MONSTROSITY AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH SEA LITERATURE

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DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I, Kelly Patricia Bushnell, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: ______________________________________

Date: ______________________________________

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores monsters and monstrosity in sea literature of the nineteenth century, particularly the period 1820-1883. In a period in which Britannia so thoroughly 'rules the waves', how does English literature depict potentially monstrous creatures which inhabit the depths beneath? I argue that the literary relationship between monstrosity and the sea plays out through the language and metaphor of the material culture and public exhibition of animals in Britain at this time, including traveling whales carcasses, menageries, the Crystal Palace, early aquaria, and the London Zoological Society. The control conferred by this culture of display, however, is undermined by frustrating hybrid creatures populating structurally hybrid texts which ultimately destabilise the organisation they are often intended to cement. Furthermore, the monstrous potential of the sea creature on display is that, instead of being the trophy it is intended to be, the caught creature is an anxious avatar of the *uncaught* or the *unseen*. Also 'on display' in these texts is the human capacity—even propensity—to do violence in wild spaces, and consequently to repatriate that violence back on the *terra firma* of the empire.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: BRITANNIA RULES THE WAVES, BUT WHAT CREATURES RULE THE DEPTHS?

The Whitsuntide holiday of 1878 saw a particularly busy Royal Aquarium exhibiting a white whale to the public:

> The Royal Aquarium was one of the few places of indoor amusement that did not suffer by the fine weather, and this success must be largely attributed to the attractions of the whale. *It was long since discovered that nothing is so fascinating to an English crowd as a sea-monster* […] The whale was visited by 36,000 people last week, and by great numbers yesterday […] The Aquarium invites also by the attraction of Professor Pepper, of the cuttle-fish which give sepia colour, and of M. Gautier, who paints in five minutes a landscape in oils which is given to the occupant of a certain lucky seat.[1]

Cashing in on the common knowledge that 'nothing is so fascinating to an English crowd as a sea-monster', the curators of the Royal Aquarium on Tothill Street in Westminster were on their second white whale by 1878. (The first, employed in 1877, was the victim of uneducated aquarists and was one day found dead, being nibbled upon by the eels with which it shared a tank.) Marine life was just one facet of the Royal Aquarium, opened in 1876 and envisioned as a complex for art and entertainment of various sorts. The aquarium theatre put on productions of 'School for Scandal' and WS Gilbert's adaptation of *Great Expectations*, among others before it was demolished in 1906 after a general failure to keep animals in the tanks, accusations of impropriety, unescorted ladies after dark, and increasingly seedy attractions such as the tattooed American woman exhibited in the front hall.[2] This

[1] *The Times*, 11 June, 1878; p. 8, Issue 29278 (emphasis mine).

[2] John Sands, 'Sullivan and the Royal Aquarium' (*The Gilbert and Sullivan Archive*, Boise State University, 2011). Erroll Sherson also writes of the aquarium in 1925, 'The Royal Aquarium, in short, was intended to be a sort of Crystal Palace in London within easy reach of Charing Cross, a covered-in promenade for the wet weather, with the glass cases of live fish thrown in. In truth, the attractions of the place soon began to be very "fishy" indeed. Ladies promenaded there up and down without the escort of any gentleman friend (till, maybe, they found one) and the appeal of the management to sensation lovers was very wide indeed. Bare-backed ladies dived from the roof or were shot out of a

intentional mixing of science and entertainment, high- and low-brow exhibitionism, speaks to the paradoxical fetishization and domestication of the sea monster in the nineteenth century.

Philip Henry Gosse's *Romance of Natural History* talks of 'the great unknown' as sea monsters and their ilk. Even a cursory browse through the nineteenth-century periodical databases for the term 'sea monster' yields thousands of results. Of the 'traditional' 'sea monsters' perhaps the sea serpent springs first to mind, and there are indeed many accounts of encounters with such creatures. On 3 December 1808, for instance, the *Caledonian Mercury* reported a sixty-foot 'sea snake' found rotting on a beach in Orkney and pronounced the sea serpent 'no longer a fable'.[3] The animal had the 'girth about that of an Orkney pony' as well a 'silvery coloured mane', 'two spout-holes', and 'fins, or rather paws, each five feet from the body'. After this report, the writer asked, 'who will pronounce the Kraken entirely fabulous?' Whales, often portrayed as monstrous rather than the gentle giants of today, comprise a significant portion of the beached 'sea monsters' of the nineteenth century— particularly as their corpses became tourist attractions. Anything with tentacles captivated the market for 'sea monsters' as well, and the London papers meticulously reported a rash of giant squid beachings and reported attacks in Newfoundland in the 1870s. In the 1820s and 1830s Wombwell's Menagerie toured Britain with a 'polar sea monster' among his lions and tigers, which was probably a leopard seal. The *York Herald* remarked of Wombwell's 'monster': 'The enormous animals, the great sea monsters, is the largest we remember to have seen, and arduous must have been the seaman's task to capture such a powerful opponent, in his

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cannon, or sat in a cage covered with hair and calling themselves 'Missing Links'. Zulus, Gorillas, Fasting Humans, Boxing Humans and Boxing Kangaroos, succeeded one another in rapid changes, and failed in time to attract' (Erroll Sherson, *London's Lost Theatres of the Nineteenth Century* (London: John Lane, 1925), p.297).

[3] *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Scotland), Saturday, 3 December 1808, Issue 13568.

unfriendly clime' (Figure 1 shows an advertisement of the menagerie's visit to Sheffield).[4]

WOMBWELL'S

IMMENSE MENAGERIE.

Mr. G. WOMBWELL

MOST respectfully announces to the Inhabitants of Sheffield and its Vicinity, that he has arrived with his truly valuable and varied Collection of the Animal Kingdom, the equal of which has never been seen since the great Collection in Noah's Ark. The Menagerie will on this occasion be found to contain the greatest Exotics ever witnessed; including the

THREE ELEPHANTS;

The CHITTAH, or Hunting Tiger of India, the only one ever exhibited in England. Also the identical

ARCTIC OR POLAR SEA MONSTER,

Brought to England by the celebrated CAPTAIN ROSS. Together with the endless varieties of the Feline, Canine, Granivorous, Herbeverous, and Ruminating Classes; likewise the most ample and varied Aviary of Foreign BIRDS ever seen travelling, from the stupendous Ostrich in Full Plumage, standing ten feet high, to the smallest class of the Feathered Creation.

N.B.—The Collection is open from Half-past Nine in the Morning till Half-past Nine at Night.—For particulars see Bills.

Figure 1. ***Sheffield Independent, and Yorkshire and Derbyshire Advertiser*** **(Sheffield, England), Saturday, 30 November 1833.**

[4] *York Herald, and General Advertiser* (York, England), Saturday, 19 January 1839.

‘Sea monsters’ also took the form of the recognisable (sharks, seals, porpoises, reptiles, swordfish, sunfish, sturgeon); the humanoid (sirens, mermaids, and mermen); and the ambiguous (devil-fish or sea-devils, a dogfish with actual legs of a dog, unidentifiable masses of slime, and those just called ‘sea monster’ without further description). The arts and humanities were inextricable from the obsession with the monstrous creatures of sea, however indefinite their forms. JMW Turner’s 1845 ‘Sunrise with Sea Monsters’ (Figure 2) gives little indication what *sort* of monsters lurk in Turner’s ochre sea. And though it was not exhibited in his lifetime, Turner’s watercolour sketch ‘Sea Monsters and Vessels at Sunset’ (Figure 3) shows his interest in the form (rather, formlessness) of representing monstrous creatures of the sea. In ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’, of course, ‘slimy things […] crawl with legs | Upon the slimy sea’, and there is definitely a slimy (that is: ungraspable) quality to many nineteenth-century depictions of ‘monstrous’ sea creatures. What—or whom—is portrayed as monstrous in maritime literature following nineteenth-century conventions of monstrosity? What is the role of sea creatures in nineteenth century literature and why, in spite of their ambiguity, is their monstrosity communicated in such *material* terms? As British ships so thoroughly ‘ruled the waves’ in the nineteenth century, the texts studied in this thesis pay critical attention to the creatures *beneath* those waves, violently destabilising the boundaries between human and nonhuman, domesticity and wildness, order and chaos.

Figure 2. JMW Turner, ‘Sunrise with Sea Monsters’ (1845), Tate Britain.

Figure 3. JMW Turner, ‘Sea Monsters and Vessels at Sunset’ (c. 1845), Turner’s ‘Whalers Sketchbook’, Tate Britain.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

My aim has been to take a view of the nineteenth century which traces depictions of monstrosity in different literary modes of the maritime. This study focuses on two novels (*Fighting the Whales* (Chapter 2) and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Chapter 5)), two poems ('The Kraken' (Chapter 3) and 'A Vision of the Sea' (Chapter 4)) and one body of exhibition literature (Chapter 6). The five central texts were published between 1820 and 1884; however, the timelines therein are often less easy to plot (for instance, *Fighting the Whales* is set decades earlier, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* is set eleven years before its publication, and the use of time in 'The Kraken' is intentionally vague). For these temporal and thematic reasons, texts are not presented chronologically but in an order in which they might interact with one another in interesting ways. The two pre-Victorian texts, 'A Vision of the Sea' and 'The Kraken' will especially be read with consideration for how they would have been read and interpreted as the nineteenth century progressed.

These issues of form and time contributed to my choice of primary texts. RM Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales* (1863) provides an opportunity to look at a critically neglected author and novel which, in its often-stereotypical Victorian imperialism, provides a baseline for reading the nineteenth century sea and its creatures in other nineteenth-century texts. Tennyson's 'The Kraken' (1830) is a rare sort of poem which deals, literally and figuratively, with a monstrous sea creature on the surface, and ensured that Victorian discourse about monstrous sea creatures thereafter was often conducted in literary terms. 'A Vision of the Sea' (1820) and *Pym* (1838) both portray shipwrecks, animals, and monstrosity at sea. Shelley's 'Vision' is a peculiar poem which imagines the oceanic passage of the exotic animals

on display throughout England in the nineteenth century. I have also chosen to include Edgar Allan Poe's only novel in this thesis because, though American, Poe spent some of his formative years in London and the maritime world he imagines is largely British, draws on British sources, and the novel was widely read in Britain. The final chapter of this thesis considers the literature published by the 'Literary Department' of the International Fisheries Exhibition held in London in 1883, on which there has never been any scholarship. The Exhibition publications' particularly literary nature—and material rendering of maritime monstrosity for the public to see—provides an ideal final chapter to reflect on the preceding century and push the generic boundaries of what literary studies might be able to do with historiography and historical scientific texts. Supporting literary texts include *Bleak House*, *Frankenstein,* and Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* as well as periodicals and newspapers. This thesis also relies heavily on nineteenth-century visual and material culture as supporting primary sources, including paintings and taxidermy.

1.2 CRITICAL CONTEXTS

This thesis also grew out of a desire to see a critical study of the sea situated within nineteenth century studies' growing presence in ecocritical literary conversations. The critical gap that exists here is twofold: there is neither much Victorian ecocriticism nor marine ecocriticism, and certainly little overlap between the two. This section will establish relevant terminology and situate this project within today's critical discussions by interrogating current blind spots in the discourse on the sea in the nineteenth century (Where is the sea in ecocriticism? Where is the sea in animal studies? Where is the sea in monster theory?), concluding with critical overviews of

nineteenth-century *material* ecocriticism and hybridities, respectively, to foreground the important thematic arguments of this project.

1.2.1 Ecocriticism and/or animal studies?

First, it is important to outline the theoretical differences between the fields of ecocriticism and animal studies as they stand today. Though animal studies is often mistaken for a sub-field of ecocriticism (and indeed shares many of ecocriticism's core concerns), it has developed independently. Philip Armstrong, Graham Huggan, Helen Tiffin, and John Miller have been especially adept at expressing the complex relationship between the two fields. Miller has noted the generally 'different set of ethical priorities' between ecocriticism and animal studies; whereas both generally aim to reject anthropocentrism, this often manifests in profoundly different and sometimes contradictory ways, as the ecocritical agenda of sustainability can be at odds with the animal liberationist objective of animal studies.[5] The animal studies scholar's fundamental moral consideration is the treatment of the nonhuman animal, and while the ecocritic naturally takes animals on board as part of the environment, they are more focused on the health of the environment as a whole. Therefore they may be, for instance, in favour of indigenous subsistence hunting or the culling of a species in order to protect the environment at large (while the animal studies scholar will reject harming animals for any reason).

This study, and studies of the sea in general, must then allow space for both ecocritical and animal studies approaches, as the study of sea creatures is unique in

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[5] Philip Armstrong, 'What Animals Mean, in Moby-Dick, for Example,' *Textual Practice* 19.1 (2005), 93-111; Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 1-24, 134-147; John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body: Violence, Identity and Ecology in Victorian Adventure Fiction* (London and New York: Anthem, 2012), p. 16.

that it is inextricable from critical perspectives on the aquatic environment. Paying attention to the way ecocritical and animal studies modes work with and against each other will, I hope, yield a richer understanding of these texts and of nineteenth-century portrayals the ocean. I will thus approach depictions of the sea itself from an ecocritical perspective, and I have chosen to delineate this thesis's animal studies component as closer to *zoocriticism*, a term coined by Huggan and Tiffin and defined succinctly by Miller as 'the specifically literary aspect of animal studies' which 'forms a closer counterpart to ecocriticism than the broader disciplinary sweep' of other types of animal studies, such as those that focus solely on legal advocacy and liberation.[6] Miller reminds us that in literature 'engagement with wild beasts is an inevitable part of the hero's sojourn in far-flung, flourishing bio-regions' and also observes that 'problematically for environmentalist assessments of imperial romance, the hero's encounter with animals is generally structured around violence [...] Indeed, violence against animals appears inscribed in the narrative expectations of the form'.[7] This study looks particularly at monstrosity and at nonhuman animals' perceived capacity for violence; however, this project will show time and again that also 'on display' is the *human* animal's capacity (even propensity) to do violence in wild and monstrous spaces, and to repatriate that violence in different forms (upon the environment and nonhuman animals) back in Britain.

1.2.2 WHERE IS THE SEA IN ECOCRITICISM?

The past two decades have seen the study of the maritime flourish in nineteenth-century literary studies. Howard Isham has used the term 'oceanic consciousness' to describe the 'profusion of sea imagery and oceanic metaphor' during the nineteenth

[6] Miller, p. 31.
[7] Ibid.

century, and Samuel Baker has argued that the Lake Poets 'invented the idea of "culture"' in the early nineteenth century (a 'period of maximal concern with maritime affairs') by 'framing their picture of human life as a whole within the horizon of a common experience of the sea'.[8] Margaret Cohen has looked specifically at maritime novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[9] as well as developing six 'Chronotopes of the Sea' (after Bakhtin) which categorise maritime literary sub-environments as: blue water (out of sight of land), brown water (rivers and estuaries), white water (rapids and waves), island, shore, or ship.[10] Ursula Kluwick and Virginia Richter have recently focused on the chronotope of the shore as a contact zone between land and sea (though not exclusively in the nineteenth century),[11] and Cesare Casarino addresses the chronotope of the ship as a 'microcosm of society' and a 'self-sufficient narrative ecosystem'.[12] Neil Rennie, Jonathan Lamb, and Vanessa Smith have been particularly instrumental in studies of the South Seas as unique maritime space and John Peck, Bernard Klein, and Gesa Mackenthun have produced the first collections of critical essays which address the sea in the literature of the long nineteenth century. The future is looking promising as well: Andrew Nash has recently published on the long-neglected Victorian nautical novelist William Clark Russell[13] and Matthew Kerr's forthcoming monograph on sea language in the

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[8] Simon Baker, *Written on the water: British romanticism and the maritime empire of culture* (Charlottesville ; London, University of Virginia Press, 2010), pp. ix-3.
[9] Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2001).
[10] Margaret Cohen, 'The Chronotopes of the Sea', *The Novel: Volume 2, Forms and Themes*, ed. by Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 647-666.
[11] Ursula Kluwick and Virginia Richter. *The Beach in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures: Reading Littoral Space* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016).
[12] Cesare Casarino, *Modernity at Sea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 28.
[13] *William Clark Russell and the Victorian Nautical Novel: Gender, Genre, and Marketplace* (Pickering and Chatto, 2014).

nineteenth-century novel argues that the 'vagueness of sea writing offers a useful paradigm for thinking about literary language itself'.[14]

Most famously, Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* and *The Song of the Earth* take on British Romanticism as ecopoetics and, in so doing, provide some of the first and most enduring 'literary ecocriticism'.[15] This sense of the ecocritical, mostly vested in the pastoral and georgic depictions of the turn of the nineteenth century, has not necessarily continued into Victorian studies. Jesse Oak Taylor has only recently asked, 'Where is Victorian Ecocriticism?' in the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, remarking 'the striking thing about Victorian ecocriticism is that there is so little of it'.[16] This is changing (with fascinating new titles like Allen MacDuffie's *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination*[17]), with the notable exception of Francis O'Gorman's chapter on 'Victorian literature and the natural world' in Kate Flint's 2012 *Cambridge History of Victorian Literature*. O'Gorman notes that 'more ample considerations of fantastic scenes were to be found among writers who tested the limits of their imaginations in escaping from the knowable world of visible nature. They envisaged nature's hidden sides or they left the terrestrial behind altogether'.[18] He pays attention to writers for whom 'the bottom of the sea was alluring', such as Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* in which 'that world, in its deepest identity,

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[14] Kerr's description, via his website: http://www.southampton.ac.uk/english/about/staff/mpk1g15.page.
[15] Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 2.
[16] Jesse Oak Taylor, 'Where is Victorian Ecocriticism?' *Victorian Literature and Culture* 43.4 (2015), 877-894, (p. 877).
[17] Allen MacDuffie, *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014).
[18]Frances O'Gorman, 'The Rural Scene: Victorian Literature and the Natural World', *The New Cambridge History of English Literature: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Kate Flint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 532-49, (p. 547).

was remorselessly vicious, its violent competitions no less unsettling because it happened underwater'.[19]

Daniel Brayton has pointed out this 'terrestrial bias' in ecocriticism at large, and fellow early modernist Steve Mentz has been particularly important to the development of the 'blue' turn in green studies.[20] 'Pining for the green solidarity of land', Mentz argues, 'ecocriticism has largely failed to develop models for encountering blue oceans'.[21] In his groundbreaking monograph on Shakespeare's use of oceanic imagery Mentz calls for a 'blue ecocriticism' or 'blue cultural studies', writing that 'we need a poetic history of the oceans'.[22] This thesis aims to make some inroads into a 'blue' nineteenth-century ecocriticism which charts changing depictions of the sea in this period by studying the human and nonhuman animals present in these texts and their monstrosities.

1.2.3 Where is the sea in animal studies (zoocriticism)?

Ecocriticism often attends to the tension between the pastoral and the wilderness, the latter being a point of overlap for ecocritics and animal studies because an inextricable component of wilderness is the potential monsters therein. Ecocritic Greg Garrard reminds us that 'wilderness' comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wilddeoren*, where '*deoren*' (beasts) 'existed beyond the boundaries of cultivation'.[23] The sea is a prime setting for interrogating beasts beyond the cultivation, control, understanding,

[19] Ibid., p. 540.
[20] Steve Mentz, *Shakespeare's Ocean*, p. xi. He uses the term 'new thalassology' for 'rewriting the cultural history of the sea'.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. x.
[23] Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), p. 66-67.

and comfort of man after—as Byron famously writes— 'our control | Stops at the shore'.[24]

Claude Levi-Strauss, redirecting the notion that animals are 'good to eat', asserts in *Totemism* that animals are 'good to think [with]'. Drawing on *Totemism* and other theoretical work by Jacques Derrida ('The Animal That Therefore I Am'), Donna Haraway (*When Species Meet*), Mary Midgley (*Animals and Why They Matter*), John Berger ('Why Look at Animals?'), and others, the past decade in particular has seen an explosion of scholarly interest in the historical study of animals.[25] Literary scholars have been particularly integral to animal studies, and Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's helpful term *zoocriticism* (as outlined in 1.2.1) provides a way to signal that this project's animal studies practice is grounded in literary analysis.

Nineteenth-century literary studies has taken a special interest in the nonhuman animal: Christina Kenyon-Jones's *Kindred Brutes* focuses on Romantic animals, Philip Armstrong has considered *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, Kurt Koenigsberger has considered *The Novel and the Menagerie*, and Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin Danahay edited a 2007 collection on 'Victorian Animal Dreams' (*Representation of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture*).[26] Historians and historical geographers have helped to map the landscape of

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[24] Georg Gordon, Lord Byron, 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' (CLXXIX), *The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[25] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Totemism,* trans. by Rodney Needham (London: Merlin Press, 1964)*;* Jacques Derrida, 'The Animal That Therefore I Am', *Critical Inquiry* 28.2 (2002), 369-418; Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998); John Berger, 'Why Look at Animals?' (London: Penguin, 2009); and the British Animal Studies Network (BASN), which conducts regular symposia around themes such as 'Smelling', 'Tasting', and 'Conserving'.

[26] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*. (Burlington, VT and Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2001); Philip Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); Kurt Koenigsberger, *The Novel and the Menagerie: Totality, Englishness, and Empire* (Cincinnati: Ohio State University Press, 2007); Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin Danahay,

animals in the nineteenth century, including Ann Colley's excellent recent monograph *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain* (which takes the skin as a site of imperial encounter) and Harriet Ritvo's *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*.[27] Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert encourage scholars to question the 'agency of animals, and the extent to which we can say that animals destabilise, transgress, or even resist our human orderings, including spatial ones',[28] and an important spatial strain of this new discipline is the study of the display of live and dead animals in nineteenth-century Britain as material culture. An early contribution to this field was RJ Homage and William A. Deiss's edited collection on *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century*, and more recent contributions have come from Merle Patchett's 2010 thesis at the University of Glasgow, and Christopher's Plumb's 2010 thesis at the University of Manchester which has recently been published as a monograph called *The Georgian Menagerie*.[29]

A recent debate within the study of nineteenth-century animals on display has seen Ann Colley respond to Harriet Ritvo's more totalising concept of display in relation to empire. Though Colley agrees that it is sometimes accurate that 'a caged lion, a skinned tiger, or a stuffed gorilla displayed in nineteenth-century menageries and museums did serve as tangible proof of Britain's mastery abroad' she argues that this is an oversimplification which is 'ultimately insensitive to the actual experiences

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Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture (Burlington, Vermont and Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2007).

[27] Ann C. Colley, *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain* (Burlington, VT and Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014); Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[28] Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relationships* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 5.

[29] RJ Homage and William A. Deiss, *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Merle Patchett, 'Putting Animals on Display: Geographies of Taxidermy Practice'; Christopher Plumb, *The Georgian Menagerie* (London: IB Taurus, 2015).

of amassing foreign specimens' and 'fails to acknowledge the messiness of empire'.[30] Colley 'corrects the received belief that when amassing and arranging these spoils, the British exercised control over foreign territories' as 'accounts written by Victorian travellers, hunters, and agents demonstrate that the opposite was true: mastery was rarely realised'. The strain of this thesis which takes up monstrous maritime hybridities will agree with Colley's assessment of the ontological 'messiness' of displaying animals in Victorian Britain.

With the whale-sized exception of *Moby-Dick* animal studies has not generally extended its reach to creatures of the sea, and certainly not in the nineteenth century. Scholars such as Philip Armstrong have considered the natural and cultural history of Melville's whale; however, due to the particularly American and singular nature of Melville's novel, it has not seemed advisable for this project to build theories about Moby Dick into criticism of other sea creatures, particularly in non-American literatures. Rebecca Stott has looked at representations of aquarium colonies in the nineteenth century, and Ritvo's *The Platypus and the Mermaid* keeps those creatures instead in their terrestrial contexts and afterlives. This thesis hopes to help establish a 'blue' (to borrow the ecocritical adjective) zoocriticism, both in the nineteenth century and in literary studies in general, which has yet to make an organised effort toward getting below the surface to view literary sea creatures as more than a screen (on which to anthropocentrically view human life.[31]

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[30] Colley, pp. 49-50.

[31] An important facet of both ecocriticism and zoocriticism in nineteenth-century literary studies is an understanding of developments in postcolonial studies. Huggan and Tiffin's *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* and Philip Armstrong's *The Postcolonial Animal* have been integral to this field. While Huggan and Tiffin have observed that postcolonial theory has in the past been 'routinely, and at times, unthinkingly, anthropocentric' (p. 17), Armstrong has also rightly worried that 'pursuing an interest in the postcolonial animal risks trivialising the suffering of human beings under colonialism' (*The Postcolonial Animal,* p. 413). Most recently, John Miller's *Empire and the Animal Body* has applied these theories to animals in Victorian adventure fiction in a critical way which does justice both to the agency of animals and to the sufferings of the colonised. Though this thesis is not an intentionally postcolonial study, the colonial underpinnings of several of the primary texts studies here must not be

1.2.4 Where is the sea in monster theory?

When Ann Colley describes Victorian efforts to apply constantly shifting taxonomies to the live and dead animal specimens from the empire, she argues that scientists 'were surrounded by a disorder which, in spite of their pains to categorise their specimens, ruined their efforts time after time'.[32] This category crisis is where the monstrous is brought to bear upon nineteenth-century ecocritical studies of sea creatures, as Jeffrey Cohen argues: 'The monster is best understood as an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category, and a resistant Other known only through process and movement, never through dissection-table analysis'.[33] Cohen's *Monster Theory: Reading Culture,* a 1996 collection of essays which he introduces with his 'Seven Theses About Monster Culture', has become the discipline-defining text. Cohen advocates a new *modus legendi,* 'a method of reading cultures from the monsters they engender', and this thesis aims to accept the challenge to read nineteenth-century Britain through the monsters engendered by some of its maritime literatures. [34]

Cohen reminds us that at the heart of 'monster' is *monstrum*: 'that which reveals' or 'that which warns'.[35] ('They ask us why we have created them.' [36]) What do real and unreal 'monsters' such the whale, the Kraken, or the shark 'reveal' about nineteenth-century Britain (without falling into the reductive anthropocentric discourse of the 'screen' against which Phillip Armstrong cautions us)? Other aspects of Cohen's 'Theses' which figure strongly in my analysis are that the monster is an

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ignored. (For instance, I will argue that 'A Vision of the Sea' (1820) is an Orientalised account of a colonial transaction of bringing animals to England from Asia.) Postcolonial eco- and zoocriticism could also benefit from engagement with the sea. This thesis aims to take a more generally eco- and zoocritical view of the sea in the nineteenth century, engaging the postcolonial where appropriate.

[32] Colley, p. 50.

[33] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. x.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., p. 4.

[36] Ibid., p. 20.

'embodiment of a certain cultural moment', a 'harbinger of category crisis', and his monsters warn that to 'step outside [one's] official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself', an argument in some ways anticipated by Nietzsche's aphorism to 'Battle not with monsters, lest ye become a monster'.[37] In this thesis's emphasis on the culture of display surrounding these maritime monsters, I point out the materialisation of Cohen's argument that the 'fear of the monster is really a kind of desire' in that the 'simultaneous repulsion and attraction at the core of the monster's composition accounts greatly for its continued cultural popularity'.[38]

Nineteenth-century monsters were often bound up with the emergent discipline of geology (today called palaeontology), as Adelene Buckland, Susan Shatto, Ralph O'Connor, and Martin JS Rudwick in particular have shown.[39] No survey or specific critical work exists on the topic of 'monstrous' nineteenth-century sea creatures, and certainly no book-length treatment. Rebecca Stott's 'Through a Glass Darkly: Aquarium Colonies and Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Marine Monstrosity' looks at the smallest monsters domesticated in the aquarium, and Harriet Ritvo briefly mentions monstrous sea creatures in *The Mermaid and the Platypus,* remarking:

> If the rapid exploration of the globe made it increasingly difficult to imagine a terrestrial habitat for creatures that defied the established laws of nature… the ocean remained an unplumbed mystery. For most of the Victorian period, therefore, the liminal creatures of choice were the kraken and, especially, the sea serpent.[40]

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[37] Ibid., pp. 4-12; Friedrich Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. by Michael Tanner, trans. by RJ Hollingdale (New York and London: Penguin, 2003).
[38] Ibid., p. 17.
[39] Adelene Buckland, 'The Poetry of Science: Charles Dickens, Geology, and Visual and Material Culture in Victorian London', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35.2 (2007), 679-94.; Susan Shatto, 'Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, and the Monstrous Efts', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 6 (1976), 144-55.; Ralph O'Connor, *The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science, 1802-1856* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).; Martin JS Rudwick, *Scenes from Deep Time: Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[40] Ritvo, *Platypus,* p. 182-83.

When Margaret Cohen outlines the 'blue water' chronotope she writes that

> In Bakhtin's chronotope of the road, events have the plausibility of actual social existence, but the unthinkable is the limit for the open sea. This is the case from antiquity to the twentieth century, whether the encounter is with the enchanted monsters of *The Odyssey* and the haphazard marauders of classical romance, or with natural monsters that cross the boundaries of species in the disenchanted world of the modern novel, like the vengeful white whale of *Moby Dick* endowed with almost human psychology, or the prototype of *'l'informe*, the demonic octopus in Hugo's *Les travailleurs de la mer*[41]

The literary chronotope of the 'blue water', or open ocean, is thus marked by glorious, terrifying, boundary-breaking monsters. This thesis will show the anxiety about those creatures plays out in intensely material ways in Britain and its empire in the nineteenth century.

1.2.5 Material culture and material ecocriticism

When I set out to look at the portrayal of 'monstrous' creatures at sea in the nineteenth century, the trend which emerged was a reliance on the language of and allusions to British popular material culture. Victorian studies is already well-versed in interdisciplinary material culture studies, and ecocriticism has taken its 'material turn' in the past several years with more sustained scholarship in material ecocriticism (or 'ecomaterialism'). For the most part, however, both Victorian and ecocritical studies of material culture have excluded studies of the sea.[42]

The sea is a prime location for this encounter between the theoretical and the material in the nineteenth century because of the myriad ways in which public and private actors used *things* to try to domesticate the literally and figuratively unfathomable sea, exemplified by traveling whale carcasses, marine fossils, sea shore collecting, and the Victorian aquarium craze. These live and dead animal

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[41] Cohen, 'Chronotopes', p. 651.

[42] Though not explicitly concerned with the nineteenth century, hopefully the ecomaterialist critic Stacy Alaimo's book in progress, *Composing Blue Ecologies: Science, Aesthetics, and Creatures of the Abyss,* will provide valuable templates for historical study of sea creatures, and I will be interested to see how/if she addresses debates between ecocriticism and animal studies.

commodities were part of a cultural structure with careful interpretive management, yet they also provided encounters which were fraught with the possibility of attack, of rupture, and of monstrosity in its many forms.

Material culture studies might also be a place where ecocriticism and animal studies overlap more effectively, as both fields push back against the often-violent removal of agency in reducing anything—animal, vegetable, mineral—into an objectified 'specimen' to be anthropocentrically displayed. I will argue that these specimens did assert a sort of literary agency by resisting the control implied by their display (the 'management' in *menagerie*), by complicating categorisation to the point of chaos. Some of the material culture items this thesis explores are: the ship's barometer (and the microscope as a sort of corollary); the elaborately manufactured physical spaces in which live animals were displayed; dead specimens in their physical display contexts (and, to a lesser extent, dead animals as decoration); the fire-forged products of industrialisation to which I argue the whaleship's try-works functions as corollary; and the more widely-studied material culture of fossil geology in the nineteenth century. This thesis will in part take up geology, as its Victorian practitioners so often conflated the contemporary deep sea with 'deep time' and, as Adelene Buckland argues, Victorian geology's 'proliferating material cultures were not so much focused on the unravelling of a long-dead past, as on shaping the geological, social and political contours of the world the Victorians inhabited in the present'.[43] In the works of Thomas Hardy and the scientist Gideon Mantell, Buckland writes, science 'does not simply produce ahistorical laws, or incontrovertible patterns, by which experience may be interpreted. In its interpretation of the material objects

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[43] Buckland, p. 21.

of the natural world it also intervenes in the historical, contingent, politically-motivated concerns of the present'.[44]

1.2.6 Hybridities

Hybridity—especially of the wild and domestic—has also emerged as a cornerstone of material maritime monstrosity. The control conferred by the culture of display in the nineteenth century was often undermined by frustrating hybrid creatures populating structurally hybrid maritime texts. This section will briefly foreground some of the historiography and criticism relevant to the hybridities (that is, multiple forms of hybridity) at play in the primary texts of this thesis.

Literally, a hybrid is 'offspring of two animals or plants of different species or (less strictly) varieties; a half-breed, cross-breed, or mongrel'.[45] According to Robert Young, *hybrid* is 'the nineteenth century's word'. [46]JV Prichard's 1778 *Natural History of Man* engaged in 'briefly surveying the phenomena of hybridity', and biological hybridity was a common topic of scientific discourse.[47] In the figurative sense, a hybrid can also be 'anything derived from heterogeneous sources, or composed of different or incongruous elements' or 'having mixed character' or 'composed of diverse elements'.[48]

Hybridity is also a category of significant theoretical importance. Bakhtin discusses 'linguistic hybridity' and the 'double voiced'.[49] Cohen observes in *Monster*

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[44] Ibid, p. 22.
[45] *OED*.
[46] Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 6. And from the *OED*: the word *hybrid* 'was scarcely used until the nineteenth century'.
[47] Prichard, p. 12. Also referenced in OED 'hybridity'.
[48] *OED*. Including the temporal, as in Henry Hallam's introduction to the literature of Europe in the fifteen through seventeenth centuries (1st ed. 1838): 'The historians use a hybrid jargon intermixed with modern words' (I.i.103).
[49] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009).

Theory that a monster is a 'harbinger of category crisis', and that 'this refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration [...] In the face of the monster, scientific inquiry and its ordered rationality crumble'.[50]

More specific critical work on nineteenth-century hybridities includes Sarah Whatmore's *Hybrid Geographies*, Harriet Ritvo's *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, and UC Knoepflmacher and Logan Browning's edited collection of essays, *Victorian Hybridities*, which provides the most diverse view of the phenomenon of Victorianist scholarship on hybridity.[51] Cohen's material (even anatomical) defiance of 'systematic structuration' on the part of the monster also echoes postcolonial studies' interest in hybridity, which focuses on sites of imperial encounter with indigenous cultures who are too often portrayed as monsters (then erased entirely or else subsumed by the hegemon's culture).

'Real' Victorian hybrids abounded. Hybridity was central to Darwin and to nineteenth-century biological thought *in toto*.[52] It would also have been a tangible idea for the Victorian public across multiple classes, who might see such a creature (live, preserved, or somehow represented) at menageries, zoological gardens, animal freak shows, or in the pages of periodicals and books or advertisements. In addition to real hybrid creatures, Harriet Ritvo notes that 'nineteenth-century readers were

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[50] Cohen, *Monster Theory,* pp. 6-7.

[51] Sarah Whatmore, *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures, Spaces* (London: Sage, 2002); Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997); UC Knoepflmacher and Logan Browning, *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[52] Charles Darwin's letters prove an example of the free usage of the term in its various forms; he writes in 1837 of his 'closest examination of hybridity', of spending 'three whole months on one chapter [of 'Origin of Species'] on Hybridism', and addressing a friend: 'I will tell what you are, a hybrid, a complex cross of lawyer, poet, naturalist, and theologian!' From *Life and Letters* not published until 1887, these entries found at II.8, II.10, and II.33, respectively; also referenced in *OED* 'hybridity', 'hybridism', and 'hybrid', respectively.

assured of the existence' of a variety of implausible-sounding hybrids (noting that 'scepticism was hardly the invariable rule in such matters').[53] The platypus is a docile, naturally-occurring example, exhibited widely (live and preserved), whose eighteenth-century discoverers 'tentatively described [it] as an amalgam of bird, reptile, and mammal, [continuing] a Renaissance habit of interpreting American novelties as monstrous recombinisations of familiar parts, analogous to the chimaeras and tales of medieval bestiaries'.[54]

'The Keeper's Nightmare', which appeared in *Punch in 1871*, nicely emblemises Victorian anxieties about hybridity. (The caption reads: 'One of the officials at the Zoological Gardens has a bewildering nightmare. He dreams that all the animals have broken loose and swapped heads, and he doesn't know "which to feed with what."') Perhaps the most famous examples of Victorian wild beast hybridity on public display were the 'lion-tigers' of the Thomas Atkins' menagerie and the Liverpool Zoological Garden in the 1820s and 1830s. The mating of Atkins' prised lion and tiger was at first unintended (they shared an enclosure) but quickly capitalised upon and encouraged, and the pair had a total of six cubs. The *Visitor's Handbook to the Liverpool Zoological Garden* puts plainly and unabashedly what the man-made hybrid signals for Britain's quickly-expanding geographic and scientific empire, attesting that the lion-tiger cubs prove that 'under the dominion of man even the most savage spirits might be subdued'.[55]

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[53] Ritvo, *Platypus*, p. 132.
[54] Ibid.
[55] *Visitor's Handbook to the Liverpool Zoological Garden,* as quoted in Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 237.

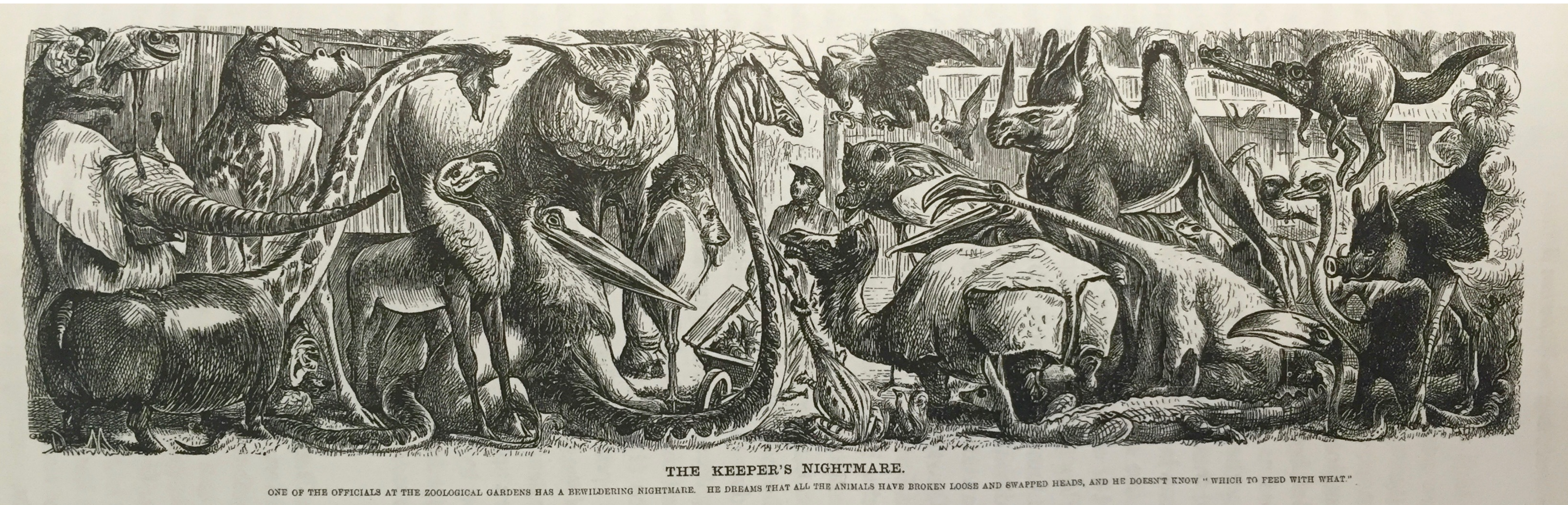

Figure 4. 'The Keeper's Nightmare', from *Punch*'s 1871 'Almanack'.

'Real' hybrid creatures were in zoos and menageries, but art and literature provided a space to be particularly liberal in assembling hybrids. As UC Knoepfelmacher observes: 'Victorian writers not only addressed hybridity as a subject but also incarnated it through a great variety of blended forms and discursive mixtures'.[56] The hybrid creatures in this thesis are preceded by the Yahoos and Houyhnhnms whom Gulliver meets, by Matthew Rowlandson's human-animal hybrid caricatures, and of course the 'new species' to emerge from Victor Frankenstein's 'workshop of filthy creation'. In the realm of the solidly Victorian are Rochester's 'embruted partner' Bertha Mason (a 'clothed hyena' who 'snatched and growled like some wild animal'),[57] the undead hybrid count Dracula, and those 'beast-folk' created by the eponymous vivisector of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, including the ape-man and the puma-woman who eventually kills him. Victorian literature and lore of the sea often trades on the hybrid. *Frankenstein* is framed by a polar sea narrative, *Dracula* begins at sea, and the maritime genre abounds with miscegenated monsters, including those who dwell only on maps. I will discuss maritime hybrids in this thesis many times, particularly with regard to the taxonomical confusion they create. I aim to show how some creatures are cast as monstrous and attempts are made to use language to control them, due to their confounding appearances.

Harriet Ritvo observes that in the nineteenth century the 'mere existence of hybrids whose parents were unlike in species, breed, or race testified to an analogous breaching of apparently natural boundaries' and were thus 'stigmatised by both agriculturalists and naturalists, not only as mongrels but "monsters"', and even 'less

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[56] Knoepfelmacher, *Victorian Hybridities*, p. 3.
[57] Brenda Mann Hammack's writes of the 'bestial hybridity' of Bertha Rochester: a 'clothed hyena', not knowing 'whether 'it was' a beast or a human being' who 'snatched and growled like some wild animal', Rochester's 'embruted partner' whom Hammack reminds us is also compared to a 'dog, a wolf, a tigress, and a 'carrion-seeking bird of prey' in *Victorian Hybridities*.

judgmental accounts of hybridisation also associated it with monstrosity'.[58] The sea environment (and, by extension, sea literature) is a space in which monstrous hybridity thrives. Hybrid creatures supposedly plucked from the depths were various. 'Stuffed mermaids' imported from Asia did not fool naturalists for long (Frank Buckland examined one at Spitalfields) but fed the public fascination with maritime hybrid monsters. (The 'mermaids' were generally the torso, head, and arms of a simian taxidermically fused to the tail of a large fish such as a carp; the most famous of these was PT Barnum's 'Feejee Mermaid', well-known in Britain, which he displayed at his American Museum from 1841 to 1865.[59]) Ann Colley has shown how Robert Louis Stevenson, at the end of the century, employs literal and figurative hybrids in his portrayal of Samoa, particularly in chimeric images which 'recall the nineteenth-century fascination with the mermaid [...] and stories of monkey-men and pig-men who roam colonies lands'.[60]

I will show that the hybrid creatures and spaces in these texts materialise the straddling or outright rupture of scientific, geographic, and ontological boundaries in the nineteenth century. These hybrids often violently invert, pervert, or twist the English pastoral— sometimes, however, the most disturbing hybridity is the humanness of nonhuman animals and nonhuman animality of men.

1.3 Overview

The most significant single theme in every primary text is that of display: the constant grounding in the material cultures associated with animals in nineteenth-century Britain. This thesis will demonstrate that the relationship between monstrosity and

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[58] Ritvo, *Platypus*, p. 132. Her double-quote "monsters" is from Pennant's *British Zoology* (1766).
[59] Harriet Ritvo (in *Platypus*) and Ann C. Colley (in her essay for Knoepfelmacher and Browning's *Victorian Hybridities*) both explore the mermaid as chimera in further detail.
[60] Colley, in *Victorian Hybridities* (ed. Knoepfelmacher and Browning), pp. 137-38.

the sea in this period plays out in material ways through the language and metaphor of public exhibition. In these texts, monstrosity is often linked to the pervasive culture of display in Britain at this time. Furthermore, the monstrous potential of the sea creature on display is that, instead of being the trophy it was intended to be, the caught creature is an unmistakable, anxious avatar of the *uncaught* or the *unseen*.

I argue that in many of these texts the nineteenth-century obsession with taxonomy and categorisation (which manifests in these very tangible, material ways) actually destabilises the order it was intended to cement. Each text will show that in trying to glorify England's divinely appointed, technologically advanced civilisation, the new technologies and discoveries only revealed the ultimate power of nature over culture or the supremacy of the wild over the domestic. Sea creatures posed a particular problem for this culture of display, because to display them live one had to recreate their environment far more precisely than with terrestrial animals, and until the invention of the diving bell they could not be observed in their natural habitat even by the most intrepid explorers. In most of the period covered by this thesis (1820-1883), people could only know what was beneath the waves via literature or material objects hauled to the surface or washed ashore.

