing. The Maine Lobster Promotion Council's widely circulated proclamation that this violence is acceptable because the lobster is cognitively lacking helps "surround" participants with "the most reliable of all safeguards against" criticism and judgement (Arendt 198).

Perhaps, Ishmael is troubled by these forms of etymological hairsplitting, too. Due to the classificatory tiers between fish and mammals, the former are killed but the latter are murdered. In order to console any potential hard feelings, he considers himself a nautical butcher in an industrial "fishery." As I earlier demonstrate, Ishmael takes comedic, outlandish measures to deny his kinship with cetaceans by insisting they are not mammals, but warm-blooded "spouting fish with horizontal tails" and "lungs" (Melville 148). This satire reverberates into the sadder untold dimensions of the whale's own tale in *Moby-Dick*, and, much later, that of the lobster's in Wallace's essay. The callous appetite of Maine Lobster Festival attendees undermines the civil restraint that is supposed to galvanize the border between humans from other animals. The whalers aboard the *Pequod* can be hardly discerned from the marine creatures that surround them. Sharks swarm "round the dead leviathan, smackingly feast[ing] on its fatness" while divided by just a few inches of hull from a crew that mercilessly chews and chops away at the exact same hunted whale (Melville 319). The Maine Lobster Festival is its own "sharkish business," its own feeding frenzy of over "80,000" humans gorging on "over 25,000 pounds of fresh-caught Maine Lobster" (Melville 319, Wallace 50). When tearing mouthfuls from defeated

prey, humans uncannily resemble the beasts we direly separate ourselves from. It would seem both authors suggest the crowning glory of "apex predator" fits truest between human ears.

Former fishmonger and commercial lobsterman, Richard King details the history, biology and anthropocentric culture of lobsters in his book *Lobster*. In it, we see rational practices used to determine appropriate ways of treating lobsters can be quite harmful and can fail to further any "knowledge" on the subject:

> After killing some 54 lobsters in four different ways, marine biologist Elizabeth Murray of Oxford concluded[…] 'From the point of view of kindness to the lobster, it is hard to say which is the best method of killing, because it is impossible, and probably will always be impossible, to say whether the lobster is suffering pain or not. Therefore, to give the animal the benefit of the doubt, the quickest methods are probable the best.'(King 127)

This speaks directly to both Beckett and Wallace's "discussion about whether lobsters die instantly, which forms the haunting close" of both their texts (Ebury 5). Not entirely convinced, Beckett's protagonist "reconciles himself to the lobster's death by rationalizing it, only to be reproved by the narrator's interjection." In an effort to ease his conscience, Belacqua thinks to himself "well[…] it's a quick death," but the narrator circumnavigates any chance of feeling absolved from the lobster's not entirely swift death: "God help us all. It is not" (Beckett 14). Powerless in protesting against the baseless authority his aunt presents, Belacqua hopes the lobster's death is a quick one, and "the timing of the death is an aspect to which Wallace directly refers" (Eve 7). "According to marine zoologists," says Wallace, "it usually takes lobsters between 35 and 45 seconds to die in boiling water" (63). "Dante and the Lobster" conflates

cooking with conceptions of pain, life, death and gustatory satisfaction. When Belacqua's aunt declares —with no evidence whatsoever—that lobsters "feel nothing" during the process of their co-option and extermination, we are presented with the very tension that drives the thrust of Wallace's essay. After all, this is the exact same erroneous assertion made by the Main Lobster Promotion Council which Wallace highlights.

In her study of Adolf Eichmann's widely publicized trial in Jerusalem, Arendt "examines Eichmann's claim that he was simply following orders in a Kantian mode of ethics" (Eve 16). Much of his testimony relied on perverted notions of Kantian precepts; he clarifies "that the principle of my will must always be such that it can become the principle of general laws" (Arendt 131). Arendt relays his self-perception: "He no longer 'was master of his own deeds,' and[…] he 'was unable to change anything'." If one feels troubled when considering the moral implications of participating in the slaughter and consumption of nonhuman animals and their byproducts, there is little inclination to follow that troublesome course of thought because of the given "principle of extrapolation to general laws," policies and norms (Eve 16). To "act as if the principal of your actions were the same as that of the legislator or the law of the land" is perfectly acceptable, even deemed the "moral" course of action (Arendt 136). Any ethical quandary incited by boiling a lobster alive is easily circumvented considering one has the legal right to do so. This is a key contribution to Eichmann's defence; his readiness "to commit banal evil, an evil that occurs without thinking, is administration, bureaucracy and process" (Eve 16). "Reflexive moral thinking is abandoned" when following a "logical set of steps to follow" which "become a duty to follow." Those who enjoy fresh lobster follow the string of "logical" steps

outlined by Belaqcua's unthinking aunt: lobsters "are always boiled alive" because "they feel nothing" (Beckett 14).

Belacqua's aunt chastises her nephew for the very same reason Timothy Morton criticizes Carroll's Walrus. As observed in the previous portion of this thesis, the protagonist in "The Walrus and the Carpenter" "weeps for the oysters as he pours them down his greedy throat" (Morton, *Ecological* 75). Belacqua's superficial morality gives his aunt little reason to reconsider the way she has chosen to prepare their shared repast: "You make a fuss," she says angrily, "and upset me and then lash into it for your dinner" (Beckett 14). Although, the aunt — bearing comparison to Starbuck's practical and unfeeling demeanour— admits that when considering a prolonged death in scalding water, she, too, feels "upset." Despite being "all business" in her butcher's apron, she is annoyed by her nephew's trepidation as it prevents her from avoiding her own. Much like Wallace and his intended readership, she would prefer "to avoid thinking about the whole unpleasant thing," and Belacqua's whining temporarily suspends the cognitive capacity to do so (Wallace 61). Belacqua does not "want to see [him]self as cruel or unfeeling" but (Wallace 64), like the Walrus, cannot help himself from "lash[ing] into it for" his dinner (Beckett 14).

If the Walrus, Belacqua, or Maine Lobster Festival attendees feel any reservation in condemning a sentient being to a painful death, it is short-lived because causing the pain and destruction of a nonhuman animal is ubiquitous, common, normalized, and banal. For Arendt, this does not lessen the abomination in any such event but rather intensifies the horror of the evil:

> The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were and still are, terribly an

> terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together for it implied [...] that this new type of criminal, who is in actual fact *hostis generis humani*, commits his crime under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong. (Arendt 276)

This is one of the many reasons animal activism and scholarship returns to historical examples of systemized mass-violence like the Holocaust, colonialism, and slavery. Just as Melville has Ishmael view slave ships tellingly pass the *Pequod*, Wallace's narrator wonders if one permits themselves "to think that lobsters can suffer and would rather not" then events like the "MLF can begin to take on aspects of something like a Roman Circus or medieval torture-fest" (Wallace 64). Musing over the industrial-sized death apparatus brewing hundreds of lobster bodies for all to see and salivate over, "Wallace rhetorically compares the lobster festival" to the second world war and ancient Rome by asking whether future generations will compare "our eating practices in much the same way we now view Nero's entertainments or Mengele's experiments" (Eve 8, Wallace 64). This amplifies the aestheticization of animal cruelty as well was the industrialized and banal nature of the killing. "[P]art of the overall spectacle of the Maine Lobster Festival," explains Wallace, "is that you can see actual lobstermen's vessels docking at the wharves along the northeast grounds and unloading fresh-caught product, which is transferred by hand or cart 150 yards to the great clear tanks stacked up around the festival's cooker" (Wallace 60). This Taylorist description, coupled with images of "tanks" into which crustaceans are "unloaded," is intentionally paralleled to the Holocaust logistics network, where individuals were captured,

transported and helplessly selected to meet their destruction in industrial-sized and timed-death apparatuses. All done, Wallace would have us believe, sans consideration, "in banal, Eichmann-esque fashion" (Eve 18). We are relieved to delegate moral thinking to governmental regulators, self-governing agents, retailers and the like, but these social bodies seduce us into banal modes of operation and consumption. Advertising, marketing, unfinished research, ambiguous slogans and all other forms of media that stimulate citizens from morning until night are economically invested in thinking —or unthinking— for us.

Juxtaposing crimes against humanity to crimes against nonhuman animals can be problematic and is often met with furious reprisal. The specific history of Holocaust narratives and imagery appropriated by animal rights groups has been cast in an unfavourable light because many interpret the metaphorical comparison as denigrating the adversity felt by those affected by the Holocaust. Despite this criticism, this thesis openly compares the horrors of the second world war to the Maine Lobster Festival not to equate lobsters to Jewish persons, but to showcase humanity's dismal track record of correcting overt practices of violent, intractable conflict. The parallels this chapter pursues does not aim to deflate the atrocity of murdering millions of Jewish persons, gypsies, Poles, homosexuals, disabled persons, the ill or the many other populations targeted by the Nazi regime. As Peter Singer says in his struggle to make sense of Elizabeth Costello's position in *The Lives of Animals*, "a comparison is not necessarily an equation," and the comparisons put forth are employed to highlight humanity's capacity to institutionalize and legalize mass-violence while normalizing apathetic responses to suffering (Coetzee 79). Avoiding engagement with analogies of victimhood, these issues are traced alongside omnivorous practices to return to essential questions surrounding the banality of evil. If a

subculture believes that subjugating and exterminating sentiment beings for their palatable flesh is immoral, then, can one ask how is it they live and cooperate with the dominant culture that finds nothing wrong in what vegans consider to be a world war against kindred species? If what Wallace assumes the future generation's attitude towards our treatment of other animals is correct, how do we disentangle ourselves from these distinctly banal evil-doings? Theodor Adorno, who professed solidarity with other animals, famously states that "Auschwitz begins wherever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals" (Sanbonmatsu 10). How do we provoke a sense of responsibility in a society where "even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter"? (Adorno, *Prisms* 34) "Consider the Lobster" offers an analysis of the dynamics between a subject's position in their societal hierarchy and its influence on their opinion of those deemed beneath them.

In utilizing some of the same tactics used by PETA, Wallace, once again, unwittingly aligns himself with the infamous organization by comparing the Maine Lobster Festival to Josef Mengele's inhumane experiments. Wallace's clever persona uses PETA under the guise of not using it; he knows —as did Melville— that he is bearing witness to genocide and recounts his observation without ever using the word. In "The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)," Jacques Derrida warns that "one should neither abuse the figure of genocide nor consider it explained away" (394). Despite the gravity of the concept, he confidently asserts that "there are[…] animal genocides" that "compare to the worst cases" of the anthroparchal variety. Derrida's work on nonhuman animal ethics questions if our treatment of other animals is more sinister than crimes committed during the second world war. He asks us to consider what if,

> for example, instead of throwing people into ovens or gas chambers (let's say Nazi) doctors and geneticists had decided to organize the overproduction and overgeneration of Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals by means of artificial insemination, so that, being more numerous and better fed, they could be destined in always increasing numbers for the same hell, that of the imposition of genetic experimentation or extermination by gas or by fire. In the same abattoirs. (Derrida, "The Animal" 395)