Each chapter looks to historical sources to contextualise the creatures which populate these texts in terms of how the British public might have been able to interact with them (including suggesting several new sources). Chapter 2 draws on the material culture of whales and whaling in nineteenth-century Britain to take the first critical look at RM Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales*, in which the commercially prized body of the whale is alternately monstrous and maternal, a foil to the miniscule creatures it eats (also monstrous, when populating a cup of tea from the Thames) and to the men to hunt it. Chapter 3 considers Tennyson's 'The Kraken' (when it was

published and as the nineteenth century progressed) in light of public engagement with polypi under the microscope and in the aquarium. I will also reconsider the traditionally accepted reading of the poem's peculiar sonnet form and posit a new theory that the poem is structurally modelled after the Kraken itself. Chapter 4 takes up Percy Bysshe Shelley's rarely-studied 'A Vision of the Sea (1820) as an Orientalist ecological text which glorifies the captivity of rare beasts such as tigers and serpents in British menageries but also explores the constant anxiety that these avatars of the 'exotic' or 'savage' subjects of the crown might monstrously break free of their imperial shackles (as the poem alludes to the well-known imperial treasure Tipu's Tiger). Chapter 5 builds on the monstrous hybridity of Ballantyne's whales and whalemen to focuses on the hybridities of wild and domestic traits within the different human and nonhuman animals of Edgar Allan's Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, including the structural hybridity of the novel itself. Chapter 6 presses beyond more conservative boundaries of literary studies to consider the fourteen volumes of essays, lectures, and ephemera published by the 'Literary Department' of the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition in London. This chapter reconstructs a neglected major Victorian exhibition which is critical to understanding Britain's relationship with the sea and an ideal conclusion to this thesis because it is a concentrated example of material culture. Taking several commissioned booklets as case studies I explore marine monstrosity in many forms throughout the exhibition, including the sustained visual metaphor that the spatial arrangement of the exhibition placed visitors under the sea, so to speak, with larger repercussions as people began to describe the exhibition space as an analogue for London.

1.4 A NOTE ON TERMS, TO 'PRESERVE A SENSE OF THEIR STRANGENESS'

It is important to pause to consider the terms used by historians and critics of the sea. Too often terms like *marine, maritime, nautical, oceanic,* and *aquatic* are used synonymously; indeed, there is considerable overlap in what these terms designate today as there was in the nineteenth century, and much depends on the personal preference of the author and where they hope to situate their work. Most simply, *marine* pertains to the sea's inhabitants and characteristics, while *maritime* refers to the people, places, and activities connected to the sea, such as 'shipping, navigation, seaborne trade, etc.'.[61] These definitions are slightly looser in the nineteenth century, when *marine* also often included lakes, streams, and rivers, and *maritime* also referred to an 'animal, plant, etc., living on or close to the sea coast' (and a *marine* was also a colloquial noun for a painted seascape), but the very general delineation between the natural (*marine*) and the human (*maritime*) is mostly upheld. *Oceanic*, of course, pertains specifically to the ocean but is often used interchangeably with both *marine* and *maritime* in the nineteenth century. *Nautical* is less common, and connotes maritime enterprise ('of, relating to, or characteristic of sailing, sailors, or the sea; naval, marine, maritime, seafaring'), while *aquatic* pertains to 'water as a habitat or resort' and 'plants and animals [...] living or growing in or near water', but also carried the cultural connotation in the nineteenth century of 'pertaining to pastime in or upon the water'. Adjectives like *seafaring* are a bit more transparent in their alliance to the mechanisms and cultures of going to sea.

As for the names of creatures, I have maintained in most instances the nineteenth-century terminology, as I appreciate Ralph O'Connor's perspective that 'At a cosmetic level, retaining the most current nineteenth-century spelling of each animal discussed ("hyaena", "pterodactyl") helps preserve a sense of their strangeness

[61] *OED*, as are all subsequent in this section.

which we have perhaps lost'.[62] I hope to maintain the conceptual (and cosmetic) strangeness of these creatures that, in many cases, are less strange to us today. This means using the terms by which the author would have known the animals: 'polypus', for instance, for creatures with tentacles. This also means endeavouring to call practitioners of science by the terms by which they called themselves (anatomist, geologist, malacologist, etc.). Every effort has been made to choose these terms with care, and footnotes will give more information about terminology.

[62] O'Connor, p. 10.

CHAPTER TWO

MONSTROUS TAXONOMY IN *FIGHTING THE WHALES*

Daniel Robson, retired whaleman and father of Sylvia in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*, expresses to Sylvia's suitor, the dashing harpooneer Charley Kinraid, that as oppressive as he found the Arctic environment, the most fearsome thing in the northern whale fishery was the whale itself:

> There' three things to be afeared on…there's t' ice, that's bad; there's dirty weather, that's worse; and there whales theirselves, as is t'worst of all; leastaways, they was I' my days, t' darned brutes may ha' larnt better manners sin'. When I were young, they could niver be got to let theirselves be harpooned wi'out flounderin' and makin' play wi' their tales and their fins, till t' say were all in a foam, and t' boats' crews was all o'er wi' spray, which i' them latitudes is akind o' shower-bath no needed.[1]

In remarking that the 'darned brutes may ha' larnt better manner sin'', Daniel hints at a kind of pre-Victorian savagery vested in the uncivilised world of the whale hunt. Like *Sylvia's Lovers*, RM Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales* was published in 1863 and employs retrospective narration: Bob Ledbury is an old man and tells of his first whaling cruise as a teenager in the 1820s, and in *Sylvia's Lovers* the events at Monkshaven are set in the 1790s.[2] The protagonist of each novel becomes attached to a charismatic harpooneer: for Ballantyne's Bob Ledbury this relationship with Tom Lokins provides him with his livelihood, but for Sylvia Robson, Kinraid contributes to her ruin. Both protagonists participate in the ritual of storytelling surrounding whaling and in the nineteenth-century public fascination with the exhibition of 'monsters' of any sort. After Daniel Robson hangs for his part in a riot against the press gangs, Sylvia asserts, 'I should be just a monster, fit to be shown at a fair, if I

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[1] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers*, ed. by Frances O'Gorman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[2] A year is not given, but earnest narrator Bob relays the seemingly recent tale of the sinking of the whale ship *Essex*, sunk by the infamous famous Mocha Dick in 1820.

could forgive him as got feyther hanged'.[3] Bob's narrative, however, often reads like the musings of an incredulous boy at the exhibition of a 'monster whale', as in the first line of the novel: 'There are few things in this world that have filled me with so much astonishment as the fact that man can kill a whale!'[4] In its depictions of monstrous sea creatures, *Fighting the Whales* participates in Victorian material culture's exhibitionary gaze toward that which is wild or monstrous.

Ballantyne, the son of a prominent Edinburgh literary family and nephew of Sir Walter Scott's printer James Ballantyne, went to work for the Hudson's Bay Company at age sixteen after a bad investment led to the family's financial ruin. His experiences inspired dozens of novels on topics from the South Seas to London fire fighting. His most popular, the juvenile Robinsonade *The Coral Island,* inspired Robert Louis Stevenson to term him 'Ballantyne the brave'.[5] Critical discussion of Ballantyne usually focuses on his romantic portrayals of English colonialism. *Fighting the Whales* has yet to be considered critically, though it is particularly suitable because its setting and publication span a crucial series of moments in the whaling industry. In 1859 the last casks of fished sperm whale oil from British vessels arrived in London after a slow decline in the size of the fleet, which could not compete with the Golden Age of Yankee whaling.[6] The same year, however, petroleum was discovered in Pennsylvania, which spelled the end of sperm whale oil as America's choice illuminant and shifted fishing interests to whale species that could produce 'whalebone' (baleen) instead of oil. In 1861 the United States became

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[3] Gaskell, p. 333.

[4] Robert Michael Ballantyne, *Fighting the Whales; or Doing and Dangers on a Fishing Cruise* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1863), Ch. 1. Due to the rarity of first editions of the novel I have used an e-text which is not paginated, but the chapters are short enough to be a convenient point of reference.

[5] In his poem 'To the Hesitating Purchaser'.

[6] Robert Hamilton calculated in 1843 that in 1791 seventy-five British vessels fished the Southern grounds, but by 1830 the fleet was comprised of just thirty-one ships from London with 937 sailors aboard and a burden of eleven thousand tons (Hamilton, *Whales*, for *The Naturalist's Library* (Edinburgh, Lizards, 183), p. 175).

mired in the Civil War, in which the Confederate Navy all but crippled the Yankee whaling fleet, relocating American whaling to San Francisco. The same year, the invention of the explosive shoulder-mounted harpoon gun revolutionised the whaling industry by exposing new species (such as the blue whale, largest on Earth) to exploitation. This new weapon ended the need for intimate, practically hand-to-hand skirmishes with the most famous and aggressive species, the sperm whale, and the discovery of petroleum removed the need to engage him at all. Ballantyne's novel is an unwitting salute to the golden age of whaling on both sides of the Atlantic which were inextricably linked, as crews were typically a mix of British and American; in *Fighting the Whales*, the first mate is American.

Ballantyne's novel, a greenhorn-on-the-high-seas bildungsroman, draws heavily on *Moby-Dick* (which enjoyed larger readership in Britain than in North America, where the novel was generally poorly received) and on the most significant 'true' whaling texts of the century including Scoresby, Cheever, Browne, and Beale, reinterpreted for young men. Ballantyne's narrator Bob Ledbury, however, is neither a man of science nor letters but a boy whose poverty has forced him to sea, and while he methodically describes the processes of whale-catching, cutting-in blubber, and trying-out oil, he is still aware of his social, scientific, and narrative limitations, and ultimately he attributes all things to God's providence. The novel is marked by the same incredulity Bob evinces in the opening line, revealing both his dependence on God and his status as a product of—and ideal spectator to—mid-nineteenth century material culture. He writes,

> I shall never forget the surprise I got the first time I saw a whale (Ch. 3)
>
> I was so amazed at this sight that I could not speak. I could only stare at the place where the huge monster had gone down (Ch. 3)
>
> I could scarcely believe it possible that wood and iron could bear such a strain (Ch. 2)

> I would not have believed this had I not seen it with my own eyes (Ch. 4)

Pursuing the monster, as opposed to sea stories in which ships and men are attacked by *unsought* monsters, demonstrates man's bravery, and the well- and oft-documented perils of doing so underscore man's vulnerability and the chaos of the deep oceans. Ballantyne's narrative is a prime example of Cohen's theory that 'the monster's body is a cultural body', an 'embodiment of a certain cultural moment' and a 'harbinger of category crisis'.[7] This transgression of borders (or the possibility of a total lack of them) threatens the Victorian conception of natural order and the human place within (rather, atop) it. The story is set in the immediately pre-Victorian moment, but the novel itself is a thoroughly Victorian product, a monstrous exhibition to which purchase of the book grants admission.

Various 'monsters' populate *Fighting the Whales*. The whales, of course (epithetically 'monster' or 'monstrous') but also Neptune and his wife (portrayed by crewmen as they cross the equator), sharks, 'savage' seabirds, and a 'killer' (that is, a killer whale/orca/grampus). But the monster that so disquiets Bob's pre-whaling life and sets the stage for the whaling voyage is the poverty which forces him to sea, embodied in the 'passion' Tom Lokins identifies in him and metaphorised as a sea monster. After an unsuccessful day of seeking work at the docks (and an embarrassing attempt at begging) the 'old Jack-tar' Tom Lokins names the monster stifling Bob: 'You're in a passion, my young buck, that's all; and, in case you didn't know it, I thought I'd tell ye'.[8] Bob's 'passion', his violent frustration with his lot, is a sea monster that can be slain, according to Tom Lokins:

> Now, younker, let me give you a bit of advice. Never get into a passion if you can help it, and if you can't help it get out of it as fast as possible, and if you can't get out of it, just give a great roar to let off the steam and turn about and run. There's nothing like that. Passion han't got legs.

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[7] Jeffrey Cohen, *Monster Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 4-6.
[8] Ballantyne, Ch. 1.

> It can't hold on to a feller when he's runnin'. If you keep it up till you a'most split your timbers, passion has no chance. It *must* go a-starn.[9]

Tom personifies the passion that holds Bob in poverty as a creature. But if Bob, in the grips of the passion, 'runs', he can break the creature's grasp. Tom seems to mean that Bob should physically run about to tire himself out, as the passion will keep hold of him if he sits and wallows in his misfortune. And Bob does run—to sea, exposing the metaphorical side of Tom's advice. Tom positions Bob as a ship, who should run (a common verb for ships in motion) so hard and long that he almost splits his timbers.[10] If he does this, the 'passion' creature pursuing the ship will eventually 'go a-starn' (that is, astern, left behind in the ship's wake). A decade before *Fighting the Whales*, Melville's Ishmael asserted that 'All men live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks',[11] and Bob is haltered by his poverty until Tom Lokins offers him a place on his ship where Bob might 'turn about and run' from his monstrous passion, throwing off the halter only to take up the whale-lines.

This chapter explores Ballantyne's sea monsters in light of the public material culture of creatures and new 'popular' science in the nineteenth century emblemised by the Great Exhibition of 1851 and its reconstruction at Sydenham in 1854. Romantic wonder at nature's monstrous creation, the whale, has been replaced by Victorian wonder at the technology by which it can be industrially and culturally domesticated as well as articulated, displayed, and consumed. *Fighting the Whales* (whose full title is *Fighting the Whales; or Dangers and Doings on a Fishing Cruise*) is a proper Victorian article: concerned with order, taxonomy, limits, and the Victorians' place at the apex of human achievement; however, in trying to uphold

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[9] Ibid.
[10] A variant of the popularised 'shiver me timbers', relating that a ship has 'run' so hard her planks literally splinter.
[11] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*, 1st American edn (New York: Harper and Brothers and London: Richard Bentley, 1851), p. 315.

these values the novel actually ends up destabilising the organisation it was intended to cement. The agents of this disruption are the novel's host of sea monsters, namely the whale, an antediluvian monster whose unchanged ancientness complicates the Victorian progress narrative. The chapter is broken into three sections, each of which refracts the 'monster' whale though a different lens: (1) the novel's use of scientific 'glass', (2) the domestication of the whale by the exhibition and by the try-works, and (3) the hybridity of the whale.

Fighting the Whales places an exhibitionary gaze on its creatures in an attempt to neatly divide the ancient and the modern, nature and culture, subject and object, wild and domestic. On its way to a wholesome, didactic adventure tale for boys, however, it slides toward a poetics of popular science that, in its transgression of borders (or anxiety about the possibility of a total lack of them) threatens the Victorian conception of natural order and the human place within (or rather *atop* it). Ultimately, in trying to be an upstanding Victorian operative, the novel falls into the same epistemological pitfall as did the Crystal Palace: the attempt to reinforce Victorian dominion over the primitive only destabilises the categories it has strained to create and maintain. *Fighting the Whales* painfully reveals that not only are these classifications inadequate and often violated, but those primitive 'monsters' are far closer than imagined, and perhaps even contained in men.

2.1 SEA MONSTERS UNDER THE GLASS

The nineteenth century was the 'era of public glass', begins Isobel Armstrong in *Victorian Glassworlds*.[12] In 'Childe Harold', Byron calls the sea a 'glorious mirror' and 'throne of the invisible' in which the Almighty 'glasses itself in tempests':

> Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
> Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
> Calm, or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
> Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
> Dark-heaving; boundless, endless, and sublime—
> The image of Eternity—the throne
> Of the Invisible; even from out they slime
> The monsters of the deep are made- each zone
> Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.[13]

Foregrounding the 'glass' in *Fighting the Whales* The 'glorious mirror' glass of the sea's surface betrays an oncoming storm, where to 'glass' may refer to looking through a telescope (which the novel does not discuss) or using a barometer (colloquially, 'glass') to 'read' the weather. The 'throne of the invisible' not only speaks to the Almighty's eternal but invisible presence on the sea (to which Ballantyne's narrators attribute all narrative providence), but also the 'invisible' nature of glass and minute creatures therein which can only be seen though the microscope, a technology which helped usher in the Victorian idea of 'popular science'. (The 'slime' and its progeny will be discussed later in this chapter in light of Dickens' Megalosaurus sloshing through the mud on Holborn Hill.) The minute focus of the microscope, the portentous readout of the barometer, the sheets of glass in a display case were, paradoxically, made to contain rather than allow access. In trying to glorify Victorian civilisation's divine inheritance of a technologically advanced society, the new technologies revealed that culture's dominion over nature (and that of the domestic over the wild) was tenuous at best (and often outright

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[12] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 1.
[13] George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Lord Byron, The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), IV.183.1639-47.

obliterated), symbolised by the view though the microscope and the miniscule sea monsters pervading a single drop of the Thames. The two 'glasses' in the novel (the microscope and the barometer) are examples of the excitement-turned-anxiety that there is 'more than meets the eye', promising a focused view of civilisation but yielding chaos under the glass.

I will begin with the microscope, a symbol in some of the most important novels of the 1850s and 1860s including Thomas Hardy, Henry James, and George Eliot. When Eliot employs the image of the microscope in *Middlemarch*, Gillian Beer has famously noted 'a recognition of the multiple unseen worlds by which we are surrounded and which new methods of perception may reveal without reducing the mystery inherent in the fact of multiplicity'.[14] The microscope indeed provided a new 'method of perception' by which to acknowledge and study this plurality of worlds, but also magnified Victorian anxieties therein.

William Whewell, master of Trinity College, Cambridge (who coined the term 'scientist') wrote that the 'telescope brought into view worlds as numerous as the drops of water which make up the ocean' while 'the microscope brought into view a world in almost every drop of water. Infinity in one direction was balanced by infinity in another'.[15] Byron's geographically and epistemologically 'boundless,' 'endless', 'fathomless' ocean came into focus in the nineteenth century under the variety of scientific 'glass'. Bob encounters three 'glasses' in *Fighting the Whales*. The first is the microscope, the introduction of which is predicated on the following exchange after Bob inquires about the 'blue fire' in the wake of the ship at night:

> 'It is caused by small animals,' said [the captain], leaning over the side.
> 'Small animals!' said I, in astonishment.

[14] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 161.
[15] Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, p. 317.

> ‘Ay, many parts of the sea are full of creatures so small and so thin and colourless, that you can hardly see them even in a clear glass tumbler. Many of them are larger than others, but the most of them are very small.’
>
> ‘But how do they shine like that, sir?’ I asked.
>
> ‘That I do not know, boy… I think, myself, it must be anger that makes them shine, for they generally do it when they are stirred up or knocked about by oars, or ships’ keels, or tumbling waves. But I am not sure that that’s the reason either, because, you know, we often sail through them without seeing the light, though of course they must be there.’
>
> ‘P’raps, sir,’ said Tom Lokins; ‘p’raps, sir, they’re sleepy sometimes, an’ can’t be bothered gettin’ angry.’
>
> ‘Perhaps!’ answered the captain, laughing. ‘But then again, at other times, I have seen them shining over the whole sea when it was quite calm, making it like an ocean of milk; and nothing was disturbing them at that time, d’ye see.’[16]

The conversation is just the first of many in the novel which concern the unseen in the water, and the captain and Tom’s speculation will later be replaced by Fred Borders’ didacticism, symbolised by the captain’s allusion to seeing the ‘small animals’ in a ‘clear glass tumbler’, a decidedly *u*nscientific glass which will be replaced by the microscope Fred Borders describes. The small animals are anthropomorphised and the exchange plants the question of microscopic sea monsters in the mind of the reader, which Ballantyne later employs Fred Borders and Tom Lokins to answer. The passage anticipates a more properly didactic one, in Chapter 7 when Fred, of whom Bob thinks very highly, relates that on his previous voyage to there was a young doctor aboard the ship conducting experiments:

> ‘One of the men said to him he had heard that the greenness of the Greenland Sea was caused by the little things like small bits of jelly on which the whales feed. As soon as he heard this he got a bucket and hauled some sea-water aboard, and for the next ten days he was never done working away with the sea-water; pouring it into tumblers and glasses; looking through it by daylight and by lamplight; tasting it, and boiling it, and examining it with a microscope.’
>
> ‘What’s a microscope?’ inquired one of the men.
>
> ‘Don’t you know?’ said Tom Lokins, ‘why it’s a glass that makes little things seem big, when ye look through it. I’ve heerd say that beasts that are so uncommon small that you can’t see them at all are made to come into sight and look quite big by means o’ this glass.’[17]

As Victorian science sought to make the world a laboratory, Joe Roman writes that ‘in the nineteenth century whaleships became important platforms for scientific research’, and the young doctor aboard Fred’s former ship alludes to Scoresby, Beale, and the small but dedicated legion of early cetologists (many of whom were actually

[16] Ballantyne, Ch. 2.
[17] Ibid., Ch. 7.

physicians by training).[18] The 'little things' are 'medusae'. The little 'beasts' can only be studied with a microscope, and indeed the novel places a microscopic gaze on beasts of all sizes encountered by whalemen, all of which 'look quite big' magnified through the narrator's innocent young lens. Robert Hamilton, in *Whales* (an 1843 addition to the *Mammalia* series of *The Naturalist's Library*) reminds us that 'Mr Scoresby examined the qualities of this water, and, to his astonishment, found that it obtained its colour from the present of immense numbers of animalcules, most of them invisible without the aid of a microscope', including 'medusae &c [...] upon which the monster of the deep is supported'[19]. The accompanying plate is captioned thus: 'In this plate is seen at one glance the common food of this enormous whale; and its dependence on these minute insects, as well as that of the greater number of animals which inhabit those prodigious and dreary seas, is also too clear to require demonstration' (Figure 5).[20]

[18] Joe Roman, *Whale* (London: Reaktion, 2006), p. 101.
[19] Hamilton, *Whales*, pp. 86-87.
[20] Ibid.

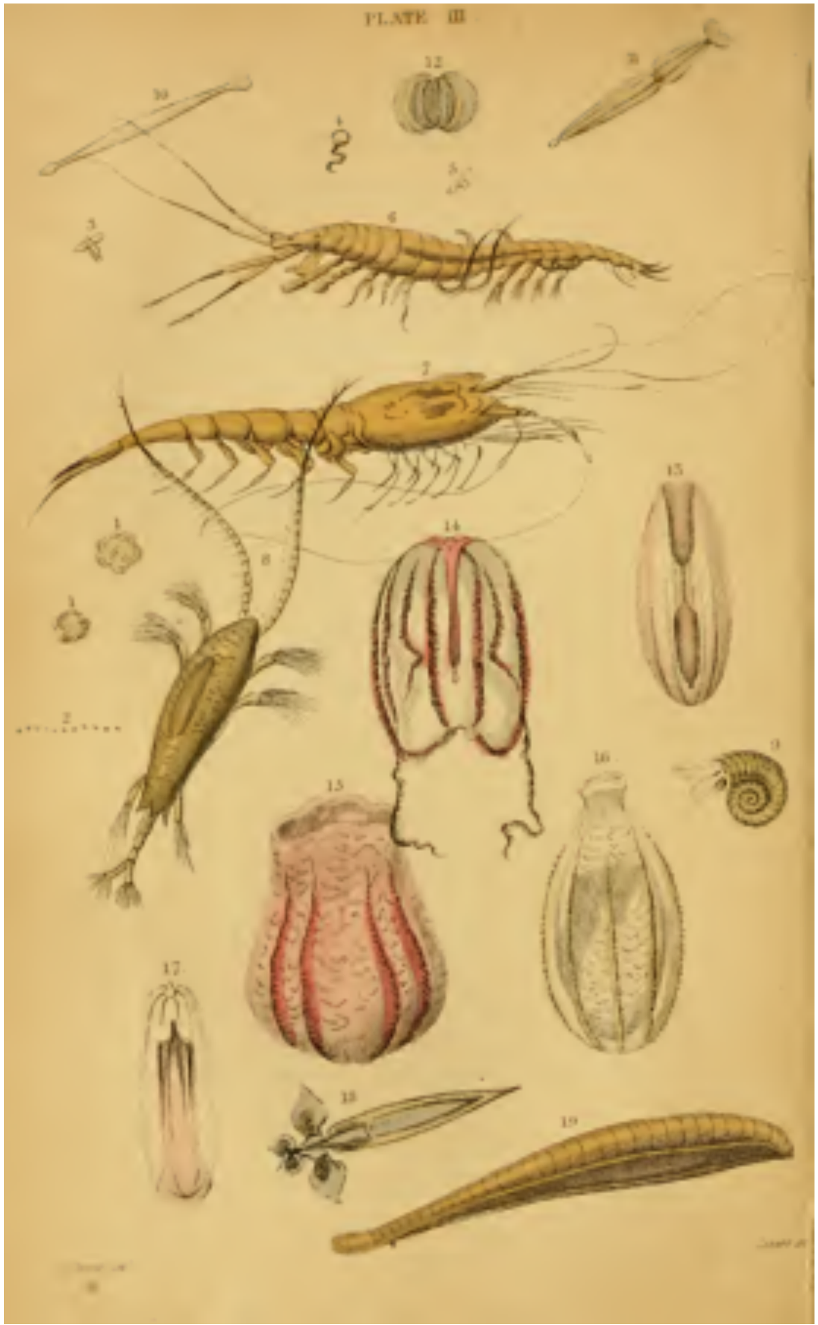

Figure 5. 'In this plate is seen at one glance the common food of the enormous whale.' From Robert Hamilton, *Whales* (1843).

Fundamentally, Isobel Armstrong argues that under the microscope 'structural refraction organises all its images'.[21] The Victorian obsession with microscopy and its implied organisation also spawned a genre of books for scientific and common readers alike in the decade between the Great Exhibition and the publication of *Fighting the Whales*, a common theme of which was the microscope as a tool for understanding the aquatic world.[22] 'Water and its contents', writes Armstrong, 'spawned a popular literature of microscopic investigation and, indeed, helped to bring into being the category of "popular" science in an avid print culture'.[23] GH Lewes notices an anthropomorphic potential in his 1858 microscopic survey of tide-pools:

> What microcosms are these rugged basins! […] What arts, and wiles, and stratagems are being practiced there! What struggles for mastery, for food, for life! What pursuits and flights! What pleasant gambols! What conjugal and parental affections! What varied enjoyments! What births! What deaths! Are every hour going on in these unruffled wells, beneath the brown shade of the umbrageous oarweed, or even the waving slopes of bright green *Ulva*, or among the feathery branches of crimson *Ceramium*![24]

Those 'conjugal and parental affections' speak directly to the humanised monster whale to be discussed in section 2.4.1 of this chapter. In the comparison of Victorian London to a tide pool, Lewes disconcertingly reminds the reader that the scale of their existence is simply a matter of calibrated perspective, and participates in what Isobel Armstrong would call the 'popularising of the microscope disseminated in cheap print and periodicals'.[25] Melanie Keene writes that 'thanks to the increasingly affordable home microscopes, people with no formal scientific background had begun to realise that there was more to [a drop of water] than meets the eye. Indeed, so-called "magic

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[21] Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds,* p. 317.
[22] Some of the most popular include Agnes Callow's *Drops of Water: Their Marvellous and Beautiful Inhabitants Displayed by the Microscope* (1851), Charles Kingsley's *Glaucus, or the Wonders of the Shore* (1854), GH Lewes' *Sea-Side Studies* (1858), Henry James Slack's *Marvels of Pond Life* (1861), Philip Henry Gosse's *A Year at the Shore* (1865), and *The Story of a Drop of Water* edited by Catharine Long (1856).
[23] Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, p. 320.
[24] Ibid., pp. 321-22.
[25] Ibid., p. 330.

lantern shows" of microscope slides proved a popular form of entertainment throughout the century, amazing audiences with the gigantic creatures seemingly conjured from nowhere'.[26] *Fighting the Whales* does similarly, using Bob's naiveté as a didactic device for a lesson about microscopy, and indeed plenty of these volumes (some by well-known writers) were aimed specifically at young people just like *Fighting the Whales*. In addition to Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies*, Hans Christian Andersen published 'A Drop of Water' in 1848, a fairy tale about Kribble-Krabble, an old man who tricks a magician (by looking through a magnifying glass) into believing there is an entire city within a drop of water that he has dyed red (the 'city', of course, is the 'microcosm' of creatures in a magnified drop of water). In 'The Diamond Lens' by Fitz-James O'Brien, a man falls in love with an animalcule ('Animula') whom he spies through his microscope, until she is tragically lost to evaporation. Arabella Buckley's 1879 *The Fairyland of Science* collected such tales, as did its predecessor, John Cargill Brough's 1859 *Fairy-Tales of Science*. *Fighting the Whales*, though not a fairy tale, emblemises this genre beautifully in its balance of facts and feeling. Keene argues that because 'educators believed that fantasies could damage the young mind, while useful, instructive facts were considered the order of the day' Victorian children's authors rose to the challenge and created 'elegant, witty, and inventive storytelling that weaves scientific truths into wondrous tales starring dragons, fairies, witches, and demons'[27] and, I would add, sea monsters.

For Victorian children's literature the view through the microscope—though often frightening—also often contained magic. For adults, however, this view proved monstrous. Armstrong summarises the Victorian proposition that the microscope

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[26] Melanie Keene, *Science in Wonderland: The Scientific Fairy Tales of Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 2.
[27] Ibid.

'confirms the hierarchy of organised life, with human beings at the apex, and the unalterable permanence of the five Cuvierian embranchments […] This inviolable taxonomy moved through molluscs, crustaceans, fish, and up to vertebrates'[28] before demonstrating that the Victorians ultimately found that the microscope actually destabilised, complicated, and outright confused the categorisation with which the period was so utterly preoccupied. Darwin disagreed with Cuvier's five embranchments on the basis of his microscopic study of barnacles (Cuvier had labelled them a mollusc but Darwin shows them to be a crustacean), and overwhelmingly the depictions of microscopic life took on a monstrous air (for instance, Kingsley called the aeons-old coral *madrepore* nothing but a 'moveable mouth').

Not everyone delighted in the newfound company. According to Whewell: 'The microscope shewed [sic] that there had been, close to us, inhabiting minute crevices and crannies, peopling the leaves of plants, and the bodies of other animals, animalcules of minuteness hitherto unguessed, and of a structure hitherto unknown'[29] and in 1828 a colour etching by William Heath circulated around London which portrayed a 'MICROCOSM, dedicated to the London Water Companies' (Figure 6); in it, a woman holds a microscope in one hand and has just dropped her teacup with the other, the horrified look on her face owing to the 'microcosm' she sees through her lens. Magnified for the viewer are a variety of little beasts. Below the image reads 'MONSTER SOUP commonly called THAMES WATER' and in the corner a passage from *Paradise Lost*:

> Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds
> Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things
> Abominable, inutterable, and worse
> Than fables have feigned or fear conceived

[28] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, p. 322.
[29] Ibid., p. 318.

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.[30]

Milton's monstrous, 'prodigious things' in the depths of Hamilton's 'dreary and prodigious seas' became horribly local in 1827 when the Metropolitan Water Supply of London appointed new commissioners to address London's issues of supply and hygiene. The city's infrastructure was already stressed by expanding slums and the proliferation of flush toilets (which carried sewage away with rainwater as opposed to into cesspools, which were overflowing as it was) and the contaminated Thames became a wellspring of water-borne illness. In science, in satire, and in Bob's narrative, magnification yields revelation. The water only appears innocent and pure. There is more than meets the eye, and if the scientist/hunter can just *see* the monster ('There she blows!') it can be studied/slain. Furthermore, while the nineteenth century domesticated (and economically commoditised) the sea monster by bringing whale oil and baleen from the alien depths of the northern and southern fisheries to London, Heath's etching portrays *local* sea monsters. Londoners need not fear the faraway whale or serpent, instead their very water supply, the Thames, was home to gorgons, hydras, chimeras, and all manner of 'hitherto unguessed' readily breeding beasts poised to poison their afternoon tea.

[30] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 and 2008), II.624-28.

Figure 6. William Heath, 'MICROCOSM, dedicated to the London Water Companies' (1828).

In the section on the hybrid/humanised monster (2.4.1.) I will discuss how interactions with whales may make men monsters in light of Nietzsche's Aphorism 146 in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886): 'He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby becomes a monster', but what about *ingesting* monsters, as in the 'monster soup' of the Thames? The less considered second half of Nietzsche's aphorism is particularly fitting: 'And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss gazes also into you'.[31] What does it mean to look through the microscope in Victorian Britain—or aboard the whale ship—and to see monsters staring back at you? Isobel Armstrong argues that 'magnification only intensified the shock of cohabitation with the gross feeding and sexual avidity of animalcules', and in *Fighting the Whales* the ship is constantly surrounded by such microscopic sea monsters (which, unlike the sharks or whales or the giant squid which the whale vomits up, the crew cannot see

[31] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. by RJ Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1973, 1990, and 2003), p. 102.

with the naked eye).[32] The ‘gross feeding’ and the ‘sexual avidity’ of the little monsters, in keeping with the ‘microcosm’ of Lewes’ tide pools and Heath’s monster soup, emblemise what Armstrong terms a ‘violent laissez-faire pastoral’ where ‘glass culture’s necessary concern with taxonomy and the violation of categories emerges’.[33] This anxiety about the monstrous so close—rather than the sublime literary delight in faraway monsters—signals a disintegration of the borders which keep the monstrous at bay. The microscope literally and figuratively magnifies the emblems of these concerns, these monsters hidden from the naked eye, reinforcing what WH Auden will write in his seminal *The Enchafèd Flood*: ‘What lies hidden in the water is the unknown powers of nature’.[34]

Ballantyne again invokes a scientific ‘glass’ to teach Bob a lesson about weather; this time, his ‘glass’ is a barometer. Bob and Tom are chatting on deck and the captain asks for Tom’s opinion of the weather. Despite the apparent calm, and to Bob’s surprise, Tom forecasts a storm. Bob inquires about this instinctive forecast and Tom replies

> ‘Ay, that shows that you’re a young feller, and han’t got much experience o’ them seas,’ replied my companion. ‘Why, boy, sometimes the fiercest storm is brewin’ behind the greatest calm. An’ the worst o’ the thing is that it comes so sudden at times, that the masts are torn out o’ the ship before you can say Jack Robinson.’
>
> ‘What! and without any warning?’ said I.
>
> ‘Ay, *almost* without warnin’; but not *altogether* without it. You heer’d the captain say he’d go an’ take a squint at the glass?’
>
> ‘Yes; what is the glass?’
>
> ‘It’s not a glass o’ grog, you may be sure; nor yet a lookin’-glass. It’s the weather-glass, boy. Shore-goin’ chaps call it a barometer.’
>
> ‘And what’s the meaning of barometer?’ I inquired earnestly.
>
> Tom Lokins stared at me in stupid amazement.
>
> ‘Why, boy,’ said he, ‘you’re too inquisitive. I once asked the doctor o’ a ship that question, and says he to me, “Tom,” says he, “a barometer is a glass tube filled with quicksilver or mercury, which is a metal in a soft or fluid state, like water, you know, and it’s meant for tellin’ the state o’ the weather… a barometer is a glass for measurin’ the weight o’ the air, and, *somehow or other, that* lets ye know wots a-coming. If the mercury in the glass rises high, all’s right. If it falls uncommon low very sudden, look out for squalls; that’s all. No matter how

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[32] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds,* p. 318.
[33] Ibid.
[34] WH Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood: Or, Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 67.

> smooth the sea may be, or how sweetly all natur' may smile, don't you believe it; take in every inch o' canvas at once."'
>
> 'That was a queer explanation, Tom.'
>
> 'Ay, but it was a true one, as you shall see before long.'
>
> As I looked out upon the calm sea, which lay like a sheet of glass, without a ripple on its surface, I could scarcely believe what he had said. But before many minutes had passed I was convinced of my error.[35]

It is another highly didactic moment in the novel, which in general parallels the goal of the Great Exhibition at Hyde Park and later Sydenham—and much Victorian 'popular science'—to educate the masses (and there was indeed a new barometric technology on display at the Crystal Palace: the 'Tempest Prognosticator', a barometer powered by leeches). Both the microscope and the barometer are objects of potential disruption. Like the miniature monsters in the Thames, the coming storm can only be seen in a particular sort of scientific glass. The 'fiercest storm [may be] brewin' behind the greatest calm', just as the calmness of the Thames conceals the monsters within. Tom's lesson that there is more than meets eye also amounts to an empirical trust in science, as when the barometer drops he says 'No matter how smooth the sea may be, or how sweetly all natur' may smile, don't you believe it; take in every inch o' canvas at once'.[36]

Isobel Armstrong also notes that critiques of the microscope were not new; rather, they were the same complaints made by Locke, Hume, and Berkeley, and took up the question of 'surface' in microscopy. They were concerned 'that [the microscope] produced a depthless play of surfaces never revealing an interior, that its images were illusory because appearance is all we see, that representations explain nothing, that it trivialises knowledge, that the great and small cannot be calibrated'.[37] Ballantyne's 'glasses', as well as this distrust in the microscope, also invoke the glass of display cases back on land, where aquariums (a mid-century craze), zoos (the

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[35] Ballantyne, *Fighting the Whales*, Ch. 2.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, p. 330.

London Zoo opened 1828), museums (such as Richard Owen's Hunterian, full of prehistoric 'sea monsters'), and travelling exhibitions (such as Wombwell's) paradoxically separated viewers from, and allowed them access to, showcases of Victorian mastery over the natural world. Victorian technologies such as the proliferation of vivaria proved to be meta-exhibits: the development of these technologies not only showcased the creature, but the technology itself, as will be discussed in the following section on the whale as a public spectacle body.

The monstrosity magnified by the microscope and foretold by the barometer had colonial implications as well. Isobel Armstrong observes that it is precisely the 'capacity to read this violence that fits young men to be servants of empire in the colonies'.[38] Young whale man Bob indeed serves the economic interests of England, and in turn the British whaling fleet contributed directly to the proliferation of the empire. Naval surgeons practiced on whaling voyages before deploying to the colonies; British whalers, pushing farther into the South Seas in search of whales, discovered and colonised parts of South America and Australia; and many have noted the effects of whale oil in powering the Industrial Revolution.

The microscope magnifies 'animalcules' and, more importantly, anxieties about their implications. The microscope implies an organisation that is, as Locke and Hume complained, 'depthless' and essentially false. By magnifying little monsters, the microscope instead exposed the chaotic plurality and proximity of 'microcosms' of these creatures, thus destabilising the organisation they were employed to create and maintain. Additionally, as Isobel Armstrong, Gillian Beer, Melanie Keene, and others have pointed out, the microscope directly contributed to the Victorian invention of 'popular science'. Tom's lesson about the barometer builds

[38] Ibid.

on the microscope's disconcerting realisation that there is always more than meets the eye under scientific 'glass', and seeks to reinforce an empirical trust in science.

Material spoils of the empire's contact with faraway lands, their strange animals, and primitive cultures, as well as the Victorian technologies by which they were obtained, provided the basis for the largest glass display case in Victorian Britain— the Crystal Palace erected in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and its subsequent reconstruction at Sydenham in 1854. As the next section on the body of the whale as public spectacle will explore in depth, the Crystal Palace became a symbol of contradiction. Ballantyne's novel is a Crystal Palace of sorts: showcasing the minute focus of the microscope, the portentous readout of the barometer, the sheets of glass made to *contain* rather than to peer through; however, in trying to glorify Victorian England's divine inheritance of a technologically-advanced civilisation the new technologies only revealed the ultimate power of nature over culture symbolised by the view through the microscope at the miniscule sea monsters pervading a single drop of the Thames. Armstrong notes that 'glass culture instigated a kind of taxonomical panic and a struggle for power among taxonomies in 1851'.[39] In the microscope the desire to contain, to be the gatekeeper of monstrous taxonomies, seems to have resulted in accidentally locking ourselves inside with the monster. ('Glass is never neutral', Armstrong warns.) When select Victorians looked through the microscope and saw the busy world of monstrous animalcules they did not just see an *Other* but a microcosm of London, indeed revealing not just Victorian geographic proximity to monsters, but ontological proximity. When they gazed into an abyss, the abyss gazed also into them.

[39] Ibid., p. 168.

2.2 The whale as domestic spectacle

Fighting the Whales is influenced by the didactic animal entertainment of the period: white whales at the Royal Aquarium; traveling whale carcasses; orchestras conducted within articulated ribs of a long-since-flensed whale. The novel participates in the Victorian industrial exhibitionary culture that showcased both new discoveries and the new technologies by which they were attained. Building on the discussion of the 'glasses', this section further explores entertainment and education, delving into Bob's lessons as they pertain to an increasingly industrial Britain. In its participation in the Victorian material culture of display, the novel presents an alternate economy of monsters: their blubber melted down into useful products in the fiery furnaces of the ship, or their bodies being displayed as spectacles in the conservatories of industrial production back on land such as the Crystal Palace. Both domesticate the sea monster into a valuable commodity. This section builds on the discussion of glass to talk about industry and exhibition culture, and the mixing of entertainment and education for the progression of civilisation symbolised by the fire of England's 'dark Satanic mills'. Prehistory and sea monsters are crucially bound up in this, as the Victorian era saw the development of the new discipline of geology and the alignment of the deep sea with the deep past, the exhibitions of which also contributed to the calibration of what is 'primitive' to Victorians as being geographically, culturally, taxonomically, or *temporally* distant (epitomised by the dinosaur exhibits at the new Crystal Palace at Sydenham).

A stranded whale was a spectacle and a rare opportunity to view a creature from Genesis and a survivor of the Deluge whose constituent parts so contributed to everyday life in Britain. Strandings also allowed men of science to inspect the whale without the danger of those early cetologists who braved whaling voyages. Robert

Hamilton, in his 1843 treatise *Whales*, catalogued every known instance of stranding by rorquals on the British Isles, remarking

> Many of the occurrences above alluded to were of great moment, in as much as they afforded an opportunity which men of zeal and science improved, in the particular examination of the structure of the order, and thereby improved our acquaintance with them: they thus became landmarks in the acquisition of knowledge, at which those who laboured acquired for themselves a well merited and substantial praise.[40]

Hamilton spends a significant portion of his chapter detailing these strandings, the people who took custody of the carcasses, and how they were displayed to an eager public, for instance in the case of the Knox brothers who exhibited the skeleton of a rorqual 'in Edinburgh and Glasgow to the admiration of thousands' (Figure 7).[41] In 1828 (the same year as Heath's 'Microcosm, Dedicated to the London Water Companies') the London papers reported the activities of a Mr Kessel, who transported to Ghent a 95-foot blue whale carcass washed up at Ostend, where he 'constructed an elegant pavilion for its reception… fitted in the most tasteful style' where one can visit the 'sea monster' and take in a concert 'in the interior of this animal, for which twenty-four eminent musicians are engaged.' The *Morning Chronicle* notes, quoting the *Paris Paper of Saturday*, that Mr Kessel 'has been much complimented on his taste and good arrangement of this affair, and it is expected that he will shortly exhibit his phenomenon in Paris.' Though only the skeleton was displayed, an illustration of the 'Ostend Whale' included an elephant, a giraffe, and ringmaster perched atop the full carcass, which looks to be sleeping soundly (Figure 8). (The Ostend Whale concluded its European tour in Russia in 1856, where it is still in the collections of the St. Petersburg Zoological Museum.)

Displaying similarly pageantry (and fanciful artistry), a later nineteenth-century illustration of a chemically preserved whale carcass which travelled by rail shows the

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[40] Hamilton, p. 138.
[41] Ibid.

ornately-decorated railcar filled with water, and the spouting whale accompanied by seals and a narwhal (Figure 9). (It is unclear whether this is an advertisement or simply a fanciful illustration, as the whale in question was actually but a chemically preserved carcass.) Traveling exhibitions and menageries such as Wombwell's in Britain, PT Barnum's in the United States, and any of the myriad human/animal monster shows, freak shows, and sideshows in both nations have deep roots. In 1383 the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge sponsored a blue whale found at Plymouth to tour around England in a parade of carriages, and Britons have flocked to such exhibits ever since. Victorian technologies, increasingly adept at whaling, also grew exponentially in the transportation sector. Steam ships replaced sail, Atlantic crossings became faster, and the railroad allowed travelling exhibitions to move farther faster, reaching ever larger numbers of interested public willing to pay to participate in this transition to a modernity where man holds such convincing dominion over nature. The exhibition of an intact whale carcass in particular is a finite enterprise, and the railroad allowed more ground to be covered before the carcass reached an unpalatable state of decomposition. (After which, of course, the soft tissue could be removed, the skeleton articulated, and more money charged to wander through the monster's ribcage or a bit more to take home a length of his baleen, as in Figure 10— a whale at Charing Cross July 1831, as illustrated in *The Mirror*.)

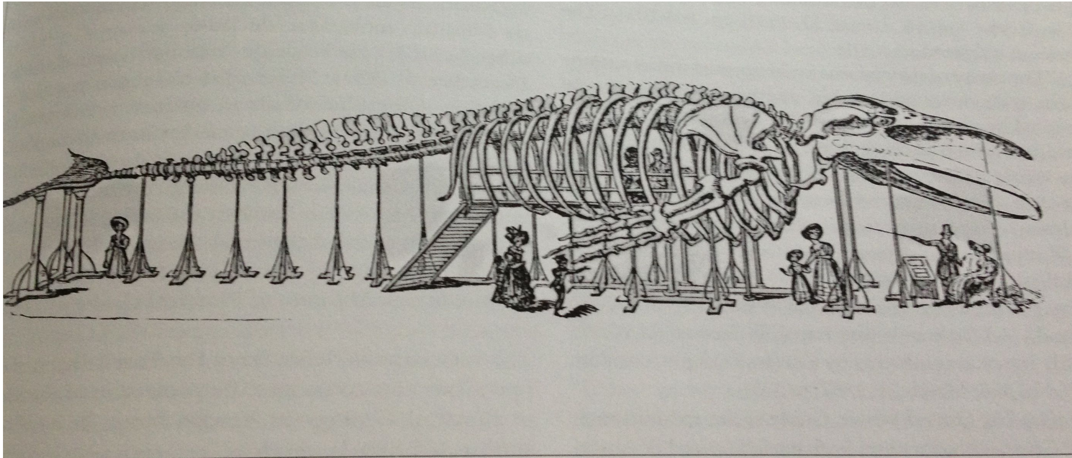
Figure 7. Knox brothers' North Berwick whale (1835).