Marjorie Spiegel, Charles Patterson, Issac Bashevis Singer, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz, Marguerite Yourcenar, Alex Hershaft, David Foster Wallace and countless others employ the dreadful comparison for the sole purpose of evoking pathos. Considering crimes against humanity in conjunction to the "philosophical problematic of the animal" is not necessarily intended to "overload with pathos the self-evidences" (Derrida, "The Animal" 395). Made increasingly difficult to conjure due to ag-gag laws that forbid the act of undercover filming and photography of activity on animal "processing" facilities, imagery of the lives and deaths of "production" animals is "'pathetic'[…] because they 'pathetically' open the immense question of pathos and the pathological, precisely, that is, of suffering, pity and compassion; to the sharing of this suffering among the living, to the law, ethics, and politics that must be brought to bear upon this experience of compassion" (Derrida, "The Animal" 395). Derrida's claims are sensitive and difficult to refute, but, as mentioned, the use of Holocaust materials and allegories when discussing the issue of nonhuman animal subjugation has a controversial history. Roberta Kalechofsky, a member of PETA, denounces the practice because "human beings do not hate animals. They do not eat them because they hate them[…] These were the motives for the

Holocaust" (4). Indeed, the agony of nonhuman animals does not arise from hatred; although, Arendt's analysis firmly posits that harbouring hatred is not a necessary precursor in becoming complicit in gross cruelty. Also, in tow of Kalechofsky's claim, it would be difficult to surmise that humans have no ideological conflict with other animals.

Because of these reasons, a key comparison appears differently in *Gourmet's* publication of the article.[24] Along with palliating the favourable portrayal of PETA, Wallace was asked to remove any mention of the SS physician, and he compromised by comparing "present agribusiness and eating practices" to "Aztec sacrifices" instead of second world war crimes to appease the editorial demands of *Gourmet*. Wallace believes his "own initial reaction is that such a comparison is hysterical" and "extreme" because, to him, "animals are less morally important than human beings" (Wallace 64). In the article's final footnote, Wallace emphasizes that animals are "a *lot* less important" because the moral comparison used does not equate "the value of one human's life" to "the value of one animal's life, but rather the value of one animal's life vs. the value of one human's taste for a particular kind of protein" (Wallace 64). Martin Paul Eve notes how this phrasing echoes a particular history in Nazi classification practices. When translated from German to English, "untermensch" means "under man"; it usually translates to "subhuman," which was the designation given to those the Nazis had selected for extermination (Eve 16). This logic parallel's Wallace's; because animals are "a *lot* less important" they become "non-human" or "less-than-human." This classification is paramount to the widespread conception of nonhuman animal species as "less morally important than human beings" which is cornerstone to widely held apathetic attitudes towards their suffering.

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[24] This analogy stays the same in *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays,* 2005.

It is hard to ignore the difference in objective and tone between "Consider the Lobster"'s main textual body and its footnotes; they appear to fulfil different intentions. Wallace's satirical persona exudes ignorance as he openly idles in a cognitive dissonance that permits his "obvious selfish interest in this belief, since [he] like[s] to eat certain kinds of animals and want[s] to be able to keep doing it" (Wallace 64). Like Ishmael, Wallace is delightfully funny to listen to; enough so that missing the moralist underpinnings in his comical musings is intentionally made easy. A "highlighted[…] attraction in the Festival's program" is "the World's Largest Lobster Cooker" which is situated "on the MLF's north grounds for everyone to see" (Wallace 62). The essay's comedy invites us to "[t]ry to imagine a Nebraska Beef Festival at which part of the festivities is watching trucks pull up and the live cattle get driven down the ramp and slaughtered right there on the World's Largest Killing floor or something —there's no way" (Wallace 62). Many of his assertions are made so comical that it tactfully buffers a critical distance between an omnivore's desired self-perception of being kind and compassionate and their wanton carnivorous habits. However, his footnotes are less forgiving, many of which are prefaced with an abbreviated nota bene. The merciless strategies of maximizing "commercial efficiency" in the meat industry are made known, such as confinement "in unnaturally close quarters, under which conditions many birds go crazy and peck one another to death" (Wallace 60). The effectiveness of Wallace's essay is bolstered through a proclamation that the speaker does not, in any shape or form, pass judgement —a rhetorical necessity that will be discussed later in further detail. He tenderly cushions his readership against feeling antagonized through prefacing damning information as "purely observational side-note[s]." By supplanting buttresses to protect the egos of *Gourmet*'s readers from feeling riled, he is free to explain how debeaking is "an automated

process and that chickens receive no anesthetic. It's not clear to me whether most *Gourmet* readers know about debeaking, or about related practices like dehorning cattle in commercial feedlots, cropping swine's tails in factory hog farms to keep psychotically bored neighbours from chewing them off and so forth" (Wallace 60). Whether *Gourmet*'s readers do or do not know about these specific forms of adversity felt by "production" animals in the throes of capitalist consumption, one would assume they would prefer not to think about it —but Wallace makes that increasingly difficult. By disclosing *Gourmet*'s censorship, he dares his readers to finish the parts of his exposition that are forcibly, or skillfully, left unsaid: "N.B. PETA distributes a certain video—the title of which is being omitted as part of the elaborate editorial compromise by which this note appears at all—in which you can see just about everything meat-related you don't want to see or think about" (62). This false omission not only tauntingly compels a reader to put down their magazine to conduct a quick youtube search, it makes us question the underlying logic and authority of having to erase the imagery of commercial nonhuman animal rendering, and ag-gag laws by association.

"Consider the Lobster" is exhaustively tireless in its mitigation between exposing the unfortunate truths of the meat industry and maintaining a merely "observational" stance in its exposure. Wallace continuously untethers himself from animal advocacy while regularly tying his sentiments to its insights; in yet another footnote, he makes us nota bene that "PETA" is not "any sort of font of unspun truth. Like may partisans in complex moral disputes, the PETA people are fanatics, and a lot of their rhetoric seems simplistic and self-righteous. Personally, though, I have to say that I found this unnamed video both credible and deeply upsetting" (Wallace 62). "Consider the Lobster" pretends not to utilize PETA's rhetorics the same

way it pretends that raising questions about industrial nonhuman animal agriculture belongs in footnotes and afterthoughts. The delectable sarcasm of the main text teases out ecological inquiry while the footnotes perform the heavy lifting, hoisting the necessity of nonhuman animal justice out of peripheral consideration.

As a social justice initiative, veganist discourse does not end at considering one's own consumption; it is invested in critiquing meat culture, which has the potential to antagonize those who maintain an omnivorous diet. For this reason, animal advocates frequently face an argumentum ad hominem; vegans are often accused of considering themselves as morally superior to omnivores. This kind of social positioning between opposing cultures typically guarantees preventing dialogue between the two; asking "who are *you* to judge?" streamlines the passing judgement to the fringes of serious consideration. Narrating from the position of an entertaining, judgement-free and trustworthy correspondent allows Wallace to perform all sorts of poetic acrobatics necessary when trying to dodge any moralist finger-pointing —his speaker asserts anthropocentric hierarchies while the essay and its specific composition unravels it. Although, the footnoted version of Wallace's persona takes measures to absolve some of the guilt his essay unequivocally evokes in his omnivorous readership. He admits that it just "so happens that your assigned correspondent knew almost nothing about the standard meat-industry operations before starting work on this article" (Wallace 60). The narrative development of *Moby-Dick* and "Consider the Lobster" is dependent on the narrators' increasing awareness of the world while their readers are paralleled with the protagonists —allowing for all parties involved to actively undertake a cultural initiation of ecological consideration.

When volunteering to become a correspondent between Jerusalem and New York, Arendt prepared herself to behold the perpetrator of great evil in the flesh. In coming face-to-face with a man guilty of gross crimes against humanity, Arendt was expecting to find the source of radical evil. However, upon listening to Eichmann repeat "word for word the same stock phrases and self-invented clichés" of dutiful obligation to one's governing body, she encountered a radically different kind of evil (Arendt 77). Eichmann, doltishly proud of the efficiency of his operation and impressed with himself for being such a loyal follower of the Führer, was incapable of thought, and, therefore, Arendt believes he was less culpable than the S.S elite and German generals who masterminded the Final Solution. Being "much less intelligent" than them "and without any education to speak of," Eichmann "dimly realized that it was not an order but a law which has turned them all into criminals." According to Arendt, "Eichmann may well have lacked 'intentions' insofar as he failed to think about the crime he was committing" (Butler).[25] In this instance, "she feared that what had become 'banal' was non-thinking itself." "Consider the Lobster" involves components necessary in shutting down the types of thinking that would make such events unthinkable: notions of tradition, advertising, hype, indulgence, commercialization and half-baked science. The essay gestures towards the departure of rational thinking, which is the precise moment mass-slaughter arrives.

While "the banality of evil" is the subtitle to *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, the phrase only appears once in the final formal chapter of the book and once in the postscript. Despite its paucity, the book is dedicated to explaining the multi-dimensional concept, emphasizing that the

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[25] Arendt does not claim Eichmann "acted without conscious activity, but insisted the term 'thinking' has to be reserved for a more reflective mode of rationality" (Butler).

banality of evil-doing is a major and important detail to its fruition. Arendt describes the banality of evil as a societal inversion:

> Hitler's land demanded that the voice of conscience tell everybody: "Thou shalt kill," although the organizers of the massacres knew full well that murder is against the normal desires and inclinations of most people. Evil in the Third Reich had lost the quality by which most people recognize it - *the quality of temptation*. Many Germans and many Nazis, probably an overwhelming majority of them, must have been *tempted not* to murder, *not* to rob, *not* to let their neighbors go off to their doom[…] and *not* to become accomplices in all these crimes by benefiting from them. But, God knows, they had learned how to *resist temptation*. (Arendt 150, emph. mine)

Is it possible, then, to regard Wallace's essay as an invitation to consider one's "temptation" to "*not"* murder? Does Belacqua's aunt resent her nephew for suggesting that such a temptation exists? Is this why Ruth Reichl published Wallace's piece after he agreed to tone-down the "flattering portrayal of PETA"? When "ex-flower children" come up and down along the "ungodly" long line for freshly boiled lobster to hand out "pamphlets that say lobsters die in terrible pain," do we belittle them for presenting the temptation to not eat and kill someone who would prefer to be left alone (Wallace 60)?

The subject of Wallace's article "is the 56th Annual MLF[…] whose official theme was 'Lighthouses, Laughter, and Lobster,'" yet he chooses to go against his presumed duty of fortifying the already well-advertised joyous "laughter" and "happiness" that was served to "over 80,000" attendees. "Consider the Lobster" almost never appeared in *Gourmet* because it is an apt

example of what Sara Ahmed would call a "killjoy." Wallace admits he does "not like tourist venues" and is, therefore, an inappropriate correspondent because he will "never understand the appeal" of participating in intranational tourism (Wallace 56). One of the most charming aspects of the article is his trademarked attitude of sarcasm and cynicism, especially poignant when describing how North Americans "crawl through maddening traffic to hot crowded tourist venues in order to sample a 'local flavor' that is by definition ruined by the presence of tourists" (Wallace 56). It is not Wallace's cantankerous demeanour that positions him as a "killjoy," in Sara Ahmed's lexicon, because he is thoroughly "estranged from" the cheery happenings at the Maine Lobster Festival, he is better positioned to be "conscious of" the most highlighted attraction of the Festival's program (Ahmed, "Feminist" 3) —"the World's Largest Lobster Cooker" that is "right out there on the MLF's north grounds for everyone to see" (Wallace 62). Making lobsters fully intelligible to humans is unachievable, but Wallace succeeds in tempting his reader to consider their perspective which effectively and willingly goes "against a social order" that "is protected as a moral order, a happiness order" (Ahmed, "Feminist" 2). The prescribed merriment of "Lighthouses, Laughter and Lobster" emphasizes the social homo-bonding that arises from sharing gustatory delights, but "Consider the Lobster" draws our attention to the living beings that must be barbarically sacrificed for its attainment which produces feelings visceral enough to guide ethical behaviour.