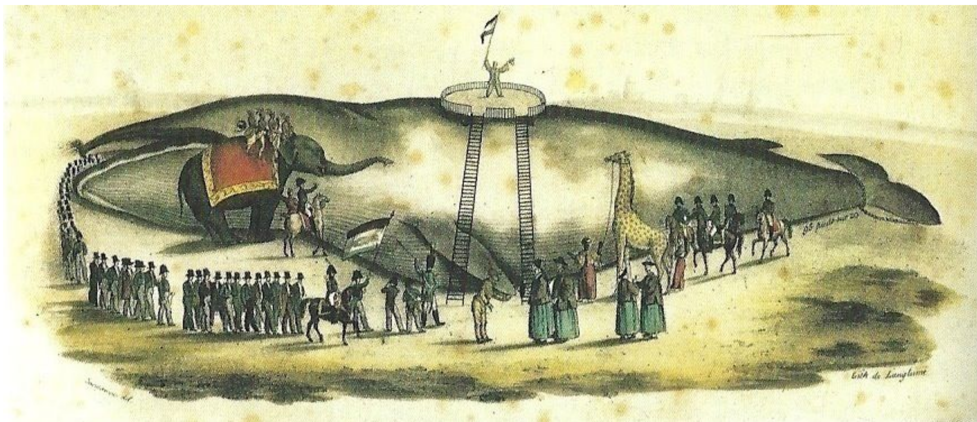
Figure 8. Ostend whale (1850s).

Figure 9. Travelling whale carcass (1850s?).

Figure 10. Whale at Charing Cross, from *The Mirror* (1831).

Literature was both critical of and complicit in this cetological culture of display. In a literary monstering of the eighteenth century that bore so influentially upon the nineteenth, Swift casts Gulliver as a monster in the eyes of Lilliputians. Dennis Todd observes:

> Had the Lilliputians followed through on their plan to kill Gulliver, 'leaving the Skeleton as a Monument of Admiration to Posterity', their descendants would have seen little more than Londoners saw in 1702 when the skeleton of a whale caught in the Thames was displayed in a field near Kings Street, Bloomsbury. And the Lilliputians' anxiety about the stench of Gulliver's carcass was realised when, ten years later, another whale exhibited on a barge near Blackfriars had to be auctioned off quickly because of its smell.[42]

Gulliver laments 'the Ignominy of being carried about for a Monster' and being 'exposed for Money as a publick Spectacle to the meanest of the people', and Lilliput has often been equated with London, where Britons indeed loved a good monster viewing.[43] So much so that, 'from the highest to the lowest,' the English were so 'fond of sights and monsters' and so 'liberal in rewarding those who shew [sic] them,' that the exhibitors 'all live in luxury'.[44] Says Todd, 'in this scientific climate, there was

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[42] Dennis Todd, *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 144.
[43] Ibid., p. 145, citing Swift 80-1.
[44] Ibid., p. 5, citing Oliver Goldsmith.

nothing remarkable about an interest in monsters. […] Such an interest was expected'.[45]

Part of the goal of this project in general is to connect and interpret the public practice of monster-*viewing* with the literary practice of monster-*making* in this period. A strong strand of this connection links the image of the monster whale on display with that of its (presumed) ancient predecessors the ocean-going dinosaurs. Prehistoric sea monsters and the very idea of prehistory are regularly bound up with Victorian 'sea monsters' such as the whale because there was simply not a strong enough understanding of their origins and characteristics to individuate their taxonomy. Alignment of the deep sea and 'deep past' illuminates not only the stress placed on Victorian speciation but also contributed to the calibration of what is 'primitive' to Victorians as being geographically, culturally, taxonomically, or *temporally* distant. This is epitomised in the first full-scale dinosaur models in the 'Geology and Inhabitants of the Ancient World' area of the 1854 reconstruction of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham by Thomas Waterhouse Hawkins under the guidance of Hunterian anatomist Richard Owen. I will first establish the exhibitionary nature of Bob's viewpoint throughout *Fighting the Whales*, then widen that gaze from the whale to the larger 'scenes' of the voyage, which I will show illuminate the relationship between Victorian Britain's emphases on industry and exhibition to assert its tenuous dominion over nature in the Victorian present, past, and 'deep' past (that 'history' which becomes '*pre*history' in this period).

2.2.1 Bob's exhibitionary gaze

[45] Ibid., p. 154.

Fighting the Whales is a backward-looking narrative whose understanding of the first half of the nineteenth century illuminates the issues facing the latter half using allusions to Britain's primeval past. Bob's sense of time (and he is obsessed with 'time', referencing it over seventy times in the ten-chapter novel) is peculiar. The novel is a reconstruction of a particular era gone by (those earlier days of whaling before the British fleet was in decline), set up as a series of 'scenes' that the reader views as if following a guidebook through a museum or exhibition. Bob calls this bygone era 'old times', or 'that time', or 'a long time since'.[46] These 'scenes' move the reader through Bob's exhibit, in which I will show him to be visitor, subject, and proprietor:

> When we came up to the scene of action the second mate had just 'touched the life' (Ch. 3)
>
> The scene that took place on board ship after we caught our first fish was most wonderful (Ch. 4)
>
> The scene that followed was very horrible, for there was no killing the brute (Ch. 4)
>
> The scenes in a whaleman's life are varied and very stirring (Ch. 5)
>
> 'Trying out' the oil, although not so thrilling a scene as many a one in his career, is, nevertheless, extremely interesting (Ch. 5)
>
> We gazed at this scene in deep silence and with beating hearts (Ch. 7)
>
> And in the midst of such work we forgot for a time the solemn scene we had so recently witnessed (Ch. 9)

The 'scenes' educate and entice, propelling the reader from one to the next. There are pages of information, clinical description and explanation for each 'scene' (though Bob shows himself to be an uneducated boy many times), reading often like a guidebook to an exhibition, and with the benefits of Bob's juvenilia-in-retrospect framing narrative which casts the whale as a monstrous spectacle.

The *character* Bob Ledbury is as an astonished child inspecting the monsters at Wombwell's or a whale carcass touring around England on a freight car, but the

[46] Ballantyne, Ch. 1 (all).

elderly *narrator* Bob Ledbury is more akin to the proprietor of the monster show, lifting the whale carcass from the sea and strapping it to the side of the ship so that his teenage self (and the boys who buy tickets to this exhibition— that is, read *Fighting the Whales*) can look incredulously upon the carcass of the monster and know that it exists and that it can be slain by (English) men. The opening paragraph of the novel employs Bob Ledbury as promoter of the exhibition and reads like an advertisement for any of the numerous exhibitions of whale carcasses which made the rounds of Britain, America, and Western Europe in the nineteenth century:

> That a fish, more than sixty feet long, and thirty feet round the body; with the bulk of three hundred fat oxen rolled into one; with the strength of many hundreds of horses; able to swim at a rate that would carry it right round the world in twenty-three days; that can smash a boat to atoms with one slap of its tail, and stave in the planks of a ship with one blow of its thick skull;—that such a monster can be caught and killed by man, is most wonderful to hear of, but I can tell from experience that it is much more wonderful to see.[47]

'Limited engagement only!' he might easily have concluded. By violently inverting the pastoral ('three hundred fat oxen' with 'the strength of many hundreds of horses' gives way to staving in the planks of ships) Ballantyne's opening advertisement for his didactic exhibitionary novel promises the sublime: to witness the monstrous potential of nature from a position of safety. To say that the hunting of such a creature is 'wonderful to hear of, but [...] much more wonderful to see' invests the novel with a sense of confidence in the vividness of its 'scenes'. This is not like other novels for boys—*Fighting the Whales* participates in the enticing sensory experience of material culture.

Like Ballantyne's adventure novels for boys, Roman observes that exhibitions of monstrous whales (carcasses or skeletons) 'combined entertainment with education'.[48] An 1881 broadside for a 'monster whale' in Philadelphia encouraged parents: 'no parents should neglect this opportunity to give the children so excellent

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[47] Ibid., Ch. 1.
[48] Roman, p. 175.

and practical a lesson in natural history'.[49] *Fighting the Whales* operates similarly. The novel was re-printed in 1869 as a volume of *Ballantyne's Miscellany*, the frontispieces thereof promise adventure for the boy reader and signals to his parents that his adventure will be wholesome (Figure 11). The same image was the frontispiece for each volume, with the specific title in a white box in the centre under the banner of 'Ballantyne's Miscellany'. 'Ballantyne's *Menagerie',* it might easily read, as the collage of images from his vast canon features animals from all over the world whom his boy heroes 'fight' and ultimately conquer in the name of God and country. This veritable zoo includes a hippopotamus, lion, crocodile, monkey, beaver, elephant, albatross, and, of course a whale about to be harpooned. There are also large ships, small open boats, a fishing vessel, a desert island, an iceberg, and a life ring. At each side is a curious assortment of indigenous-looking weapons and spears alongside the English weapons and tools of military and economic conquest including swords and rifles but also mining tools such as two pickaxes. Atop the miscellany of monsters, however, is an open bible (complete with radiating light) with a Union Jack firmly planted in it, reassuring parents as to which forces will always prevail in these novels.

[49] Ibid.

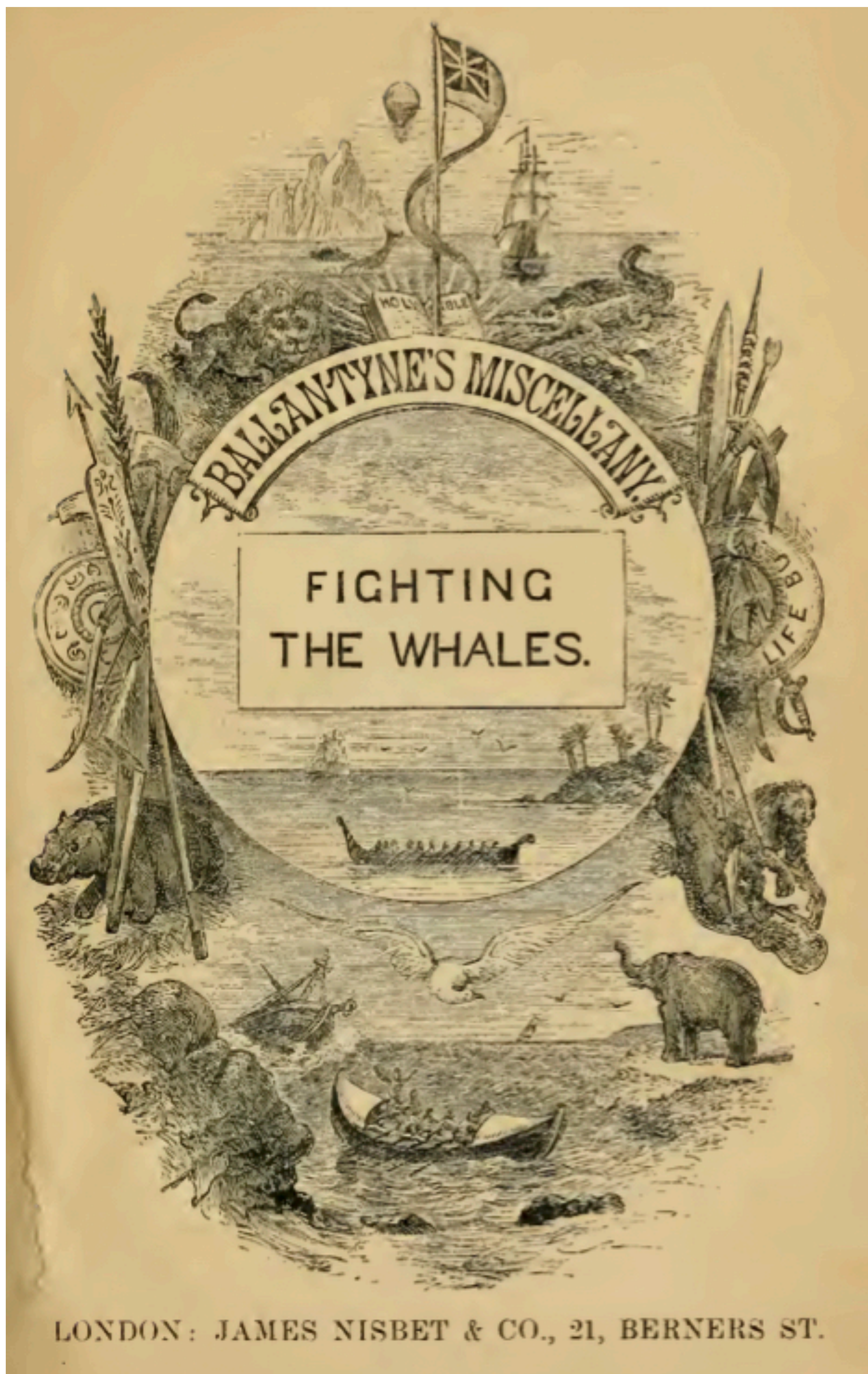

Figure 11. Frontispiece for the *Fighting Whales* volume of *Ballantyne's Miscellany* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1869).

The Pacific Whaling Company employed a similar tactic in 1835 when it began its tour of a 55-foot, 66-ton whale on a flat railroad car from British Columbia, advertising it as 'A Mystery of This Age' and a 'Playmate of Dinosaurs and Mastodons, Last of a Race of Towering Giants'.[50] The compellingly-named Monster Whaling Association followed suit, inviting the public to see 'THE MONSTER WHALE', 'Our Monarch Supreme of the Ocean', situated on the advertisement next to 'the greatest of the giant prehistoric and modern creations of the Earth. The MASTODON, the ELEPHANT, the OX, the HORSE, and MAN' (Figure 12).[51] These invocations of the prehistoric particularly situate the whale as an antediluvian spectacle which has outlived the dinosaurs, thereby making it even more impressive that Victorians men can kill what even the biblical flood could not.

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[50] Richard Ellis, *Monsters of the Sea* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 197.

[51] The mention of the mastodon in these two examples is particularly interesting and emblemises the frequently alluded to 'prehistoric' assumptions about sea monsters to be discussed later in this section. The mastodon, for instance, was first documented in New York in 1705 but became a source of great interest in the nineteenth century when discussed by Baron Cuvier and after the discovery of Koch's 'Leviathan' which turned out to be a mastodon.

He Will Soon Be Here

THE MONSTER WHALE.

Length 60 Feet.

Original Weight 80,000 Pounds.

The following illustration is an unexaggerated comparison of size between

Commencing Wednesday, Jan. 18,

FOR FOUR DAYS ONLY !

—AT THE—

Corner of Main & Eighth

(Near E. & T. H. Passenger Depot.)

Admission, 25c. Children, 15c.

Figure 12. 'The Monster Whale' (1835).

When the first whale is killed and hoisted alongside the ship, Bob again assumes the perspective of the child visitor. 'I began to understand more clearly what a large creature it was,' he says, describing it thus:

> One thing surprised me much; the top of its head, which was rough and knotty like the bark of an old tree, was swarming with little crabs and barnacles, and other small creatures. The whale's head seemed to be their regular home! This fish was by no means one of the largest kind, but being the first I had seen, I fancied it must be the largest fish in the sea. [...] Its body was forty feet long, and twenty feet round at the thickest part. Its head, which seemed to me a great, blunt, shapeless thing, like a clumsy old boat, was eight feet long from the tip to the blow-holes or nostrils[52]

Bob again relies on a pastoral image, the 'bark of an old tree', to orient the landlubbing reader. The crabs, barnacles and other 'other small creatures' 'swarming' on its 'rough and knotty' head recall the didacticism of the busy microcosm of organisms under the microscope. He breaks to retrospection (the voice of the proprietor) to inform the reader that his inexperience led him to gawk at the creature's size, as he (and indeed they) will see bigger whales. This whale's monstrosity lies in its 'great, blunt, shapeless head' which is home to swarms of creatures. Formlessness is often a hallmark of monstrosity, and Bob's struggle to describe the creature reinforces this. Like a traveling whale carcass, menagerie, or other Victorian animal exhibition, attempts to manage the cultural significance of an animal fall short, instead leaving readers—and spectators—confronted with a monstrous formlessness.

2.3 The try-works: Exhibiting the fires (and grime) of industry

Bob regrets that 'I had not much time to study the appearance of this whale' before his work must begin and the exhibition gives way to the process of domesticating the body of the monster for public use in Chapter 4. The blubber is melted down for oil to illuminate Britain and a sperm whale's prized spermaceti is collected while a baleen whale like the Right or Greenland whale is stripped of its baleen ('whalebone')

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[52] Ballantyne, Ch. 4.

for use as skirt hoops, corset stays, shoehorns, fishing rods, canes, riding whips, tongue scrapers, brooms, and surfaces for decorative carvings.

Though all mariners know that the greatest danger on a ship is fire, whale ships regularly burn huge fires aboard for days at a time to render ‘bible leaves’ of blubber into valuable oil. Fire is an orienting image in the novel (as in other texts in this thesis), taking on different forms for different purposes, with sea monsters either thriving in its shadows or exhibited, once conquered, in its light: of the bioluminescent creatures with which Bob becomes obsessed, he, ‘It seemed as if the water was on fire’ (Ch. 2); Tom calls them ‘blue fire’, and we learn that they are the food of the whale; Bob throws a lit piece of ‘oakum and rubbish… saturated with oil’ overboard to illuminate the water when Fred Borders falls from the rigging (which saves his life, Ch. 5); when a harpooned whale runs it can catch the loggerhead (the part of the boat through which the whale line is fed) aflame as it chafes (Ch. 7); and when Bob is pulled overboard by the running whales he sees only a ‘stream of fire’ ‘whizzing’ past (Ch. 7).

In keeping with the novel’s treatment of industry in the crucial period spanning its setting and its publication, *Fighting the Whales* is also a Fighting *Temeraire* of a novel: a glorious celebration of its time ultimately towed to its conclusion by sooty steam-power. Steam is one facet of this maritime corollary to the colliery of Blake’s dark Satanic mills, reinforcing the industrially progressive aims of the novel: When Tom Lokins tries to help Bob out of his ‘passion’ in the very beginning of the novel he suggests that Tom ‘give a great roar to let off the steam and turn about and run’; twice he compares whale boats ‘fast to a fish’ to steamers,[53] and

[53] ‘Fast to a fish’ in Chapter 3, Bob recalls that ‘we beheld our first mate’s boat tearing over the sea like a small steamer’, and he returns to the image in Chapter 7: ‘“Hold on!” cried the captain, and next moment we were tearing over the sea at a fearful rate, with a bank of white foam rolling before us, high above our bows, and away on each side of us like the track of a steamer, so that we expected it every

the whale to a ‘steamboat’,[54] and Tom Lokins is said to ‘smoke like a steam-engine’.[55] The factory ship is the maritime industrial revolution; the fires burning under the great pots of the try-works on deck and its attendant grime connect the seafaring monster hunter with the terrestrial technologies making the monsters’ exhibition and domestic use possible and profitable.

Bob organises himself and his interaction with the novel’s sea monsters around fire. Scenes in Bob’s mother’s house (one at the beginning, the other at the end of the novel) are set fireside, buttressing the novel with the domesticity of the hearth and the mother, and giving a sense of completeness in the voyage cycle. At the beginning of the novel, Bob informs the reader that ‘my employer, a blacksmith, had just died’ (Ch. 1), obliging him to begin his adventure on the high seas— to forge a new vocation from the ash of the void left by his blacksmithing job. Bob introduces himself to the reader in Chapter 1 in the present:

> Sometimes, when I sit in the chimney-corner of a winter evening, smoking my pipe with my old messmate Tom Lokins, I stare into the fire and think of the days gone by till I forget where I am, and go on thinking so hard that the flames seem to turn into melting fires, and the bars of the grate into dead fish, and the smoke into sails and rigging, and I go to work cutting up the blubber and stirring the oil-pots, or pulling the bow-oar and driving the harpoon at such a rate that I can’t help giving a shout.

Bob’s reflection is set by the fire. In it he sees everything he has done and everything he will tell the reader in the course of the novel. Flames of a roaring fire take many forms in the novel, and in this introduction they form an entire scene: cutting-in and trying-out, the whales, the ship, the chase. At the end of the novel he will draw Tom,

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moment to rush in-board and swamp us.’

[54] ‘He turned round and made straight at the boat. I now thought that destruction was certain, for, when I saw his great blunt forehead coming down on us like a steamboat, I felt that we could not escape’ (Ch. 7). Ballantyne also retells the entire story of the sinking of the *Essex* by the whale Mocha Dick, and in Jeremiah Reynolds’ written account of that incident (the only one available at the time) he compared Mocha Dick’s breath to steam engine.
[55] Ballantyne, Ch. 10.

his mother, and their benefactor around a fire to tell them the stories contained in the novel, and in this opening scene he does the same with the reader.

On the opening of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851, William Makepeace Thackeray wrote 'A May Day Ode' for the *Times*. He encouraged readers

> Look yonder where the engines toil:
> These England's arms of conquest are,
> The trophies of her bloodless war:
> Brave weapons these.
> Victorians over wave and soil,
> With these she sails, she weaves, she tills,
> Pierces the everlasting hills
> And spans the seas.[56]

Thackeray's 'everlasting hills' across which England's engines bloodlessly propel her industrial and imperial prowess is a far different vision of the relationship between industry and empire-building that William Blake engenders in one of the most enduring verses of the century:

> And did the Countenance Divine,
> Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
> And was Jerusalem builded here,
> Among these dark Satanic Mills?
>
> Bring me my Bow of burning gold;
> Bring me my Arrows of desire:
> Bring my spear: O clouds unfold!
> Bring me my chariot of fire![57]

The grimy mills of the Industrial Revolution have replaced the pastoral Jerusalem Christ may have visited upon Britain in his unaccounted-for years. (Factor in the 'spear' and the 'chariot of fire' and Blake's mills almost sound like a whale ship trying out blubber.) The fire of the try-works is the crucible in which the monster, once slain, is domesticated. The try-works and its attendant grime also connect the whale ship to the industrial upheaval happening in England. In so doing, the novel presents an alternate economy of monsters: their blubber melted down into useful

[56] William Makepeace Thackeray, 'A May Day Ode', *Times* (1 May 1851), ll. 128-35.
[57] William Blake, From the Preface to 'Milton' (1804), *Selected Poetry*, ed. by Michael Mason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ll. 5-12.

products in the fiery furnaces of the ship, or monstrous bodies displayed in the yields of industrial production on land such as the Crystal Palace. Both domesticate the sea monster into a valuable commodity. The crew's industrial precision builds momentum as the novel progresses. By Chapter 7 Bob remarks 'after being some months out, we became so used to the work, that we acted together like a piece of machinery'. On the capture of the first whale, after the 'cutting-in' (removal of the blubber) Bob presents the 'scene' of the functioning of the try-works:

> 'Trying out' the oil (cooking down the blubber to yield oil), although not so thrilling a scene as many a one in his career, is, nevertheless, extremely interesting, especially at night, when the glare of the fires in the try-works casts a deep red glow on the faces of the men, on the masts and sails, and even out upon the sea.[58]

Bob is in guidebook mode again, shifting to the third person. The passage prior to this explains the process of feeding the great strips of blubber into the boiling pots, and he focuses on the sphere of illumination cast on the sea by the fires in the try-works, churning out 'black smoke' as they work. The men, the ship, and even the sea are aglow with the lights of Britain's floating industry. Bob connects the scene firmly back to England, asking

> As the night advanced the fires became redder and brighter by contrast, the light shone and glittered on the decks, and, as we plied our dirty work, I could not help thinking, 'what *would* my mother say, if she could get a peep at me now?'[59]

Bob is conscious of the odd singularity of the whaleman's work. His job is a point of collision between the natural and industrial. He captures nature, cuts it up, and melts it down with the new technologies of an increasingly industrial culture. When Bob asks 'what *would* my mother say, if she could get a peep at me now?' he reinforces the didactic 'peep' that the novel gives its readers into 'scenes in a whaleman's life', but also again positions Bob's mother as Victorian domesticity, in front of a fire

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[58] Ballantyne, Ch. 3.
[59] Ibid.

hearing a story. (And when she does get her 'peep' at Bob, upon his return, her first reaction is 'how changed ye are!'[60])

The whale itself even contains a bellows to (literally and figuratively) stoke these fires of industry: 'When it was dying, I saw these lips close in once or twice on its fat cheeks, which it bulged out like the leather sides of a pair of gigantic bellows'.[61] And where the fires of industry burn there is also the attendant soot and grime, which *Fighting the Whales* not only addresses but horrifically abjects by adding oil and blood to this mix. He observes that the whale's bristly baleen 'resembles an enormous blacking brush', again relating part of the monster to something the public might know (itself a form of domestication) and further reinforcing the connection between the trying-out and domestic hearth.[62]

In Chapter 4, '"Cutting-In" the Blubber and "Trying-Out" the Oil', Bob sums up the begriming of the ship:

> When we left port our decks were clean, our sails white, our masts well scraped; the brass-work about the quarter-deck was well polished, and the men looked tidy and clean. A few hours after our first whale had been secured alongside all this was changed. The cutting up of the huge carcass covered the decks with oil and blood, making them so slippery that they had to be covered with sand to enable the men to walk about. Then the smoke of the great fires under the melting-pots begrimed the masts, sails, and cordage with soot. The faces and hands of the men got so covered with oil and soot that it would have puzzled any one to say whether they were white or black. Their clothes, too, became so dirty that it was impossible to clean them. But, indeed, whalemen do not much mind this. In fact, they take a pleasure in all the dirt that surrounds them, because it is a sign of success in the main object of their voyage. The men in a *clean* whale-ship are never happy. When everything is filthy, and dirty, and greasy, and smoky, and black—decks, rigging, clothes, and person—it is then that the hearty laugh and jest and song are heard as the crew work busily, night and day, at their rough but profitable labour.

The novel invokes images not just of dark Satanic mills but the smog permanently settled over London due its dependence on coal. Eerily similar to Ballantyne's portrayal of the whaling 'factory ship', R. Russell remarked in 1880 in a volume devoted to those fogs: 'A white cloth spread on the ground rapidly turns dirty, and

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[60] Ibid., Ch. 10.
[61] Ibid., Ch. 4.
[62] Ibid.

particles of soot attach themselves to every exposed object'.[63] The whale ship adds a further layer of horror to the grime in that the men, already covered in soot, slip and slide in the blood and oil on the deck. The sailors are so dirty that even their future cleanliness becomes an impossibility; however, they rejoice in this grime because it means profit (as I will allude to later in this chapter when I discus the opening of *Bleak House*). I have argued that the factory ship is a corollary to industrialising Britain, and that the try-works is the crucible in which the monster, once slain, is domesticated. The stench, mud, and general grime associated with the process of cutting-in and trying-out the whales aboard the factory ship builds on this idea, paradoxically associating the whaling venture with both the rapidly-arriving industrial future of England *and* its distant past full of prehistoric monsters. The idea of 'fossil fuel' (and indeed that term has been in use since the mid-eighteenth century[64]) is an emblem of this paradox of the coal-burning public viewing the 'primitive' dinosaurs at Sydenham. An 1851 *Household Words* piece by Henry Morley, 'Our Phantom Ship on an Antediluvian Cruise' (another literary 'guidebook', like *Fighting the Whales*) sails the reader among dinosaurs and the geological antecedents of the industrial revolution: 'These islands, with the changes of level constantly occurring, shall sink under the wave; the sea shall cover them with sand and mud; but after a time they shall rise again [...] and hereafter each, pressed down under the accumulated deposit of those ages through which we have been receding, shall be mined for in England as a coal deposit. Among the fossils in the coal...' and he goes on to list the species.[65] The fire and smoke also invokes volcanic deep time; in Morley's 'Cruise' 'We approach a black shore, and sail under the smoke and ashes of

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[63] R. Russell, *London Fogs* (London: Stanford, 1880), p. 6.
[64] *OED*.
[65] Henry Morley, 'Our Phantom Ship on an Antediluvian Cruise', *Household Words* 3.73 (1851), p. 494.

a huge volcano'.[66] Just as the body of the whale (the ancient leviathan) will be rendered into fuel (in addition to domestic goods), so will the dinosaurs embedded in Britain's coal deposits.

The grime of this enterprise is simply the price one has to pay for booming industry, and it also forms yet another connection to the exhibition of geologically and temporally distant 'scenes'. Nancy Rose Marshall, in her essay on spatial time at Sydenham, observes that

> Visitors arriving by train, for example, whose first glimpse of the park would have been the geological displays, might have recalled Tennyson's description of a railway engine as 'some great ichthyosaurus'. If not, park guidebooks reminded passengers on the 'monster trains' that 'roll[ed] onward to Sydenham' that the coal, lead, and gas displayed in the geological exhibits and responsible for their transportation as well as for 'the prosperity of our commercial nation' had been formed in the deep time of the remote past.[67]

Thus, she attests, 'the very substances that made modern civilisation possible were associated with the formless filth of unimaginably distant ages'.[68] Let me first establish this connection between monsters of the deep sea and the deep past, as they were conceived in the nineteenth-century, more concretely. In Morley's 'Antediluvian Cruise', the sea voyage *is* a voyage back in time: 'The sea is turbulent; often we see it beaten into surf, and roaring over banks, exposed and dismal at low water. But we pass on, centuries rolling by, and sail again over the site of England'.[69] When 'we' arrive in the deep past we meet Britain's ancient, monstrous inhabitants: 'Now we pursue our phantom voyage farther back into the depths of time—millions of years back into the past. Here is a huge reptile like a whale that darts through the sea to seize another monster with the claws that arm its webbed feet'.[70] Throughout the nineteenth century the art and hobby of fossil-collecting in the British Isles grew in popularity alongside the new discipline of geology (what today we would specify

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[66] Ibid.
[67] Marshall, p. 299.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Morley, p. 495.
[70] Ibid., p. 494.

as palaeontology). It was found that many of these enormous fossil sea monsters were actually whales; some were indeed prehistoric, deposited inland while Britain was still underwater (during the biblical flood, many believed), and others brought on land by earlier Britons or washed ashore.[71] Some were not actually whales but sea-going dinosaurs, and two dominant fossil sea monsters emerged from this early rush to catalogue: the plesiosaur and the ichthyosaur. Henry de la Beche who was responsible for many of the illustrations for the Geological Society's publications, portrayed the two in 'Duria Antiquior, or, A More Ancient Dorset' in 1830 (Figure 13). The illustration shows several ichthyosaurs, one eating a plesiosaur, one spouting like a whale at the surface, and another eating a squid (a well-documented food of the sperm whale). Thomas Hawkins (who sculpted the dinosaur statues for the Crystal Palace) published his *Memoirs of Ichthyosauri and Plesiosauri* in 1834; John Samuelson Templeton illustrated the frontispiece for the book, which portrayed the dinosaurs as looking similar to whales (Figure 14). Anatomist Richard Owen (head of the Hunterian and advisor to Hawkins in his construction of the Crystal Palace dinosaurs) quotes Cuvier in the guidebook for those dinosaurs: the plesiosaur is 'the most singular, and its characters the most monstrous, that had been yet discovered amid the ruins of a former world', as 'to the head of a lizard it united the teeth of a crocodile, a neck of enormous length, resembling the body of a serpent, a trunk and tail having the proportions of an ordinary quadruped, the ribs of a chameleon, and the paddles of a whale'.[72] Owen writes similarly of the ichthyosaurus: 'impressing the observer of the fossil skeleton with a conviction that the ancient animal must have resembled the whale tribe' and the 'tegumentary nature

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[71] Nicholas Redman has meticulously catalogued them all in his book *Whales' Bones of the British Isles*, delineating those categories as fossil and sub-fossil, respectively.
[72] Richard Owen, *Geology and Inhabitants of the Ancient World* (London: Bridbury and Evans, 1854), p. 31.

of the fin, insustained by bony fin-rays, bespeaks its affinity to the same part in the mammalian whales and porpoises'.[73]

[73] Ibid., pp. 26-27. The ichthyosaurus in particular inspired Victorian literary imaginations. Susan Shatto has called Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky a 'droll burlesque of the dinosaur' as its 'fish head and enormous eyes recall the ichthyosaurus' (Shatto, 'Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, and the Monstrous Efts', *The Yearbook I English Studies* 6 (1976), 144-55 (p. 153); Tennyson called the railway engine 'some great ichthyosaurus'; in Morley's 'Antediluvian Cruise', the reader encounters 'Herr Ichthyosaurus'; Jules Verne dramatizes a fight between an ichthyosaur and plesiosaur in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*; *The Saturday Magazine* published a spread on the ichthyosaur in 1843; May Kendall's famous 'Ballad of the Ichthyosaur' appeared in *Punch* in 1885; in *The Time Machine*, HG Wells writes that in the future 'horses, cattle, sheep, and goats had followed the ichthyosaur into extinction' (p. 15). Even at the turn of the twentieth century the prehistoric 'fish lizard' still haunted the periphery of popular literature: in *Heart of Darkness* Marlowe remarks, upon hearing a noise, 'A deadened burst of mighty splashes and snorts reached us from afar as though an ichthyosaurus had been taking a bath of glitter in the great river' (p. 30). Conrad's ichthyosaurus is vestigial, primordial, and gives the sense that Marlowe is travelling not just into the dark heart of the savage continent but the primitive dark heart of time. Ichthyosaurs and their ilk signal this primeval savagery wherever they are conjured by scientific or literary imaginations, and their environment is often portrayed as a turbid, alluvial muck in which monsters might thrive (in other words, the deep past, the deep sea, or London).

Figure 13. Henry de la Beche, '*Duria antiquior*, or, A More Ancient Dorset' (1830).

Figure 14. John Samuelson Templeton, frontispiece to *Memoirs of Ichthyosauri and Plesiosauri* (1834).

All the Year Round described the merits of Owen's collection of prehistoric sea monster skeletons: 'For the world was not then as lovely as it is now, but huge, and monstrous, and uncouth—a mere seething steaming cauldron of heated mud and turbid water, inhabited by fierce monsters always warring together'.[74] Dickens invokes the bodily remains of prehistory in several of his novels.[75] Thackeray's 'everlasting hills' of Britain and the maritime domain have already been marked by 'hideous' and 'frightful' monsters. The most famous of these 'mud-made monsters' is Dickens' Megalosaurus, slopping up Holborn Hill in the beginning of *Bleak House*:

> London. Michaelmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.[76]

It is a bleak November in London, and straightaway Dickens invokes the biblical flood (whose role in the distribution of fossil was a point of heated controversy in the new discipline of geology). Dickens imagines London covered in primordial mud, the sort of mud in which Megalosaurus might have felt at home (reminding readers that dinosaurs once stalked Britain).[77] Instead of rain and snow there is the 'soft black

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[74] *All the Year Round* 8 (27 September 1862), p. 63.

[75] In *Dombey and Son,* Adelene Buckland has noticed the 'giant forms' and 'carcasses of ragged tenements' (Dickens' words) that recall the iguanodon and ichthyosaurus fossils discovered during the cutting of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton railway line. She writes that in this passage of *Dombey and Son* 'the railroad connects the city with geographically distant places and the temporally different monsters that lurk beneath its soil. *Our Mutual Friend* also intimates a London populated with monstrous corpses: Bradley Headstone meets Lizzie in the square, 'in the centre of which… is a very hideous church with four towers at the four corners, generally resembling some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back with its legs in the air' (Buckland, p. 221).

[76] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 1.

[77] William Buckland had discovered Megalosaurus in Stonesfield in 1823 and named in in the publication of the Geological Society the following year (Buckland, 'Notice on the Megalosaurus', p. 391). Adelene Buckland reminds us that 'the Megalosaurus was just one of many images of primeval

drizzle' of smoke and 'flakes of soot'. The mud is so deep that dogs are unidentifiable and horses nearly so. Commuters on foot slosh to their destinations (meeting, at any moment, that Megalosaurus). They have been 'slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke)', alluding to the disturbed sense of time this environment casts on itself. The 'new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud' that 'accumulate at compound interest' at last invoke the reason behind the muddy madness: the city is paying for its industrial revolution in mud.[78]

Isobel Armstrong observes that in *Bleak House* the 'proliferation of mud, filth, effluvia, and rotting waste, most appallingly exhibited by the decaying burial ground of Tom-all-Alone's (the anti-conservatory of the novel) and its mephitic vapours, is the corollary of [the glass-making process]'.[79] I argue that this corollary is true for any of the grimiest Victorian industries, whaling included. The whaleship is another anti-conservatory: a perpetually smelly unclean place where the business of death is conducted in the name of Victorian progress. The glass-making industry, the whaling industry, Blake's 'dark Satanic mills', and their sister industries are literally and figuratively mired in prehistoric filth in their attempts to manufacture Britain's future, and many were on display at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and its 1854 reconstruction at Sydenham. *Bleak House* was serialised between March 1852 and September 1853 without any direct references to the Exhibition, though Isobel Armstrong has still called it his 'anti-Exhibition novel'.[80] *Bleak House's* Sir Leicester Dedlock (whose family is 'as old as the hills and infinitely more respectable'), would 'on the whole

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monsters available to consumers of popular entertainments in 1852-53' (p. 686), but it was one of the most well-known.

[78] 'And just a week before Bleak House was re-published in single-volume format, Francis Trevelyan Buckland's article "Old Bones" reported on the discovery of dinosaur bones found beneath the ground outside St. John's College in Oxford and contrasted the modern world of 1853 with "the apparition of that great leviathan on top of Heddington [sic] Hill' (Adelene Buckland, p. 687, quoting Francis Trevelyan Buckland).

[79] Isobel Armstrong, p. 247.

[80] Ibid., p. 246.

admit Nature to be a good idea' though 'little low, perhaps, when not enclosed with a park fence', and Owen and Hawkins did just sort of domestication with their 'Geology and Inhabitants of the Ancient World' exhibition outside the Crystal Palace at Sydenham.

The mud and muck of industrial Britain has also been aligned with 'its less delicate variant, excrement', a very real public health concern (as outlined in the earlier section on the microscope and the London Water Company).[81] Marshall says that 'language of mud, dirt, shapelessness, and uncleanliness' with regard to portrayals of both the deep past and Victorian London 'conveys a visceral repulsion to the abject'.[82] The same is true for the whaleship. That everything is 'filthy, and dirty, and greasy, and smoky, and black' during the process of cutting in and trying out (and Ballantyne even calls the whale's head a 'shapeless thing' (Ch. 4)) further abjects the portrayal of industrialisation.

Fighting the Whales confirms the presence of monsters in the sublimely-distant South Seas, but it may have been traumatic to learn that ancient monsters had so thoroughly breached Britain's borders (geographic, temporal, and epistemic) that they were embedded in the very soil, that London was built upon them. The whale and its gruesome domestication by the try-works is a site of conflict between the deep past full of whale-like sea monsters and the industrial future which would be impossible without their remains.

The final piece of the exhibitionary puzzle is the very Victorian notion of 'popular science'. This concept of public knowledge also unites many of the ideas I have put forth about the novel. Adelene Buckland notes of Great Exhibition-era London:

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[81] Marshall, p. 297.
[82] Ibid., p. 298.

> All over London, then, visual and material cultures pictured a prehistoric world characterised by spectacular monsters, and the natural world as intrinsically catastrophic: size, spectacle, and the pleasures of fear in the face of calamitous disasters and gigantic creatures turned nature into performance, familiarising their crowds with exaggerated versions of popular science.[83]

Just as I have argued for the Victorian view of the world as a laboratory in the first section of this chapter, the new knowledge of popular science made the natural world feel inherently exhibitionary (and, thus, domesticated) to a public who could now view these phenomena from the sublime safety of Sydenham (or, in the case of didactic literature, their homes). I am interested then in the domestication of knowledge in Ballantyne's novel. The epistemology of the novel is highly accessible, as Ballantyne is careful to account for exactly when and how Bob knows what he knows, and he uses Bob's lack of formal education as a didactic device to teach his young readers. The repeated use of images of fire is one of Ballantyne's more heavy-handed symbolisms of knowledge and enlightenment. More subtle is his use of transparency: Bob likes to use the word 'clear' in its epistemological sense, creating a sort of conservatory with his words.

The scientific 'glasses' are an example of this. The glasses of the microscope and the barometer *are* clear and they make things epistemologically clear. They make the invisible visible and quantifiable, allowing a layperson access to this knowledge once reserved for the learned community. Early in Chapter 1 Bob waxes uncharacteristically poetic on the theme of knowledge:

> There is a wise saying which I have often thought much upon. It is this: 'Knowledge is power.' Man is but a feeble creature, and if he had to depend on his own bodily strength alone he could make no head against even the ordinary brutes in this world. But the knowledge which has been given to him by his Maker has clothed man with great power, so that he is more than a match for the fiercest beast in the forest, or the largest fish in the sea. Yet, with all his knowledge, with all his experience, and all his power, the killing of a great old sperm whale costs man a long, tough battle, sometimes it even costs him his life.

[83] Adelene Buckland, p. 683.

Though attributed to Francis Bacon's 1897 *Meditationes Sacrae*, the discursive equation of knowledge with power (*'scientia potestas est'*) resonates with Victorian epistemology in response to Romanticism and its privileging of Wonder. In the passage, Bob means innate knowledge, given to humans by God, but the novel also repeatedly privileges the knowledge that man extracts from the monstrous presence of creatures and of destabilising forces at sea: under a microscope one can see the beastly medusae, food for whales, and their monstrous brethren in the Thames; with a barometer one has a fighting chance of protecting himself against storms; monstrous whales can not only be hoisted alongside a ship for flensing but preserved and displayed on land to those who will never fish the South Seas. Indeed, knowledge is power for the rapidly industrialising whaling industry, the scientific communities trying to keep pace (including the burgeoning discipline of geology, suddenly awash with marine fossils), and the increasingly literate public for whom a Romantic appreciation of nature has been supplanted by the Victorian excitement of slicing nature open to see what was inside (however disruptive that vision might be).

In several instances the more senior whale men in *Fighting the Whales* recite facts and figures they have learned from physicians and scientists who sailed on earlier voyages, thus proliferating scientific knowledge (for example, 'the captain himself said so, and that's how I came to know it' (Ch. 3)). Fred Borders says of a physician with whom he once sailed 'He was never satisfied with knowing a thing; he must always find out *why* it was […] he would tell you all kinds of queer things, and would pump you dry of all you knew in no time' (Ch. 7). Bob, however, never really seems to 'know' anything: 'Hurrying along the crowded streets without knowing very well what I meant to do' (Ch. 1); 'we knew they were going to do some sort of mischief, we didn't exactly understand what it was to be' (Ch. 2); 'I was in such a

state of flutter that I scarce knew what I did' (Ch. 3); 'I know not how I got free' (7); and the novel privileges the experience of those elder statesmen of the sea: 'young fellers like you don't know nothin' about the weather', Tom tells Bob, 'cause why? you've got no experience' (Ch. 5). Bob seems to subscribe to the view of nature espoused by the confluence of public monster shows and the new discipline of geology's near-constant discovery and display of the remains of prehistoric marine 'monsters' that there is a primordial knowledge contained in the monstrous whale. Like the medusae under the microscope, perhaps scrutiny of the whale will yield the key to its geological longevity. The whale is a spectacle body, exhibited to the public physically or through text and commoditised as such by a public both needing to *see* the monster and to use its constituent parts as domestic objects. After all, Hamilton reminds his reader, with surprising awareness, 'the vast and expensive preparations which are made for the capture of the whale, and the excitement and perils attendant upon the adventure, not only render it an object of great commercial import, but throw around it an air of something like chivalrous interest, in which every one must instinctively participate'.[84] Indeed, participation is instinctive and unavoidable, and *Fighting the Whales* brought this to the boys who would grow up to apply these principles of domesticating wild animals in the South Seas to the imperial domestication of 'wild' peoples in the South Seas and elsewhere.

The monstrous whale is a spectacle to be domesticated and commoditised by selling either its constituent parts or the chance to view it as a whole. The monster whale, then, *can* be slain, can be domesticated, though it would not be termed a monster if that endeavour did not involve great bodily risk to those men who undertake it. And even this environment can be domesticated, made civilised, and

[84] Hamilton, p. 33.

even monetised in an aquarium, museum, or exhibition. The skeletons of the prehistoric and contemporary sea monsters alike can be articulated by human hands and displayed in a museum. Sea monsters live in 'turbid' monstrous places where man cannot, but if you can put something in a glass case, or parade it around on a train car and charge admission to see it, you have bested it. If you have harpooned it and hoisted it alongside your ship you have conquered it and with it the turbid world beneath the hull of that ship. If your wife wears a corset made rigid by the baleen of the sea monster you plucked from the turbid deep then you have domesticated that creature just like the ferocious predators in the London Zoo have been contained and commoditised. They are still monsters, they still disquiet the dreams of children and endanger the lives of mariners but, in this cultural moment in Victorian Britain, they can be caught and conquered. Even when treated by men of science, the bodies of these prehistoric and nineteenth-century monsters flung up on Britain's beaches, chipped out of Britain's rock, or harpooned in the farthest reaches of the ocean, represent not just scientific or economic objects but public bodies, public spectacles, and the Victorian hunger for a sense of participation in the advances of science and technology, and the slaying of monsters.