Even though she uses affect theory to establish a "feminist critique of happiness," Ahmed's work is applicable to Wallace's piece because it openly teases the relationship between affect and social norms (Ahmed, "Feminist" 2). "Consider the Lobster" is "willing to cause unhappiness, even if it opposes a protected[…] moral order" and the unhappiness does not

support the “cause” of the objector. This is why Richard Twine outlines the abundant resonance of Ahmed’s “positioning of feminists as killjoys resistant to a dominant affective community” with “vegans in contemporary culture” (Twine 624). While writing about his experience at a presumably “happy” event, Wallace becomes an “affect alien”—a stranger to the dominant happiness order because he questions the ethics in ordering a plate of freshly boiled lobster (Ahmed, “Killing” 581). “For in the omnivorously normative happiness order it is precisely the point that animal products and the violence that is inherent to their journey there do not constitute an overt presence” in restaurants, grocery stores and omnivorous food festivals (Twine 626). The “overt presence of animals” in the forms we regularly encounter them —meat, dairy, eggs, clothes, cosmetics, medicine, etc.— incite a “normality of animal consumption.” Wallace, who coyly aligns himself to the PETA activists he writes about, contests the hegemony of meat culture; a contestation, as Ahmed argues, that is vital to the killjoy’s objective. Being “a killjoy can be a knowledge project, a world making project” (Ahmed, “Feminist” 3). “Killing joy” provides new ways of thinking which engender new practices to surface and grow; it is an animal activist’s objective to gradually erode the dominant practices of instrumentalizing nonhuman animals for commodification. Wallace contests this process by re-imaging the animal, making the lobster’s preference and perspective intelligible to his readers, and recalling the relational violence of its extermination —all of which have been intentionally ignored or discursively muted by the Maine Lobster Festival Promotion Council. When discussing feminist killjoys, Ahmed points out that the “affect alien” is “attributed as the origin of bad feeling rather than normative sexism,” or in this case, speciesism (“Killing” 581). This is why Belacqua’s aunt channels her guilt and discomfort at her nephew rather than normative speciesism. The killjoy

becomes the source of contempt because they "refuse membership of the normative affective community" —they prefer "making new meanings and new forms of happiness" (Twine 629).

"Consider the Lobster" "constitutes a direct challenge to the dominant affective community" overflowing in Rockland, Maine (629). If a consumer of animals never considered their implicit role in the nonhuman animal's destruction, Wallace's essay opens the potential to do so. If one has given it consideration before reading his essay, their discomfort is probably heightened after reading it. Any comfort felt in refraining from thinking about one's participation in unnecessary suffering becomes suspended when invited to question the social order of their actions. The success of the Maine Lobster Festival depends on the assumed shared happiness people experience in consuming animals, and by "raising the prospect of a cruel commensality," Wallace's proposition —to consider the lobster— spoils the happiness *Gourmet* was aiming to bolster (Twine 621). Richard Twine explains why decentering

> joy and happiness is the critical deconstructive work of the vegan killjoy. In performing a practice that attempts to re-construct happiness, pleasure and politics, the vegan killjoy does what all politically willful killjoys attempt to do: create new meanings and practices that underline the shared joy in living outside and beyond social norms once thought fixed. (Twine 638)

By reuniting the prescribed happiness with its inherent violence, "Consider the Lobster" "invites a troubled self-conception for the omnivore." It is unsurprising that consumers, especially those who profit from omnivorous practices, "indulge in defensive discursive practices with the aim of consolidating the normative meanings of animal consumption, human/animal hierarchy and the hegemony of their affective community" (Twine 629). To say lobsters exhibit preference in a sea

of tourists whose shared happiness buoys gleefully on the fallacy that lobsters feel nothing puts Maine Lobster Festival attendees in an awkward position. "Awkwardness is a quality of the killjoy," argues Twine when appropriating Ahmed's affect theory; killjoys "are constructed as awkward and as producing practical and affective awkwardness" (Twine 631). "Consider the Lobster," much like other texts that gesture towards the consideration of nonhuman animal suffering, embodies the uncomfortable duty to question "the habitual normativity of meat culture." The violence that the dominant omnivorous culture more or less sequesters to marginal discourse is brought back into an uncomfortable proximity when told a "lobster will sometimes try to hook its claws" over the boiling pot's rim "like a person trying to keep from going over the edge of a roof" (Wallace 62). Similar to the way Melville reconfigures the "absent referent" besieging the *Pequod*, Wallace succeeds in reconstructing the presence of the "absent referent" haunting the Maine Lobster Festival, and this newly materialized spectre destabilizes pre-existing "knowledge" that humans have no moral responsibility to nonhuman others who resist their capture and destruction.

The nonhuman animal is what Carol J. Adams refers to as an "absent referent"; they are "rendered invisible through language and material fragmentation" (Adams 40). Her book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, pioneered the necessary critical tools to both illuminate and deconstruct the intersectional crisis of nonhuman and female oppression. In it, she uncovers the cloaked function of the absent referent, the spectre that protects "the conscious of the meat eater and render[s] the idea of individual animals as immaterial to anyone's selfish desires" (Adams 304). Nonhuman animals we consume become absent in our intuitive, emotional and rational cognitive schemas because the absent referent haunts two vital, yet perversely hidden, intersections: the

separation from “flesh eater from the animal” and the departure between the sentient animal and the end product —animalized protein. Processes of objectification, fragmentation and consumption allow “for the moral abandonment of being” (304). Borrowing from Barbara Noske’s work, Adams points out that “meat eating is a perfect product for capitalism sice it requires an endless supply of raw material (plant protein) which is reduced through the animalizing and feminizing[26] of protein to sixteen percent of its original material” (305). The consumption of animals in industrialized societies is not a necessity, but a choice; an inefficient one at that when considering most omnivorous diets are driven by the misunderstanding that animalized protein is the best source of the macronutrient. The less mitigated and wholesale version of Wallace’s speaker, again, takes the austere, footnoted responsibility of addressing this fallacy: “Even the most diehard carniphile will acknowledge that it’s possible to live and eat well without consuming animals” (Wallace 64). Curiously enough, this is the final sentence of the final footnote —the visually absolute punctuation with which readers are bid farewell.

This limpid pronouncement of our capacity to eat well without slaughter echoes a very specific dialectic in Jean-Luc Nancy’s interviewing of Jacques Derrida entitled “Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject.” Wallace’s final sentence sounds interchangeable with Derrida’s scoffing parenthesis: “(and who can be made to believe our cultures are carnivorous because animal proteins are irreplaceable?)” (“Eating” 112) Derrida’s views on animals, animality and the ingestion of animals set a well-lit stage for interrupting the animal menagerie that —to a certain some— smells fishy. The opposition of oppressor and oppressed is intimately bound to

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[26] Carol Adams coined the term feminized protein for eggs and dairy products. They are derived from abusing the “reproductive cycle of female animals” (309). Because “feminized protein is taken from living female animals, whose reproductive capacity is manipulated for human needs,” most eco-feminists agree they are products of sexual slavery.

the anthropocentric struggle of defining and pegging the limits and perimeters of the human, and, by default, the animals outside of it. Derrida suggests that, under anthropocentric aspects of metaphysics, the meaning of subjectivity is comprised through a network of exclusionary relations. Derrida's discussion of carnophallogocentrism is the most directly relevant concept for critical animal studies; it is his coined term for this relational and reductive network. Its etymology illuminates the sacrificial, masculine, and speaking dimensions of enlightenment conceptions of what constitutes a subject; it describes the framework of subjectivity that implies "carnivorous virility" ("Eating" 113). Within this schema, the signifier, image and linguistic identification of "the animal" represents a sacrificial structure, a discursive and cultural economy between humans and other animals that allows for a "non-criminal putting to death" of other animals in order to affirm the prioritized and metaphysical reality of "the human" (112). In turn, as explained by Katherine Young,

> 'the animal' becomes a totalizing sign and fantasy, which effectively crushes real animal differences in order to uphold the authority or voice of the speaking subject. The State, in particular, is carnophallogocentric because it is built upon the ingestion, incorporation, and introjection of corpses into the psyche of the political animal so that it must be carnivorous in order to be powerful. Here, meat is a phallic sign to be circulated and consumed within a political economy of relations rooted in domination and signifies those human and animal bodies that remain subject to rather than subjects of power within this economy of relations, and who are thus to be consumed or sacrificed accordingly. Thus, the subject of Western political thought is not simply a Eurocentric and masculine protagonist in

> a 'virile and heroic schema' of the State over the state of nature, but also an eater of flesh according to Derrida. (Young 6)

Carnophallogocentrism links the "who" to the question of "sacrifice" and its sharp carving of the "invisible contour[s]" of one's self-reflection (Derrida, "Eating" 113). Precisely in the way one internalizes and exteriorizes the world around them, eating is the most severe, visceral, corporal, and seriously animalist way to define one's self.

This produces a metonymic schema in which these all-consuming characterizations devour and replace more compassionate and ecological significations of what constitutes "eating well" or other gastronomic exchanges. For Derrida, sacrifice idealizes "interiorization of the phallus and the necessity of its passage through the mouth, whether it's a matter of words or of things, of sentences, of daily bread or wine, of the tongue, the lips, or the breast of the other" ("Eating" 113). In short, humans consume these fetishized signs in order to appease our hungry desire to consume one another. It becomes the State's biopolitical initiative to regulate this metonymic economy so that the fetishized consumption of others feigns "the role of […]determining or protecting the living subject" (Derrida, "Eating" 115). It is in the interest of the State —which, since Melville's era, is inextricable from the corporate— to determine who lives and who dies in the midst of the citizen's longed for satiation of consuming one another. As a consequence of their very interpellation as citizens, consumers are all too ready and willing to delegate that level of responsibility to bodies outside of themselves.

Further, in *Zoographies,* Matthew Calarco observes that carnophallogocentrism seeps beyond metaphysical constructions of subjectivity to create a manifesto of juridical logic that encapsulates existing legal, political and cultural institutions. In order to achieve a complete

subjecthood in the registrar of contemporary society, one must accept the violence committed against non-subjects, especially animals, to "eat well," to nourish "not only for me, for a 'self'" (Derrida, "Eating" 115). Basically, one must participate as carnivores in order to become a fully functioning member of society —the capitalist community that circulates around carnophallogocentrism. In the context of late capitalism, meat is no longer flesh, it represents the material and immaterial labour trapped in the endless expanse of commodities manufactured and consumed on a daily basis. The political animal menagerie is precisely where Melville and Wallace pause, float upon and dive into. *Moby-Dick* and "Consider the Lobster" have never been more relevant; contemporary socio-politics, with capitalism at the masthead, is poised to trap and spear every beast of burden in order to dissolve them into a clam chowder of market economies.