When Sylvia Robson of *Sylvia's Lovers* exclaims that 'I should be a monster, fit to be shown at a fair, if I could forgive him as got feyther hanged' she is also asserting her independence.[85] If she could be so domesticated as to forgive the man who got Daniel Robson hanged for inciting the riot at Monkshaven she would be both docile and monstrous: controllable enough to be displayed and horrid enough to draw a crowd. Though Sylvia likely means those *people* deemed 'monsters' and shown in exhibitions, she, a young Yorkshire lass from a whaling town surely aware of

[85] Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers*, p. 333.

traveling whale exhibits, speaks to the culture of monster shows which included everything from bearded ladies to monster whales, while Bob narrates his first encounter with a whale carcass as if he were a visitor to one. Sylvia flips Victorian Christian piety on its head by saying that the monstrous thing to do would be to *forgive* the man who got her father killed. Sylvia's monstrosity lies also in her position in the interstices of Phillip's quiet capitalism and Kinraid's fiery heroism. There is a monstrosity in the compromise she makes to be a part of Phillip's pious Christian lifestyle, foreshadowing a Victorian middle class where she (the wife) is largely decorative. Her life with Phillip domesticates her, making her an artefact of her former wild desires, reducing her passions to fossil memories. *Fighting the Whales,* however, is engaged in shaping English *boys* for a life of imperial service specifically by feeding their wildest desires and indoctrinating them into the types of violence they may one day commit. Monkhaven's whale men experience many of Bob Ledbury's hardships; however, the two novels show what different narrative aims can be accomplished through a dramatization of British whaling. Ballantyne's novel is an exhibition a boy can visit by reading, while Gaskell (the far more skilled practitioner) uses the nuances of a whaling community to expose the injustices of the press gangs and the families they fractured. In *Fighting the Whales*, however, the dominant aim of imperial inculcation is undermined by the monstrous whale's refusal to take shape in any understandable way.

2.4 The Whale as Hybrid Monster

An important aspect of the whale's monstrosity lies in its hybridity. What could be more frightful to Victorian science (popular and professional, with its emphasis on careful cataloguing and taxonomy) than a creature that refuses to participate in

categorisation? Attempts to categorise the whale reach far into the history of science with little resolution until the eighteenth century. Monsters of the sea (and monsters more generally) by definition can move between (or sometimes completely outside of) the categories of social and scientific order, which produced particular anxiety in the carefully-crafted (but actually very fragile) framework of Victorian taxonomy. Anxiety about hybridity is an anxiety about that which refuses to be categorised or that which might occupy more than its allotted space. (Hybridity was an issue at the Crystal Palace too, both in terms of where to place things and the 'genre' of the entire endeavour.) The two sides of the hybrid coin in *Fighting the Whales* are the whales with human qualities, and poor Fred Borders who dies a whale's death on the end of a harpoon.

Bob introduces his reader to the first monster that refuses to stay in its category when the sharks show up to the whale carcass. Once the first whale is killed Bob Ledbury realises that the monstrous whale further destabilises the narrative in death by attracting and exposing men to those sea monsters they did *not* seek. Whalers often reported sperm whales locked in battl with gigantic squid or octopi, whose tentacles were often mistaken for serpents; sperm whales in their death throes often vomited up pieces of other sea monsters (the beaks and tentacles of those great cephalopods); and the whale carcass even makes monsters of the seabirds (the 'hosts of gonies, stinkards, haglets, gulls, pigeons, petrels, and other sea-birds, which commenced to feed on pieces of the whale's carcass with the most savage gluttony'[86]). Once the whale was killed and its body secured to the ship the men perched atop slicing the blubber often looked down only to see the water roiling with sharks. Melville's Ishmael devotes a chapter to these attendant sea monsters,

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[86] Ballantyne, Ch. 4.

describing the difficulty of trying to sleep below decks with the sharks' tails thumping the wooden hull millimetres from his face, and sharks features prominently in several other texts in this thesis ('A Vision of the Sea', *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* and the literature of the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition). In *Moby-Dick* these sharks are so greedy that, in the melee, a rival will rip open another's flesh and the shark will devour its own entrails (appealing to that supreme Victorian horror, cannibalism (even worse—self cannibalism). Bob Ledbury, writing for a younger audience, tells a tamer tale:

> Sharks, too, came to get their share of what was going. But these savage monsters did not content themselves with what was thrown away; they were so bold as to come before our faces and take bites out of the whale's body. Some of these sharks were eight and nine feet long, and when I saw them open their horrid jaws, armed with three rows of glistening white sharp teeth, I could well understand how easily they could bite off the leg of a man, as they often do when they get the chance. Sometimes they would come right up on the whale's body with a wave, bite out great pieces of the flesh, turn over on their bellies, and roll off.[87]

The sharks 'do not content themselves with what was thrown away', proving themselves dangerous beyond measure to the Victorian enterprise in that they are not content with their place in the literal and figurative food chain. They challenge the whalemen for a piece of the whale which has been reserved for Britain's illumination. One particularly motivated shark challenges Tom Lokins' place at the top of the evolutionary pecking order, and the novel protects this hierarchy by thrusting a harpoon down its throat. Bob is characteristically amazed:

> We quickly reeved a line through a block at the fore yard-arm, and hauled it on deck with much difficulty. The scene that followed was very horrible, for there was no killing the brute. It threshed the deck with its tail, and snapped so fiercely with its tremendous jaws, that we had to keep a sharp look out lest it should catch hold of a leg. At last its tail was cut off, the body cut open, and all the entrails taken out, yet even after this it continued to flap and thresh about the deck for some time, and the heart continued to contract for twenty minutes after it was taken out and pierced with a knife.[88]

The seemingly un-killable shark, squirming out of the men's grasps, trying to upset the predatory order, speaks to the metaphorical Victorian anxiety that perhaps there

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

really is ‘no killing the brute’, that the shark or whale or any of their monstrous ilk cannot be slain by men, thus destabilising the Victorian inheritance of dominion over ‘brutes’ of all sorts. (This unease is magnified by the shark’s continued animation after it is finally killed.) Like the whale, the monster shark is a potential domestic object as well, as Bob explains, ‘The skin of the shark is valued by the whalemen, because, when cleaned and dry, it is as good as sand-paper, and is much used in polishing the various things they make out of whales’ bones and teeth’.[89] This ‘brute’, once in competition with Tom for the precious flesh of the whale, can also be conquered and reduced to an implement with which to polish the trophies extracted from the whale which will be received in Britain as artefacts representing culture’s firm grasp over nature and the viability of the Victorian empire even where there be ‘brutes’.

2.4.1 THE HUMANISED WHALE

In the opening chapter of *Fighting the Whales*, Bob says the whale can ‘smash a boat to atoms with one slap of its tail, and stave in the planks of a ship with one blow of its thick skull’ as in the wreck of the *Essex* (which Bob faithfully recounts). Straightaway the hybridity of the monster whale in Ballantyne’s ocean is created of the most impressive parts of other creatures: a fish more than sixty feet long, with the girth of an ox, the strength of a horse, and speed greater than the fastest newly-christened steamships. Battling this monster, working at the limits and interstices of order ‘costs man a long, tough battle, sometimes it even costs him his life’.[90] But what exactly *is* this creature whose oil illuminates London’s street lamps, whose bone stays a woman’s corset, and whose body is so valuable as to risk men’s lives in the

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., Ch. 1.

polar reaches of the globe? When Hamlet famously deems a cloud to look 'very like a whale' (iii.2.) after observing to Polonius that it looks like a camel then a weasel he prefigures a debate taken up by scientists and artists alike in the nineteenth century: to what taxonomical group or groups to whales belong? Bob Ledbury asks Tom Lokins one night as the ship transits to the fishery, 'what like is a whale?', to which Tom replies 'Why, it's like nothin' but itself'.[91]

The whale indeed invoked taxonomical confusion for eighteenth- nineteenth-century cetologists and whalemen alike. As I will argue throughout this thesis, 'monstrous' sea creatures, prehistoric and contemporary, literal and literary, constantly break their own moulds and ultimately show themselves to be hybrid creatures that move fluidly between (or sometimes completely outside of) the categories of social and scientific order. Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert encourage readers to question the 'agency of animals, and the extent to which we can say that animals destabilise, transgress or even resist our human ordering, including spatial ones'.[92] Similarly, in *Monster Theory*, Cohen observes that a monster is a 'harbinger of category crisis,' asserting that 'this refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. [...] In the face of the monster, scientific inquiry and its ordered rationality crumble'.[93]

How could this animal possibly conform, when in Judeo-Christian dichotomy of the 'leviathan' is either a symbol of God's power (as on the story of Jonah) or Satan's (as in *Paradise Lost*)? The whale gets caught up in this crisis of taxonomy at a very basic level. Is it a fish? A mammal? Or is it something else entirely? Beale asserted

[91] Ibid., Ch. 3.
[92] Philo and Wilbert, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*, p. 5.
[93] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, pp. 6-7.

in 1839 that 'utter confusion exists among the historians of this animals' and Hamilton observed that the 'very position which the Cetacea occupy in the animal kingdom, forms in itself a subject of the deepest wonder and astonishment'.[94]

To most Victorian scientists, Linnaeus' seminal *Systema Naturae*, first published in 1735, laid this question to rest. The Swedish naturalist conclusively showed that whales were mammals, not fish, as they breathe air, have warm blood, and suckle their young. The highly-publicised 1818 New York court case Maurice vs. Judd called this taxonomy into economic question, asking whether whale oil qualified as fish oil and could thus be inspected and taxed as such. The Plaintiff James Maurice was a state inspector who argued that whale oil was fish oil, and the defendant Samuel Judd was a candle maker and oil merchant. The jury ruled in Maurice's favour, but within a month the New York State Legislature effectively reversed the decision and exempted whale oil from inspection. Thereafter the law would support what Linnaeus knew in 1758.[95] Most literary whalemen hold Linnaeus' classification as truth, though, to a man, they still call a whale a 'fish' on principle. Ballantyne's Bob Ledbury writes

> In the first place, the whale is not a fish! I have applied that name to it, no doubt, because it is the custom to do so; but there are great differences between the whales and the fishes. The mere fact that the whale lives in water is not sufficient to prove it to be a fish. The frog lives very much in water—he is born in the water, and, when very young, he lives in it altogether—would die, in fact, if he were taken out of it; yet a frog is not a fish.
> The following are some of the differences existing between a whale and a fish:—[96]

And he proceeds to list them, following then with perhaps the most interesting constituent part of Ballantyne's hybrid monster whale— its humanness. Reminiscent of those 'conjugal and parental affections' GH Lewes noticed in his anthropomorphic survey of tide-pools—and *Lamentations* 4:3: 'Even sea monsters draw out of the

[94] Beale, p. 34.
[95] See D. Graham Burnett's *Trying the Leviathan: The Nineteenth-Century New York Court Case That Put the Whale on Trial and Challenged the Order of Nature* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2007).
[96] Ballantyne, Ch. 6.

breast, they give suck to their young ones'—Bob finds the maternal bond to be the most interesting difference between whales and fish:

> But the most remarkable point of difference between the whale and fishes of all kinds is, that it suckles its young.
>
> The calf of one kind of whale is about fourteen feet long when it is born, and it weighs about a ton. The cow-whale usually has only one calf at a time, and the manner in which she behaves to her gigantic baby shows that she is affected by feelings of anxiety and affection such as are never seen in fishes, which heartless creatures forsake their eggs when they are laid, and I am pretty sure they would not know their own children if they happened to meet with them.
>
> The whale, on the contrary, takes care of her little one, gives it suck, and sports playfully with it in the waves; its enormous heart throbbing all the while, no doubt, with satisfaction.[97]

This very human attribute complicates the whale's monstrosity by pairing it with a maternal gentleness, though whaling historian Joe Roman reminds us that this 'maternal bond enabled whalers to double their catch' as a calf was an easy target and a mother would never leave her calf's side though it certainly meant her own death.[98] Philip Armstrong has shown that the attitudes twenty-first century culture holds about the uniqueness and fragility of cetaceans and our kinship with them as intelligent, increasingly rare creatures 'were not utterly absent but barely conceived and certainly not authoritative' in the nineteenth century.[99] This mammalian tenderness indeed seems to touch Bob Ledbury during his first capture of a Right Whale: 'I could not look upon the dying struggles of this enormous fish without feelings of regret and self-reproach for helping to destroy it. I felt almost as if I were a murderer, and that the Creator would call me to account for taking part in the destruction of one of His grandest living creatures'.[100]

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[97] Ibid. Canonical colonial minister Cotton Mather invoked the same idea to encourage parents to pray with their children: 'Among the Fish which you follow with your Harping Irons You see the Sea-Monsters draw out of the Breast, and give suck to their Young ones: Even in the Cold Sea, such a Warmth of Parental Affection! But what monsters are those Parents, who are Unconcerned, Whether their Children even Come to Know and Serve God, and Seek and Find the Blessings of the only Saviour? Parents, if you never Pray with your Children… you are such Monsters. Those of the Sea, do with Open Mouth Cry out against your Cruelty' (as quoted in Roman, p. 68).

[98] Roman, p. 116.

[99] Philip Armstrong, '*Moby-Dick* and Compassion', *Society and Animals* 12.1(2004), p. 25.

[100] Ballantyne, p. 7.

These feelings are well documented among whalemen. Hamilton writes (echoing Scoresby),

> There is something […] extremely painful in the destruction of a whale, when thus evincing a degree of affectionate regard for its offspring, which would so honour to the superior intelligence of human beings; yet the object of the adventure, the value of the prise, the joy of the capture, cannot be sacrificed to feelings of compassion.[101]

Similarly, Roman cites whaleman Enoch Cloud, who wrote in his diary 'It was the most terrible sight I ever witnessed… And when I saw this, the largest and most terrible of all created animals bleeding, quivering, dying a victim to the cunning man, my feelings were indeed peculiar!'[102] The aborted capture of a mother whale and her calf is the focus of Edmund Waller's 1645 'Battle of the Summer Islands', still relevant to the nineteenth century whale hunt: 'Seas stain'd with goar, I sing advent-rous toyle, | And how these Monster did disarme an Isle'.[103] The isle is disarmed physically, as 'they fixed javelins in her side [the mother whale] wears, | And on her back a grove of pikes appears' and also because, as the baby whale tries to defend its mother, 'The men amaz'd, blush'd to observe the seed | Of monster human piety exceed!'.[104] The men are so moved by the infant whale's courage they lay down their pikes:

> The rising tide, ere long, their efforts to aid,
> And to the deep a passage for them made;
> And thus they parted with exchange of harms,
> Much blood the monsters lost, and they—their arms.[105]

When Bob Ledbury echoes these feelings, he underscores a sort of communicable monstrosity in the whaling venture that Nietzsche will aphorise in *Beyond Good and Evil* in 1886: 'He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby becomes a

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[101] Hamilton, p. 90.
[102] Roman, p. 80.
[103] Edmund Waller, 'Battle of the Summer Islands' (1645), Canto I, ll. 5-6.
[104] Ibid., III.55-56, III.68-69.
[105] Ibid., III.88-91.

monster'.[106] In a particularly gruesome chapter of *Moby-Dick* the cruel Flask, made monstrous by his life hunting monsters needlessly drives a lance in the ulcer of a dying elderly whale and it explodes, showering the crew in viscera. In his seminal whaling tome, Beale relates of the killing that 'In its struggles the blood from the nostril is frequently thrown upon the men in the boats, who glory in its show!'. [107] Elizabeth Gaskell reminds us of Bob's northern counterparts: 'The whalers went out into the Greenland seas full of strong, hopeful men; but the whalers never returned as they sailed forth', and Cohen that 'the monster polices the borders of the possible, and 'to step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself'.[108]

Bob's feelings of remorse abate, however, when the monster again shows its frightful brawn:

> But the thought passed quickly from my mind as the whale became more violent and went into its flurry. It began to lash the sea with such astonishing violence, that all the previous struggles seemed as nothing. The water all round became white like milk, with great streaks of red blood running through it, and the sound of the quick blows of its tail and fins resembled that of dull hollow thunder. We gazed at this scene in deep silence and with beating hearts.[109]

He repeats the milk image during a later battle: 'The water all round us soon became white like milk, and the foam near the whale red with blood'.[110] The maternal bond Bob romanticised earlier is abjected in the animal's death throes. Where once the whale sweetly suckles her young with 'satisfaction' the mammary image is horrifically retold when the water, 'white like milk', is also streaked with blood. Though the frothy white water in Ballantyne's narrative only *resembles* milk, he is likely showing restraint for his young audience in not describing a relatively common

[106] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. by Michael Tanner, trans. by RJ Hollingdale (New York and London: Penguin, 2003).
[107] Beale p. 83-43. Philip Armstrong, in his historicising of Moby Dick's agency, in 'Moby-Dick and Compassion' makes this connection between Beale and this episode in the novel.
[108] Gaskell, p. 16; Cohen, p. 12.
[109] Ballantyne, Ch. 7.
[110] Ibid.

whaling scene: As 'the maternal bond enabled whalers to double their catch,' a dying mother whale would release both blood and milk into the sea.[111]

Melville also alludes to the practice of killing a calf to bring the mother close, and the mother's release of her milk in her own death throes: 'When by chance these precious parts in a nursing whale are cut by the hunter's lace, the mother's pouring milk and blood rivallingly [sic] discolour the sea for rods.[112] The milk is very sweet and rich; it has been tasted by men; it might do well with strawberries'.[113] One whaleman tells it thus in his diary: 'That's when you feel it. When we killed the mother the milk made the ocean white all around us'.[114] (And it should be noted that in keeping with the Victorian desire for information with their literature, the journals of whalemen and accounts of voyages were commonly published for public consumption.) Bob Ledbury understands intellectually that the whale is not a fish but a mammal, and he spend a lot of time convincing the reader of this solid categorisation; however, the narrative is disturbed by Bob's practical observations at sea that the whale seems to move fluidly between classifications, displaying a capacity for domesticity. In light of Nietzsche's aphorism that 'He who fights with monsters might take care lest he becomes a monster', the whale's apparent parental dedication, domesticity, and capacity to feel pain complicates the whale's monstrosity, and prompts disturbing questions about the righteousness of plunging a harpoon into one in order to convert it into domestic fuel and materials.

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[111] Roman, p. 116.
[112] A rod is a unit of measurement that is 16.5 feet.
[113] Melville, p. 303.
[114] Roman, pp. 80-81.

2.4.2 DEHUMANISED (WHALE-LIKE) MAN

The whale's death throes are the most dangerous time for men in whaleboats, as Bob tell us 'most of the accidents that happen to whalemen occur when the wounded monster is lashing the water in blind terror and agony.'[115] And indeed one of Bob's dear friends, Fred Borders, is killed during this time, and in a most peculiar manner that further speaks to the hybridity of the whaling venture. After the boat is stove by a whale all the men are recovered, but Fred Borders is mortally wounded: 'The worst case, however, was that of poor Fred Borders. He had a leg broken, and a severe wound in the side from a harpoon which had been forced into the flesh over the barbs, so that we could hardly get it drawn out'.[116]

In Ballantyne's novel the only thing 'like a whale' is Fred Borders, in that they both meet their demise on the barb of the harpoon, are brought back to the ship, and after several days their corpses are released overboard. Fred lives for about a week before he dies and his body buried 'in the usual sailor fashion' where 'in deep silence, we committed his corpse to the deep', echoing Bob's earlier description of releasing the whale carcass from the side of the ship after the cutting-in and trying-out.[117] The whale carcass 'sank like a stone', prefiguring the cannon ball they attach to Fred Borders' corpse.[118] And to observe the similarity between the corpse of the whale and of Fred Borders the text suggests that Fred's body will also be fodder for monsters (fed on by sharks): Fred's corpse is 'committed to the deep' while the whale's corpse is lost to the scavenging seabirds at the surface, 'but what was loss to the gulls was gain to the sharks, which could follow the carcass down into the deep and devour it at

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[115] Ballantyne, Ch. 8.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., Ch. 4.

their leisure'.[119] Fred Borders death weakens the already-transgressable boundary between man and monster and their intertwined fates on the high seas.

Ballantyne may be drawing on an episode from John Ross Browne's *Etchings of Whale Cruise* in which one of his ship mates related a particularly lucid dream in which he found himself a whale, experiencing each stage of the killing, slaughtering, cutting-in, and trying-out process.[120] On the most basic level, Fred Borders' death underscores the monstrous potential and power of the whale to violently disturb the voyage. But why zoomorphise Fred Borders in this particularly gruesome way? The zoomorphised man reinforces the monstrous hybridity of the humanised whale; that is, Bob Ledbury spends a significant portion of his narrative on the human qualities of the whale, only to underpin the whale's humanity (and therefore its hybridity) by showing the vulnerability of man to the same fate as the whale (death on the end of a harpoon). Furthermore, to kill a man with the same weapon used to kill the sea monster offers even a further commonality between the monster and 'he who fights with monsters', blurring the line between zoomorphised man and anthropomorphised whale. The monster makes man fear such a transgression of borders. Fred Borders' demise may also signal scepticism of the view espoused by Beale and his whaling and writing contemporaries that the whale fishery is evidence of man's primacy over nature. Fred's death on the harpoon is a reminder that the barb which pierces the flesh of the whale can pierce men too, and that even Victorians are not exempt from the pointed spear-tip where nature and culture, subject and object, come together.

The anxiety about hybridity in Victorian culture, as evidenced by genre-less monsters, again tracks back to the obsession with classification and display. The skeletons of the prehistoric and contemporary sea monsters alike can be articulated by

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[119] Ibid.
[120] John Ross Browne, *Etchings of a Whale Cruise* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846).

human hands and displayed in a museum. However, monsters prove time and again that their particular form of agency does not go gently into that good night of categorisation or exhibition. The monster is powerful, chaotic, it resists classification and takes many forms. Morley's 'Antediluvian Cruise' for *Household Worlds,* however, in touring the geological habitats of those monsters, also recognises their limited temporal habitat: 'If we go farther now, we pass, perhaps, the bounds of life, and we pass, certainly the bounds of knowledge'.[121] What is one to do when faced with such a limit? The Victorian desire to add to the knowledge of the age—and to conquer outbound lands—abuts the desire to create and stay within carefully crafted epistemological boundaries. *Fighting the Whales* is just the first text of several in this thesis whose reliance on a material, visual culture of creatures will ultimately destabilise the order it was intended to secure (others, such as 'The Kraken' will seize on such instability) and trouble the boundaries between wild and domestic, human and nonhuman animals.

[121] Morley, p. 495.

CHAPTER THREE

'THE KRAKEN' AND POLYPI UNDER THE MICROSCOPE AND IN THE AQUARIUM

Below the thunders of the upper deep;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides: above him swell 5
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumbered and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green. 10
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.[1] 15

With scientific categories expanding seemingly faster than they could be named, the latter half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century necessitated not just new names for things but new *systems* for naming. It will be helpful to know a few contemporaneous scientific terms at the outset. *Polypi* is the plural of *polyp* or *polypus*, and in this period generally denoted any sea-going invertebrate with many tentacles radiating from its body. Thus, when 'The Kraken' was published there were two types of polypi: 'ancient' and 'modern'. 'Ancient' polypi were the *cephalopods*: octopi, squid, cuttlefish, and nautili (in this period also known as *calamary* or *sepia*). 'Modern' polypi (as Oliver Goldsmith's 1774 natural history terms them), composed of a curious grouping of corals, sponges, jellyfish, and microscopic creatures, all of which are united by the presence of tentacles (however microscopic). Part of the intrigue of 'The Kraken' which has yet to be properly interrogated is that the poem

[1] Alfred, Lord Tennyson *The Major Works,* ed. by Adam Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000/2009).

contains both 'ancient' and 'modern' polypi. As I foregrounded in Section 1.4, terminology is critical to this study, so I hope that by using the terms by which Tennyson would have known these animals (where appropriate), I can indeed 'preserve a sense of their strangeness' (as Ralph O'Connor has said). Today, 'polypus' is no longer the proper scientific term, and has long since fallen out of public language as well, but its history and usage exemplify and are crucial to understanding the crisis of taxonomy faced by nascent Victorian science.

3.1 Polypi 'ancient' and 'modern'

The 3rd of March 1769 Joseph Banks (one day Sir Joseph, President of the Royal Society) and then-Lieutenant James Cook, aboard *HMS Endeavour*, plucked a large, dead squid out of the water somewhere between Cape Horn and Australia. Banks packed the creature's beak in alcohol and addressed it John Hunter in London, and the remainder of the animal was consumed for supper in the commander's cabin of *Endeavour*. The specimen indeed found its way back to Hunter, whose anatomical collections became the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons. The specimen went largely unnoticed until 1829, when the newly-appointed curator of the Hunterian undertook the immense collection's first-ever catalogue. The new curator was Richard Owen, a familiar character in this project for his work in both the anatomy of cephalopods and his critical role in the creation of the 1854 Crystal Park dinosaurs (and, more broadly, for coining the term *dinosaur* and trying to have Darwin excommunicated). Owen was curious about the specimen and learned that John Hunter had supplied Banks with bottles for specimens collected on the voyage. At the Hunterian Owen cultivated a lifelong interest in cephalopods, and published his *Memoirs on the Pearly Nautilus* three years later, which was so influential that his

official portrait circa 1845 by HR Pickersgill shows Owen holding a nautilus shell in his left hand while an unshelled nautilus is preserved in liquid on the table on which his right hand rests.[2] Presumably, he has unshelled it— his *Memoirs on the Pearly Nautilus* laying the ancient polypus bare for the world to see (Figure 15).

[2] Pickersgill also painted portraits of William Godwin, Jeremy Bentham, Hannah More, William Wordsworth, and many other influential figures. His portrait of Owen is now in the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square.

Figure 15. HR Pickersgill's portrait of Richard Owen (1845). National Gallery London.

The 'Kraken', generally considered an enormous polypus of the cephalopod variety (and sometimes linked to the biblical Leviathan) might be called a 'classic' sea monster. Henry Lee asserts in his 1883 treatise on sea monsters for the London International Fisheries Commission Exhibition (to be discussed in depth in Chapter 6) that 'the belief in giant cuttles is an ancient one' and specifically cites such sources Aristotle, Pliny, and Aelian.[3] The Kraken appears as early as the thirteenth century in Norse and Icelandic literatures and oral traditions. The word *Kraken* comes from the Norse 'krake', for an unhealthy animal or something twisted. Nineteenth-century English interest in the Kraken stems from the Linnaeus's discussion of the creature in the first edition of *Systema Naturae* (1735) and *Fauna Suecica* (1746), and most famously from *Natural History of Norway* (1752-3) by the Bishop of Bergen Erik Pontoppidan (translated to English soon after). The French malacologist Pierre Denys de Montfort wrote of giant octopi in his *Natural History of Mollusca* (1802), which contributed one of the best-known illustrations of the creature (*le poulpe colossal*) terrorising a ship (Figure 16).[4] Zoologist James Wilson theorised in an essay for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1818 that the Kraken must be a giant cephalopod.

[3] Henry Lee, *Sea Monsters Unmasked* (London: Clowes and Sons, 1884), p. 30.
[4] De Montfort was later disgraced after making a series of increasingly far-fetched arguments, including the claim that the ten Royal warships (and their prise, the French ship of line *Ville de Paris),* had been sunk by giant octopi in 1782. A survivor had made it back to Britain, however, and confirmed that it was a hurricane off the Newfoundland coast, not the sea monster, which had sunk the fleet.

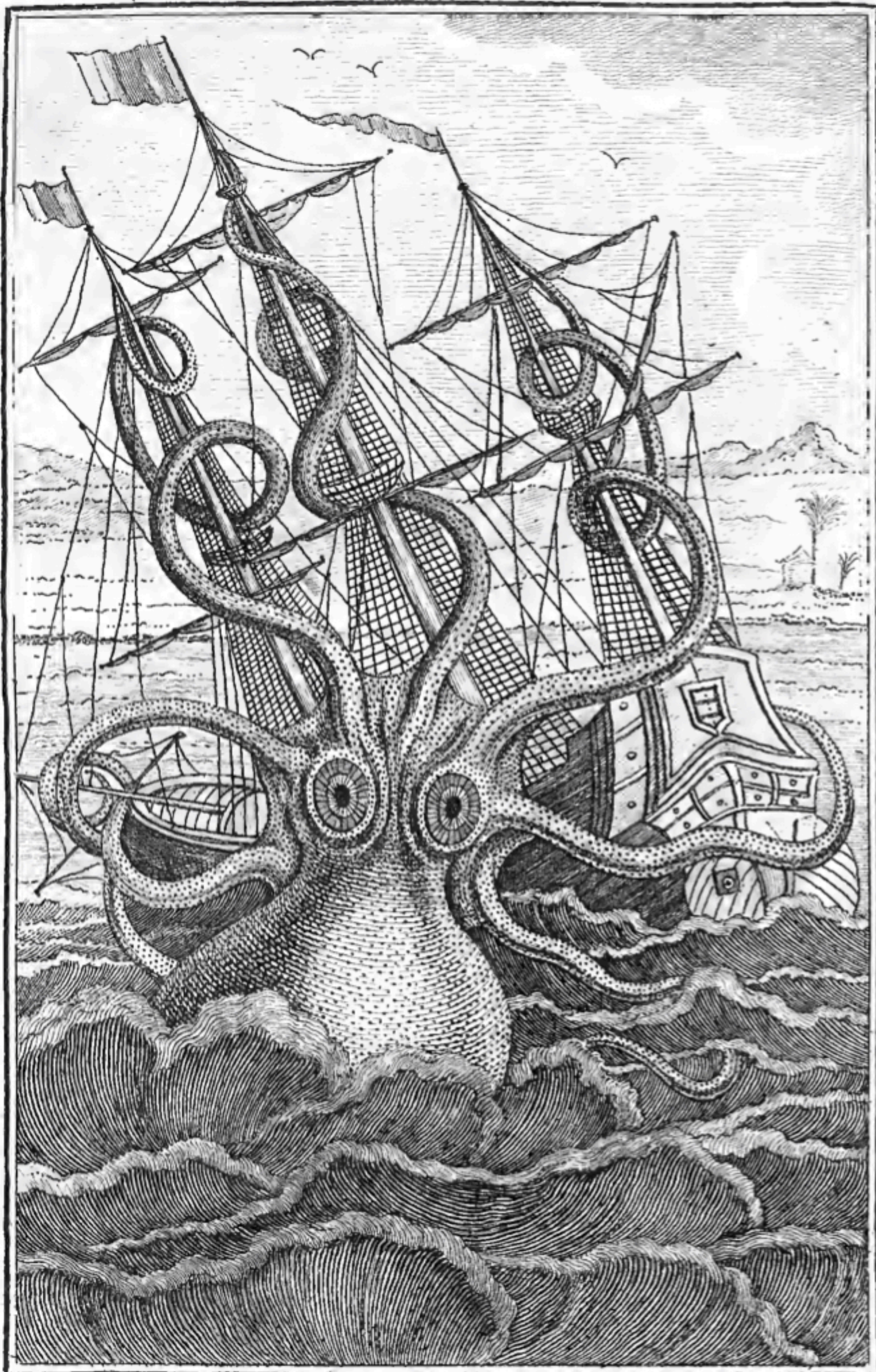

Figure 16. ***Poulpe colossal*****. Pierre Denys de Montfort,** ***Histoire naturelle, générale et particuliere des mollusques*****, vol. 2 (Paris: F. Dufart, 1802), p. 256.**

Krakens aside, the natural history of the cephalopod (the 'ancient' polypus) in the nineteenth century was investigated the era's most celebrated scientific minds. In addition to Owen, Georges Cuvier was also an authority on molluscs (the phylum to which cephalopods belong) and even wrote the first draft of his 1829 volume *Mollusca* in octopus ink. Charles Darwin kept a pet octopus believed to have been collected by the Beagle near the Cape Verde Islands in 1832.

Though occasionally equated with sea-serpents, the Kraken is most often identified as a gigantic squid, and by the early nineteenth century a formidable body of encounters with giant squid (or giant octopi, 'polypi', 'cuttles', etc.) would have been known to anyone with a passing interest in the subject. Giant squid have washed up on the coasts of the British Isles for centuries, most famously at Dingle Bay, County Kerry, in 1673 where the carcass was taken to Dublin and displayed and a broadside was circulated. Thus, part of what is at stake in this chapter is what I might call a history of engagement with polypi in the British Isles, in which 'The Kraken' participates and foretells the Victorian preoccupation with sea monsters (of which polypi small and large are a recurring figure). The Kraken creature itself is a flash point of 'modern' science and archaic lore, and Tennyson pushes this tension to the boundaries of scientific and public knowledge.

3.2 A NEW SOURCE FOR 'THE KRAKEN'

'The Kraken' appeared in *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, published in London in 1830, but was removed from future editions of the collection for unclear reasons and was not reprinted until its inclusion in the 1872 volume of Tennyson's juvenilia. Determining Tennyson's sources for the poem has been a preoccupation of Tennyson scholars since that publication, and has revealed Tennyson's unique perspective as a poet at

the interstices of Romantic naturalism and Victorian empiricism. Tennyson was largely informed by the growing scientific literatures of geology and marine zoology, whose influence will be discussed in depth in this chapter, but lore of the Kraken abounded in his circles. Christopher Ricks confirms Keats and Coleridge talked of Krakens with one another and Tennyson had read Scott's *The Pirate* and his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* as well as Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* and TC Croker's *Fairy Legends*, all which contain references to the Kraken.[5] Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* features a 'dull weed which some sea worm battens on' (IV.542), and of course there is Milton's 'Leviathan | Hugest of all living creatures, on the deep | Stretch'd like a promontory'.[6] (And the Hebrew 'leviathan' means 'that which gathers itself together in folds', resembling the tentacled Kraken.) The Book of Revelation is also often cited as a likely source for Tennyson.[7]

I would also like to contribute a potential source. The week of the New Year 1830 (the year 'The Kraken' was published in *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*) a sea monster appeared in Dartmouth harbour. News spread quickly, and on the 6th of January the *Bury and Norwich Post* reprinted an article that had recently appeared in the *Exeter Post*:

> Considerable consternation has been excited in the town of Dartmouth by the appearance of an immense floating body off the mouth of the harbour. [...] No judgment can yet be formed as to its extreme length and size; but the general conjecture is, that is must either by the immense sea serpent seen two years ago in the Bay of Honduras, or one of the Kraken species described by Pontoppidan in his *Natural History of Norway*. Three parts of this *monstrum horrendum* have been visible at one time, of a greenish black, covered with scales and sea-weeds; the middle portion (apparently the largest) would cover several acres! And what we conjecture to be the head is sometimes elevated several feet above the surface of the water, with immense spouts like the whale! The whole of the town and neighbourhood are on the watch to catch a glance of this immense Leviathan of the deep when it rises, which is commonly at noon, and has hitherto

[5] Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson: A Selected Edition* (London: Pearson, 1969/2007), p. 17.
[6] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Major Works*, ed. by Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), IV.542; Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I.42-44.
[7] 'And the second angel sounded, and as it were a heat mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part and its creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died' (*Revelations* viii); 'And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea' (*Revelations* xiii).

> disappeared about one pm. This hills and the neighbourhood of the Castle are daily crowded with spectators from all parts of the country; and such has been the influx of strangers to our ancient borough that the Inns have not been able to accommodate them, and there are scarcely any lodgings to be had.[8]

The account has all the hallmarks of Tennyson's poem: Pontoppidan's Kraken, of course (and Tennyson does point directly to Pontoppidan in his notes on the poem), the invocation of the *monstrum horrendum,* the green, the enormity of the creature, and especially its propensity to be seen by men as it 'rises'. This is not just another example of the *Times*' observation later in the century that 'It was long since discovered that nothing is so fascinating to an English crowd as a sea-monster', but of the exhibitionary public knowledge of this very particular sort of sea monster and its literary origins. *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* was published later in the year, and if Tennyson was not aware of this particularly public monster, then his poem is certainly part and parcel of the monstrous literary climate it espoused.

Contemporary critics see the vestiges of 'The Kraken' in *Moby-Dick*, *Bleak House*, in Ruskin, and Turner's paintings in that, as Richard Maxwell has noted, they all 'like to tie apocalyptic rhetoric to fastidious observation with scientific ambitions'.[9] Stephen George has compared 'The Kraken' to Yeats' 'The Second Coming'.[10] Christopher Ricks notes that the poem is 'quite other than a science-fiction or Loch Ness fantasy; its depth of feeling comes from Tennyson's pained fascination with the thought of a life which is somehow not life at all'.[11] In his Oxford edition of Tennyson Adam Roberts observes that the Kraken is part of the Tennyson's early work which 'explores with horrified fascination the passive life, the life of inaction', calling it a

[8] *Bury and Norwich Post,* 6 January 1830.
[9] Richard Maxwell, 'Unnumbered Polypi', *Victorian Poetry* 47.1 (2009), p. 15.
[10] Stephen George, 'Tennyson's "The Kraken"', *Explicator* 52.1 (1993), pp. 25-27.
[11] Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson: A Selected Edition* (London: Pearson, 1969/2007), p. 44.

‘poetry of impotence’.[12] Isobel Armstrong has read ‘The Kraken’ as a poem which ‘discloses an uneasy, riven, political experience’, though ‘it is not clear whether it belongs to the inert forces of reaction or the mindless violence of revolutionary action’.[13] Monica Young-Zook, Matthew Rowlinson, and Margaret Lourie take respective psychoanalytic perspectives: Young-Zook has argued that the Kraken ‘might appear to be most easily read in psychoanalytic terms as a vague figure of repression and the Oedipal complex’, while Rowlinson calls it the stage before the Oedipal complex, situating it in the Lacanian Law of the Father, and Lourie argues that the creature ‘can only represent to the post-Freudian reader the vaguely fearful machinations of the unconscious’.[14]

John Rosenberg and James Donald Welch have focused on ‘The Kraken’ in the context of Tennyson’s body of work. Rosenberg calls the poem ‘the germ of all Tennyson’s poetry’ as the poet ‘stakes out his essential subject—the twilight world of myth in which consciousness and unconsciousness intersect’, while Welch has been interested more generally in Tennyson’s sense of time, his ‘predilection of landscape’ and ‘concentration on the external’, suggesting that the ‘enigmatic quality of [‘The Kraken’] and similar poems is a result of the centrality of the materials to the structure of Tennyson’s imagination’.[15]

My analysis will differ from two of the poem’s critics in one fundamental way: WD Paden and Howard Fulweiler, respectively, consider Tennyson’s Kraken a

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[12]Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Major Works*, ed. by Adam Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. xiv.
[13] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 53.
[14] Monica Young-Zook, ‘Sons and Lovers: Tennyson’s Fraternal Paternity’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 33.2 (2005), p. 453; Matthew Rowlinson, *Tennyson’s Fixations: Psychoanalysis and the Topics of the Early Poetry* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), pp. 3, 50; Margaret Lourie, ‘”Below the Thunders of the Upper Deep”: Tennyson as Romantic Revisionist’, *Studies in Romanticism* 18 (1979), p. 11.
[15] John D. Rosenberg *Elegy for an Age: The Presence of the Past in Victorian Literature* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), p. 303; James Donald Welch, ‘Tennyson's Landscapes of Time and a Reading of “The Kraken”’, *Victorian Poetry* 14.3 (1976), p. 201.

sea-snake rather than enormous polypus. (Fulweiler takes this image of the Kraken in an attempt to reconcile the poem with Tennyson's mer-poetry.) This chapter recognises the Kraken as Pontoppidan's giant cephalopod (the 'ancient' polypus), as Tennyson's own notes on the poem suggest. As Christopher Ricks has noted in his annotated text, Tennyson wrote 'See the account which Erik Pontoppidan, the Norwegian bishop, born 1698, gives of the fabulous sea monster—the Kraken'.[16] Pontoppidan wrote of the monster:

> This Krake must be of the Polypus kind, notwithstanding its enormous size… As this enormous animal in al probability may be reckoned of the Polype, or of the Star-fish kind, as shall hereafter be more fully proved, it seems that the part which are seen riling at its pleasure, and are called arms, are properly the tentacle, or feeling instruments, called horns as well as arms. With these they move themselves, and likewise gather in their food[17]

Pontoppidan's writing were also summarised in the 1802 *English Encyclopaedia*, a copy of which Tennyson owned.[18]

I appreciate Rebecca Stott's perspective on the importance of marine zoology (specifically with regard to invertebrates) in the nineteenth century's evolutionary constructions of monstrosity (though her period of consideration is later in the century): 'whilst the ape has received a good deal of attention as the primary evolutionary icon of the fin de siècle, through which the Victorians dreamed their nightmares of descent, the marine invertebrate has received a good deal less attention as an alternative monstrous ancestor with a different set of cultural meanings'.[19] As we have seen in the fictional and factual whaling texts, through the course of the nineteenth century there was an increasing interest in domesticating the monstrous. As in *Fighting the Whales,* there is a profound underlying categorical chaos in 'The

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[16] Ricks, p. 17.
[17] Pontoppidan, p. 412.
[18] Ricks, p. 17.
[19] Rebecca Stott, "Through a Glass Darkly: Aquarium Colonies and Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Marine Monstrosity." *Gothic Studies* 2.3 (2000), p. 306.

Kraken' (written thirty five years earlier), but unlike Ballantyne, Tennyson embraces it, masterfully shaping it into a series of provocative images which question the role of the new scientific disciplines and their taxonomies. The Kraken creature itself is a symbol of tension between an ancient past and an apocalyptic future, and new science struggling to reconcile itself with archaic public lore (or perhaps vice-versa). Polypi ('ancient' and 'modern') are a surprisingly common motif in a variety of writings in the early nineteenth century, and this chapter will explore how the polypus reflects and challenges the taxonomical debates of its historical moment, employing Tennyson's Kraken as an emblem of the new scientific climate of the nineteenth century perhaps best expressed in the tension between Wordsworth's preferred style of observation—'emotion recollected in tranquillity'—and his caution that 'we murder to dissect'.

Specifically, this chapter will first discuss differing 'doubles' under the glass of the microscope or behind the glass of the aquarium to place tension between archaic public lore and progressive scientific discourse in the 1820s. Three instances of doubling in particular call attention to Tennyson's exploration of the tension between ancient and modern, scientific and public in the immediately pre-Victorian moment: (1) 'ancient' vs. 'modern' polypi, (2) 'secret cells' under the sea and in the laboratory, and (3) the literally doubling polypus. Next, I will explore how 'The Kraken' reflects—both underpinning and challenging—the conflation of deep sea and deep time in Britain. Lastly, I will rethink the much-debated form of 'The Kraken' to show how this peculiar structure helps accomplish the poem's aims of reinforcing a taxonomical strangeness, part of which is intensely *material*, as I will argue that poem is modelled after the Kraken itself ('head-footed' with eight tentacles). I hope this chapter will make several contributions to the study of the poem, including: the

suggestion of a new source; an interpretation of the allegory of the microscope as an invitation to the reader to engage in their own taxonomy of polypi; and a reconsideration of the peculiar structure of the poem.

3.3 DOUBLING UNDER GLASS: 'THE KRAKEN' UNDER THE MICROSCOPE AND IN THE AQUARIUM

Rebecca Stott has written of sea creatures on display 'From the mid-century onwards, public and drawing-room aquaria, deep sea dredging, rock pools, and the detailed recording and observing of the sexual behaviour, anatomy and metamorphosis of sea creatures could be said to have become a national obsession'.[20] This is the lens through which later Victorians would read 'The Kraken', but at its publication in 1830 the poem deftly engaged the infancy of aquarium technology (and adolescent microscopy) to place enormous tension between archaic public lore and progressive scientific discourse in the 1820s. It invokes the scientist observing polypi under the glass of the microscope and prefigures the public observing polypi behind the glass of the aquarium. Through these media, the form of the polypus becomes a symbol for sexual grotesqueness and a creature who threatens the foundations of polite taxonomy with its anthropomorphised, literal and figurative backwardness. It is 'upside-down', 'head-footed', an unchanged inhabitant of the primordial monster-filled seas, a primitive, readily-breeding creature whose mouth, genitals, and appendages are situated in indelicate proximity.

The poem invites a criticism of its scientific gaze under the microscope with allusions to 'secret cells' and creatures commonly observed in the early days of microscopy. Like Ballantyne's animalcules, under the microscope of the poem these usually-tiny creatures become 'huge', 'enormous', 'giant'. Tennyson's sponges and

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[20] Ibid.

polypi, 'huge' versions of common microscopy subjects, indicate the poem's engagement with those creatures far away in the depths of sea *and* in the laboratory under the microscope. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has argued that the monster's body in general that it is an 'uncertain cultural body in which is condensed an intriguing simultaneity or doubleness'. The poem's relationship with the microscope (as a symbol of scientific gaze upon polypi) might be understood in terms a series of doubles which will complicate but ultimately enhances our reading.[21] Three instances of doubling call attention to Tennyson's exploration of the tension between ancient and modern, scientific and public in the immediately pre-Victorian moment: (3.3.1) the definition of 'polypus' as a double, with the 'modern' polypus' jockeying for taxonomical position alongside the 'ancient' polypus (and both ancient and 'modern' definitions of polypi appear in the poem); (3.3.2) the middle lines of the poem in the invocation of 'secret cells' create a double meaning of setting—the sea and the laboratory; (3.3.3) the modern polypus can have on half of its body separated from the other (literally 'doubled' and survive as two new creatures).

3.3.1 DOUBLE #1: 'ANCIENT' AND 'MODERN' POLYPI

When Tennyson imagines 'unnumbered and enormous polypi' (l. 9) it is important to appreciate the plurality of meanings of 'polypi' (singular 'polyp', 'polypus', or 'polypod') in 1830. There were the medical 'polypi' (singular 'polyp') which described growths on the body, but in the early decades of the nineteenth century the term's other life, describing things with tentacles, was undergoing a renaissance. When Beale published his landmark *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* in 1839 he reminds his readers that 'The octopus [...] was the animal denominated polypus by

[21] Cohen, *Monster Theory,* p. ix.

Aristotle'.[22] And for its many legs, the octopus and his relatives the squid, cuttlefish, and nautilus (the cephalopods, from the Greek 'head-footed') were thus termed 'polypi' and were *still* 'polypi' in 1830 when Tennyson published 'The Kraken'. However, toward the end of the eighteenth century the term was also inclusive of a variety of small ('often microscopic'[23]) creatures whose tentacles resembled those of the ancient 'classic' 'polypi'. The now-obsolete *OED* entry on these newcomers was 'any of a disparate group of aquatic invertebrates, mostly of branched or radial form, classified as 'polypi by various 19th-cent. writers, including stalked echinoderms, tunicates, sponges, and certain ciliates and rotifers', including the hydra. In 1828, two years before 'The Kraken', John Stark's *Elements of Natural History* surmised that 'the class of Polypi… is one of the largest and most singular in the Animal Kingdom'.[24]

It thus became customary to specify which type of polypi to which one was referring ('ancient' or 'modern').[25] 'The Kraken' is populated by both 'ancient' and 'modern' polypi. Later in this chapter I will argue that the poem equates the deep sea with 'deep time', which both supports—and is supported by—this dual definition of polypi. As the poem descends 'Below the thunders of the upper deep | Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea' it also descends, like the strata of fossil rock being excavated in English in the 1820s, further back into the ancient sea. Closer to the surface are the 'modern' polypi, 'huge sponges of millennial growth and height' which are 'above' the Kraken.

Still 'above' the Kraken 'unnumbered and enormous polypi' with 'giant arms' undulate in the current, but are these polypi of the ancient or the 'modern'

[22] Thomas Beale, *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (London: John van Voorst, 1839), p. 57.
[23] Maxwell, p. 10.
[24] John Stark, *Elements of Natural History*, (London: Blackwood, 1828), II.417.
[25] Maxwell, p. 10.

interpretation of the term? This is another as-yet-unexplicated moment in the poem. I suggest that these are the 'modern' polypi (of coral and sponge variety rather than the cephalopod variety) because of the way Tennyson describes their behaviour. While a squid, octopus, or cuttlefish might certainly inhabit a 'wondrous grot or secret cell' (l. 8), the polypi 'winnow with giant arms the slumbering green' (l. 10). Not only does waving one's arms in the water not sound like the secretive octopus, squid, or cuttlefish who like to surprise their prey by darting out of their cave, but the 'new' depictions of the 'modern' polypi often focus on its method of gathering food: leaving its tentacles out in the water to snatch passing prey. This is also a peculiar moment in the text because the poem seems to invite the reader to engage in a bit of taxonomy themselves when they have to make sense of what sort of 'polypi' these shapes are, thus provoking and validating a sense of studied participation that will come to symbolise the Victorian reading public.

'Below' these modern polypi is the Kraken dreaming his 'ancient' sleep (l. 3). But the poem is not simply a 'gradual descent and a rise' as Richard Maxwell has termed it.[26] Rather than embarking at the surface and describing each new depth, Tennyson begins the poem all the way down in the realm of the Kraken:

> Below the thunders of the upper deep;
> Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
> His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
> The Kraken sleepeth.[27]

Only then does Tennyson begin to build context, as in the following line, '*above* him swell | Huge sponges of millennial growth and height' (emphasis mine).[28] Suspended somewhere between the 'thunders of the upper deep' and the deepest reaches of the 'abysmal sea' are the 'modern' polypi's caves, and somewhere beneath it all we

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[26] Maxwell, p. 10.
[27] Tennyson, 'The Kraken', ll. 1-4.
[28] Ibid., ll. 5-6.

return, in line 11, ‘there’, where the Kraken ‘hath lain for ages and will lie’. Only then, after another depiction of the Kraken, does the narration ‘rise’ again, this time *with* the monster, this time all the way to the surface where he will meet his death. Thus, rather than a descent and a rise, the poem might be more aptly described as beginning at the deepest depths inhabited by the Kraken, then rising just shallow enough to get some context, just shallow enough to see something recognizable to the ‘modern’ naturalist, then descending again to revisit the Kraken as he is woken from his ‘sleep’ to rise all the way to the surface to die.

By building on the notion of ancient-versus-modern, Tennyson deftly uses the ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ polypi to symbolise rapidly changing taxonomies and the profoundly changing *systems* of those taxonomies as well as what this shift will mean for the art and philosophy of new scientific disciplines such as geology. ‘The Kraken’ (the monster and the poem) strains between archaic mysticism and modern taxonomy, between classical (even Aristotelian) wisdom and a new English empiricism. To kill the Kraken and ostensibly leave the modern polypi intact forges, in the ‘latter fire [which] shall heat the deep’ (l. 13), what it will mean to do Victorian science. The structure of the poem reinforces the space of the ‘modern’ polypi while drawing the sea monster to the surface to expose it to men and thus, like the whale, domesticate its monstrosity. Just as Linnaeus omitted the Kraken from his later editions of *Systema Naturae*, there is no place for the giant sea monster in Victorian taxonomies concerned more with technologies like the microscope through which new, miniscule creatures could be ‘discovered’ by the new generation of natural philosophers.

3.3.2 Double #2: ‘Secret cells’ under the sea and in the lab

This 'double' might be termed the allegory of the microscope. In keeping with this notion of the miniscule vs. the enormous monstrous sea creature: Why, when most 'modern' polypi were nearly microscopic, would Tennyson make his 'huge' (l. 6) and 'enormous' (l. 9) with 'giant arms' (l. 10)? When Hardy's Clym Yeobright, working as a furze-cutter, realises that 'His daily life was of a curious microscopic sort, his whole world being limited to a circuit of a few feet from his person', he is in keeping with a literary tradition of which Tennyson was at the forefront.[29] Tennyson spends the first half of the 'Kraken' focusing his microscope; the lens descends farther and farther down into the sphere of influence of the monster. While under Ballantyne's microscope in *Fighting the Whales* there is chaos, under Tennyson's there is a disconcerting calm. The creature is sleeping soundly, dreamlessly, in a dark seabed, ripe for observation.

Studying polypi (specifically of the 'modern' coral and sponge variety) under the microscope was a 'grand nineteenth-century tradition'.[30] The middle lines of 'The Kraken' are Tennyson's laboratory, refracting the creature's environment through the language of rapidly-popularising microscopy:

> And far away into the sickly light,
> From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
> Unnumbered and enormous polypi
> Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.[31]

The 'secret cell' is a double meaning. Indeed the 'unnumbered and enormous polypi' inhabit cell-like caves beneath the sea, but 'secret cell' also alludes to the cellular level on which marine creatures (often polypi) were being observed for the first time under new microscope technologies.[32] These cells are 'secret' because they are yet

[29] Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 262.
[30] Maxwell, p. 11.
[31] Tennyson, 'The Kraken', ll. 7-10.
[32] Though the understanding of 'cells' in 1830 lacked the sophistication of even the following decade, it is not anachronistic to read the 'secret cell' as biological. From the *OED*, 'cell': '(chiefly *poet.* and *literary*). A small and humble dwelling, a cottage. Also: a lonely nook; the den of a wild beast'; 'The

unstudied. The allegory of the microscope is further evident in the 'unnumbered and enormous' polypi: 'unnumbered' because there are so many of them under the lens in a single sample but also likely alludes to their reproductive avidity (to be discussed in this chapter). The polypi are 'enormous' with 'giant arms' when literally magnified under new microscope technologies, as with Ballantyne's 'animalcules' and Heath's 'Microcosm, Dedicated to the London Water Company'.

The duality of the sea and laboratory can be considered separately, as I have just done, and together, as the sea itself was a new laboratory for the growing marine sciences: GH Lewes and others would encourage ordinary Britons to go out and explore tide pools and the 'wonders of the shore'; deep sea diving bells were in their infancy; physicians aboard whaling ships were acting as marine scientists and studying the water and its creatures. I reiterate Isobel Armstrong's correlation of microscopy and 'popular' science which supported my argument about Ballantyne: 'Water and its contents,' she writes, 'spawned a popular literature of microscopic investigation and, indeed, helped to bring into being the category of "popular" science in an avid print culture'.[33] The allegory of the microscope in the middle lines of the poem places tension between the 'secret cells' of the undersea caves and the 'secret cells' visible under new microscopic technologies in the laboratory, further illuminating the poem's deep consciousness with regard to proliferating technologies, told through the vision of an archaic sea monster.

3.3.3 DOUBLE #3: THE LITERALLY DOUBLING POLYPUS

cup-like cavity occupied by an individual polyp in a some colonial invertebrates, esp. cnidarians and bryozoans. Now *rare*'; '*Biol*. Any of various larger chambers in the structure of a tissue or organism, typically with known functions'.

[33] Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, p. 320.

In one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's letters, which the poet dated the 9th of October 1809, he wrote of compiling new manuscripts for publication: 'I will divide them polypus-wise, so that first Half should get itself a new Tail of its own, and the latter a new Head'.[34] In a letter to James Gilman in 1826, Coleridge charged nature with being a 'warily wily long-breathed old witch, tough-lived as a turtle and divisible as the polyp, repullalative in a thousand snips and cuttings'.[35] The idea of a double meaning is further complicated by the 'modern' polypi's peculiar habit of surviving (and regenerating) as two creatures after being cut in half (or a thousand, as Coleridge hyperbolises). Oliver Goldsmith notes in his 1774 *History* that it was 'modern' polypi's unique cell structure which allowed them to regenerate in this way. This certainly gives a new meaning to the 'secret cells' from which Tennyson's 'unnumbered and enormous polypi' wave their giant arms. The 'secret cells' were 'unnumbered' as well, as this reproductive power stunned, confounded, and profoundly disturbed naturalists. The body which can survive such trauma (and reproduce asexually as a result of it) is threatening. The monsters in Heath's 'Monster Soup' (published just two years before 'The Kraken') are in Milton's words, 'all prodigious things', readily, unstoppably breeding. And indeed Isobel Armstrong has observed that much of the shock of microscopic observation was the 'gross feeding and sexual avidity' of the heretofore unseen creatures beneath the lens.[36] And that which so discomfited early Victorian naturalists made the public, once exposed to these modern polypi in aquariums, positively aghast. When the scientific glass of the microscope yielded to the public glass of the aquarium, polypi ancient and modern became spectacle. 'The Kraken' illuminates the public exhibition of polypi ancient

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[34] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* vol. 3, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971, 2002), p. 235.
[35] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* vol. 6, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971, 2002), p. 743.
[36] Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds*, p. 318.

and modern under the glass of proliferating microscopy and prefigures such engagement at aquariums beginning mid-century.

The public reception of polypi ancient and modern was often relegated to horror at the creature's sexual grotesqueness. In the 'ancient' (cephalopod) polypus this anxiety was focused on the immodesty of having a mouth permanently situated between one's legs as well as the phallic nature of the tentacles. With regard to the modern polypi this public horror was largely contained in the animal's ability to reproduce without a mate. Heath's 'Microcosm, Dedicated to London Water Companies' again makes an important point (Figure 6). The passage from *Paradise Lost* at the top right of the etching decries 'All monstrous, all prodigious things | Hydras and gorgons and chimeras dire'. The passage from Milton is a particularly clever epigram, as it invokes yet another set of double meanings. When Milton invoked hydras and gorgons, he did so in the mythological sense; however, Heath would have known that hydras, gorgons, and chimeras were also genii of marine creatures first catalogued by Linnaeus in *Systema Naturae*.[37] 'Monster Soup' is also a complicated expression of the categorical tensions present when Tennyson was writing 'The Kraken'; Heath's Miltonic nod to Linnaeus accepts the taxonomy he cemented in 1735 (the first phylogenic binomial system), but the busy visual of microscopic monsters undermines that taxonomy to seem 'unnumbered' (to borrow

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[37] In *Paradise Lost*, **Chimera** was the unholy hybrid of a lion, a snake, and a goat, but to the English naturalist in 1828 the *chimera* was also a type of cartilaginous fish (*chimera monstrosa*) catalogued by Linnaeus in 1758. (The chimera does not specifically have any bearing on modern polypi except that the mythological chimera was considered a sibling of the Lernaean Hydra.) In *Paradise Lost*, Lernaean **Hydra** was a many-headed serpentine monster slain by Hercules, especially notable because for every head chopped off two grew in its place. To the English naturalist in 1828, the *hydra* fell under the category of 'modern' polypus: it had tentacles, radial symmetry, and reproduced asexually with or without being forcefully bisected. In *Paradise Lost*, **Gorgons** were three sister-monsters with hair made of living snakes. The most famous, Medusae, was slain by the demigod Perseus, but her sisters are notable for their supposed immortality. To the English naturalist in 1828, the *medusa* was also a 'modern' polypus, radially symmetrical, covered with tentacles, and seemingly reproducing asexually. (Linnaeus calls it the 'medusa', though I have encountered several instances of naturalists calling these creatures 'gorgons'; today we would classify it a type of jellyfish.)

from 'The Kraken'). There was much to fear from these sexually avid modern polypi populating not just the faraway oceans but the Thames and one's afternoon tea.

Rebecca Stott has argued that 'from the mid-century onwards, public and drawing-room aquaria, deep sea dredging, rock pools, and the detailed recording and observing of the sexual behaviour, anatomy, and metamorphosis of sea creatures would be said to have become a national obsession'.[38] Though the Victorian 'aquarium craze' is generally considered a product of the 1850s, its framework is absolutely laid in the 1820s and solidified in the 1830s in these early Victorian naturalists' studies of invertebrates, specifically the modern and ancient polypi. Stott has also credited these naturalists and the literary figures who were inspired by their work with being central to the development of evolutionary theory: 'From the 1830s, marine zoology was at the heart of debates and developments in comparative anatomy because simple marine invertebrates, such as sea-sponges and polyps, were believed by transmutationists [...] to represent living descendants of the very first biological forms on the planet'.[39] 'The Kraken' participates in the scaffolding which builds to the climax of the aquarium craze, when in 1856 the periodical *Titan* published an article entitled 'The Aquarium Mania' in which 'In London itself, the mania is raging just now at fever point. [...] In West End squares, in trim suburban villas, in crowded city thoroughfares, in the demure houses of little, unfrequented back streets, and inside the flat, sill-less windows of wretched Spitalfields and Bethnal Green, everywhere you see the aquarium in one form or another'.[40]

Thirty years later after publication of 'The Kraken', in John Swain's 1860 cartoon 'Valuable Addition to the Aquarium' for *Punch* (Figure 17), a woman is

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[38] Stott, p. 6.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

horrified at the octopus, its legs splayed out in front of her face. Stott observe that 'there were times when the search for homology could produce repetitions of form and body parts, particularly sexual body parts, which were deeply troubling', and takes the case of Darwin's barnacles (as have others) as a disturbing defiance of taxonomy, as they too have a mouth between what seem to be legs.

Figure 17. John Swain, 'Valuable Addition to the Aquarium, *Punch* (1860).

But of course, just as Victorian science tried to fit new creatures into archaic taxonomies, it also tried to apply the conventions of human body parts to non-human creatures, resulting in an anthropomorphism in which the human form is horrifically, abjectly reimagined by a public (and even a scientific community) that observes, in the case of Darwin's barnacles, a creature's legs in the air while it 'stands' on its head, its mouth beneath its many 'legs' (tentacles), a single eye on top of its 'stomach' and a horrifying public anus. This defiance of taxonomy (and their seeming reproductive avidity) put creatures like the polypus at odds with Victorian

decorum and made them the perfect sea monster: so gruesome the public could not get enough—from a safe distance, that is, through the mediation of glass.

The 'ancient' cephalopod polypus was equally as sexually threatening. Maritime essayist Frank Bullen, writing later in the century, surmises that the Greeks fashioned their mythological Medusa in the image of an octopus, and that his century's profound discomfort with the classic polypi stems from Medusa as particularly threatening to men as a symbol of the female desire to possess a phallus (or eight). The image of a public display of polypi is also evident in the last lines of 'The Kraken': 'Then once by man and angels to be seen, | In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die' (l. 14-15). I will take up these lines with regard to the structure in the final section of this chapter, but it is important to underscore in this section that the fifteenth line, in which the monster is at last visible to men on land, is also the moment of its demise. At its most basic level, the conflation of water and glass (scientific and public, the microscope and the aquarium) might be about fatal visibility. I have interpreted what I have seen as the tacit moments of taxonomy and new Victorian visibility of the deep sea, but the poem's final line is an unequivocal moment of display. Richard Maxwell has argued that 'death and visibility go together' in the poem, though it is not expressly clear in the poem just how.[41] Is the Kraken's death in part *caused* by being seen? Rather than (or perhaps in conjunction with) the more traditional Christian apocalyptic reading of the Kraken rising to face judgment, perhaps we should also consider the final Romantic caution to nascent Victorian science, when Wordsworth famously warns in 'The Tables Turned' (1798):

> Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
> Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—

[41] Maxwell, p. 14.

We murder to dissect'[42]

With the science and technologies of zoological display firmly on the Victorian horizon, the monstrous 'misshapen' Kraken's death at the surface may serve as such a caution that to remove creatures from their natural habitats and put them in vivaria risks damage to the creature, their ecosystem, and perhaps even an unfair accounting of their behaviour. The Kraken's poetic sleep begins 'uninvaded' (l. 3) by the symbolic light of science (l. 4). By 1830 it was already suspected that prolonged time at the surface damages deep-sea creatures' buoyancy mechanisms such that they cannot dive again and die there on the surface. Rather than taking 'pleasure in the pathless woods' and meeting nature where it stands, a new (Victorian) observational ethos of capture and domestication is emerging, and the Kraken is 'roaring' against it.

3.4 Tennyson's conflation of deep sea and deep time

When American geologists published their discovery of the fossil 'New Orleans Leviathan' in 1827, the British papers followed every development. The *Newcastle Courant* reported on the 24th of November that year:

> After seeing these bones we can scarcely any longer doubt the existence of the Kraken and other monsters, who history has generally been considered fabulous. [...] Let the reader measure off the distance in his mind, and imagine its existence, and the thought is almost enough to startle ordinary nerves, for man would be no more to such a monster than an insect of two inches long is to him.[43]

As I have discussed in regard to *Fighting the Whales*, the earliest geological remains were generally assumed to be ancient sea monsters who thrived during or before the biblical deluge. The New Orleans Leviathan, for one, turned out to be fossil mammoth, but that hardly deterred other early geologists from making similar

[42] William Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned', *The Major Works*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ll. 25-28.
[43] *The Newcastle Courant,* 14 November 1827.

proclamations of the antediluvian sea monsters. This section will, in part, establish the 'ancient' polypus (the cephalopod: squid, octopi, cuttlefish, and nautili) as a fixture in visual, literary, and scientific reconstructions of 'deep time', situating Tennyson's Kraken as a hyperbole of the archaic polypus, which is typically portrayed as an ancient, primitive creature living unchanged in a primeval environment. Similar to my earlier analysis involving the Crystal Palace dinosaurs, this section will explore how the poem reflects the identification of the deep sea with prehistory through the material cultural portrayals of polypi in the decades leading to Tennyson's 'Kraken'. I will show that Tennyson is not just reflecting but participating in this reconstruction of the ancient life of Britain, complicating the quickly-cementing scientific narrative by creating tension between the archaic and modern (and thus also participating in the tumultuous transition between the Romantics and Victorians).

By invoking sponges and polypi with the Kraken in the deep sea, Tennyson firmly thrusts the Kraken (and the poem) into deep time. The importance of time in Tennyson's work (or in the scientific culture of *his* time) can hardly be overstated. The two decades leading up to *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* created a scientific and literary culture in which the Kraken could be as plausible as the sponges and modern polypi with whom it shares the 'slumbering green'. The decade prior to the publication of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* was monumental for the new field of geology. The avid fossil collector James Parkinson (best known for his 1817 essay on the 'Shaking Palsy' now called Parkinson's Disease) had published *Organic Remains of a Former World* in three volumes between 1804 and 1811 (in which he waxed poetic that those *Remains* more closely 'resemble the fictions of poets, than the reasonings of philosophers'), and co-founded the Geological Society of London in 1807, helping to create an

enormous scientific momentum that resulted in a tripling of the number of scientific periodicals between 1815 and 1830.[44]

While Wombwell's Menagerie was travelling Britain with a 'Polar Sea Monster' in the 1820s, members of the Geological Society of London were busy unearthing sea monsters from the gravel of England. In 1821 a fossil cave was discovered by workmen in Yorkshire, and in 1822 William Buckland was the first to slither inside and pronounce it an ancient hyaena den, full of the bones of hippopotami and other creatures long since extinct from the British Isles. William Conybeare (who in 1821 had delivered a paper to the GSL with Henry de la Beche on a 'new fossil animal, forming a link between the Icthyosaurus and the Crocodile, together') commemorated Buckland's foray into the cave with a sketch and a poem. He published his own *Outlines of the Geology of England and Wales* in 1822 and delivered an address on his discovery of that prehistoric sea monster *Plesiosaurus* to the GSL in 1824. Gideon Mantell unearthed dinosaur skeletons in Tilgate Forest, Sussex, in 1822, and in 1825 announced his discovery of the Iguanadon. Mantell's 1826 *Illustrations of the Geology of Sussex* observe that 'the realities of Geology far exceed the fictions of romance'.[45]

It was Charles Lyell's first volume of *Principles of Geology,* however, which so influenced the science of Darwin, the poetry of Tennyson, and as Ralph O'Connor has argued, 'exemplified' the popularisation of science in the 1820s and 1830s.[46] Published in 1830, the first volume boldly attested that the earth was far more ancient than the six thousand years designated by the bible. (Isobel Armstrong has noted that,

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[44] Martin JS Rudwick *Scenes from Deep Time: Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 6, 61; Ralph O'Connor, *The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science, 1802-1856* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 193.
[45] Gideon Mantell, *The fossils of the South Downs: or, Illustrations of the geology of Sussex; the engravings executed by Mrs Mantell, from drawings by the author* (London: L. Relfe, 1822).
[46] O'Connor, p. 10.

though 'The Kraken' and the first volume of *Principles of Geology* were published the same year, Tennyson seemed to have had an advanced copy of the text.) O'Connor has argued that the popularity of these geological texts is in part due to the blending of what would now be separated into the scientific and the literary: 'In an age marked by debates over the dangers of imagination and the deceptive allure of cheap romances and sensation novels, geology was marketed as the key to true facts which were nonetheless more marvellous and sensational than fiction'.[47] He writes after 1825 'the market for scientific spectacle in shows and museums boomed as never before' and by 1830 'the poetics of geology had been under construction for some time, and the same old techniques were still used: comparisons with romance, descriptions of huge monsters, folklore allusions, devotional rhapsodies, poetry quotations, vivid restorations of the past'.[48] When Tennyson published 'The Kraken', polypi were already understood in scientific and popular texts to be positively primeval. They are fixtures in the visual genre, new to the 1820s, of 'scenes from deep time'. The 'modern' polypi line the shores of these works, while the 'classic' polypi are often depicted in the clutches of fearsome creatures like the newly-discovered 'fish-lizard' *icthyosaurus*. Henry Lee, in his pamphlet *Sea Fables Explained* for the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition in London, speaks of large 'cuttles': 'That old fish-reptile, the Ichthyosaurus, also, preyed upon them; and portions of the horny rings of their suckers were discovered in its coprolites by Dean Buckland'.[49]

The descents and rises of the narration also prove a way to trace Tennyson's mediation on geology:

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[47] Ibid, p. 2. His argument is 'science writing was an integral part of nineteenth-century literary culture—not that science writing and literature enjoyed a fruitful relationship, but that scientific writing *was* literature' (p. 13).
[48] Ibid., pp. 219, 196.
[49] Lee, *Sea Monsters Unmasked, p. 41.*

> Below the thunders of the upper deep;
> Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
> His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
> The Kraken sleepeth[50]

The first lines tug the reader deep into the ocean. The 'upper deep' suggests that the 'deep' inhabited by the Kraken is beyond the reader's imagination of the word. The upper deep is threatening for its 'thunders'. What is below is threatening for the opposite reason: it is so quiet that the Kraken's 'dreamless' sleep is 'uninvaded' for millennia. The repetition of 'far' emphasises depth, as lower realm of the sleeping Kraken is the 'abysmal sea'; Tennyson seems to use 'abysmal' in the now rare oceanographic sense, which the *OED* notes was synonymous with 'abyssal' in the mid-nineteenth century only. 'Abysmal' did not take its current meaning as 'horrible' until the early twentieth century, but it did have figurative claims 'resembling an abyss; bottomless; profound […] relating to Hell; hellish', all of which lend the line great nuance in depicting the Kraken's lair as a hellishly bottomless, intellectually barren space (due to the Kraken's 'dreamless' sleep).[51]

The Kraken is a living fossil, prehistoric and dormant, yet undisturbed by man (or science for that matter), potentially 'uninvaded' by the conquest of science which will murder to dissect. Developments in marine zoology along with recent discoveries of fossil sea monster skeletons embedded relatively shallowly in Britain's soil (or just inside an undiscovered cave) created a sense of tension that if these sea monsters were buried just below the surface of the soil, one can only imagine what monsters lurk leagues beneath the surface of the sea. In its fanciful, mythological grace, the poem is also a taxonomical journey on par with Morley's 'Antediluvian Cruise'. We descend with the poem into the lair of the Kraken. 'Far, far beneath' takes us farther, farther down. The 'upper deep' gives a sense of the strata of the sea

[50] Tennyson, 'The Kraken', ll. 1-4.
[51] Definitions *OED*.

like the strata of geological time evident in the layers of rock from which fossils were being discovered seemingly every day in England in the 1820s and 1830s.

As in every text in this thesis, light plays an important role, with the power to both reveal and conceal. 'The Kraken' personifies the weak rays of the sun which reach down into the Kraken's lair and 'flee | About his shadowy sides' (ll. 4-5).[52] The monster lives in darkness, and anything from the modern terrestrial world would 'flee' from (rather, around) him. Furthermore, he is unmoved by light of the symbolic variety as well. Instead of exposing the monster to be something ordinary (or at least conquerable), shining light on this foe only makes the light itself flee. This monster does not retreat from the light—the light retreats from it. Tennyson is likely also toying with the symbolic light of science. This literal 'enlightenment' of the ancient past was a common trope in scientific literatures of the 1820s, perhaps best exemplified by William Buckland's foray into that Yorkshire cave in 1821. In the famous illustration by fellow geologist William Conybeare (one of the first pictorial depictions of ancient Britain), Buckland peers into the cave on his hands and knees, as Martin Rudwick puts so well: 'candle in hand, illuminating this scene from deep time with the light of science, penetrating the epistemic barrier between the human world and the prehuman'.[53]

Tennyson's 'wondrous grot and secret cell' inhabited by the 'unnumbered and enormous polypi' 'far away into the sickly light' may also be poking fun at the general assumption that fossil caves, such as Buckland's were populated with bones from when Britain was covered with the biblical deluge. Buckland famously discovered that his 'wonder grot and secret cell' was no diluvian repository but an

[52] Tennyson, 'The Kraken', ll. 4-5.
[53] Rudwick, p. 39.

ancient hyaena's lair. The scavengers, not the flood, had carried the bones inside. Conybeare's accompanying poem amusingly considers this:

> Ages long ere this planet was formed
> (I beg pardon) before it was drown'd,
> Fierce and fell were the Monsters that swarmed
> Roared and rolled in these hollows profound[54]

Tennyson's enormous polypi inhabit such 'hollows'. The 'sponges of millennial growth and height' which 'swell' above the Kraken date his 'sleep' as better than a thousand years, as traveling into the depths of the sea are analogous to traveling into the depths of time (like the strata of rock layers on display next to the dinosaurs at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham). The sponge, of the 'modern' polypus family, was understood to be among the oldest and most primitive creatures in the sea. Tennyson is not just taking the reading into the deep sea but into 'deep time'. The 'huge sponges of millennial growth and height' appeal to the scientific sensibilities of measurement. Structurally, 'swell | Huge' is one of just three examples of enjambment in the entire poem (the other two, to be discussed below, yield peculiar metrical shifts which potentially change the reading of the poem). The lack of punctuation allows the line itself to 'swell'.

'Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep' reveals that the Kraken's sleep is figurative—a dormant period of stillness and retarded development 'for ages' as opposed to actual slumber. Literally, to 'batten' is to 'feed gluttonously' with a sinister sort of connotation.[55] The 'huge sea-worms' further conflate the deep sea with the deep past as, like sponges, they were considered a primitive animal unchanged for millennia, whose impressions were visible in fossil rocks. Tennyson's layering of these images of time and space at sea prefigure the literary and visual genres which will conflate the deep sea with 'deep time'. In Morley's 'Antediluvian

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[54] William Coneybeare, 'On the Hyaena's Den at Kirkdale' (1822) ll. 10-13.
[55] *OED*.

Cruise', for instance, the sea voyage *is* a voyage back in time. The same year that 'The Kraken' was published, Henry de la Beche broke ground with 'Duria Antiquior, or, A More Ancient Dorset' in 1830 (Figure 13). In it, ichthyosaurs frolic in the water submerging Dorset, while several of Owen's nautili ('ancient polypi) rest on the seafloor and four large squid (also 'ancient' polypi, and specific inspiration for the Kraken) are clearly visible among the ichthyosaurs. The rock which slopes to the sea floor seems to host several organisms which resemble more the shape of the 'modern' polypi, in keeping with the sort of new cosmology espoused by 'The Kraken' as well. As Martin Rudwick argues, 'this conjunction of living and dead alludes neatly to the process of fossilisation that links the reality of the deep past to the survival of its relics in the present'.[56] 'The Kraken' (the poem and the creature) engenders this connection, but also creates a sense of tension between the two instead of a harmonious scientific 'conjunction' of living and dead, modern and archaic.

Most notable, however, is what Rudwick has termed the 'tacit human viewpoint', which we see in 'Duria Antiquior' and 'The Kraken' for the first time, as 'The observer is not out on land, but half in the water, close to the surface and seeing the view both underwater and above it. [...] The viewpoint is as much that of the marine animals themselves as of any ordinary human observer.'[57] Indeed, the viewpoint in 'The Kraken' even descends deep below the surface. As Rudwick points out, 'Duria antiquior' (published the same year as 'The Kraken') comes twenty years before the accepted 'invention' of the aquarium and mid-century 'aquarium craze' which allows Britons to see underwater for the first time. 'Duria antiquior' and 'The Kraken' participate in this iteration of the 'tacit human viewpoint' by serving as aids to visualisation of the world beneath the surface. 'The Kraken' may give us a clue as

[56] Rudwick, p. 46.
[57] Ibid., p. 27. I will discuss this literal and literary 'viewpoint' further in Chapter 6.

to why the 'tacit human viewpoint' would have been so radical in the 1820s. By facilitating readers' first visions beneath the surface—and linking it so inextricably with the idea of deep time—'The Kraken' echoes 'Monster Soup' in the ubiquity of monsters, while adding the layer of the temporal as well as the geographic.

3.5 Rethinking the structure of 'The Kraken'

The peculiar structure of 'The Kraken' has confounded critics. Drawing on my claims from the first two sections of this chapter, I propose a reinterpretation of the poem's structure which reinforces a sense of taxonomical strangeness and interacts with the new theory and practice of 'popular' science (emblemised, as I have previously shown in this chapter, by the 'ancient' and 'modern' polypus).

It is generally agreed that 'The Kraken' is a sonnet of sorts which more closely resembles the Petrarchan than the Shakespearian form; however, it has fifteen lines instead of the customary fourteen (a medium-is-the-message nod to the 'latter chaos', most critics say). As the Petrarchan sonnet is typically marked by an octave followed by a sestet which changes, resolves, or otherwise redirects the conflict laid out in the octave, most Tennyson scholars account for 'The Kraken's' fifteenth line as an addition to the conventional sestet. The fifteenth line indeed accomplishes this 'return' (the 'roaring' in line 15 recalls the 'thunders' of line 1); however, to characterise the final seven lines as a sestet with an extra line seems disingenuous when the implied stanza break would come in between two enjambed lines (lines 8-9, 'From many a wondrous grot and secret cell | Unnumbered and enormous polypi'). Instead, Tennyson's enjambment where the octave would traditionally conclude and the sestet would begin subverts the anticipated pause and continues the poem's measured descent into the lair of the Kraken, creating a breathless but patient lack of

order or resolution building toward to the 'latter' chaos of the extra line. I would like to offer, then, that the Petrarchan form is intact but backward before the extra line: Instead of the customary octave and sestet, Tennyson employs a sestet *then* an octave plus an extra line. A standard Petrarchan stanza break would fall like so:

Octave	Below the thunders of the upper deep; Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea, His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee About his shadowy sides: above him swell Huge sponges of millennial growth and height; And far away into the sickly light, From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Sestet	Unnumbered and enormous polypi Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green. There hath he lain for ages and will lie Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep, Until the latter fire shall heat the deep; Then once by man and angels to be seen,
Extra line	In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

However, I contend that the poem should be understood with the following subtextual stanzaic break:

Sestet	Below the thunders of the upper deep; Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea, His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee About his shadowy sides: above him swell Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
Octave	And far away into the sickly light, From many a wondrous grot and secret cell Unnumbered and enormous polypi Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green. There hath he lain for ages and will lie Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep, Until the latter fire shall heat the deep; Then once by man and angels to be seen,
Extra line	In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

'The Kraken' is a poem about that which is below rising to the top. The ancient monster, supposed to dwell at the bottom of the sea, rises to be 'seen'. More specifically, however, I propose that poem itself takes the form of a Kraken. The octave and sestet are upside-down, and the Kraken itself is well-understood to be an upside-down creature: the word *cephalopod* is Greek and translates to 'head-footed'.

The 'head' and 'foot' of the poem, like the creature, are backward, upside-down. What's more, cephalopods (the 'ancient' polypi), by definition, have eight tentacles. Thus, the octave at the bottom of the poem mimics the creature itself: a smaller head on top with an octave of appendages below. And indeed the first enjambed sentence of the octave-plus-one is about the 'giant arms' of the 'unnumbered polypi' which 'winnow' the sea ('unnumbered' deftly intimating the difficult-to-quantify structure of the poem).

'The Kraken' is a poem about an impending lack of order, a chaos. What could be more threatening to the rigid Victorian literary-scientific consciousness than the tried-and-true sonnet dismantled and put back together wrong in the form of a monster? (Mimicking a creature which does the same?) The rhyme is also a measure of embraced chaos. While the traditional Petrarchan rhyme scheme is ABBAABBA-CDDECE, the rhyme scheme of 'The Kraken' is ABABCDDCEFEAAFE. Upon closer examination, a sort of warped reflectiveness is visible, beginning with the rhyming lines 12 and 13. Lines 12 and 13 cannot strictly be called a couplet, as their subject is in an earlier line, but as a rhyming couplet they create a warped mirror image of the first three lines of the poem:

> Below the thunders of the upper <u>**deep**</u>;
> Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
> His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded <u>**sleep**</u> (ll. 1-3)
>
> Battening upon huge sea-worms in his <u>**sleep**</u>,
> Until the latter fire shall heat the <u>**deep**</u>; (ll. 12-13)

In line 12 'deep;' (including the semicolon) is reiterated, followed by 'sleep,' but without the line in between the pace between them is now hurried. And indeed the chaos of the 'latter fire' draws near—it is the next line. Perhaps Tennyson is alluding

to (but distorting) the common characteristic of all the polypi ancient and modern: their 'radial symmetry'.[58]

Furthermore, the rhyme scheme of lines 9-14 of 'The Kraken' is a warped mirror image of the traditional rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan sonnet form. In 'The Kraken', lines 9-14 rhyme EFEAAF while the traditional Petrarchan sonnet rhymes lines 9-14 CDDECE. Though the scheme corresponds to different rhymed lines, Tennyson has deftly mirrored the rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan concluding sestet. He has also embedded it in the octave which mimics the octopod creature itself, and composed the line after this odd sestet in iambic hexameter (as opposed to the staunch pentameter of all other lines), perhaps as a nod to this.

This reflection again speaks to the 'backwardness' of the creature after which the poem is modelled: the 'head-footed' creature with head and legs reversed, and perhaps even the intellectual backwardness of the creature's invocation of deep time. Furthermore, in the traditional Petrarchan sonnet form of an octave followed by a sestet, the sestet is supposed to resolve the conflict laid out in the octave. Tennyson's poem is backward in this way as well, as the initial sestet relies heavily on assonance for its calm, measured depiction of deep-sea life, and the concluding octave (the tentacles of the beast) are chaos personified. (And the final line, in hexameter, is this chaotic sestet in miniature.) Tennyson's 'reflection' of the sestet form may be construed as reiterating the 'rules' in order to throw them into chaos or somehow mediate or challenge the anxiety of poetic 'impotence' which Tennyson's early poetry espouses.[59]

The Kraken will finally surface with the 'latter fire' to be seen by man and angels. But why shall he die? Purely scientifically, by 1830 it was already suspected

[58] *OED*.
[59] According to Roberts, with whom I agree.

that prolonged time at the surface damages deep-sea creatures' buoyancy mechanisms such that they cannot dive again and die there on the surface. But why has he risen in the first place? It has been widely speculated that the Kraken has been summoned (along with other monsters) to the surface to face judgement upon the Second Coming. His 'rise' underscores Christ's and he rages against it, ultimately succumbing to judgement. The passionate 'latter fire' figuratively 'heats' the sea to draw out its monsters, blinding through the earlier 'sickly light' to cast vision (of 'man and angels') upon the creature.

Richard Maxwell has called the fifteenth line a 'calculated moment of excess', though he (and others who have considered 'The Kraken') have not considered the metrical makeup of the line.[60] The final line is not only anomalous because it is the fifteenth in an ordinarily fourteen-line poetic form, but because of its meter. The poem, though making huge changes to the Petrarchan structure, staunchly maintained iambic pentameter save the two trochees in lines 10 and 12, respectively. The final line, however, is iambic *hexameter*. It contains an entire extra metrical foot. The extra metrical foot mimics the extra line. Also, an abundance of 'feet' is precisely what makes a polypus. The line is a monster, it has an extra foot, and the monstrous creature itself has 'extra' feet.

'Extra' feet make a statement in other parts of the poem as well:

> And far away into the sickly light,
> From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
> Unnumbered and enormous polypi
> Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.[61]

To this point the carefully measured iambic pentameter has slowly, methodically submerged the reader into the deep sea and deep time, and this sense of rhythm lends the outlying metrical feet a profound send of disruption. The enjambment between

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[60] Maxwell, p. 14.
[61] Tennyson, 'The Kraken', ll. 7-10.

lines 9-10 and between lines 11-12 yields a stressed syllable at the beginning of lines 10 and 12 (‘Winnow’ and ‘Battening’, respectively), disrupting the iambic nature of the first two thirds of the poem. Line 10, ‘**Win**now with **gi**ant **arms** the **slum**bering **green**’ throws the entire structure off kilter by beginning with a trochee, which disrupts the heretofore iambic nature by beginning with a stressed syllable. The pentameter remains intact, but the metrical balance is thrown off. Something is happening, portending chaos. The medium indeed seems to be the message in ‘The Kraken’, contributing to the sense of taxonomical confusion and monstrosity informed by both modern science and archaic public lore. ‘The Kraken’ embraces this confusion where *Fighting the Whales* strains against it. In the next chapter, on Percy Shelley’s ‘A Vision of the Sea’, these constraints will be made even more material both in the bursting planks of a sinking ship and the chains which lock two tigers therein, raising questions about another sort of border or boundary: that of imperial geography.

CHAPTER FOUR

SHELLEY'S ORIENTALIST MENAGERIE IN 'A VISION OF THE SEA'[1]

Britannia has a menagerie that reaches all over the world
She has some animals rich and rare, some treacherous creatures are caged up there.[2]

The London music hall standard 'Britannia's Menagerie' compares Britain's 'menagerie' of colonial possessions to a 'menagerie' exhibition such as Wombwell's, Pidcock's, or Polito's (to name just a few) in which exotic animals were marketed as savage beasts and displayed to the public throughout Britain. The menagerie was a critical piece of the Orientalist material culture of Britain's expanding empire which also included static displays such as the East India Company's museum at Leadenhall Street, the Museum of the Asiatick Society, the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace, and the mid-century beginnings of the South Kensington museums. As Kurt Koenigsberger has said so well,

> An important effect of the menagerie's work was the practical shaping of the cognitive boundaries of empire, stripping it of its infinite character and defining it as a singular totality: Britannia's menagerie allowed her to rule—that is, to give essential form to—the wide and sublime imperial seas[3]

These often-travelling spectacles and their 'treacherous creatures' not only played an imperative role in creating a public geography of monsters, but often stood in as avatars of the 'exotic' or 'savage' human subjects of the Crown.

Exotic animals were transported to London by sea as early as the thirteenth century.[4] The first elephant was brought to the Tower in 1255 (though archaeological evidence suggests that the Romans likely brought elephants to London as well), and

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[1] See Appendix B for full text of the poem.
[2] 'Britannia's Menagerie', music hall standard by Nat Clifford, c. 1900.
[3] Koenigsberger, p. 61.
[4] Hannah Velten, *Beastly London: A History of Animals in the City* (London: Reaktion, 2013), p. 145.

in the 1420s the Royal Menagerie at the Tower opened its doors to select members of the public (though visitors had to pay admission by bringing a dog or cat to feed the lions). By the end of the eighteenth century there were a staggering number of exotic animals all over London that practically anyone could see. Christopher Plumb's 2010 doctoral thesis (and subsequent book, *The Georgian Menagerie*) has looked into this in depth, observing that 'In the 1760s, a distinct geography of animal exhibitions and commerce emerged in London as animal merchants and menageries began to line the Strand, Piccadilly, and St James's. In the following decades, and certainly by 1800, these would proliferate to the extent that it was possible to walk through West London and see all the principle animals of importance. These animals could be found living and dead in a variety of permanent and temporary exhibitionary contexts'.[5] Similarly, Kurt Koenigsberger (who has argued for the British 'novel as zoo') reminds us that *management* is at the heart of the etymology of *menagerie*, and indeed such an operation was not limited to an animal's husbandry but intrinsically included 'managing its cultural significance'.[6]

Published with the 1820 volume of *Prometheus Unbound,* the poetic menagerie 'A Vision of the Sea' is critically overshadowed by the collection's weightier pieces such as 'To a Skylark', 'Ode to the West Wind', and the title play.[7] As John Barcus has shown in his assembly of reviews for *Shelley's Critical Heritage*, initial critical reactions were positive. John Gibson Lockhart of *Blackwood's*

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[5] Christopher Plumb, 'Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Britain' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2010); Christopher Plumb, *The Georgian Menagerie: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century London* (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2015, p. 55). Page numbers will refer to the thesis which, by nature of not having to appeal to the public, drills down harder into an academic assessment of these animals' captivity.

[6] Kurt Koenigsberger, *The Novel and the Menagerie: Totality, Englishness, and Empire* (Cincinnati: Ohio University Press), p. 37.

[7] See Appendix A for full text of the poem.

Edinburgh Magazine called the poem 'magnificent'[8] and WS Walker, in the *Quarterly Review* of October 1820 chose to focus his review 'not [on] the great storehouse of the obscure and the unintelligible—the *Prometheus*, but on the opening poem, entitled, "A Vision of the Sea", which we have often heard praised as a splendid work of imagination'.[9] After this initial reception the poem received little attention for a century and half, until contemporary Romanticists renewed interest in its strange form and equally peculiar content. Mandy Swann and others prefer to refer to the poem as a 'fragment', while Sally West has argued that the poem is 'critically neglected', and its body of criticism is 'in many ways, more fragmentary and unresolved that the poem itself'.[10] Much of the criticism has been largely biographical—lining it up with dates and events in the summer of 1819 through the spring of 1820.[11]

Though this angle has not featured prominently in any critical discussions of Shelley's 'A Vision of the Sea', the poem's insistence on depicting the animal life of the passage between the East and West is striking. The inventory of creatures in the poem connects the intrinsic English interest in seafaring (and its narratives) with the pervasive material culture of Orientalism in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. The centrepiece of this section is the poem's peculiar depiction of a pair of tigers freed from their cage in a shipwreck, and the poem's treatment of the potential limits of this Orientalist seafaring material culture. At these fragile 'limits' are the

[8] September 1820; James E. Barcus, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: The Critical Heritage* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2003), p. 239.
[9] Ibid., p. 258.
[10] Many Swann, 'Shelley's Utopian Seascapes', *Studies in Romanticism* (2013), p. 390; Sally West, *Coleridge and Shelley: Textual Engagement* (London: Ashgate, 2013), p. 123.
[11] Though most often attributed to Shelley's writings at Pisa, Elsie Mayer has ventured that the poem may have been composed at Livorno in 1819 after the death of Percy and Mary's infant son William.) Elsie F. Mayer, 'Notes on the Composition of "A Vision of the Sea"', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 28 (1979), 17-20.

borders and interstices of East and West, nature and culture, beast and man, subject and object. The poem's rupture of these limits speaks to an anxiety that these material interests might grow too large or monstrously break free of their constraints: the menagerie tiger or elephant may burst its chains and run wild through London, or indeed those human subjects inhabiting Britain's colonial possessions may strain to break free of Britain's imperial shackles. Shelley's 'Vision' places these material, imperial concerns inside the 'bursting' planks of a wrecked ship.