Self-governing agents facilitate the relationship betweens humans and other animals through their discursive power in determining "knowledge." By peddling information that is incomplete, incomprehensive or untrue, they offer consumers a quasi-therapeutic ways of claiming to understand nonhuman animal subjectivity. It is in the interest of the institution that consumers adopt their proposed view that nonhuman animal subjectivity is morally irrelevant, done easily when portraying the nonhuman subject as lacking, incomplete, or inferior. The Maine Lobster Promotion Council's opinion of crustaceans is very much a rendition of Descarte's automata: the "lobster is very simple[…] it [has] no brain. [They have] no cerebral cortex, which in humans is the area of the brain that gives the experience of pain" (Wallace 62). The industrialization or objectification of nonhuman animals depends "on a Cartesian denial of their sentience," their emotional and communicative capacities, and their preference: "a cultural logic that defines them as 'dumb,' as lacking the ability to express themselves" and most dangerously

as “lacking any self to express” (Smith 49). The “knowledge” generated is incidental to the “discursive reconfiguration of relationships between humans” and other animals. In actively diminishing the lobster’s sentience, the council neutralizes any discomfort a consumer may feel when witnessing a lobster display expressions of self. Even though the lobster behaves much as you or I would, we can privilege ourselves in registering the expressions as the mechanized reactions of an automata —objects to our subjects, and continue to confine and kill for gustatory pleasure.

The hub of Maine Lobster Festival’s dining tents is not a network of gas chambers, nor does “Consider the Lobster” suggest so. In referencing the unthinkable conceptualization and enactment of what took pace during the second world war, Wallace’s narrator frames the mechanized murder and masticating thoughtlessly taking place in Maine with a profound 20th century horror that has changed 21st century understandings of humanity and its definition. Genocide is the end result of an allegiance to one side of an arbitrary classification system such as Aryans/non-Aryans, Tutsi/Hutu, Muslim/Yazidi, Crusader-Christian/Indigenous or humans/nonhumans. Wallace’s persona and Ishmael can be interpreted as Eichmann-ish figures; the former has serious reservations about consuming other animals, but it never stops him from doing so. The latter has a deeply emotional —even spiritual— admiration for whales, but it never prevents his hunting of them. Ishmael admits there is genius and a lot of other qualities that would elevate the ethical merit in the sperm whale, as does Wallace with his elucidation of crustacean sensitivities. Considering their steadfast preference for whale hunting and the consumption of other animals, their “consciousness” of nonhuman suffering “degenerate[s] into idle chatter” (Adorna, *Prisms* 34). “As Eichmann told it,” writes Arendt, “the most potent factor

in the soothing of his own conscience was the simple fact that he could see no one, no one at all, who actually was against the Final Solution" (Arendt 116). She further explains how Eichmann was in now way important to the Nationalist Socialist German Worker's Party, and in observing the enthusiasm circulating between Hitler, Heydrich, Müller, the S.S and the Civil Service —all of which vied for "taking the lead in" the "'bloody' matters" responsible for exterminating millions of beings— Eichmann felt "free of all guilt" (114). A sense of a "Pontius Pilate feeling" overcame him; middle-manning execution allows one to circumvent having their "own thoughts on the matter." Melville and Wallace's narratives are dependent on the non-thinking inherent in one's complacency in manufacturing mass-violence, but weave their told and untold stories through a positioning of non-partisanship. When considering Eichmann's capacity to neither stop the daily slaughter surrounding him or stop his participation in its horrors, Arendt comments, "Who was he to judge? Who was he 'to have [his] own thoughts in this matter'? Well, he was neither the first nor the last to be ruined by modesty" (Arendt 114). One cannot allow their intuition, feelings, thoughts or judgement be ruined by modesty. To be moral amidst the banality of evil is an awkward, uncomfortable and resistant path when crewing the deck of the *Pequod* or enjoying local festivities and cuisine at the Maine Lobster Festival. Both narrators are swept in the currents of their socio-political norms, that the domination of those beneath one's hierarchal tier is normal, natural or necessary is effortlessly internalized —moral objections are mere afterthoughts and footnotes. But they are there, and Melville and Wallace imply that impending ecological —and, therefore humanitarian— disasters will not stay contained in the margins.

What both Arendt and Wallace underscore in their dramatically different journalistic objectives is that our society is inattentive to mundane courtesies. It seems, for the most part,

“we only pay attention when evil looms so large that” it begins to seep through the barrier that protects uncomfortable thoughts from spaces open to reflective modes of rationality (Young-Bruehl). Perhaps, the real evil —that plagues every consumer in every industrialized country— is disregarding all the compounding moments that allow evil to loom at all; “in every discourteous moment we add another brick to the castle of compassionless,” its apathetic composition mortared by an inability or unwillingness to think. Mass-violence against nonhuman animals can very much be explained by Arendt’s understanding of banality because it is “committed in a daily way, systemically, without being adequately named and opposed” (Butler). By calling crimes against humanity “banal,” Arendt highlights how easily crime can become acceptable, “routinised, and implemented without moral revulsion and political indignation and resistance.” The “failure to think is precisely the name of the crime that Eichmann commits” and, according to Arendt, the consequence “of non-thinking is genocidal, or certainly can be” (Butler). It appears we have the necessary empathetic faculty to overcome these practices of extreme evil, yet, not enough collective will or determination to do so. “Consider the Lobster” gestures towards the non-thinking propelled by the pretence that regulation thinks for us. In mapping the history of nonthinking and its place in Rockland, Maine, Wallace proposes we are proficient in the type of nonthinking of which lobsters are themselves accused. The article is an invitation to temptation, and an invitation to be critical of the the manipulated allegiance to a noxious set of laws, norms, or diets.