I will first make space for an Orientalist reading of the poem, which draws on the exotic animal touchstones of the Indian colonial project to situate the shipwreck in time and space (returning to England from India, carrying prizes). Here I will also begin to trace what the poem may suggest about Shelley's own imperialist leanings. Following sections will each focus on an agent in the poem: Of the 'twin tigers', I will argue that the poem is also an act of imperialism, envisaging the tiger as subject and perhaps turning the colonial tables on the 'tameless' tiger even as it glorifies him (specifically, Tipu's tiger, ones of the most famous material prizes of colonial India). I will argue that the sea-snake is more than just a nod to Coleridge, but has roots in the popular narrative of the crew of the *HMS Alceste*, and that the image of the snake explores the theme of rupture in the poem. I will argue that the mother and child (the poem's only human survivors) are positioned as spectators in the sublime menagerie of the poem, allowing the reader the opportunity to see the animals from a safe distance. I will conclude with a discussion of what these fears of rupture might mean in the Orientalist cultural landscape of Britain in 1820, and what it might take to tame such beasts from a literary and imperial perspective.

4.1 AN ORIENTALIST 'VISION'

Excepting 'Mont Blanc', Carl Ketchum has called 'Vision' Shelley's 'most explicit treatment of man vs. Nature'.[12] Shelley was not, however, averse to employing animals—or monsters—in his other work. Lloyd Jeffrey has catalogued Shelley's references to animals from the insect to the whale, noting that Shelley's animal imagery is generally concerned with the mammalian and the terrestrial, which makes 'A Vision of the Sea' an exciting departure. In AMD Hughes' 1910 edition of Shelley's 1820 poems, he notes that Shelley 'frequently images the awful events in the lives of the brute creation, their deadly encounters, or the distress of hunted things, the mute fear of the beast and bird at the oncoming tempest. [...] not allowing the pain and cruelty in these things to darken his view of Nature, but fascinated simply by the daemonic power'.[13] Shelley was familiar with Buffon's taxonomy, Cuvier's *Règne Animal*, and Pennant's 1781 *History of Quadrupeds*, though Jeffrey observes that 'by the standards of the zoologist or taxonomist, Shelley's beast lore is not impressive; the thing that counts is what he does with it through the language of metaphor and symbol'.[14] Even in *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley places these creatures in an Orientalised setting when the Chorus of Spirits says in Act IV that they sing 'by the whirlwind of gladness borne along; | As the flying fish leap | From the Indian deep, | And mix with the sea-birds half asleep'.[15] 'A Vision of the Sea' marries this animal language of metaphor and symbol to the timely discussion of Britain's role in the East, with the familiar Romantic setting of a Gothic ocean.

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[12] Carl H. Ketchum, 'Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea"', *Studies in Romanticism* 17.1 (1978), p. 52.
[13] AMD Hughes, *Prometheus Unbound, and other Poem*s (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), p. 214.
[14] LN Jeffrey, '"Beasts of the Woods and Wildernesses" in the Poetry of Shelley', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 21/22 (1972), pp. 69-70.
[15] *Prometheus Unbound,* IV.85-88.

Much has been made recently of the notion of a uniquely Romantic Orientalism in the latter decades of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The *Norton Anthology's* entry on Romantic Orientalism reminds us that though English Romanticism generally takes place among the fields of England populated by sheep (and even the 'unnatural' settings of medieval castles are always Christian), the Romantics engaged a certain eastern exoticism more often than previously acknowledged: Blake's tiger, of course, but there is also Wordsworth's 'Arab of the Bedouin Tribes' in Book 5 of his *Prelude*, Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan', Byron's 'Oriental Tales', Keats' 'Endymion' and 'The Eve of St. Agnes', and Safie in *Frankenstein*.[16] The deficiency so far in this geographically-expanded view is that even though it attempts to move beyond a default Romantic pastoralism, its new (Eastern) territory is still solidly terrestrial. Even when Sofia Hofkosh and Alan Richardson focus on the 'ethnographic exoticism' of 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'—in which the mariner's voyage is part and parcel of a 'growing maritime empire of far-flung islands, trading-posts, and stretches of coastline on five continents'—the emphasis is still on the human interactions which happen around the human periphery of the sea rather than *within* it.[17] 'A Vision of the Sea' is a prime text to answer Steve Mentz's call for a 'blue ecocriticism' by analysing the poetics of nonhuman animals (terrestrial and aquatic), especially in the Orientalised ocean environment which is portrayed with a tropical wildness not present in Ballantyne or Tennyson's oceans.

In the early nineteenth century Romantic Orientalism spawned in part by the popularity of the early eighteenth-century English translation of *The Arabian Nights,* flourished alongside—and overlapped with—that other new aesthetic, the Gothic. 'A

[16] *Norton Anthology of English Literature Online (*henceforth *NAEL),* https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/topic_4/welcome.htm

[17] Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh, eds., *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), as quoted in *NAEL* Online.

Vision of the Sea' is a moment of intersection of these two parallel movements within Romanticism. This makes sense, as the *NAEL* has pointed out the similarities between the two: 'Like Gothic novels and plays, Oriental tales feature exotic settings, supernatural happenings, and deliberate extravagance of events, character, behaviour, emotion, and speech. […] they operate more sensationally than other types of fiction. Pleasurable terror and pleasurable exoticism are kindred experiences, with unreality and strangeness at the root of both'.[18] And indeed though 'A Vision of the Sea' begins in 'the terror of the tempest' Shelley also notes the '*splendour* and terror' of the wreck.[19]

Often these Eastern themes go beyond just the in-demand Orientalism of the day and promote a personal imperialism. In *British Romantic Writers and the East*, Nigel Leask has charted the demand for and the proliferation of Orientalised literary and material culture in Britain, uncovering the Romantic poets' 'anxieties' about the aims, jurisdiction, and ultimate fragility of the empire which plays out in the often 'Oriental tone' of their work. Shelley, Byron, Southey, and De Quincey all return again and again to exoticised, Othering images of the East, but with very different (and sometimes difficult to infer) perspectives on that imperialism. Writes Leask: 'To study the manner in which British Romantic writers consciously or unconsciously articulated their anxieties about the Other is neither to claim that they *sought* to subvert the imperialist project […] nor that they sought simply to endorse it.'[20] Southey, for instance, demonstrated an increasingly conservative imperialism (much to the chagrin of radical young Shelley, who visited him at his Lake District home in the 1790s) while close friend Byron was of course a staunch anti-imperialist, drawn to

[18] *NAEL*.
[19] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 1, 20.
[20] Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 2.

the East as a 'deadly cure for the aristocratic spleen'.[21] Shelley's place on this spectrum has been the object of a surprisingly small amount of criticism. Somewhere between the extremes of Southey and Byron, Leask has called Shelley a 'liberal imperialist', for whom the East 'beckoned as an uncluttered site for the fulfilment of frustrated dreams of liberty, but in practice revealed itself to be treacherous and obstacle-ridden, the nemesis of revolutionary narcissism'.[22] This section will return to this question to trace Shelley's imperialism in the poem, though more in-depth analysis of Shelley's imperialism will be conducted in the following sections, which each focus on one agent in the poem (the tigers, the snakes, the mother and child).

The 'real' and figurative animals in 'A Vision of the Sea' are a peculiar set, though less so in view of Britain's role in—and public, material fascination with—its Indian colonial project. Subject-specific periodicals like the *Asiatic Journal* as well as the London papers and their regional affiliates were full of news items and first-hand accounts from the East as well as ship sailings and reports on newly-'discovered' treasures to be exhibited in Britain, including wild animals. The poem references elephants, centipedes, cormorants, tigers, snakes, and sharks, all of which feature in the material cultural dialogues about the East in this period. The poem's Orientalism has yet to be examined critically, and I propose that these exotic animals, touchstones of the Indian colonial project, situate the shipwreck in time and space (returning from the East) and express the often-contradictory nature of Shelley's imperialist images. To fully appreciate its Orientalist underpinnings, 'A Vision of the Sea' must be understood in the context of the voyage's geography, which has yet to be established by its small body of criticism. The poem's employment of 'real' and figurative

[21] Ibid., p. 10.
[22] Ibid.

animals suggests that the ship is returning to London from the East (specifically India, it seems, though it is worth noting that the 'Orient' or the 'East' in this period stretched from Egypt to Japan[23]). Once in London the tigers will be displayed for profit, and even if they die en route (as animals often did) they will still hold value in the Orientalist material economies of London.

For context, an extract from the letters of a Mr Squance during his travels to Ceylon ran in the 'Missionary Notices' section of the London papers on New Year's Day 1816, relating his understanding of the exotic eastern fauna:

> The woods are infested with elephants, tigers, bears, buffaloes, while boars, jackals, &c. […] Serpents, scorpions, and centipedes of all kinds are numerous, and grow to a monstrous size; it is said that a snake in this island killed a tiger and devoured it at one meal[24]

Squance's accounting of animals in the letter is representative of the general understanding of Asian animals. And 'A Vision of the Sea' indeed prominently features tigers and a serpent which attempts to make a meal of a tiger, and depicts the ocean environment as having animal qualities, specifically like an elephant, a serpent, and a centipede.

The sea itself engages Egypt, as the waves are '*pyramid*-billows'; one of the ship's decks is 'burst up by the waters below | And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow | O'er the lakes of the *desert*!' on which the crew's corpses are 'black as *mummies* on which Time has written | His scorn of the embalmer'. The storm which has destroyed the ship is one of the poem's most complicated figurative depictions of Eastern animals:

> The hurricane came from the west, and passed on
> By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
> Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
> As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
> Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.[25]

[23] See Nigel's Leask's notion of the 'composite Orient'.
[24] 'Missionary Notices Relating Principally to the Missions of the Wesleyan Methodists (London)' (1 January 1816), p. 3.
[25] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 100-04.

Though the hurricane comes from the West it passes ‘by the path of the gate of the eastern sun’, suggesting not the just the sun’s origin but the ship’s. The ‘gate of the eastern sun’ creates a geographic barrier between East and West. The hurricane is an ‘arrowy serpent, pursuing the form / Of an elephant’ as it ‘bursts’ through the initial storm which has stalled the ship. But the image of pursuit here is unclear. Either the arrowy serpent storm is pursuing the form of an elephant in the sense that it is not lithe like a snake but huge and brash like an elephant, or the hurricane is as predatory as a carnivorous snake pursuing (hunting) the elephant.

In the context of the poem alone, the ‘arrowy serpent’ of the hurricane foreshadows the snake which the tiger will battle in the water. In the poem’s historical context, the *Asiatic Journal* abounds with accounts of enormous predatory snakes attacking men and even tigers (the most prominent animal in Shelley’s poem). And, as I will discuss in much greater detail in the section concerning the sea-snake, enormous serpents were staples of the English menageries (to stay nothing of the English obsession with perhaps the most celebrated genre of sea monster, the sea serpent).

The invocation of the elephant here is similarly significant. Kurt Koenigsberger has noted that the elephant, more so than any other animal, is a ‘synecdoche for the menagerie in which it plays its spectacular part and for the empire whose practices and institutions bring it before the English public’.[26] The elephant held an exalted place in the English menagerie and has been the subject of much scholarly work as a symbol of imperialism (first in the India then in Africa). The *Asiatic Journal* abounds with accounts of the brutal imperial pastime of elephant hunting (in which domesticated elephants were ridden into chaotic battle with wild

[26] Koenigsberger, p. 13.

elephants). Though they exist only figuratively in the poem, the serpent and elephant establish an inescapably Eastern (and material) context for the poem. While the hurricane is an 'arrowy serpent, pursuing the form | Of an elephant', the storm's 'screaming blast' is 'black as a cormorant':

> Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
> Between Ocean and Heaven, like an Ocean passed,
> Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
> Which, based on the sea and to Heaven uncurled,
> Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
> The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
> As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
> And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
> Like the stone of a temple ere earthquake has passed[27]

Andrew Marvell invokes the literal blackness of the cormorant (common seabirds in Britain and around the world) in 'Unfortunate Lover', but let us take Shakespeare's cormorant as our cipher for Shelley's use of the bird: In *Richard II* 'Light vanities insatiate cormorant, Consuming meanes soon praies upon itself'; in *Coriolanus* he references 'the Cormorant belly' of a corpulent character; in King Ferdinand's first monologue of *Love's Labours Lost* he remarks 'When, spite of cormorant devouring Time, | The endeavour of this present breath may buy | That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge | And make us heirs of all eternity'; and *Troilus and Cressida* references 'This cormorant war'.[28] Shakespeare's cormorant, and the secondary *OED* definition, is a metaphor for someone or something 'insatiably greedy or rapacious' (due to the bird's voracious appetite for fish).[29] Shakespeare's figurative use of the cormorant took root, and from it grew Milton's Satan, a foremost literary symbol of greed, sitting atop the Tree of Life 'in the shape of a cormorant' in Book Four of *Paradise Lost*. The cormorant's reputation was sealed: in 1693 William Congreve's

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[27] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 105-13.

[28] *Richard II*, II.i.38; *Coriolanus,* I.i.119; *Love's Labours Lost*, i.1; *Troilus and Cressida*, ii.2.

[29] 'A numerous fleet of corm'rants black' (1658); 'insatiably greedy or rapacious' is from *OED*. It is also worth noting that cormorants are mentioned by name in four books of the Bible—*Leviticus*, Deuteronomy, *Isaiah, and Zephaniah*—all of which connect them to death and infection, which makes sense in 'Vision' as the fog the storm brings was 'quick pestilence'.

Old Batchelour remarks ‘Why what a Cormorant in Love am I!’; in Elijah Fenton’s contribution to Pope’s translation of the *Odyssey* he says ‘His treasur’d stores these Cormorants consume’; the Duke of Wellington wrote in 1809 of his campaigns in Europe ‘We must look after these cormorants of Romana.[30]

Here Shelley’s often-contradictory imperialism begins to emerge. The passage presents a Eurocentric view in which the East is the ‘verge of the world’ (the farthest reaches of England’s empire); however, the screaming blast is likened to a cormorant and therefore vested with the connotation of Shakespearean greed. Though the poem projects England as the centre of the world and its eastward influence as inevitable, the subtle likening of that influence to a symbol of insatiable greed may support the notion of Shelley as a more liberal imperialist.

Furthermore, in this passage Shelley is working with a peculiar literary and literal architecture. He characterises those ‘clouds at the verge of the world’ (the East) as being ‘like columns and walls [which] did surround and sustain | The dome of the tempest.’ Those clouds are then split in two by the coming hurricane, which leaves them in ruins, ‘like the stone of a temple ere an earthquake has passed’, and the ‘dome of the tempest’ with its ‘columns and walls’ made of clouds becomes like the earthquake-ruined ‘stone of a temple’. Shelley is likely playing with the consonance and auditory similarity of ‘dome of the tempest’ and ‘stone of a temple’, remarking on the literally and literarily ethereal, breakable nature of the metonymous Eastern temples. The cormorant—symbol of insatiable greed—may be the spectre of English imperialism coming to ‘rent in twain’ those temples at the verge of the world.

Immediately thereafter:

> The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
> Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,

[30] Congreve, *Old Batchelour*, I.i.4; Fenton in Pope et al. tr. Homer, *Odyssey*, I.i.207; *Dispatches* (1838 ed.) V.155.

> Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
> Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
> They encounter, but interpenetrate.[31]

As the storm begins to clear, the sunrise beams in representing the spoils of that Eastern land: 'Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline'. With the exception of some of the more organised Indian resistance movements (such as Tipu Sahib's, to be discussed in relation to the tigers), imperial plundering was indeed mostly 'unimpeded'. 'Golden' and 'crystalline' allude to some of the treasures of these lands, particularly in India where gem, rock crystal, gold, and diamond mining dated back centuries and was soon exploited by the East India Company and made up a sizable portion of the material prises of empire. Those 'banded armies' (and indeed the East India company had its own military) 'encounter' these new subjects of the crown and largely interpenetrate in both the military and cultural sense. The 'armies of light and air' reinforce the Romantic, ethereal nature of the stone temples and those who worship within, but their characterisation as 'armies' in the first place invokes the possibility of violent suppression of there. Shelley then puts even a finer point of the storm-tide of British imperialism. The storm has calmed, but its 'heaped waves…slide | Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide | From Andes to Atlas'.[32] From the Andes mountains in South America to the Atlas mountains in North Africa, the liberal imperialist Shelley prefers to depict British colonial control as 'soft influence' while still channelling George McCartney's oft-quoted characterisation of Britain's expanded holdings after the Seven Years' War in 1773 as

[31] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 116-20.
[32] Ibid., ll. 128-33.

'this vast empire on which the sun never sets, and whose bounds nature has not yet ascertained'.[33]

How does this often-contradictory 'liberal' imperialism evidenced in 'A Vision of the Sea' align with what is known of Shelley's personal politics? In 1819, a year before the publication of 'A Vision of the Sea' Shelley wrote but did not publish his *Philosophical View of Reform* in which he empathises with the plight of 'enslaved' Indians toward revolution. 'Vision' lacks the revolutionary potential of *Revolt of Islam* (perhaps Shelley's most overtly Oriental work, in which Cynthia famously asks 'Can man be free if woman be a slave?'); instead, 'A Vision of the Sea' often reads more like a narcissistic imperial fantasy with none of the radicalism for which Shelley is often admired, even as he asserted in his 1812 *Declaration of Rights*, 'If a person's religious ideas correspond not with yours, love him nevertheless. How different would yours have been, had the chance of birth placed you in Tartary or India![34]

By today's standards, Shelley's radicalism which championed democracy and the ineluctable impermanence of empire may seem at odds with the Romantic treatment of eastern subjects as Other even as they glorified them. This contradiction is biographically reinforced by Shelley's appeal to Thomas Love Peacock, who held an appointment with the East India Company, to secure him a position with the Company in India. Peacock denied him, and Shelley wrote back: 'I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called *verse*: but I have not, & since you give me no encouragement about India I

[33] George Macartney, *An Account of Ireland in 1773 by a Late Chief Secretary of that Kingdom* (1773), p. 55; also cited in Kevin Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 72.
[34] Article 25 (written1812).

cannot hope to have.'[35] Shelley never abandoned the subject: though only three of Shelley's poems deal in specifically Indian settings (*Zeinab and Kathema* (1811), *The Indian Serenade* (1819), and *Fragments of an Unfinished Drama* (1822)), Leask has argued that Shelley's 'interest in India transcends the level of biographical anecdote' to have an 'Oriental *tone*', 'carried by the stereotypical binary oppositions: West/East, male/female, reason/imagination'.[36]

4.2 TWIN TIGERS

'A Vision of the Sea' was not Shelley's first employment of the image of the tiger. In *Hellas*, Shelley cautions: 'Fear not the Russian: | The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay against the hunter.— | Cunning, base, and cruel, | He crouches, waiting till the spoil be won'.[37] In *Queen Mab* God is 'A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend | Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage | Of tameless tigers hungering for blood'.[38] And in *Prometheus Unbound* (the centrepiece of the volume which 'A Vision of the Sea' introduces) the personified Earth soliloquises

> Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce

[35] Leask, p. 109.
[36] Ibid., p. 109, 71, 122. This interest in India in particular may have been influenced (or at least furthered) by two visitors to the Pisa circle in the years Shelley composed *Prometheus Unbound* and its companion poems (including 'A Vision of the Sea'): his cousin Thomas Medwin and friend Edward Ellerker Williams (who drowned with Shelley in Italy in 1822). Medwin, a British army lieutenant stationed in India is know to have visited the Shelleys at Pisa, though Leask is quick to point out that 'Shelley was *already* a confirmed Orientalist and liberal imperialist, so that Medwin's arrival at Pisa simply confirmed, rather than initiated, Shelley's interest in India' (Leask, p. 70). Williams was likely an even stronger source for Shelley's particular brand of Orientalism. Born in India, Williams served in the Royal Navy, and his 1814 travel journal to India, 'Sporting Sketches during a Short Stay in Hindustane' were circulated among Shelley and Byron's circle when Williams lodged with them in Italy. The journal ruminated on tiger hunting, the architecture of Delhi, the phrenology of his Indian porters, and general observations and remarks thereon. These characters will have further influence on Shelley's employment of 'royal tigers'. (Edward Ellerker Williams, 'Sporting Sketches during a Short Stay in Hindustane.' *Bodleian MS Shelley adds.e.21*, University of Oxford.) Tilar Mazzeo, who has edited the recently-digitised version of the 'Indian Journal' (as the Byron/Shelley circled called it), has ventured that 'the notebook records significant information on the Orientalist discourses produced in the midst of the Italian circle… and Shelley, in particular, gave both care and criticism to the authors. A certain tolerance and even enthusiasm for the British colonial project characterises both […] notebooks and, it seems, the interests and literary endeavours of the Byron/Shelley circle at Pisa'.
[37] Shelley, *Hellas,* ll. 536-39.
[38] Shelley, *Queen Mab,* IV.211-13.

> The caverns of my pride's deep universe.
> Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
> Made winds which need they balm[39]

Lloyd Jeffrey has asserted that in the poet's entire canon, 'the tiger is for Shelley the avatar of stark, ruthless power'.[40] But are the tigers of 'Vision' the tigers of *Hellas*, *Queen Mab, Prometheus,* or something new? In this section on the tigers of 'A Vision of the Sea' I will argue that the poem seems to envisage the tigers as *subjects* as opposed to 'tameless' agents, perhaps toward a more imperialist end. First I will establish the tiger's place in Georgian Britain as an important item of material culture in three ways: narratives of man-eating Indian tigers published in England, live tigers on display in England, and dead tigers (or their hides or claws) on display or in domestic or decorative use in England. I will then argue that Shelley's tigers allude to the famous musical automaton 'Tipu's Tiger' in order to glorify the animal (and Tipu Sultan) but also to take a certain imperial pride in it demise.

The tiger was an exotic and savage monster in the eyes of the British public. Periodicals abounded with tales of enormous tigers plucking Indian children from their beds, men and women from the crops they tended, and the occasional unlucky 'European' as he bravely served the crown. Scores could be settled during tiger hunts, the narratives of which proved a staple of such periodicals. Edward Ellerker Williams talks of tigers forty-six times in his 'Indian Journal' which so enthralled Shelley.[41] The tiger hunt held even more value than as a moralising allegory of western victory over eastern savagery: the tiger's carcass could be broken down and

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[39] Shelley*, Prometheus Unbound*, IV.499-502.
[40] Jeffrey, p. 77.
[41] Including this account of stalking a tiger through the jungles of Rhoutuk: 'Going out we were all repeatedly cautioned not to be confused when the Tiger should be roused, but to take steady aim—How vain this caution! For what young Sportsman 'in the madness of delight' can be composed when the angry Tiger 'shakes his sides […] rising from his Lair, and stretches […] his rav'nous paws, with recent gore destain'd'. Williams, p. 37; 'in the madness…destined' comes from the 1735 edition of William Somerville's *The Chace, A Poem*, which documents traditional Moghal hunting practices.

shipped back to Britain as public evidence of imperial dominance and decorative material culture, as Isobel Armstrong notes 'The skin of a killed tiger will be made into a domestic chair: savagery and domesticity, horror and amusement, converge and collide'.[42] Live tigers, however, were a renewable commodity irresistible in the proliferating world of travelling menageries (after all, once a menagerist secured a mating pair he had a theoretically endless supply of animals). Any self-respecting menagerie had at least one tiger on retainer (Wombwell had three), as did the Royal Menagerie at the Tower of London, whose animals were transferred to the new Zoological Society of London in Regent's Park in the 1830s.

'A Vision of Sea' is unique in that it imagines the animals' voyage to Britain. Though the fiction and verse of captive animals in Britain is prevalent in the nineteenth century, I have yet to find another literary text which depicts the actual shipboard passage of an exotic animal to Britain. Wombwell paid prompt attention to shipping traffic in and around the Thames, and was either present or notified when the East Indiamen returned to London with wild animals aboard. It was also common, as early as the seventeenth century, for Londoners to crowd the dock trying to catch a glimpse of an exotic creature being unloaded. *Tuesday's Journal*, 24 July 1649 reports that 'Some East Indies Ships arrived and brought some very strange birds and beasts, such as were never seen in England. A great number of persons from the city of London and other parts flock daily to see the rarities that they have brought over'.[43]

Maritime enterprise was inextricable from these exotic imports, and Shelley's 'vision' of the passage lends further context to the animals' imperial captivity. Shelley first approaches the tigers subtly, asking

Are those

[42] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 217
[43] Lysons Collection, BL. See also Phillip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 97; and Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Penguin, 1994), p.138.

> Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
> In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
> (What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
> Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
> The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank[44]

The reader implicitly asks back —*Are they?*— dependent on Shelley for the answer. There are indeed two tigers aboard the sinking ship, but the employment of the question form here (the narrator asks the same of the dead crew members on deck) lends an important sense of incredulity. Even the narrator (the reader's only source for the story), telling the scene in the present tense as it unfolds before him without retrospect, seems to struggle to believe it is all true.

'(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold)' is a riddle of sorts, made more cryptic by its parentheses, which create a sense of removal from the action of the poem. Shelley's tigers in *Queen Mab* are 'tameless', but the tigers of 'A Vision of the Sea' are now 'tame' in the midst of the shipwreck. The riddle seems to suggest that the strong animal sense of self-preservation made them difficult to constrain, but now that their constraints are broken they are tamed by the same sense of self-preservation in the unfamiliar environment of the sea, with no apparent corporeal adversary (until the sea-snake toward the end of the poem, that is). The tigers 'crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank, | The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank'; this depiction of the tigers' actions as oddly mechanical is likely another connection to the Orientalist material culture of Georgian London: the tigers of 'A Vision of the Sea' are representative of Britain's opposition to the Indian sultan Tipu, and more specifically to the famous 'Tipu's Tiger' organ which was a fixture in the museum of the East India Company from 1810 (Figure 18).[45]

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[44] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 39-44
[45] V&A Museum no. 2545(IS).

The organ, a life-sized musical automaton of a carved, painted tiger attacking a European man belonged to Tipu, the Sultan of Mysore who challenged British rule in South India during the four Mysore wars until his death in the Battle of Seringapatam in 1799, arousing English fascination and fear (like the 'splendour and terror' of the poem) with his famous maxim that 'it is better to die as a tiger than to live as a sheep'.[46] Tipu kept live tigers within the walls of the city (reports abounded of British prisoners being thrown to them), the walls of Seringapatam were covered in murals depicting tigers savaging Europeans, and during the plunder that followed Tipu's defeat, the East India Company discovered the extent to which that motto permeated the iconography of the sultanate: Tipu's throne was adorned with tigers as were his guards' uniforms and weapons, and in his armoury the Company found mortars in the shape of tigers and a cannon with the muzzle of a tiger. British Colonel Mark Wood, in an 1800 book on Tipu's life and recent defeat called the tiger organ a 'characteristic emblem of the ferocious animosity of Tippoo'.[47] Tipu's tiger organ is generally thought to have been inspired by the 1793 death of General Sir Hector Munro's son by 'an immense royal tiger' in Mysore; General Munro had been involved in forcing Tipu to sign the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1793, and many historians believe Tipu, seeing himself as a 'royal tiger,' commissioned the tiger organ as a gruesome memento.

[46] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', l. 20. Certainly a challenge to the desirability of the pastoral!

[47] Mark Wood, *A Review of the Origin, Progress, and Result of the Late Decisive War in Mysore. With notes; and an appendix, comprising the whole of the secret state papers found in the cabinet of Tippoo Sultaun* (London: T. Cadell, Jr. and W. Davies, 1800), p. 66.

Figure 18. Tipu's Tiger (1790s). Victoria and Albert Museum.

The 'Storming of Seringapatam', as it came to be known, incited an important subgenre of Orientalist material culture in Britain with the rapid distribution of prints, broadsheets, and one the largest panoramic paintings in the world displayed at Astley's Amphitheatre in London. This important imperial victory would also be the setting for the prologue of Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*. After Tipu's defeat at Seringapatam the East India Company's soldiers also discovered *Tipu's Dream Book* in the sultan's palace, which further explained his obsession with the tiger as the beast which could eradicate the infidel (British) scourge from his homeland. (The book was translated into English by 1800.) Tipu's possessions were seized as spoils of imperial victory, and the tiger organ aroused special interest when it was displayed in the East India Company's India House Museum at Leadenhall Street, London. Keats is known to have seen it on display there in 1819 when he visited to inquire about a position as ship's doctor on an Indiaman. The organ left an impression on Keats, and later that year he included an allusion to it in 'Cap and Bells': 'That little buzzing

noise | Comes from a plaything of he Emperor's choice, | From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his toys.' Flaubert also visited the organ in 1851 while in London for the Great Exhibition, where 'apparently nothing under that stupendous roof [of the Crystal Palace] delighted him more than Tippoo's Tyger at the East India Company Museum'.[48] When the Company was disbanded these trophies were absorbed by the Crown and distributed to various museums around Britain; Tipu's Tiger was allocated to the Indian Section of the South Kensington Museum in 1879, now the V&A.[49]

Shelley's twin tigers evoke Tipu's tiger in the mechanical description of their movements. Shelley's tigers 'have driven, like a crank, | The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank' of the wooden ship. Tipu's tiger organ is operated by turning a crank on the side of the tiger. The wooden tiger then appears to maul the man (dressed in common European clothes of the 1790s) as his arm flails mechanically about the animal's head. The crank also operates a bellows inside the animal which causes the man to cry plaintively and the tiger to growl. Later in the poem the tigers 'Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry | Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously'.[50] The poem, like the organ, reverses the roles of Western man and Eastern beast as victim and aggressor.

Tipu's Tiger is, like much of 'A Vision of the Sea, oddly contradictory: a symbol of both imperial failure and an imperial trophy. As a man, Tipu represented to Britain not just an animal who broke its chains and attacked its master, but an animal that never acknowledged having a master (being a subject) in the first place.

[48] See Julian Barnes' essay in the *New York Review of Books*, 25 May 2005, p. 12.
[49] When the organ was exhibited at South Kensington in 1879 visitors were allowed to turn the crank themselves, and the constant sound is said to have driven the students working in the adjacent reading room quite mad.
[50] 'Vision', ll. 94-95.

4.3 'Ghastly affray with a sea-snake'

Phil Robinson, whose handbook to the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition (*Fishes of Fancy*) will be discussed in Chapter 6, puts into words what every Shelley reader is thinking in his 1882 compendium *The Poet's Beasts*: 'But why does Shelley make tigers fight with snakes out in mid-ocean?'[51]

The 'arrowy serpent' of the hurricane in the early lines of the poem finds physical form later as

> One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
> With a sea-snake.
> The foam and the smoke of the battle
> Stain the clear air with sunbows[52]

It is known that Percy and Mary Shelley often recited 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' to one another; Coleridge's 'water-snakes' are bound up with his Ancient Mariner in a blessing to return home, and Scott McEathron has asserted that 'A Vision of the Sea' rewrites the role of Coleridge's spiritually potent water-snake into Shelley's 'sea-snake' which is just 'one more link the food chain with 'no more meaning. […] A natural world stripped of moral caveats or metaphysical second chances'.[53] While Shelley's sea-snake seems less mystical than Coleridge's water-snakes (whose impact is also due in part to their quantity), there is another narrative to be gleaned from the sea-snake in 'A Vision of the Sea'. I will first re-establish the snake/serpent as a staple of the Orientalist narrative—and English menagerie—which was portrayed as predatory and powerful. I will also make a case for an unacknowledged piece of source material for the snake (the narrative of the crew of the *Alceste*), and conclude by examining how the sea-snake interrogates the poem's theme of rupture.

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[51] Phil Robinson, *The Poet's Beasts* (London: Isbister and Co. Limited, 1893), p. 39.
[52] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 135-39.
[53] Scott McEathron, '"Death as "Refuge and Ruin": Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea" and Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 43 (1994), p. 178.

In an account published in the *Caledonian Mercury* 3 June 1816, an enormous 'anaconda' kills a tiger in the jungles of India. The huge snake grabs the tiger,

> biting and grinding him in a most horrible manner, and at once choking him and tearing him to pieces. The tiger reared up again on this, and words are too poor to paint his seeming agony;—he wreathed and tossed about, but all in vain, the enemy wherever he went was on him, and his hollow roaring from within the devourer's mouth was dreadful beyond expression. I was firing on the creature in this state… Nature, it seems, informs this animal, that though it can conquer such large creatures as these, it can by no means devour them as they are, since their bodies are too thick for his swallow, and he must therefore break their bones, and reduce them to a soft mass, before he can manage them […] This took up several hours, and the poor creature all this while was living, and at every crack of the bones gave a howl, though not loud, yet piteous enough to pierce the cruellest heart, and make him even more forget his natural hatred to its species, and pity its misery.[54]

The tiger, 'though mangled in this miserable manner', survives to be eaten alive by the snake, just as in 'A Vision of the Sea' when the snake attacks the tiger, the reader can hear in the mind's ear 'the jar, and the rattle | Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress | of the snake's adamantine voluminousness'.[55] This is just one of the more gruesome references I have found to giant snakes eating tigers in this Eastern space in which the accepted (English) assumptions about a hierarchical 'food chain' do not seem to apply.

Large carnivorous snakes were already a staple of any respectable London menageries by the poem's publication in 1820. Wombwell's first ever acquisition was a pair of large snakes, which he had purchased in London aboard a ship from South America for £75. He showed them in pubs and soon had enough money to buy more exotic animals. By 1810 he had founded Wombwell's Travelling Menagerie, based in Soho, and began to tour British fairs with elephants, leopards, lions, llamas, monkeys, ostriches, a rhinoceros, tigers, and zebras. When the colder, damper British environment took a toll on the more tropical animals and they died, Wombwell could turn enough of a profit on exhibiting the carcasses (or selling them to a taxidermist or university) to buy a new animal when the next ship came in. (By the 1820s

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[54] 'A Monstrous Serpent', *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Scotland), Monday 3 June 1816.
[55] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 139-41.

Londoners would have also been able to choose to see Polito's, Pidcock's, or Adkins' respective menageries in addition to the Royal Menagerie in the Tower of London.[56]) As I have argued in the previous section, 'A Vision of the Sea' is a very unique *literary* account of an exotic animal's voyage to England, though the process by which these unique acquisitions arrived would not have been unfamiliar to the public. One such journey, that of the crew of the HMS *Alceste,* was particularly well publicised and poses great similarity to elements of 'A Vision of the Sea'.

In 1816 premier English naturalist Joseph Banks (a familiar character in this thesis) recommended the younger Clarke Abel (1780-1826) to serve as naturalist on Lord Amherst's Embassy to China aboard the East India Company's HMS *Alceste*. Abel was charged with collecting and maintaining living and preserved specimens for transport, research, and ultimately display back in London. The journey of the *Alceste*, when her crew finally returned home in 1818, captivated England: on her initial return *Alceste* shipwrecked near Java and was burned by Malays, who also destroyed Abel's collection of three hundred specimens. The crew boarded a replacement ship, HMS *Caesar*, with some new live specimens including a parrot, two sixteen-foot-long boa constrictors ('the property of a gentleman [now in England] who had two of the same sort'), and an *orang-outang* (orang-utan). The *Caesar* was nearly sunk by an accidental fire (set, according to Abel, by an 'idle looby who had been carelessly pumping off spirits with a naked light to preserve the body of [the] vile parrot, which had died the night before').[57] At this point in the journey the ship had also already lost one of the two boa constrictors, as shortly after leaving Batavia (Jakarta) the snake broke free in the hold and slithered onto the deck and over the

[56] *The Leeds Mercury* (14 February 1818); *The Hull Packet and Original Weekly Commercial, Literary and General Advertiser* (13 October 1818).
[57] Clarke Abel, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China, and of a Voyage to and from that Country in the years 1816 and 1817* (London: Longman, 1818), p. 369.

gunwale into the sea. In *Mcleod's Narrative of a Voyage in his Majesty's Ship* Alceste, the ship's surgeon Mcleod describes the incident thus:

> one of [the snakes] broke loose from his confinement, and very soon cleared the decks, as every body *easily* made way for him. Not being used to a ship, however, or taking perhaps the sea for a green field, he sprawled overboard; and was drowned. He is said not to sunk immediately, but to have reared his head several times, and with a considerable portion of his body out of the sea[58]

In a strange twist on what might be called the 'classic' English sea monster, this serpent is a land-dweller who has merely fallen into the sea. On review of Abel and Mcleod's narratives of the voyage of the *Alceste* (and subsequently the *Caesar,* on which they were finally repatriated), there is strong evidence that Shelley grounded elements of 'A Vision of the Sea' in those voyages. Like 'Vision', Abel and Mcleod's accounts both discuss tigers, snakes, and sharks against the backdrop of shipwreck. Abel in particular devotes an entire chapter to 'the great snake of Java', which he reinforces is capable of crushing tigers (as the snake in 'Vision' does), and on the same page he discusses the unique and impressive killing power of sharks in Eastern waters. Earlier in his narrative he is also presented with the carcass of a shark, from which he extracts 'the remains of several snakes', reminiscent of Shelley's blue shark waiting to be the 'fin-winged tomb of the victor' of the battle between snake and tiger.[59]

The two boas aboard the *Caesar* echo Shelley's 'twin tigers' (one of which gets free of its chains and ends up in the sea) with even a further similarity: the second boa aboard the *Caesar*, less interested in a getaway, also died during the passage. Abel dissected the boa on the deck of the *Caesar* and found its demise to be caused by intestinal worms. The dissection, observed by the crew, is the basis for a section of Abel's own narrative of the voyage, including an anatomical illustration. It is

[58] From *Macleod's Narrative of a Voyage in his Majesty's Ship* Alceste reprinted in the *Liverpool Mercury* (9 January 1818).
[59] Abel, p. 52-74.

especially worth noting here that in Shelley's first draft of 'A Vision of the Sea', the description of the corpses on deck references 'worms' which 'revealed' the nature of their death, again placing an almost scientific anatomisation of the menagerie in Shelley's poem.

The image of Shelley's sea-snake, squeezing the life from the tiger, taps into the theme of rupture which is at the heart of the poem and its Orientalist, imperialist anxieties. Everything in the poem is breakable—and breaking or broken—except the snake. The poem is an exploration of rupture in its many forms, exposing spaces which are split, burst, pierced, or otherwise broken, particularly emblemised in the passage

> The pyramid billows with white points of brine
> In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine
> As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
> The great ship seems splitting! It cracks as a tree
> While an earthquake is splintering its root[60]

The lightning is 'piercing' and the ship is 'splitting', it 'cracks', and is 'splintering' ('The great ship seems splitting!' is a particularly lovely play on *seems* and *seams* splitting). The motif carries throughout the poem: the ship's 'chinks suck destruction'; the deck is 'burst up by the water below | And it splits' like ice'; the wind has 'burst out through the chasm' which 'that breach in the tempest in widening away'.[61] This motif of rupture also coincides with the poem's insistence on specific dissection or anatomisation of the body and the flesh, often perverting Christian death rituals: 'Is that the crew that lie burying each other, | Like the dead in a breach…?'[62] With no proper burial the bodies bury each other where they fell, in a breach— a gap or a place of rupture. Those sailors whose bodies made it into the sea (nearer to a proper burial at sea) had their 'grave-clothes unbound' by dogfish and sharks (sea

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[60] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 24-27.
[61] Ibid., ll. 30-31, 34-37, 115-122.
[62] Ibid., ll. 37-38.

monsters).[63] This sartorial and ontological 'unbinding' by the sharks strips the sailors and they become nothing but monster-fodder in the sea. A seventh sailor has had 'an oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back, | And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck'.[64] A piece of the deck that had 'split' has 'pierced' a sailor, gruesomely displaying him on the wreck, drawing grim parallel to the display of insects or small creatures by pinning them to boards in zoological collections.

The ship, the men, even the 'solid bones' of the tigers reveal themselves to be physically fragile and easily breakable. The only physically stalwart figure in 'A Vision of the Sea' is the sea-snake, who possesses 'adamantine voluminousness'. Though now archaic, in the Romantic era the *OED* defines 'adamantine' as 'unable to be broken or dissolved; unbreakable; impenetrable' in literal and figurative contexts, and perhaps Shelley takes after William's Cowper's depiction of biblical sea monster Leviathan (often envisioned as a great serpent) in his 1785 'The Task' in which Leviathan 'turns to stroke his adamantine scales'.[65]

That Shelley's sea-snake should seem to be the only successful actor in the poem may owe its success to the fact that, like the sharks and dogfish who enjoy the human spoils of the shipwreck, it is the only creature in its natural habitat. Perhaps here is to be found that more 'liberal' brand of Shelley's imperialism, in which he expresses anxiety at the vulnerability of ill-suited Britons occupying foreign shores and dragging unsuspecting tigers into alien environs as well. Perhaps the most frightening rupture occurs with the realisation that those tigers and other savage animals, once arrived in London, might then break free of their chains and run savage around civil Britain.

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[63] Ibid., ll. 54-58.
[64] Ibid., ll. 64-65.
[65] William Cowper, 'The Task' (1785), ii.324.

4.4 MOTHER AND CHILD

There is an omniscient narrator, but whose optical 'Vision' is the narrator describing? The 'vision' the reader sees is through the eyes of a young mother, clinging to the wreck with her infant. The combination of the infant's innocent enjoyment of the action and the mother's fear is an embodiment of the sublime 'splendour and terror' of the scene, in which, like a spectator at a menagerie, the reader can enjoy the fearsome creatures from a position of safety.

Far before we know who 'she' is, Shelley tells us that 'when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven, | She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin | and bend'.[66] She *sees*; the 'vision' of the storm and the sea and the animals are hers. Just as the audience mediates its experience of enjoyable fear through the bars of the menagerie cages (and the distance between the East and West), so Shelley's audience experiences the fear of the shipwreck's female survivor through from the safe distance of fiction. Similarly, the mother and her child, the only survivors of the shipwreck, are cast as the audience to this terrifying menagerie. The whole scene of the shipwreck, for instance, is contained in the 'walls' of the storm, later the 'columns and walls' that 'surround and sustain | The dome of the tempest', sounding very similar to a large animal exhibition space such as St. Bartholomew's, even including the 'spire'.[67]

The 'bright child' she holds is particularly enjoying the menagerie, with his infant sensibilities believing the entire thing to be entertainment, just as the menagerie patron enjoys the show because they know they are actually safe: it 'laughs at the

[66] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', ll. 4-6.
[67] Ibid., ll. 15, 109-10, 22.

lighting, it mocks the mixed thunder'.[68] After the ship breaks apart completely, the child, 'with desire and wonder' begins 'beckoning the tigers to rise and come near'.[69] This is an intense moment of exhibitionary gaze, as I have discussed in my first two chapters on whaling and the kraken. The full passage reads:

> [The child] is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
> It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
> Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
> The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye,
> While its mother's is lustreless.[70]

Here Shelley makes good on the title's promise to show the reader a '*Vision* of the Sea' by comparing the 'eyes' of the tigers, the child, and the mother in one passage. The child, acting as if he is in the artificially safe environs of the menagerie, beckons to the tigers to come play, though the reader now knows the tigers are fearful of their situation because in their eyes 'the radiance of fear | Is outshining the meteors'. The child is excited by the show, as in his eyes the reader is instructed to visualise the 'heart-fire of pleasure', in contrast to his mother's eyes which are 'lustreless'.

This emphasis on seeing for oneself plays out in menagerie advertisements, such as this 1839 playbill:

> *GO AND SEE THE MIRACLE! That you may say when you grow old, I have seen a man DRIVE A LIVING LION HARNESSED TO A SPLENDID CHARIOT! ON THE OPEN STAGE Make his bed on a room of CONQUERED BEASTS*[71]

The novelty or excitement of the menagerie is built upon the idea of *seeing* the animal for oneself, acquiring the living, breathing material *vision*. In crafting a 'vision' of an Orientalist literary menagerie, Shelley creates an imperialist 'vision' as well. As the infant 'beckons the tigers to rise and come near' and the menagerist 'make[s]' his bed

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[68] Ibid., ll. 66-67.
[69] Ibid., ll. 68-69.
[70] Ibid., ll. 72-76.
[71] Advertisement from the British Library Playbill Archive 171, featured in many books on the subject including Koenigsberger.

on a room of CONQUERED BEASTS', Shelley and the Orientalist cultural landscape domesticate the East (that is, its animal and human natives) by placing an exhibitionary gaze upon it, reinforcing the West as object and the East as subject—'making [one's] bed on a room of CONQUERED BEASTS'.

Though only the proper civilising influence of Europe can tame the beasts (animal *and* human) of the Eastern colonies, 'A Vision of the Sea' is also an anxious examination of what happens when the constraints rupture. The voyage has gone awry in the epistemologically-worrisome interstices of East and West (that is, somewhere on the high seas). As I discussed earlier in realisation to the snake as counterpoint to the poem's motif of rupture, the ship, the sky, the tigers' chains, and the sailors' corpses have all burst open, no longer capable of containing what they are supposed to. (And another verse in 'Britannia's Menagerie' warns 'Let 'em growl, let 'em howl, and grind their teeth with rage; | They may bite, snarl and fight, but they mustn't get out of their cage'.[72]) Even the structure of the poem has broken free from any formal constraints. The first line begins in medias res ('Tis the terror of the tempest') and ends mid-sentence with the confounding 'Whilst—'. There is a chaotic contradiction in the frequent enjambment and moments of metrical instability (deviations from the anapestic tetrameter): the poem seems to try so steadfastly to regain order and establish limits in its ruptured world and yet all the lines blend into one another in breathless couplets and conclude in an unfinished fragment.

Like Shelley's tigers or Abel's boa constrictor who break loose of their European confinement, English periodicals were anxious about and eager to sensationally report these savage exotic animals breaking free and ravaging London. The earliest recorded modern example is the 1703 mauling death of Hannah Twynnoy

[72] Clifford, 'Britannia's Menagerie'.

at the claws of a tiger belonging to the menagerie which had set up shop in the yard of the White Lion pub in rural Malmesbury where she was a servant. In just the 1780s a man was bitten by an imported snake; several keepers were injured or killed by their lions; a leopard escaped Wombwell's and was found strolling through Piccadilly (mauling his keeper upon recapture); and escaped menagerie animals were several times reported to have attacked horses or coaches on the roads in and out of London.[73] So what can tame these beasts? What can rein them in when they have broken free, or keep them in their shackles in the first place? These escaped animals represent the fear of colonial rebellion. The primitive 'conquered beasts' of menagerie playbills and 'Britannia's […] animals rich and rare', those 'treacherous creatures […] caged up there' in the music hall standard who happen to already live in the places the Crown desired to own can only be 'conquered' by a properly civilising imperial influence— or, at the very least, they can be caged and one can charge for admission.

[73] See Plumb and Velten.

CHAPTER FIVE

HYBRIDITIES OF WILD AND DOMESTIC IN *THE NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON PYM OF NANTUCKET*

Almost twenty years after 'A Vision of the Sea', another tiger stalks the maritime. Though Edgar Allan Poe is now an ultra-canonical voice in the American Gothic, his only novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, participates in a transatlantic public thirst for narratives of the South Seas. Poe lived in London with his Scottish adoptive father John Allan from 1815 to 1820, and the novel is anchored in in the British maritime world: Pym references the Enderby family (prominent London whaling ship owners); some of the *Grampus's* ill-fated sailors are British; the ship *Jane Guy*, whose crew rescues Pym, is from Liverpool; when Captain Guy finds an interesting creature he endeavours to take it back to England for taxidermy; Pym visits British settlements in the South Seas; he quotes (or sometimes outright plagiarises) well-known British explorers' narratives such as Jeremiah Reynolds and Benjamin Morrell, and enters into an imagined dialogue with the Royal Geographical Society of London to dispute their findings.

Pym was published in July 1838 by Harper Brothers in New York, though the first two instalments were published in serial by the *Southern Literary Messenger* in January and February 1837, respectively. Though the novel sold poorly in the States, Wiley and Putnam published it in London in October 1838, where it sold far better fuelled by the British thirst for South Seas adventure stories. As J. Gerald Kennedy famously puts it, the novel's 'very opacity invites and demands exegesis even as it defies adequate explanation', though it was not widely studied until Patrick Quinn's

1953 essay which deemed it a 'crucial text' in understanding Poe.[1] Kennedy has argued that 'the novel's claim to classic status rests (as does much of Poe's fiction) on its evocation of a psychosymbolic crisis *played out in physical, material terms'* (emphasis mine).[2] (If true for *Pym*—and I agree it is—it is easy to see why the novel resonated with Victorian audiences.) For Arthur Pym these 'physical, material terms' are animal, and this chapter will be concerned with images of monstrosity in the novel, and with hybridities in and of man and animal which create epistemological anxiety in the title character.

Grace Farrell Lee has argued that the 'hold of the [*Grampus*] is the mythic equivalent of the belly of the sea monster' and that Pym's 'incarceration in the hold of the ship is reminiscent of Jonah's imprisonment in the belly of the whale'.[3] Joan Dayan has looked at Poe's overall portrayal of the limits between human and animal. And though she is more interested in women and slavery she touches something fundamental in Poe's treatment of animals: 'Perhaps all of Poe's work is finally about radical dehumanisation'.[4] She argues that 'animality, after all, emerges for most nineteenth-century phrenologists, theologians, and anthropologists in those beings who are classified as both human and beast' (which she takes to mean 'lunatics, women, primates, black men, and children') and that 'Poe's reconstructions depend upon experiences that trade on unspeakable slippages between men and women, humans and animals, life and death'.[5] This is not the focus of her study, but provided the point of embarkation for Dominic Mastroianni, who has most recently read the

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[1] J. Gerald Kennedy, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym and the Abyss of Interpretation* (New York: Twayne, 1995); Patrick F. Quinn, 'Poe's Imaginary Voyage', *Hudson Review* 4 (1952), 562-585.
[2] J. Gerald Kennedy's introduction to the Oxford edition of *Pym*, pp. x-xi.
[3] Grace Farrell Lee, 'The Quest of Arthur Gordon Pym', *The Southern Literary Journal* 4.2 (1972), pp. 25-26. And the grampus, the creature we now call the killer whale, had a ferocious reputation, as evidenced in the grampus episode of *Fighting the Whales*.
[4] Joan Dayan, 'Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves', *American Literature* 66.2 (1994), 239–73.
[5] Ibid., p. 244.

novel as 'a study of how conceptions of social life can change when the boundaries between human and animal are taken not to be stable or inviolable, but rather volatile and readily crossable', noting that the novel 'blurs, breaks through, and multiplies the boundaries between human beings and other animal species'.[6] He also argues that 'attending to Poe's animals promises not only to show us his relevance to contemporary animal studies, but also give us a more adequately historicised account of his writing', as this chapter aims to do by looking at instances of maritime monstrosity in the text.[7]

Pym is obsessed with borders, boundaries, limits, and their interstices and permeability. It is a text full of decay: decay of the body, the psyche, of reality, and of identity. The dehumanising forces constantly at play in the novel are material in nature. They are not abstract; rather, they are human and animal, creatures who are often hybrids or composites which have more in common with Frankenstein's monster than a 'traditional' sea monster, challenging the eponymous narrator's reliability at every turn. His first-person narrative lapses between travelogue and philosophical treatise, formal and informal diction, sanity and insanity. During his dream in the hold Pym laments that 'Every *species* of calamity and horror befell me' (emphasis mine); he uses the word 'species' over forty times in the novel, almost all of which refer to non-scientific topics, and this sort of taxonomical language lends a pseudoscientific flare to his writing and underscores the duality of the narration (that is, the disconnect between what Pym is saying and what the reader understands.)

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[6] Dominic Mastroianni,'Hospitality and the Thresholds of the Human in Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*', *Studies in American Fiction*, 40.2 (2013), pp. 185-202.
[7] Ibid., p. 186.

Poe has dealt in sea monsters before. In ‘MS Found in a Bottle’,[8] in ‘A Descent into the Maelstrom’,[9] and especially prominently in ‘Thousand and Second Tales of Scheherazade’.[10] Like his larger body of work—but with the much larger narrative space of a novel—*Pym* places a kaleidoscopic lens over the motif of monstrosity at sea, reimagining it as wild and domestic in many different ways in the same text. This chapter will argue most generally that *Pym* is a hybrid meditation on the wild and the domestic, in which spaces of wildness ultimately conquer spaces of domesticity. Pym learns that culture is no match for nature in the farthest-flung parts of the earth, and that the punishment for such hubris is death by monster, though the text also seems to suggest man is among the worst monsters. *Pym* routinely places literal and figurative representations of the wild and domestic at odds—and in amalgamation—with one another, constantly renegotiating these categories and yielding a hybridity which renders the novel fundamentally unstable. The wild and the domestic do function as discrete, polarised categories in Pym, but more often they are dangerous hybrids uncontainable in a single body. Pym’s sustained and constantly shifting discourse on the wild and domestic yields a hybrid text in which the novel itself is a hybrid of multiple literary forms, and in its pages hybrid creatures abound. I will argue that these space of hybridity call attention to the permeability of the boundaries between wild and domestic not only in the text but in its cultural moment with respect to Poe’s transatlantic literary market and nineteenth-century understanding about animals in ‘domestic’ settings.

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[8] ‘At times we gasped for breath at an elevation beyond the albatross—at times became dizzy with the velocity of our descent into some watery hell, where the air grew stagnant, and no sound disturbed the slumbers of the kraken’ (‘Message Found in a Bottle’, published with the Oxford *Pym*, p.183).

[9] ‘It likewise happens frequently that whales come too near the stream, and are overpowered by its violence; and then it is impossible to describe their howling and bellowings in their fruitless struggles to disengage themselves. A bear once, attempting to swim from Lofoden to Moskoe, was cast by the stream and borne down, while he roared so terribly, so as to be heard on shore’ (‘Descent into the Maelstrom’, published with the Oxford *Pym*, p. 227).

[10] ‘At length, on the edge of the horizon, we discovered a black speck, which rapidly increased in size until we made it out to be a vast monster.’ (‘Thousand and Second Tales of Scheherazade’, n.pag.)

I will begin with a reading of the role of Pym's Newfoundland dog Tiger, who has never been given any sustained critical attention. Tiger's cycle of monstrosity and redemption echoes the contrived and fluid representations of animals as monsters for public consumption in the literature and material culture (including menageries and exhibitions) in this period. He is a literal and metaphorical messenger and an early warning that even the most loyal companion or hero can go mad at sea. His early presence is also a meditation on the biblical idea of the lion lying with the lamb, and calls into question the act of literary monster-making, especially in the sea environment. I will historicise my discussion of Tiger by arguing for his cultural resonance (especially for British audiences) within the context of literature and visual art about heroic Newfoundland dogs, and as a foil to the actual tigers on display in London at the time. Lastly, Tiger raises questions about domestication and agency, particularly in an environment such as ships at sea (even more specifically the South Seas), where strict social hierarchies are essential and the literal and figurative food chain is complicated.

Dirk Peters, whom I discuss after Tiger, is also in a constant cycle of being made and 'un-made' into a monster. Peters commits transgressions in every sense: he is a mutineer, a cannibal, but he can also fluidly transgress the boundaries of man and beast (Pym explicitly calls him a 'hybrid'), making him uniquely adaptable to the changing environments (he is the 'line-manager' aboard a whale ship, after all).

In the section on 'Predatory Gulls' I will explore the ghost ship chapter as a retelling of the Prometheus myth: a cautionary tale about the limits of human knowledge and culture, and the disaster that ensues from trying to push beyond those boundaries. The Promethean figure of the sailor on the ghost ship is a warning against the transgressions of man past the limits of his knowledge, such as sailing so

far into the South Seas. The seagull that pecks at the sailor's corpse is, like Tiger, a grim reminder of how normal creatures' potential to violate humans is somehow magnified so far from home, and of man's inherent risk of being consumed by stronger animals. The putrefaction of corpses aboard that ship also signifies a deterioration of Pym's reality and his ability to articulate (or even understand) his position within it.

The novel's sharks are then another, much more urgent, reminder of the human body's capacity to become food and fuel for another animal. Augustus's physical decay throughout the novel largely mirrors the decay of Pym's sense of self, and so the phosphoric light by which the sharks finally consume Augustus's body literally shines a light on both of these forms of putrefaction. The sharks' continual presence around the wreck of the *Grampus* further dehumanises Pym and Peters because they cannot even get in the water to bathe themselves and thus become even more physically repulsive (matching the intense repulsion and horror Pym feels as he attempts to reflect on his own emotional and intellectual state).

I will then examine Pym's 'naturalist' or 'documentary' phase though the end of the novel as an attempt to (re)gain some control over his narrative, though this also ends in bloodshed, suggesting that Pym still does not realise, or at least does not acknowledge, that man's epistemological overreach has disastrous consequences. This culminates in the episode with the bear, a polar monster which horrifyingly upends the English pastoral and provides an entry point for a discussion of the motif of teeth, jaws, and mouths in the novel as signifiers of monstrous components of the whole which reinforce where man does not belong. This discussion of Pym's 'naturalist phase' will conclude with an examination of white figures in the novel. The 'strange creature' the crew plucks from the water foregrounds the white curtain

and giant white figure with which the novel concludes, and I ultimately argue that Pym's taxonomical project ends in failure in the 'darkness' he experiences before the canoes rushes into the chasm.

The final section of this chapter will argue that *Pym*'s hybridity extends to its genre form as well, which is a mixture of popular genres such as adventure novel, natural history book, and ethnological treatise. It is also an authorial hybrid, combining the work of three 'writers' and under the umbrella of the editor, Mr Poe. These incongruities yield a text which is fundamentally unstable, potentially mocking the very readership on which it depended and pointing to a hybridity of wild and domestic which challenges Britannia's 'rule' over the waves, and man's rule over his own humanity.

5.1 ANOTHER 'TIGER' AT SEA

Like Shelley's tigers in 'A Vision of the Sea', exceedingly little has been written about Pym's giant Newfoundland dog, Tiger, who features prominently in the events aboard the *Grampus*. Keith Huntress has accounted for Tiger by arguing that Poe copied many parts of *Pym* from AMR Thomas's 1836 *An Authentic Account of the Most Remarkable Events,* including the presence of a Newfoundland dog.[11] David Faflik argues that Tiger is a reminder of Yankee Pym's 'Northern-ness' in an increasingly 'Southern' and 'Cavalier' tale.[12] This chapter aims to be the first

[11] 'The crew consisted the captain and four men, with […] livestock for the voyage, and a Newfoundland dog, valuable for his fidelity and sagacity. He had once saved his master from a watery grave, when he had been stunned and knocked overboard by the sudden shifting of the boom' (Thomas 1836 quoted in Keith Huntress, 'Another Source for Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*', *American Literature* 16.1 (1944), p. 22).

[12] 'Poe is never entirely free Pym from his Yankee conscience. […] Consider the on-board presence of Tiger, Pym's Newfoundland dog. As the boy's "faithful follower and friend" through seven years of Nantucket childhood, this Northern-bred cabin return Pym to his cultural heritage. […] Waking its owner from his intervals of Southern "stupor", Tiger interrupts the unchecked course of Pym's Cavalier career, dragging him back across one side of Poe's contact zone to the other' (David Faflik,

focused study of Tiger's role in the novel which considers his complex agency as well as the great significance of the Newfoundland dog in Britain in this period.[13]

Tiger is not the only Newfoundland dog in Poe, and both facilitate a friend's message: Wolf, the Newfoundland belonging to the unnamed 'Gold Bug' narrator's friend Legrand, is also integral to the narration.[14] Wolf barks and growls loudly and is employed to guard the eventual treasure, but he is also gentle and affectionate ('loading [the narrator] with caresses'). Wolf is also an important epistemological agent; says the narrator: 'without the intervention of the dog at the precise moment in which he appeared, I should never have become aware of the death's-head, and so never the possessor of the treasure.' Though Poe never explicitly calls another dog in his corpus a Newfoundland, he does refer to several other dogs as 'large water-dogs', likely alluding to the breed. Dogs often serve as barometers of human worth in Poe. In 'Bon-Bon' the evidence that a character is a 'man of genius' is that his cat and dog seem to physically revere him.[15] In 'Landor's Cottage' the narrator relates that a

> mastiff bounded toward me in stern silence, but with the eye and the whole air of a tiger. I held out my hand, however, in token of amity—and I never yet knew the dog who was proof against such an appeal to his courtesy. He not only shut his mouth and wagged his tail, but absolutely offered me his paw-afterward extending his civilities to [my companion].[16]

As Poe's narrator says in 'The Black Cat' of his dog: 'There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a brute which goes directly to the heart of him

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'South of the "border"; or, Poe's *Pym*: a case study in region, race, and American literary history', *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 57.2 (2004), 265-288).

[13] 'The interest of animals in Poe extends well beyond *Pym*, and the important of animals even within *Pym* goes beyond the scope of my essay. For instance, much remains to be said about Pym's Newfoundland dog Tiger, a character on which I am currently working' (Mastroianni, n3). This research has not yet been published.

[14] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Gold Bug', University of Virginia hypertext <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/poe/gold_bug.html> [accessed 3 October 2015], n. pag.

[15] Edgar Allan Poe, 'Bon-Bon', University of Virginia hypertext <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/poe/bon_bon.html> [accessed 3 October 2015], n. pag.

[16] Edgar Allan Poe, 'Landor's Cottage', University of Virginia hypertext <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/poe/landor.html> [accessed 3 October 2015], n. pag.

who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere *Man*'.[17]

The invocation of the tiger may be similarly loaded, as Poe's overall use of tiger imagery is limited but intriguing. In addition to Pym's Tiger and the mastiff with the 'whole air of a tiger' in 'Landor's Cottage', in 'The Pit and the Pendulum' the narrator says of the pendulum blade: 'Down—steadily down it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward and its lateral velocity. To the right—to the left—far and wide—with the shriek of a damned spirit! To my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger!'[18] While Poe's other 'tigers' are domestic animals with wild qualities, this invocation of the tiger is not an animal at all but the pendulum blade swinging ever lower to slice the narrator. Kevin J. Hayes has read this scene, in a departure from the canonical criticism, as an allusion to William Blake.[19] Though Blake's popularity in the United States was not conferred until much later in the century, Hayes argues that Poe was not only familiar with Blake's 'Tiger', but constructs several puns around it in 'The Pit and the Pendulum' toward a different reading of the animal than Blake:

> Whereas Blake was intrigued that a creature could be so beautiful yet so powerful, so frightening, and so deadly, Poe saw that man was ultimately more frightening and more deadly. Alluding to Blake's poem, Poe created an implicit comparison, suggesting that a tiger's ferocity is nothing compared to man's innate capacity to elicit fear or inflict carnage on his fellow man.[20]

Hayes is, of course, only writing of 'The Pit and the Pendulum', but this idea is worth foregrounding here, as I will argue that in *Pym* the most 'real' monsters at sea are men.

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[17] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Black Cat', University of Virginia hypertext <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/poe/black.html> [accessed 3 October 2015], n. pag.
[18] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Pit and the Pendulum' University of Virginia hypertext <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/poe/pit.html> [accessed 3 October 2015], n. pag.
[19] Kevin J. Hayes, 'Poe's Knowledge of William Blake', *Notes and Queries* 61.1 (2014), p. 83.
[20] Ibid., p. 84.

Pym's Tiger begins as a monster that Pym meets in the midst of nightmare while locked in the hold of the *Grampus*,

> naked and alone, amid the burned sand-plains of the Zahara. At my feet lay crouched a fierce lion of the tropics. Suddenly his wild eyes opened and fell upon me. With a convulsive bound he sprang to his feet, and laid bare his horrible teeth. […] Stifling in a paroxysm of terror, I at last found myself partly awake. […] Now, at least, I was in possession of my senses. The paws of some huge and real monster were pressing heavily upon my bosom—his hot breath was in my ear—and his white and ghastly fangs were gleaming upon me through the gloom.[21]

This passage is one of only three times in the novel that Pym explicitly calls anything 'monster'. He begins his description 'naked and alone'—that is, in a state of vulnerability and primal wildness. Pym is 'partly awake', in the liminal space between sleep and wakefulness, in which his narration is even more unstable than usual. He lays down further epistemological touchstones with material language when he is at last 'in *possession* of [his] senses'. The monster in Pym's nightmare is revealed to be a real, material creature, but the real creature is then revealed to be quite the opposite: it is his 'faithful follower and friend' Tiger the Newfoundland dog. Though it has not been discussed in the historicist criticism of *Pym*, I trace this description of the lion to Thomas Pennant's 1793 *History of Quadrupeds*, which describes the lion's 'rage' in the desert as 'tremendous, being inflamed by the influence of the burning sun, on a most arid soil. […] this line in a perpetual fever, a sort of madness fatal to every animal they met with'.[22] (And indeed Tiger, the once 'fierce lion of the tropics' does meet with a madness in the hold which proves nearly fatal to Pym.) In a very dramatic *physical* (and retrospectively comical) epiphany, Pym realises that the 'lion' is actually a 'Tiger'.

There is a certain parallelism in the two passages (the dream and the epiphany, respectively). First the thunderous roar of 'lion' then Pym's own voice screaming in

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[21] *Pym*, p. 21.
[22] Thomas Pennant, *History of Quadrupeds*, vol. 1 (London: B&J White, 1793), p. 275.

terror; first the ‘monster […] pressing heavily upon [Pym’s] bosom’ then Pym throwing himself onto Tiger to relieve ‘the long oppression of [Pym’s] bosom’. Furthermore, Tiger’s presence is integral in Pym’s taming of his physical space. Though Leslie Fiedler has called Pym’s narrative an antecedent to *Huckleberry Finn* ‘in its rejection of the family and the world of women’, Pym works hard to carve out an intensely domestic physical space at sea.[23] And despite his self-professed desire for the wildness of the seafaring life he is proud of his and Augustus’s domestic creation in the ‘little apartment in the hold’ which is even more fully realised after the discovery of Tiger. For this portion of the novel, Pym is not only domestic but privileged—he is a young man who wiles away his days reclining on his bed, reading and snacking with his dog (oblivious to the violent mutiny happening just feet above his head). Tiger’s reinforcement of the domestic within the wild sea space also has patriotic underpinnings: Christine Kenyon-Jones has argued that Newfoundland dogs in literature and more generally in the nineteenth century could be seen as ‘particularly British and patriotic’ because the breed ‘[originates] from a part of North America that was still loyal’ to England.[24]

Tiger not only bears the symbolic message of Pym’s comfort[25] but an *actual* message, written by Augustus, which Pym (true to character) misreads and tears up. Tiger’s agency here, however, is not just as man’s best friend and servant. Pym has torn up the message which Tiger was sent into the hold to deliver; he has disregarded the warning delivered by the monster (which is never a good idea, as ‘monsters are harbingers of category crisis’).[26] Only Tiger can redeliver the message, when ‘From

[23] Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion, 1960), p. 372
[24] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2001), p. 49.
[25] ‘As I sank, utterly exhausted, upon the mattress, Tiger threw himself at full length by my side, and seemed as if desirous, by his caresses, of consoling me in my troubles and urging me to bear them with fortitude’ (*Pym,* p. 26).
[26] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

the worst part of this dilemma I was relieved by the sagacity of Tiger' who brings him the multiple pieces of the torn-up message even though Pym has 'taught him none of the usual tricks for which his breed are famous'.[27] Tiger literally and figuratively helps Pym piece together what is going on, to restore order and Pym's sense of reality in the maddening confines of the hold. (And Pym's mention of those 'usual tricks for which his breed are famous' acknowledges the public familiarity with Newfoundland dogs which I will discuss in this section.)

But how has a giant dog found its way into the hold of a whaleship with his stowaway owner? Pym confirms with customary anthropocentrism that the dog is there to serve him: 'For the presence of Tiger I tried in vain to account; and after basing myself with a thousand conjectures respecting him, was forced to content myself with rejoicing that he was with me to share my dreary solitude, and render me comfort by his caresses.'[28] Tiger also has presence enough in the novel to warrant an origin story, which gives context for Pym's relationship with him and foregrounds his future monstrosity. Pym calls Tiger his 'inseparable companion' who 'in a multitude of instances had given [him] evidence of all the noble qualities for which we value the animal.'[29] Reinforcing man's mastery over beast, Pym abstractly refers to those 'noble qualities' which make 'the animal' of 'value' to men. And though Pym takes pains to describe Tiger's kind and gentle nature, he relates that Tiger did save him 'from the bludgeon of a street robber', implying the dog's capability to use its monstrous size for force—though in service of his master (particularly in that this was the dog's 'obligation' after Pym saved him as a puppy). This nebulous, possibly

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[27] *Pym*, p. 23.
[28] Ibid, p. 22.
[29] Ibid.

violent act of heroism prefigures Tiger's brutal killing of one of the mutineers as they take back the ship.

Though a joyous reunion, Tiger's agency becomes a problem. He eats all of Pym's limited provisions (including his candles) while Pym sleeps, and the happiness of their reunion is short-lived when the maddening confines of the hold transform Tiger back into a monster several days later. Pym recalls the 'disquietude' of his domestic space in the hold, the 'harassing terrors' of which arise from Tiger's sudden change in demeanour; he snarls at Pym, 'his eyeballs flashing fiercely through the gloom.'[30] Pym relates that he 'had no doubt whatever that the want of water or the confined atmosphere of the hold had driven him mad. [...] I could distinctly perceive his eyes fastened upon me with an expression of the most deadly animosity, and I expected every instant that he would attack me'.[31]As in the first passage, the monster displays his teeth: 'the whole of his white fangs [...] were easily discernible'.[32] Tiger cannot be fully domesticated, or properly confined in the intensely domestic space of Pym's 'little apartment'.

Tiger does attack Pym, and Pym escapes and leaves Tiger down in his confines, mad, until he and Augustus hatch their plan to take back from the ship from the mutineers.[33] He has literally caged the monster, situated himself as lion tamer within the cage, and escaped alive. When Pym and Augustus do open the hatch and

[30] Ibid, p. 32.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] 'I had fallen upon my knees with my head buried among the blankets, and these protected me from a second furious assault, during which I felt the sharp teeth pressing vigorously upon the woollen which enveloped my neck—yet, luckily, without being able to penetrate all the folds' (*Pym*, p. 33).

pull Tiger out he revives.[34] As the sea story genre warns and its loyal readers know well, even the most loyal companion can go mad at sea.

Tiger ultimately cements himself as a hero in the novel, paradoxically, by a final act of monstrosity. The mutineer Jones has thrown Augustus to the floor and stabbed him in the arm ('and would no doubt have soon despatched him') when 'with a low growl' Tiger runs in and attacks Jones, saving Augustus and turning the tide of the skirmish back toward Augustus, Pym, and Peters. When the bloodshed has ended, Tiger is 'still growling over Jones; but upon examination, we found him completely dead, the blood issuing in a stream from a deep wound in the throat, inflicted, no doubt, by the sharp teeth of the animal'.[35] Recalling Pym's proud statement that Tiger once saved him 'from the bludgeon of a street-robber' (and the iteration of Tiger as 'lion' which Pym so feared in his dream-state), Tiger kills the mutineer Jones so savagely that he has to be pulled from his victim's bloody throat.

This, the last scene in which the reader sees Tiger, complicates any notion of narrative control over him as purely wild or domestic. He is characterised as a wild, ferocious beast attacking Jones; however, he does so as the domestic servant of 'good' men. He is therefore left as a hybrid: a nebulous gentle monster for whom wild ferocity simmers close under the surface, who may deploy that wildness in domestic service to his master, or just as easily may attack that master. Though it is unclear whether or not Tiger is actually eating Jones (or just refuses let go, as a dog with a bone), Harriet Ritvo's reading helps us consider the implications: for an animal to '[eat] human flesh symbolises the ultimate rebellion, the radical reversal of roles

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[34] 'The day was fully broke, we found that Tiger had recovered his strength almost entirely…His strange conduct has been brought on, no doubt, by the deleterious quality of the air of the hold, and had no connection with canine madness' (*Pym,* p. 54).
[35] *Pym,* p. 69.

between master and servant'.[36] (Relevant to this discussion of Tiger, Ritvo then quotes from an ominous *Farrier and Naturalist* article from September 1828 which warns 'it is said, that when a lion has once tasted human flesh he thenceforth entirely loses his awe of human superiority'.[37])

Tiger starts as a mislabelled monster; that monster is then discovered not to be (when Pym realises it is him), then made monstrous again (when Tiger goes mad in the hold and attacks him), then 'un-made' monstrous (when he gets fresh air up on deck and he saves Pym again by monstrously savaging one of the mutineers). Put in terms of the wild and domestic: He is first wild, then domestic, then wild, then domestic, then ultimately both wild *and* domestic when he savages another man in order to protect his human master. Tiger is representative of the cycle of making and taming monsters, of the fear and danger assuaged by knowledge only to be replaced with fear and danger again, and of Pym's unreliable narration.

Tiger's ultimate fate is uncertain. Not long after Pym, Augustus, Peters, and Parker take back the *Grampus* it is wrecked in a storm (which employs many of the same Romantic and sublime shipwreck tropes as 'A Vision of the Sea'). The four men survive by lashing themselves to parts of the deck, and it is generally presumed that Tiger is swept away when the ship breaks apart. His whereabouts or death are never accounted for (even in the retrospective note at the end of the novel which tells the reader that Peters now lives in Illinois), but there is one final and peculiar mention of him. When the storm has passed and the men remain lashed to the deck but still insensible, Pym relates

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[36] Ritvo, *Animal Estate* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 29.
[37] 'The Lion of South Africa', *The Farrier and Naturalist,* Vol. 1, p. 417 (qtd. in Ritvo, *The Animal Estate,* p. 29).

> I had the greatest difficulty in bringing to recollection the various circumstances connected with my situation, and for some time remained firmly convinced that I was still in the hold of the brig, near the box, and that the body of Parker was that of Tiger.[38]

This admission invites a rereading of the passages in which Pym is in the hold of the *Grampus* with Tiger, in which the dog's presence reassures Pym that he is not alone, though his presence is also reason for a certain 'disquietude', as Tiger is alternately monster, friend, monster. And indeed during the ordeal aboard the wrecked hulk of the *Grampus*, it is now Parker who will be alternately friend and monster. It is Parker who finally admits his desire to kill and consume one of the survivors, and during that drawing of lots it comes down to Pym and Parker (emphasis mine):

> I summoned up all my strength, and passed the lots to Augustus. He also drew immediately, and he also was free; and now, whether I should live or die, the chances were no more than precisely even. At this moment *all the fierceness of the tiger possessed my bosom*, and I felt towards my poor fellow-creature, Parker, the most intense [...] the most diabolical hatred.[39]

Pym is 'possessed' by 'the fierceness of the tiger' even as he calls Parker his 'poor fellow-creature', recalling the confusing sort of violence Tiger exhibits. Pym may be trying to say he was possessed by the fierceness of *Tiger*; that is, the sort of fierceness that flares in an ordinarily docile creature when it perceives a threat, as when Tiger goes briefly mad in the hold and when he kills one of the mutineers. Despite his importance in the early portion of the novel, Tiger is never mentioned again, nor his fate conjectured, as Pym is fond of doing in practically all other areas of the narrative. Poe's reference to the 'fierceness of the tiger' then also serves as a final reminder of Tiger as a character, and of the fragile balance between gentleness and monstrosity, the domestic and the wild, in the narrative and in the sea environment in which fortunes (and allegiances) change with the winds.

When Pym, certain of his imminent death, lies with Tiger in the hold, he is also acting out the biblical image of the lion/tiger lying with the lamb or other small

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[38] *Pym*, p. 109.
[39] Ibid.

tame creatures (that is, a wild predator communing with a domestic creature at the end of the world). In Isaiah 11:6 ‘The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fattened calf together’. Edwin Landseer was said to be obsessed with this imagery, and Byron too, in *Heaven and Earth* (1822), writes of the flooded end of the world when

> The creatures proud of their poor clay,
> Shall perish, and their bleached bones shall lurk
> In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where
> The deep shall follow to their latest lair;
> Where even the brutes, in their despair,
> Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
> And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
> Besides the lamb, as though he were his brother[40]

Scholars have often seen Arthur Pym as the innocent victim of alternating horror and deliverance. Byron was one of Poe’s favourite poets (Arthur Gordon Pym is likely an allusion George Gordon, Lord Byron), and both *Heaven and Earth* and *Pym* both explore the possibility of a watery grave for man and beast, and both also portray a kinship in those end-times. Byron concedes that the tiger will lie down with lamb, though only in apocalyptic death, while Pym’s narrative places young Pym lying down with *his* Tiger in the hold of the ship in what he feels to be his end-times, and again when he is lying next to Parker but thinks he is lying next to Tiger. The title page of the first edition speaks to the Pym’s ‘deliverance’ from the wreck by the crew of the *Jane Guy,* and Pym uses the term ‘deliverance’ to signal the transition from one episode of his narrative to the next. Tiger is also an agent of deliverance, as Pym recalls, waking from his nightmare,

> I could not forget the peculiar whine of my Newfoundland dog Tiger, and the odd manner of his caresses I well knew. It was he. I experienced a sudden rush of blood to my temples, a giddy and overpowering sense of deliverance and reanimation.

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[40] Byron, ‘Heaven and Earth’, *The Works of Lord Byron* (Paris: Baudry, 1823), vol. XI, Part I, Scene iii, p. 22.

Tiger is thus present, in a way, in all Pym's future 'deliverances' which reanimate the narrative after Pym (and the reader) are certain he will perish: he is delivered through the storm by the comforting thought of Tiger beside him, and he is delivered through the cannibalism episode by channelling the 'fierceness of the tiger'.

What are we to learn from Tiger's brief interlude as monster, hero, monster, and ultimately monstrous hero? Tiger does not fulfill the expectation of monstrosity in his name and in our first encounter with him, calling into question the very act of literary monster-making. If Poe can deploy, then tame, a monster within the course of a single page, how permeable are the borders of monstrosity in the text and in the period? And indeed, this is how 'monster culture' works: monsters can be created by proprietors for the purpose of feeding public fascination. Many accounts from this period concede that tigers in captivity are really quite docile and even boring to watch, so they must be provoked and their cultural sign and signifier carefully managed; and indeed 'manage' is at the heart of the etymology of *menagerie*. Thus, the lion-tamer and the caging of the beast play simultaneously and paradoxically at creating and taming the monster. The animal can be caged and is therefore tame enough, but it is provoked to act monstrous within those confines, thus satisfying both sides of the paradox of public desire.

As in 'A Vision of the Sea' and its source material, invoking the image of the tiger also signifies an Orientalism. And indeed when Pym first feels the monster's paws upon his bosom he dreams a variety of Orientalised scenes: 'deserts, limitless', 'naked and alone, amid the burned sand-plains of the Zahara', 'immense', and 'a fierce lion of the tropics'. It is worth a reminder that, lacking the Victorian taxonomical specificity to come, 'lion' and 'tiger' were sometimes used

synonymously or more generally to describe many types of big cats, and that Africa, Asia, and tropical locations in general made up part of what Nigel Leask has called the 'composite Orient' of this period. Harriet Ritvo argues that lions and tigers were an 'essential component of any successful zoo' in this period and, more than any other animal, 'provided the most conclusive evidence in the of the human triumph over nature'.[41]

Tiger's breed, the Newfoundland dog, would have also held great cultural resonance for English readers in the 1830s. When Pym first discovers that the 'lion' is really his Tiger, he recounts that

> Most people love their dogs but for Tiger I had an affection far more ardent than common; and never, certainly did any creature more truly deserve it. For seven years he had been my inseparable companion, and in a multitude of instances had given evidence of all the noble qualities for which we value the animal.[42]

From the 1790s, dogs in general (including the 'gentle giant' Newfoundland dog) were glorified in art and literature.[43] The Newfoundland in particular might be called the anti-sea monster, as for centuries they have been specially bred and trained as maritime working dogs also prised for their loyal and protective nature. They are as comfortable in water as they are on land and have been traditionally employed aboard ships and on shore to retrieve fishing nets and for their instinct and prowess at rescuing imperilled swimmers (my periodical research has turned up hundreds of items between 1790 and 1837 in which Newfoundlands are credited with rescuing people from the water). Many high-profile Newfoundlands would have been known to early nineteenth-century readership, many by name: In Southey's *Omniana or Horae Otiosores* (1813) Victor the Newfoundland, aboard the *Bellona*, was 'rewarded

[41] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 223.
[42] *Pym,* p. 22.
[43] 'Only from about the 1790s were dogs celebrate in literature as saintly beings, who provided models of conduct to Christians' (Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750-1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, 2007), p. 136).

with a part in a quintessentially British feast' of roast beef and plum pudding, which he was served in a chair at the table.[44] Seaman the Newfoundland accompanied Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery (and Pym is reading about Lewis and Clark's expedition in his 'little apartment' in the hold with Tiger).[45] A Newfoundland is said to have rescued Napoleon Bonaparte when he fell overboard during his escape from exile on Elba in 1815. In 1828 Ann Harvey and her father and their Newfoundland called Hairy Man famously rescued 160 Irish immigrants whose ship *Despatch* had wrecked near their home on Isle aux Morts. Thomas Bewick, whose *History of British Birds* will be discussed in this chapter, even recounted a heroic Newfoundland in his *A General History of the Quadrupeds*.[46]

The Newfoundland as sage (Pym extolls Tiger's 'sagacity') is a common trope in the large body of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writing about the breed, including Sydenham Edwards 1800 *Cynographia Britannica* which extolls the 'sagacity and well-known fidelity of *Canis Natator*, the Newfoundland dog.[47] (In JM Barrie's original *Peter Pan,* Nana the dog-nurse is a Newfoundland, though in most adaptations she is played by a St Bernard, and Thomas Day's famous 1780s children's book *Sandford and Merton* features 'Caesar' the beloved Newfoundland.) The breed is often artistically endowed with a sense of wisdom and intelligence to

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[44] Kenyon-Jones, p .66.

[45] Meriwether Lewis purchased Seaman for $20 in August 1803, and the dog is mentioned in the expeditions journals several times: in May 1805 he was bitten by a beaver; in 1806 he was stolen by Indians; Lewis named a tributary of the Blackfoot River after him (Seaman's Creek); and though the Corps of Discovery is known to have eaten roughly two hundred dogs, Lewis's fondness for Seaman seems to have spared him.

[46] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British* Birds, vol. 2 (London: Longman, 1804): 'During a severe storm, in the winter of 1798, a ship, belonging to Newcastle, was lost near Yarmouth; and a Newfoundland Dog alone escaped to shore, bringing in his mouth the captain's pocket-book. He landed amidst a number of people, several of whom in vain endeavoured to take it from him. The sagacious animal, as if sensible of the importance of the charge, which in all probability was delivered to him by his perishing master, at length leapt fawningly against the breast of a man, who had attracted his notice among the crowd, and delivered the book to him. The dog immediately returned to the place where he had landed, and watched with great attention for everything that came from the wrecked vessel, seizing them, and endeavouring to bring them to land.'

[47] Also cited in Kenyon-Jones, p. 49. Even the dog's scientific name suggests its nautical prowess.

which the humans around them seem to defer, acknowledging a Romantic sense of wonder and trust in the preternatural instincts of the natural world.

The breed was 'perceived as a notable masculine animal, with sturdy, dependable characteristics' observes Christine Kenyon-Jones, who also points out that the 'large Newfoundland puppy' which belongs to Henry Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* 'impresses Catherine Morland with Henry's spirited masculinity and suitability as a husband'.[48] An popular 1803-4 Drury Lane Theatre attraction, 'The Caravan; Or, the Driver and His Dog', featured a real Newfoundland called Carlo who performed a stage show in which he would leap into a tank of water onstage to 'save' a drowning child (after a villain has thrown him 'overboard'). Carlo was so popular that a fictitious and richly illustrated 'autobiography' was also published detailing his life-saving adventures. Carlo was hailed as the 'preserver of Drury Lane Theatre' and no actor including Garrick had every received 'louder Plaudits, than this four-footed actor from Newfoundland'.[49] Beryl Gray points out that Charles Dickens adapted 'The Caravan' into the serio-comic play he describes in 'Gone Astray'.[50] Dickens describes another Newfoundland actor in one of his semi-autobiographical 'The Uncommercial Traveller' essays, in which the dog-actor 'kills' the villain in order to save him master, describing the tension between the dog's power and docility: 'It happened through these means, that when he was in course of time persuaded to trot up and rend the murderer limb from limb, he made it (for dramatic purposes) a little too obvious that he worked out that awful retribution by licking butter off his blood-stained hands'.[51] Dickens's interest in Newfoundlands (he also owned one called

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[48] Kenyon-Jones, pp. 48-49. (Though of course that dog not properly a 'character' and does not have a name more than a fleeting role in the scene.)
[49] As quoted in Beryl Gray, *The Dog in the Dickensian Imagination* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), p. 21.
[50] *Household Words* VII.177 (Aug 13, 1853), p. 577.
[51] Dickens, quoted. in Gray, p. 83.

Don) prompted Percy Fitzgerald to term him the 'Landseer of Fiction', and in fact he was a close personal friend of Edwin Landseer.[52]

Lord Byron famously commemorated his Newfoundland Boatswain in 'Epitaph to a Dog':

> Near this spot
> are deposited the Remains of one
> who possessed Beauty without Vanity,
> Strength without Insolence,
> Courage without Ferocity,
> And all the Virtues of Man without his Vices.
> This praise, which would be unmeaning Flattery
> If inscribed over human Ashes
> Is a just tribute to the Memory of
> BOATSWAIN, a DOG,
> Who was born in Newfoundland May 1803,
> And died at Newstead Nov. 18th, 1808.[53]

Though locating his praise of the dog around its relation to man (anthropocentrism), Byron's epitaph employs *theophily*: the portrayal of animal as better, in some way, than humans. The 'Epitaph' and a second longer elegy ('Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog') are etched into the large stone monument where Boatswain was buried in 1808 (and Byron intended to be buried in the same monument). Byron received a second Newfoundland dog, Lyon, as a gift, which Christine Kenyon-Jones suggests (based on William Parry's 'The Last Days of Lord Byron') 'provided Byron with a refuge from the barbarous human reality of Missolonghi'. When Byron died, Lyon would not leave his body, following the coffin on the ship back to England, where the dog soon became ill and died within months.[54]

In June 1803 Richard Earlom created two popular mezzotints in the style of John Eckstein which depict a heroic Newfoundland rescuing a child. 'A

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[52] Percy Fitzgerald, 'Dickens's Dogs; or, the Landseer of Fiction', *London Society: An Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature for the Hours of Relaxation* (July 1863), 48-61.
[53] Though Poe likely would not have known that the poem was begun by Byron and finished by his close friend John Cam Hobhouse.
[54] Kenyon-Jones, p. 49-50 and William Parry, 'The Last Days of Lord Byron', *The Literary Magnet* 4 (June 1825).

Newfoundland Dog Saving a Child from Drowning' (Figure 19) and 'The Child Restor'd to his Family by the Newfoundland Dog' (Figure 20) were published together by Laurie and Whittle of Fleet Street.[55] In the latter a man in military dress gestures to the hero dog, visually reinforcing the dog's valour. A smaller dog is there to show that it is not dogs in general, but *this* dog, who has acted heroically. The little dog also gives a sense of scale and purpose, as his affections seem frivolous while the heroic Newfoundland still does not take his eyes off the nearly-drowned boy even as the other children hang on him.

[55] The British Museum holds the plates but they are not on public display.

Figure 19. Richard Earlom, ‘A Newfoundland Dog Saving a Child from Drowning’ (1803).

Figure 20. Richard Earlom, ‘The Child Restor’d to his Family by the Newfoundland Dog’ (1803).

Also in 1803, George Stubbs (most famous for his paintings of horses, some of which are being attacked by lions), painted a 15-stone Newfoundland called Nelson who belonged to Frederick, Duke of York. The artist who did the most for the breed, however, was Victoria's favourite painter Edwin Landseer. Landseer's iconic depictions of Newfoundland dogs cemented the breed's reputation as the wise, docile, and heroic maritime companion. In fact, a Newfoundland who sports the black and white colour pattern (as opposed to all black or brown) is called a 'Landseer' after the painter. By the publication of *Pym* in 1838 Landseer had exhibited much-admired portraits of two 'lions': The portrait of 'Lion' the Alpine Mastiff in 1817 (then the largest dog in Britain at 6'4" long) and his 'Lion: A Newfoundland Dog' in 1824 (then his largest painting of a dog, at 150x195cm and 115kg, Figure 21). Though Landseer would not create his famous Trafalgar Square lions or paint the infamous lion tamer Van Amburgh until later, the brothers Landseer were also ready keenly interested in the animals, as in 1823 Edwin's brother Thomas published *Twenty Engravings of Lions Tigers Panthers & Leopards*. The Newfoundland's heroism is so entwined with Britain as a maritime state that Landseer's 1824 Newfoundland portrait 'Mr Gosling's Neptune' was exhibited in a frame constructed of wood from HMS *Temeraire* (Figure 22).

Figure 21. Edwin Landseer, 'Lion: A Newfoundland Dog' (1824).

Figure 22. Edwin Landseer, 'Mr Gosling's Neptune' (1824) in frame made from timber from HMS *Temeraire*.

It seems likely that Poe is invoking these animals, as his adoptive father was Scottish and Poe was living at Southampton Row, Russell Square, when the paintings—and myriad lions and tigers in the flesh—were exhibited to great acclaim. In Pym's original dream state Tiger the 'monster' is first described as 'a fierce lion of the tropics', and even the names Lion and Tiger position the dog as foil to actual lions on tigers on display in Britain.