## Conclusion

### Ego non Baptizo te in Nomine Patris, sed in Nomine Diaboli

The banality of capitalism's evil helps write its reframing. "Consider the Lobster" demonstrates that consumers are easily conditioned to interpret grand-scale mastication as a form of a culinary tourism. What is left unseen, unsaid, and unconsidered allows for the boiling-alive of cetaceans to register as gourmet food in the psyche of your average North American. The vivid preference for life or escaping suffering which lobsters exhibit upon being thrown in boiling water is invisible; what matters to nonhuman animals disappears along with their bodies as they become absent referents floating in the political animal menagerie. The fulfilment of wealth, power, one's carnivorous virility, and gustatory pleasure are satisfactions capitalized by biopolitical agents who discursively prevent the protests of nonhuman animals echo past liminal spaces. This maneuver is integral to paving foundations for capitalist superstructures to be built on material, sentient or not. Similarly, Melville cuts into the capitalist nonthinking that harpooned cetaceans to a point of near extinction; the only reason whales still swim our present day seas is because the bulls-eye moved to petroleum. Generally, the central imaginary signification of the capitalist society is unlimited expansion of productive forces and the unlimited expansions of a rationalized domination over nature and over humans themselves (Castoriadis 28). Capitalism presents this as a rational pursuit. This pursuit plays a basic and important role in the maintenance of a capitalist society, yet it is completely irrational and arbitrary; "[c]apital must keep on producing more of itself in order to continue to be itself. This strange paradox is fundamentally, structurally imbalanced" (Morton, *Hyperobjects* 11). Disavowing the being of commodities while simultaneously feeding upon them is dependent on

a capitalist dialectic that rationalizes consumption through appetite. Wallace and Melville invite their readership to mine for logical answers deep into the pits of one's stomach, but capitalism's internal fallacy makes for a short crusade. In the belly of the *Pequod*'s try-works burns a "self-consuming misanthrope" (Melville 462). Like cooking the hand that feeds you, "once ignited, the whale supplies his own fuel and burns his own body" (462). This metaphor aptly surmises Timothy's Morton opinion of capitalism as genocide. He considers our capitalist mastery of all things nonhuman the 12,000 year murder-suicide project of the anthropocentric.[27] Our taste for dominion is leaving us with a dying planet, a self-destructive program that resembles a collective version of the Freudian death drive, which, of course, relays a dim prognosis for own species and most others. The ethical deliberation in harpooning a whale or boiling a lobster alive is part of an urgent conversation looming over us in the age of the anthropocene, and as our planet becomes less hospitable for each species it hosts, we must reflect on the aspects of human consciousness and culture that legitimize violence towards socially sanctioned inferiors. When one is asked to consider the whale or consider the lobster, one cannot help but consider their moral responsibility to nonhuman others, even if they would prefer not to.

Wallace and Melville stage what is out of sight; in illuminating the way oil is wrung out of the protective fat surrounding cetacean selves, or how 25,000 pounds of fresh lobster begins in the ocean and ends on styrofoam plates, consumers are made to consider their fiery participation in these horrors. Ishmael turns this consideration into a meditation, incense of ignited whale is

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[27] In "She Stood in Tears amid the Alien Corn: Thinking through Agrilogistics," Morton contends the adoption of agriculture has caused our geological era and its hastening towards Triassic climates; an acceleration that speeds ahead of most species' ability to adapt. Beginning 12,000 years ago, agriculture "transforms the earth into the human ready, domination-ready state" which reinforces Cartesian human/animal dichotomies by privileging human prosperity at the fatal expense of the plants and animals who get in the way of harvesting and slaughtering crops or livestock (30).

"horrible to inhale, and inhale you must, and not only that, but you must live in it for the time […] It smells like the day of judgement" (Melville 462). Absent referents lash out in revenge, as "whale-ship stokers'" pitch "hissing masses of blubber into the scalding pots" the fatty fires beneath curl "out of the doors to catch them by the feet […] To every pitch of the ship there was a pitch of the boiling oil, which seemed all eagerness to leap into their faces" (463). The fierce flames cast whale-workers as demonic labourers who narrate "unholy adventures" and "tales of terror told in words of mirth; as their uncivilized laughter fork" between the labour they exert and the silenced material they boil (Melville 463). In economic theory, the term "raw materials" denotes anything that enters the factory door; it does not discriminate among steel bolts, trees, or animals.

Like capitalism itself, the factory is not built to consider its inward workings or philosophies; it is constructed to churn profit, and the profit it generates materializes its expansion. Melville and Wallace's portrayal of such spaces convolute industrial capitalism with hell; they are tanks "freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and [the] burning [of] corpse[s], and plunging in the that blackness of darkness" so heinous that it seems "the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" —our own (Melville 463). The vast processing factories that Wallace and Melville explore —the killing, maiming and devouring of another— frame on either temporal end of the cooption of Fordist/Taylorist methodologies that originated in Chicago slaughterhouses and later supplied the blueprints for the systemic killing of millions during the second world war. The capital extracted from the death-machines erected on the *Pequod* and Rockland, Maine is hunted, consumed and spent in a type of Eichmann-esque thoughtlessness that kindles fires potent enough to burn hells on earth.

By granting whales and lobsters histories, interests, preference and capacities worth considering, *Moby-Dick* and "Consider the Lobster" effectively trouble the steadfast binaries between humans and other animals to help "imagine forms of cognitive justice that can free the imagination to create social justice" (Brydon 27). Perhaps, the essay and novel are apologetic expressions for the objectification inherent in the all-encompassing obsession of product, market value and commerce. It would appear Wallace and Melville wallow in capitalism's sea-sized appetite —understandably so. Eventually, no one is spared from its leviathan waves that blindly crush the foundation it swells, ebbs, flows and eventually storms away from. And, maybe, they are sorry for that.

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