Landseer's 'Bashaw' (1829) portrays Bashaw the Newfoundland, owned by John William Ward, the First Earl of Dudley (Figure 23). Landseer's brother Thomas did the mezzotint etching of the painting in the 1850s, retitling it 'Off to the Rescue' in keeping with the public imaginations of the breed. Ward also commissioned Matthew Cotes Wyatt to sculpt a life-sized Bashaw (the full title of which is 'Bashaw, the faithful friend of man trampling under his foot the most insidious enemy', Figure 24). (The real Bashaw was sent to London over fifty times between 1832 and 1834 to model for Wyatt.) The statue was the centrepiece of Wyatt's 1834 exhibition and was also exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. The London *Literary Gazette* described the sculpture as 'the most elaborate [portrayal] of a quadruped ever produced by ancient or modern art'.[56]

[56] John Ruskin, who saw the sculpture at the South Kensington Museum in 1870, did not admire it so, and pronounced it 'the most perfectly and roundly ill-done thing I ever saw produced in art'. He went on, 'the persons who produced it had seen everything, and practised everything; and misunderstood everything they saw, and misapplied everything they did...and misunderstanding of everything had passed through them as mud does through earthworms, and here at last was their worm-cast of a Production' (V&A).

Figure 23. Edwin Landseer, 'Bashaw' (1829).

Figure 24. Matthew Cotes Wyatt, 'Bashaw, the faithful friend of man trampling under his foot the most insidious enemy' (1834).

The Newfoundland which most fully secured the public adoration for the breed was Landseer's 'A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society' (1831, Figure 25). The 'Distinguished Member' was Bob, a real figure of the London waterfront and, in an almost Dickensian characterisation, a shipwreck survivor of dubious origins. All Landseer, or anyone, knew of Bob was that he was an enormous but well-kempt stray who made his home on the London waterfront and had been named a 'Distinguished Member of the Royal Humane Society' (for which he was awarded a gold medal and a lifetime supply of food) after reportedly rescuing at least two dozen people from drowning there. The lore of Bob tells that he was twice shipwrecked; the first time he reportedly swam—dragging his master—two miles to shore. Hiss master is said to have perished in the second wreck, so Bob came ashore alone and made his way to London.[57]

Landseer's painting places Bob quayside, on the seawall just above the waterline. *The Art Journal* called it 'one of the best and most interesting publications of the year'.[58] Diana Donald notes that 'a threatening sky over the expanse of sea suggests that [Bob] will soon be called into action, and the breadth of light and tone in itself confers a kind of epic grandeur'.[59] She also sees a pun in the painting's title, as 'the dog's merits would make it a distinguished member of *human* society. It looks heavenward, with the kind of reverential expression given to figures of saints in traditional religious art'[60]. Part of Bob's popularity springs from the largely blank canvas of those dubious origins. The public was transfixed with shipwreck narratives (upon which Poe and myriad other authors attempted to capitalise). Possibly Tiger's

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[57] The real Bob was not available for the painting, so Landseer took as his model his cousin's Newfoundland, called Paul Pry. Another bit of Bob lore says that once when a bargeman prodded Bob with an oar, Bob jerked the oar (and the man) into the water, then after a moment leapt in to save him.
[58] The painting was only recently (2009) put back on display after extensive restoration to fix damage from a flood at the Tate Gallery in 1928.
[59] Donald p. 133-34.
[60] Ibid.

disappearance from Poe's narrative in the shipwreck may be meant to engender hope in the reader that Tiger, like Bob, will survive, and live to save more lives. In any case, the painting was immensely admired, often reproduced, Bob was famous, and the character of the Newfoundland cemented in the London imagination.

Figure 25. Edwin Landseer, 'A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society' (1831).

Diana Donald observes that Landseer's

> glorification of the dog was far from being peculiar to him. It represented a strong trend in nineteenth century thought, shared by artists, poets, and popular anecdotists, expert writers on dogs breeds and even those scientists who began to explore the mysteries of animal psychology. Landseer's paintings were saturated with literary allusions, but they in turn exerted an enormous influence on the Victorians' view of the dog, and were often admiringly cited or reproduced in the many books on animal behaviour.[61]

In her chapter 'Dog and Wolf: The Problems of Genealogy of Breed', Donald recounts eminent anatomist John Hunter's contention that dogs and wolves were still one species, and this dog-wolf kinship/dichotomy remained of interest to the scientific

[61] Ibid., p. 135.

community and the public through the early nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century commentator George Jesse found it 'impossible to believe that such creatures immortalised by Landseer [...] can have a common origin and be identical with the sinister, ferocious, sanguinary, cowardly, and cruel wolf'.[62] (The Newfoundland in Poe's 'The Gold Bug' is called Wolf, an uneasy reminder of the wildness which may remain in even the most docile breed.) These turn-of-the century debates raise the question of whether or not an animal can truly be domesticated. Under what circumstances will the animal give up its agency? And what happens to a once-tame animal in an utterly wild environment like the sea, where even men routinely go mad? Hierarchy at sea is equally complicated: there is the food chain of the creatures that live in the sea, but where does the terrestrial animal fit when it is thrust into that environment? This question is of course evident in the chaos of 'A Vision of the Sea'. If, as many critics have argued, the only 'order' at sea is that exerted by captain upon crew, where does the dog fit? He may obey a command from even the lowliest seaman, yet still comes and goes about the ship as he pleases with impunity.

Landseer's Newfoundlands and their material cultural contemporaries can help us understand Tiger's place in *Pym*. Donald argues that Landseer's Newfoundlands are 'almost universally familiar' in the 1820s and 1830s and 'sites of hidden conflict, which afford some insight into the anxieties of the age'.[63] Pym's Tiger fits this bill as well. In this era of public animals, of creatures on display, of 'famous' animals and animals as spectacles, the enormous Newfoundland dog represents a sort of tamed wildness that would have been very appealing. The Newfoundland is so large and powerful that it can be monstrous when it chooses (though generally in service of its master), yet it is—for all purposes of taxonomy—

[62] Ibid., p. 144.
[63] Ibid., p. 126.

domestic. Furthermore, because he does not live in a cage, he has an agency that equally famous menagerie animals do not. And that he, an animal, seems to choose of his own accord to serve man, his loyalty also acts as foil and reinforces the monstrosity of those animals who must be caged to be tamed.

Landseer has often been accused of anthropomorphising his canine subjects; however 'in fairness to Landseer', writes Campbell Lennie:

> it must be remembered that dogs actually *are* quasi-human. They live with humans and are expected and encouraged to fill human roles—the staunch protector, the playmate, the helpless child, the faithful friend and many more. They are taught to respect human codes of conduct and hygiene: there are human taboos on where and when they may relieve themselves, clean their private parts, make love and so on. If they had hands they would undoubtedly be required to use a knife, fork, spoon and napkin. They themselves quickly learn the value of the knowing look, the forlorn expression, the paw on the knee, the begging posture.[64]

The notion of the dog as 'quasi-human' aids in framing a discussion of the dog's potential hybridity of wild and domestic. A certain colonialism could have been applied to them. A dog—a seafaring dog in particular—is a good sort of colonial subject, happily subalternated into human hegemony, managing themselves and others to suit their master. In these literary, artistic, and popular contexts, the Newfoundland acts as a reinforcement of the natural world's subservience to the Victorian male. As the imperial project picked up steam, a figure like Tiger might also be a reminder that the Victorian grasp over the natural world and the increasingly far-flung Empire (including those human beasts it sought to tame) is firm but still tenuous, and seemingly tame creatures (and subjects) may turn monstrous under the right circumstances.

5.2 DIRK PETERS

[64] Campbell Lennie, *Landseer: The Victorian Paragon* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976), p. 88.

'So great was the fascination exerted by hybrid creatures', writes Harriet Ritvo of the nineteenth century, 'that many impossible mixes were reported as fact, or lingered over regretfully as persistent superstitions' including stories of crossed bears and dogs 'repeated (if only to be dismissed) throughout the nineteenth century'.[65] Dirk Peters, who wears a fearsome toupee made from 'the skin of a Spanish dog or American grizzly bear' proves one of the most interesting hybrid figures in the bestiary of *Pym* and is representative of contemporary portrayals of human and animal hybridities. Though of 'singular' character, Peters holds many titles in Pym's narrative: native, whale-line manager, mutineer, counter-mutineer, 'hybrid', 'half-breed', and ultimately Pym's only fellow survivor. This hybridity, and Peters' ability to shift, fight, adapt, and thus survive all of their trials, is attributed by Pym not to a *super*-humanness, but to a sub-human hybridity in which Peters is identified with instinctual, primitive beastliness that allows him to simply act without the burden of conscience or reflection. Like practically every figure in Pym's narrative, Peters is prone to madness: 'Of this singular being many anecdotes were prevalent among the sea-faring men of Nantucket. These anecdotes went to prove his prodigious strength when under excitement, and some of them had given rise to a doubt of his sanity'.[66] Even his name is a weapon; 'Dirk' invokes the 'large seaman's knife which he always wore in the waistband of his pantaloons' and the weapon with which he stabs Parker in the back after Parker draws the short splinter and is killed and eaten.[67]

In one of his longest descriptions of any single subject, Pym calls Peters 'one of the most ferocious-looking men I ever beheld' and gives a lengthy description of his appearance, beginning with the fact that he wears a wig

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[65] Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 95.
[66] *Pym*, p. 39.
[67] Ibid.

> formed of any hair-like material which presented itself—occasionally the skin of a Spanish dog or American grizzly bear. At the time spoken of, he had on a portion of one of those bear-skins; and it added no little to the natural ferocity of his countenance.[68]

He also observes that Peters' teeth were 'exceedingly long and protruding, and never even partially covered, in any instance, by the lips'.[69] The depiction of his exposed teeth participates in the motif of exposed teeth throughout the novel (to be discussed in 5.5.1), and prefigures the exposed teeth of the Dutch sailor on the hermaphrodite ghost brig who only appears to be smiling because seabirds have eaten his lips. Joseph Moldenhauer has noticed this peculiar animalisation of Peters, arguing 'Like some products of the imagination, of Pym's own dreaming mind, Peters is a literary *grotesque*: a bizarre combination of natural forms whose impression is preternatural'—beast and man.[70] Moldenhauer has also noted that Peters is but one of the many 'composite creatures' in the text: the polar bear's snout is described as that of a bulldog, the tortoise is depicted as an elephant with the head of a snake and the capacities of a camel, the hogs on Tsalal have the legs of an antelope, the creature they pull out of the sea is an amalgamation of teeth and claws.[71] (To this list of 'composite creatures' I would also add the hermaphrodite ghost brig, which Moldenhauer does not discuss, but which I will address in this chapter.)

Hybridity—a hallmark of monster theory—is the third of Cohen's seven principles of monstrosity: 'This refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in an systematic structuration'.[72]

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[68] Ibid.
[69] *Ibid*., pp. 38-39.
[70] Joseph J. Moldenhauer, 'Imagination and Perversity in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 13.2 (1971), p. 269.
[71] Ibid., p. 269.
[72] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. 6.

Peters is also described in Pym's narration as the 'half-breed' and simply, 'the hybrid', in part because he is

> the son of an Indian squaw of the tribe of Upsarokas, who live among the fastnesses of the Black Hills near the source of the Missouri. His Father was a fur-trader, I believe, or at least connected in some manner with the Indian trading posts on the Lewis River.[73]

This hybrid, animal monstrosity is created and tamed seemingly at the whim of Pym, whose initial observations throughout the novel often turn out to be misinterpreted. Early in the novel, Pym observes of Peters:

> To pass this man with a casual glance, one might imagine him to be convulsed with laughter; but a second look would induce a shuddering acknowledgement that, if such an expression were indicative of merriment, the merriment must be that of a demon.[74]

Because Peters' teeth are 'exceedingly long and protruding, and never even partially covered, in any instance, by the lips', Pym acknowledges that an initial observation might assume that Peters is laughing, and that it would be a grotesque shock to the observer to realise that Peters is not laughing but is instead continually and unintentionally baring his ferocious-looking teeth. Similar to Pym's misinterpretation of Tiger as a fierce lion as opposed to a docile dog, Peters can be misinterpreted as well. The 'hybrid' Peters is in a continual cycle of being made and un-made a monster to Pym: he goes from whaleboat line manager (an important and respected job aboard a whaleship) to dastardly mutineer, to ally in retaking the ship, to cannibal castaway, to Pym's often-homoeroticized partner in survival. Where once Peters is the 'hybrid' or 'half-breed', Pym later says of he and Peters marooned on Tsalal: 'We were the only living white men upon the island', thereby casting him as closer kin to Pym than the natives of Tsalal.[75]

Aboard the whaler *Grampus*, before the mutiny, Dirk Peters' job was line manager (that is, to secure the pay out of rope from the boat to the harpooned whale).

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[73] *Pym*, p. 39.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., p. 151.

There is a clever epistemology in calling Peters the line manager, which is mentioned in the text somewhat as an afterthought and has not been given critical attention, particularly as Cohen argues that part of the job description of a monster is to 'police the borders of the possible'.[76] The 'hybrid' Peters is charged with the management and strict supervision of the 'lines' of the text, even though his very existence crosses the lines/limits/boundaries of race and even species.

Peters also represents a better, or at least a more effective, Pym. Peters quite physically embodies the contradictory sense of wildness which Pym attempts to embrace by going to sea but constantly tamps down by trying to intellectualise everything he sees and experiences there. Pym's grandfather is called 'Mr Peterson', implying a certain fraternity with Peters and with his own wildness. While Pym philosophises, Peters acts, constantly saving Pym from certain death. For a non-white character in an antebellum Southern Gothic novel, Peters appears to have substantial agency in the text. Either way, the reader does learn more about Peters' fate than Tiger's; the postscript says he now lives in Illinois but was not reached for comment. He is another monster made—and un-made—by Pym.

5.3 'Predatory gulls': Ghost Ship as Promethean Episode

Gerald Kennedy has written that in *Pym*, 'Poe seems to imply a rough parallel between the ship's destiny and the fate of the mind'.[77] And in what Pym characterises as the most disturbing episode of his entire misadventure, the 'destiny' of a Dutch ghost ship sends Pym and his fellow survivors very nearly irreparably over the edge of sanity. First, Poe's characterisation of the ghost ship as a 'large hermaphrodite brig' is intriguing. A hermaphrodite brig is called such because it uses both standard

[76] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. ix-x.
[77] Kennedy, p. 51.

sail configurations (square sails on the foremast and fore-and-aft rigged sails on the mainmast), but the term 'hermaphrodite' would have been evocative to early Victorian Britons, nationally literate in nautical terms *and* the traveling monster shows in which hermaphrodites (indeed called such in the advertisements) and other figures of gender fluidity figured prominently.[78]

While the 'hermaphrodite brig' reinforces the plurality of composite creatures in the novel, Pym's insistence on the 'singularity' of the event gives it mythic status in the canon of his experiences throughout the novel and, I will now argue, is a retelling of the popular myth of the Titan Prometheus. The British Romantics from whom Poe inherited the gothic sea were interested in the figure of Prometheus not only as a symbol of rebellion against institutional tyranny, as in the French Revolution, but as an epistemological figure who represented the fate of those who tried to transgress the limits of knowledge and the realm of nature demarcated for man. Byron's 'Prometheus', Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (with which 'A Vision of the Sea' was published in 1820), and the 'modern Prometheus' Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* dramatize the horror outside of the proper limits of human knowledge.[79] Like Prometheus on the rock, during the ghost ship episode there is a sailor lashed to the bow of the ship, recalling how Pym, Peters, Augustus, and Parker escaped a similar fate when they tied themselves down during the storm that destroys the *Grampus*.

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[78] 'Androgynous monsters such a hermaphrodites or bearded ladies perplex the normally distinct identity of the sexes' (Dennis Todd, *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of Self in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 156).

[79] *Pym* is also often considered a retelling of sorts of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (particularly this ghost ship episode), from which Mary Shelley quotes directly throughout *Frankenstein*. Pym admired Shelley greatly, and the *Ariel*—the first boat on which Pym wrecks—is also the name of Shelley's boat. And, Like *Pym*, *Frankenstein* also makes use of a polar narrative to situate its hybrid creatures in between the wild and the domestic. In *Frankenstein*, the domestic space is filled by Walton's sister at home in England receiving his letters, and Walton ultimately heeds the creature's Promethean warning and abandons his plan to push into the Arctic in favour of returning to England (the pinnacle of culture and civilisation).

When the brig comes close enough to the wreck of the *Grampus* they realise that the sailor is actually dead, and being pecked violently by

> a huge seagull, busily gorging itself with the horrible flesh, its bill and talons buried, and its while plumage spattered all with blood. […] the bird, with much apparent difficulty, drew out its crimsoned head, and, after eyeing us for a moment as if stupefied, arose lazily from the body upon which it can been feasting, and, flying directly over our deck, hovered there a while with a portion of clotted and liver-like substance in its beak.[80]

The bird is a *seagull* not an *eagle* (the rhyme perhaps being significant), but it gorges itself on a 'liver-like substance', undoubtedly echoing Prometheus's fate to have his liver eaten by birds.[81] This may also be one of Poe's dark puns, as while the castaways are not, in fact, 'delivered' to the safety of the ship (Pym uses that word, and 'deliverance', multiple times), the Promethean figure of the sailor is literally 'de-*liver*-ed' by the bird.

This episode of *Pym* (and indeed the entire novel) is a cautionary tale about the limits of human knowledge and human culture, and the disasters that ensue from trying to push beyond those boundaries. In the ghost ship chapter in particular, Pym seems to acknowledge the disconnection between his own knowledge and reality. He says, with a narrative self-consciousness he often lacks, 'I relate these things and circumstances minutely, and I relate them, it must be understand, precisely as they *appeared* to us' (emphasis mine).[82] His use of epistemological language in this passage further reinforces his inability to attach meaning to what he sees once he has reached beyond the limits of human cognition, demonstrating an often nearly-fatal inability to distinguish sign and signifier. When he sees the ship he is uncharacteristically 'motionless and unable to articulate a syllable'.[83] He describes the smell of the 'strange vessel', with an unusual failure of taxonomy, as a 'stench

[80] Pym, p. 82.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

such as the whole world has no name for, no conception of, hellish, utterly suffocating, insufferable, inconceivable' (perhaps more horrifying than the stench is the inability to categorise it), and he calls the events of that day 'of the most unconceived and unconceivable character' and later 'an unfathomable mystery', 'unfathomable' perhaps squarely placing this epistemological horror in the maritime realm (just as there is no measuring the depth in fathoms of some parts of the sea there is no measuring Pym's horror at the site of the ship).[84] Pym and the survivors witness the Promethean punishment for some transgression of man against the limits of his knowledge, in which nature dominates culture. Poe reinforces this by giving Pym no knowledge of what happened aboard *nor* the ability to express himself about it. He too has reached the bounds of his articulation (like the sailor whose 'voice' is actually the gull's cry). The putrefaction of the corpses aboard the ghost ship signals the further disintegration of Pym's reality. At sea, humans overstep their bounds (which, culturally, is confusing, as Britannia is supposed to rule the waves), but even when confronted with the grotesque scene aboard the ghost ship, the men's 'nature' overtakes their 'culture': 'We plainly saw that not a soul lived in the fated vessel! Yet we could not help shouting to the dead for help!'[85]

The seagull which drops the flesh at the survivors' feet is another example of an animal bringing a message written in blood. Tiger brought Augustus's message to Pym (written in his own blood), and the gull drops the idea of cannibalism—a transgression against nature and especially culture—written in blood when 'the horrid morsel dropped at length with a sullen splash immediately at the feet of Parker. May God forgive me, but now, for the first time, there flashes through my mind a thought, a thought which I will not mention, and I felt myself making a step towards the

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

ensanguined spot.'[86] And in so doing he makes a narrative 'step' toward cannibalism and his further dehumanisation at sea.

A seagull is also a compelling choice of bird. Though the scene takes place in the unexplored latitudes of the South Sea, the seagull is still an exceedingly familiar bird for his readers. Volume II of Thomas Bewick's authoritative *A History of British Birds* takes up 'Water Birds' (which will inspire Jane Eyre's migratory daydreams), which includes a chapter on 'Predatory Gulls': 'greedy and gluttonous, almost indiscriminately devouring whatever comes in their way, whether fresh or putrid substances, until they are obliged to disgorge their overloaded stomachs'.[87] The greedy and gluttonous 'British' seagull reimagined as a consumer of human flesh reinforces the potential for monstrosity of even the most ordinary creatures. As with Tiger, it seems a normal or domesticated creature's potential for violence is somehow hugely magnified at sea. Tiger will not just protect Pym but savage his adversary, the seagull will not just steal chips and ice creams at the seaside but peck at European flesh, and men who might be celebrated for their will to survive will become cannibals—the very thing Europeans feared lived in the southern latitudes. Pym might become the savage he and his readers fear.

The sea environment also demotes humans many levels lower on the food chain, particularly coming from the British Isles, where man is the largest predatory carnivore. Harriet Ritvo asks: 'Why did the English congratulate themselves upon the extermination of ferocious wild beasts within their island, but flock to see imported specimens?'[88] Contained in this question is the hybrid tension of wild and domestic in Victorian art and material culture. *Pym* seems to suggest that the answer to such a

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[86] Ibid., p. 102.
[87] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British* Birds, vol. 2 (London: Longman, 1804), p. 189.
[88] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, p. 4.

rhetorical question might lie in the ability to physically confine and manage animals dangerous to man. Dominic Mastroianni notes of the seagull devouring the sailor on the ghost ship: ‘Through consumption and digestion, a human body becomes a gull’s body: the transformability of the concept of humanity has everything to do with the human body’s susceptibility to being eaten and incorporated by another animal’.[89] And there are multiple moments in the novel in which Pym is at risk of being consumed: when he defends himself against Tiger, the sharks, the bear, the cannibalism of his fellow survivors, the possibly-cannibalistic Tsalalians, and finally, in a different sort of consumption, the cataract of the human-shaped figure which they ‘rush into’ in the final scene.

5.4 Sharks

One of the most imminent beastly threats to Pym’s bodily safety comes from the sharks which eagerly attend the shipwrecked mariners. They are also one of only three creatures which Pym actually calls a ‘monster’ in the novel; the other two are Tiger during the lion dream and the bear, respectively. On 25 July the survivors

> saw several sharks, and were somewhat alarmed by the audacious manner in which an enormously large one approached us. At one time, a lurch throwing the deck very far beneath the water, the monster actually swam in upon us, floundering for some moment just over the companion-hatch, and striking Peters violently with his tail. A heavy sea at length hurled him overboard, much to our relief. In moderate weather we might easily have captured him.[90]

Pym does not seem to have learned anything about humility before nature from their Promethean episode, stating that they might have ‘easily captured’ the ‘enormously large’ shark which ‘violently’ struck Peters (by far the toughest among them). Pym still thinks he can best nature, and though he is not eaten for his efforts here, he will soon be reminded on Tsalal that culture is no match for nature in the South Seas.

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[89] Mastroianni, p. 188.
[90] *Pym*, p. 100.

Equally significant here is the sharks' transgression of the surface of the sea— that is, the physical boundary between sea and sky as the implicit boundary between beast and man, wild and domestic. Even in its wrecked state the ship is still acting as a domestic space, and to Pym's horror the sharks 'audaciously' cross this boundary as the wild invades the domestic and lays bare Pym's continued horror the permeability of the border. He reinforces this again soon after, writing of the sharks who 'frequently thrust themselves directly upon us, swimming up to leeward. No shouts or exertions on our part seemed to alarm them. Even when one of the largest was struck with an axe by Peters, and much wounded, he persisted in his attempted to push in where we were'.[91] In the South Seas even the sharks cross the boundaries of their realm as they lunge from below the surface onto the hull, and they are not deterred by anything the pair does. The bear will do the same, leaping from ice floe, into the water, then coming up over the gunwale and into the boat to attack the party.

When Augustus finally succumbs to his wounds and dies, his body is brutally consumed by the sharks, and though this scene takes place at night it is still within full view of Pym and Peters because of the phosphorescence of the water:

> As the mass of putrefaction slipped over the vessel's side into the water, the glare of the phosphoric light with which it was surrounded plainly discovered to us seven or eight large sharks, the clashing of whose horrible teeth, as their prey was torn to pieces among them, might have been heard at the distance of a mile.[92]

Augustus's physical decay between the mutiny and his death parallels the decay of Pym's identity in the novel and in the South Sea, a putrefaction of self in which Pym is less and less able to express his own narrative. True to Poe's Gothic roots, Pym says often that what he sees is indescribable then tries to describe it anyway, undermining his own narration. The phosphoric light by which the sharks' consumption of Augustus's body can be seen connects the scene back to the

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[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., p. 102.

phosphorous which Pym uses to read Augustus's note in the hold of the *Grampus* and literally shines light on this putrefaction.

The sharks' continual presence also keeps Pym and Peters from bathing in the sea to cool and clean their bodies, further dehumanising them, and nothing Pym does seems to convince the sharks that Pym and Peters are not prey even when out of the water on the relative safety of the overturned hull.[93] This further dehumanisation is evident in Pym's narration, as the sharks not only serve as a constant reminder of humans' susceptibility to predators at sea, but the slow degradation of humanity that comes with prolonged exposure to the sea environment.

5.5 Pym's 'documentary' phase

After Pym and Peters' deliverance from the sharks by the *Jane Guy*, Pym enters what critics often call his 'documentary' or 'naturalistic' phase. He begins to date his entries very carefully, expounding on minute details about the appearance and behaviour of penguins on Kerguelen Island and geographic and oceanographic topics. It is a way for Pym to try to regain some control over his narrative, and he does seem to recoup some narrative confidence (he finds points on which to disagree with the Royal Geographic Society despite being a teenager with no training in the field). J. Gerald Kennedy has viewed this portion of the narrative as '[asserting] the possibility of understanding the phenomenal world in some definite empirical way', and Mastroianni argues that this 'less precarious life lets Poe shift attention from bodily vulnerability to a different human threshold, the possession of reason'.[94] Pym's desire

[93] 'During the whole day we anxiously sought an opportunity of bathing, but to no purpose; for the hulk was now entirely besieged on all sides with sharks—no doubt the identical monsters who had devoured our poor companion on the evening before, and who were in momentary expectation of another similar feast' (*Pym*, p. 103).
[94] Kennedy, p. 12; Mastroianni, p. 187.

for knowledge, and his assertion to Captain Guy that the ship should continue to sail south, ultimately gets the entire crew killed:

> While, therefore, I cannot but lament the most unfortunate and bloody events which immediately arose from my advice, I must still be allowed to feel some degree of gratification at having been instrumental, however remotely, in opening to the eye of science one of the most intensely exciting secrets which has ever engrossed its attention.[95]

Pym does not realise, or at least does not acknowledge, that once again man's epistemological overreach has disastrous consequences.

Pym's strategy for the survival of his humanity in this portion of the novel seems to be to claim knowledge of something (almost anything) to assert control. This portion of the novel also makes more explicit the text as crude allegory of sorts of the development of the novel form in the first half of the nineteenth century: a sense of gothic mystery, wonder, terror giving way to a taxonomic control, and the ultimate failure thereof in its lack of closure. I agree with those critics who see a very definite sublime element to the novel in the terror, wonder, and even sometimes-ecstasy of Pym's cycle of wreck and salvation. Whereas the first half of the novel seeks to soothe Pym's anxiety with a sublime appreciation for his ultimate deliverance from every near-death experience, once Pym's naturalistic/documentary phase commences his anxiety can only be calmed by asserting control over his environment by categorising its constituent parts. This urge to categorise is also an important facet of monster theory: Cohen writes that anxiety about monsters 'manifests itself symptomatically as a cultural fascination with monsters—a fixation that is born of the twin desire to name that which is difficult to apprehend and to domesticate (and therefore disempower) that which threatens'.[96]

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[95] *Pym*, p. 130.
[96] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. xviii.

One such monster is the bear, a 'gigantic creature of the race of the Arctic bear, but far exceeding in size the largest of these animals'.[97] In typical fashion, Pym remarks that the men are 'well armed' and thus 'we made no scruple of attacking it at once.' However,

> the monster threw himself from the ice, and swam, with open jaws, to the boat in which were Peters and myself. Owing to the confusion which ensued among us at this unexpected turn of the adventure, no person was ready immediately with a second shot, and the bear had actually succeeded in getting half his vast bulk across our gunwale, and seizing one of the men by the small of his back, before any efficient means were taken to repel him.[98]

Already, taxonomy is failing. Clearly even Pym knows it is not an 'Arctic bear' as they are on the opposite pole. The bear, one of the explicit 'monsters' of the text creates 'confusion' in its unwillingness to be conquered by the men. Like the sharks who so readily cross the border of the surface and swim up onto the ship, the bear penetrates the boundaries of the boat to attack one of the men despite being repeatedly shot. There is no repelling a border-transgressing monster when a protagonist has brought on the attack by transgressing borders himself. Pym is again saved by the 'promptness and agility of Peters' who, unlike the Europeans in a state of confusion, shows no indecision or inaction and 'plunged the blade of a knife behind the neck, reaching the spinal marrow at a blow'.[99]

Dirk Peters' dirk again proves the weapon of Pym's deliverance from the monsters of the South Seas (presumably that same knife which he always carries in his waistband, the one with which he killed and ate Parker). The bear, now a 'trophy' of the conquest of man against nature, is another composite monster:

> We then returned in triumph to the schooner, towing our trophy behind us. This bear, upon admeasurement, proved to be full fifteen feet in his greatest length. His wool was perfectly white, and very coarse, curling tightly. The eyes were of a blood red, and larger than those of the Arctic bear; the snout also more rounded, rather resembling the snout of a bull-dog. The meat was tender, but excessively rank and fishy, although the men devoured it with avidity and declared it excellent eating[100]

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[97] Pym, p. 127.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., p. 128.
[100] Ibid.

Like its conqueror Peters the bear is a pastiche of species: larger than its northern (Arctic) kin with red eyes, the snout of a dog, and 'fishy' meat. Describing its snout as that of a dog and its fur as 'wool' reads like a grotesque reordering of the English pastoral: a hybrid of the sheep and the dog who shepherds them—that is, disorder in one body, and a hybrid of land and sea at that.

Pym, however, tries to frame the beast as a sort of redemption: after the horrors of the shipwreck, ghost ship, sharks, and cannibalism, the bear is a 'trophy' reminder that man can indeed best beast. Though the bear literally penetrates the gunwales of the boat (and the states of Pym's ships/boats are always an indicator of the stability of his narrative), it is ultimately repelled and conquered. The same day Pym also writes of shooting several birds which also make 'excellent eating', thus recovering a mastery over the predatory seagull on the ghost ship which so disoriented his sense of reality and position at the top of the food chain.

Furthermore, during Pym's 'naturalistic phase' he is especially interested in noting, or in effect, policing, the categories of wild and domestic among the animals he observes. When the *Jane Guy* visits Nightingale Island (a real island in the Tristan de Cunha group, directly between Uruguay and Cape Town), natural historian Pym recounts that on the arrival of the first European (when history begins, for Pym), there were to be found 'no quadrupeds, with the exception of a few wild goats' but he proudly says that 'the island now abounds with all our most valuable domestic animals, which have been introduced by subsequent navigators'.[101] Crucially, the domestication of Nightingale Island has been achieved via European animal. Pym also says the sealing and whaling is very easy there, making it a domesticated space where Europeans might easily find shelter and nourishment while sailing the wild

[101] Ibid., p. 134.

wastes.

When Pym first arrives on Tsalal and shifts the form of his narrative from dated ship's log to ethnological treatise, he devotes a sizable portion to the domestic animal-keeping of the natives of Tsalal. In the village Pym notices 'several strange animals about the dwellings, all appearing to be thoroughly domesticated. The largest of these creatures resembled our common hog in the structure and snout; the tail, however, was bushy, and the legs as slender as those of an antelope'.[102] This 'domestic' creature is described in both domestic and wild terms—grounded in the 'structure' of the 'common hog' but destabilised by the legs of an antelope, almost comically implying that such swine might move gracefully or swiftly as the antelope does on those legs. He also notes 'several animals very similar in appearance, but of a greater length of body, and covered in black wool', tossing sheep into the hybrid recipe for this pig/antelope creature. He notes the 'great variety of tame fowls' that 'seemed to constitute the chief food of the natives', which sounds innocuous and almost European enough until observes that 'to [Pym's and the white men's] astonishment we saw black albatross among these birds in a state of entire domestication, going to sea periodically for food, but always returning to the village as a home'.[103]

5.5.1 Read in Tooth and Jaw

The description of the bear during Pym's 'documentary phase' also reinforces an important motif in *Pym*, in which Pym is obsessed with the constituent parts of the mouth: jaws, teeth, and lips. Pym's grandfather Mr Peterson is described as 'shaking with rage and muttering between his teeth' while his 'lips were perfectly livid';

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., p. 192.

Tiger's teeth and 'fangs' are explicitly described and 'easily discernable' even when Pym has no idea what is going on the three times he is described as a monster; Peters' teeth are long and protrude from his lips, which are constantly in a demonic smile; Pym's box in the hold of the *Grampus* is twice a 'mouth' and once the 'jaws of [his] tomb'; the ghost brig sailor's teeth are exposed and 'brilliantly white'; the sharks' teeth can be heard gnashing Augustus's bones; the bear has huge white teeth and swims toward them 'with open jaws'; the strange small white animal (to be discussed in the next section) has scarlet teeth; the caverns of Tsalal are twice 'mouths'; and the native of Tsalal have large lips and black teeth to which Pym devotes a paragraph, remarking, 'We had never before seen the teeth of an inhabitant of Tsalal'. Teeth, usually hidden, are signifiers of the monstrous, wild, or bestial. The teeth he describes are always placed in the context of the whole body, signalling the opposite of civility. Pym never has to look for teeth—teeth in this novel are always 'exposed', 'protruding', or poised to clamp down on Pym. Teeth in the novel snarl that Pym does not belong where he is.

Jeffrey Cohen has argued that teeth can 'stand in for the monstrous body itself', but *Pym* is not content with fragments.[104] Toothy jaws were indeed a cornerstone of monstrous material culture in nineteenth-century Britain for their taxonomic and aesthetic values. Nancy Rose Marshall writes of Owen and Hawkins' Crystal Park dinosaurs:

> Owen and Hawkins designed almost all of their models with open mouths so as to display their teeth. This pose was also educational, since teeth greatly preoccupied early palaeontologists who often used them to classify and identify fossils. Oddly, visitors occasionally removed the teeth, labouring under the impression that these were actual organic remains or perhaps seeking a measure of control over a frightening spectacle.[105]

Perhaps Poe's obsessive anatomisation of jaws, lips, and teeth is a narrative attempt to

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[104] Cohen, *Monster Theory, p. 6.*
[105] Nancy Rose Marshall, '"A Dim World, Where Monsters Dwell": The Spatial Time of the Sydenham Crystal Palace Dinosaur Park', *Victorian Studies* 49.2 (2007), pp. 291-92.

control their gruesome potential over the frightening spectacle of what Pym has witnessed. I have argued in Chapter 2 that the use of whale teeth and baleen (standing in for teeth in the non-toothed whales) confers a form of control over the monstrous whale by using its predatory anatomy as a substrate for the decorative. When whales came ashore in the British Isles and Western Europe it was also common for the teeth or baleen to be removed by visitors or to be sold to visitors as souvenirs by entrepreneurs such as the Knox Brothers discussed in Chapter 2. Sketches of articulated nineteenth-century whale skeletons on display often depict visitors standing inside the jaws in order to show their enormity and to demonstrate man's ability to cheat the food chain (not unlike like the famous Victorian tiger-tamer Van Amburgh who delighted Her Majesty by placing his head in the animals' mouths). Teeth and jaws are not just constituent parts of the monster standing in for the whole but a reminder of how the human is always at risk of being consumed by the monsters of the sea while discounting that, in *Pym*, the most brutal monsters might be men.

5.5.2 WHITENESS

Perhaps the most peculiar animal in *Pym* is literally 'red in tooth and claw' (though a decade before 'In Memoriam'): a creature which has no name. It makes three appearances, all related to the final scenes of the novel. The first is the day after the incident with the bear, not long before the *Jane Guy* reaches Tsalal, they pluck out of the water

> the carcass of a singular-looking land-animal. It was three feet in length, and but six inches in height, with four very short legs, the feet armed with long claws of a brilliant scarlet, and resembling coral in substance. The body was covered with a straight silky hair, perfectly white. The tail was peaked like that of a rat, and about a foot and half long. The head resembled a cat's, with the exception of the ears; these were flapped like the ears of a dog. The teeth were of the same brilliant scarlet as the claws.[106]

[106] *Pym*, p. 131.

The 'feet armed with long claws' is an interesting and amusingly constructed homonymous and oxymoronic ('feet armed') indication that this body is out of order somehow, that Poe is again engaging in hybridity, an authorial creature-creation. They pick up the creature in the water and, though he calls it a 'land-animal', its coralline claws certainly suggest an affinity with the aquatic and indicate a sort of hybridity or at least liminality that is taxonomically troubling. Like the sharks and the bear, the divide between sea and land, wild and domestic, grows ever more permeable. What is its carcass doing (evidently still very much intact) at sea? The other features of the creature are innocuously domestic: rat, dog and cat. Perhaps as with the seagull and the bear, the relatable, recognisable features of domesticated animals who are well-known and harmless to Europeans reinforces a sense of mastery over them but also a confusion, as their constituent parts are amalgamated to make a hybrid whose role in the ecology of the text and its environment cannot be readily understood by Pym or his readers.

Captain Guy has the creature 'preserved for the purpose of stuffing the skin and taking it to England', reinforcing its strangeness, its place in monstrous material cultural, and the public interest in hybrid creatures.[107] In the final scene of the novel Pym sees another of the creatures: 'March 8. Today-day there floated by us one of the white animals. […] I would have picked it up, but there came over me a sudden listlessness, and I forbore'.[108] Monsters in this text always signal an impending crisis, and this one immediately precedes the chasm into which Pym and Peters 'rush'. Why would Pym 'have picked it up'? For food? Or for its value as artefact, as Captain Guy did? That he experiences a 'sudden listlessness' which prevents him from plucking the creature out of the water signals a sort of documentary fatigue. (And

[107] Ibid., pp. 157-58.
[108] Ibid.

again, this 'land-animal' is in the water. Everyone is out of their element in the scene.) The day after he sees the animal the environment itself begins to change:

> The range of vapour to the southward had arisen prodigiously in the horizon, and began to assume more distinctness of form. I can liken it to nothing but a limitless cataract, rolling silently into the sea from some immense and far-distant rampart in the heaven. The *gigantic curtain* ranged along the whole extent of the southern horizon.[109]

Pym's physical environment exhibits something so many of his 'monsters' do not: a 'distinctness of form' which is contradicted by the 'limitless' nature of the cataract that cannot be confined even by Pym's narrative which seeks to define boundaries and embraces figurative and geographic 'limits'. All of Pym's monsters metaphorically reveal something (*monstrum*—that which reveals or warns—being at the heart of 'monster'[110]) and have now culminated in a scene which promises, quite literally, to reveal something behind a 'gigantic curtain'. Furthermore, the language of the last chapter abandons the domestic, as Pym only seems to be able to see the intensifying wildness: the water looks to have 'all the wild variations of the Aurora Borealis', the 'region of vapour to the southward' is alive with 'wild flickerings' and a 'wild flaring up of the vapour' at the 'summit' of the cataract. The novel ends thus:

> The darkness had materially increased, relieved only by the glare of the water thrown back from the white curtain before us. Many gigantic and pallidly white birds flew continuously now from beyond the veil… And now we rushed into the embraces of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open to receive us. But there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow.[111]

All of Pym's speculation about the material culture creatures around him throughout the novel have culminated in this: 'The darkness had materially increased'. His taxonomical project has ended in darkness, a failure. He even speaks of the darkness in material terms, while of course darkness is not a presence in itself but rather the *absence* of light. The symbolic lights of science and culture which Pym shines on

[109] Ibid., p. 160.
[110] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. 4.
[111] Pym, p. 174-75.

monsters, from the phosphorous he uses to read Tiger's message to the bioluminescence with which he sees the sharks, is now extinguished.

Speculation about the ending is a favourite occupation of Pym critics. Kennedy has distilled the myriad theories about the ending into three categories: naturalistic, mythic/supernatural/spiritual, and sceptical/deconstructive. The naturalistic camp argues that the white figure is a natural phenomenon (a giant ice berg, another huge bear, penguins). Jules Verne (who wrote a sequel to *Pym*) was an early proponent of the naturalistic theory, characterising the figure as some sort of large, magnetised, electrified monument (perhaps marble), and Steve Utley and Harold Waldrop have provocatively called it Frankenstein's monster.[112] Helen Lee has called the figure 'some quite ordinary phenomenon, which then effected rescue', and JV Ridgely sees one of the 'giant white ancients' of the Old Testament.[113] O'Donnell believes the human figure to be a ship (its figurehead, perhaps), and Richard Kopley further connects this to his theory about the penguins, as the first ship which rescued Pym and Augustus from the wreck of the *Ariel* was the *Penguin*.[114] The mythic/supernatural/spiritual theory sees Christ, an angel, God, or the 'image of the reborn self, and the sceptical/deconstructive camp see the figure as the 'narrator's delusion' or an 'optical illusion'.[115] Kopley's epistemological criticism is of the most relevance to my reading of *Pym*; the figure is clearly a threshold of some kind but whether the figure, as Kopley writes, 'signifies knowledge' or 'the limits of knowledge' is unclear.[116] What *is* clear is the fundamental tenet of monster theory that 'in the face of the monster, scientific inquiry and its ordered rationality

[112] Steve Utley and Howard Waldrop, 'Black as the Pit, From Pole to Pole' from *Year's Finest Fantasy*, ed. Terry Carr (NY: Berkley, 1978), p. 110-11
[113] JV Ridgely, 'The Continuing Puzzle of *Arthur Gordon Pym*: Some Notes and Queries,' *Poe Newsletter*, 3(1970), p. 5; Helen Lee, 'Possibilities of *Pym*,' *EJ*, 55 (1996), p. 1153.
[114] O'Donnell, 'From Earth to Ether: Poe's Flight Into Space,' *PMLA*, 77 (1962), pp. 87-89.
[115] Kennedy, p. 71.
[116] Richard Kopley, 'The Secret of Arthur Gordon Pym', p. 203.

crumble'.[117] WH Auden will later write of sea iconography that the 'degree of [meteorological] visibility' is equal to 'the degree of conscious knowledge'; that is, 'fog and mist mean doubt and self-delusion, a clear day [means] knowing where one is going or exactly what one has done.' Much has been written about the antebellum Southern implications of whiteness in *Pym*. I would like to address whiteness in Pym from another angle, beginning with the observation that, with the notable except of the 'shrouded human figure', almost everything white in Pym is also red: Tiger's white fangs and red throat; the message Tiger delivers is written in blood on white paper; the body of Rogers is white and red ('the face was shrunken, shrivelled, of a chalky whiteness, except where relieved by two or thee glaring red spots… completely covering up an eye as if with a band of red velvet'); the ghost ship sailor's white teeth and red cap; the seagull pecking at the sailor's corpse is white with a red cap of blood; the Kerguelen penguins' bellies are 'the purest white imaginable' while their bill is either 'pink or bright scarlet'; the bear has white fur and red eyes; and the small weird creature has 'perfectly white' fur and red claws. In this I see a certain uniformity in the descriptions that may exercise a certain control over the narrative, and also an attempt to show polarity, as white signifies purity (or in some cases 'pallor', a word Pym uses several times in the novel) and red signifies quite the opposite: passion, fire, vigour. In all these creatures, men, and their transactions, there is duality (polarity, even)— the twin capabilities for civility and violence, as the novel demonstrates again and again. Perhaps then because the white figure at the end is not also red, it is a deliverance from the narrative back to civilisation, an opportunity for Pym to cross back into his proper social geography.

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[117] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. 7.

Dominic Mastroianni reads the novel as ‘a study of how conceptions of social life can change when the boundaries between human and animal are taken not to be stable or inviolable, but rather volatile and readily crossable’.[118] In *Pym*, I see these as the ‘border of the possible’ (which the monster ‘polices’, for Cohen), in which ‘curiosity is more often punished than rewarded, and that one is better off safely contained within one’s own domestic sphere than abroad, away from the watchful eyes of the state.’[119] For Pym, however, it is not just his curiosity for which he is punished but his lack of humility in the face of nature, his refusal to acknowledge that man is not the pinnacle of this food chain. Cohen argues that ‘To step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself’, echoing Nietzsche’s caution that those who fight with monsters may become monsters as we have seen in Ballantyne’s *Fighting the Whales*. Pym’s failures of taxonomy and his continued dehumanisation in the face of the monstrous beasts of sea culminate in his cannibalism. At the end of *Pym* the reader realises that the worst things Pym has seen have been the disintegration of the human body, and the most monstrous acts of barbarism have been done by men (including himself): the mutiny, the counter-mutiny, and, ultimately, the cannibalism. Though he calls the Tsalalians ‘savages’, Pym, Peters, and Augustus are the only characters who are shown butchering another person. The worst monsters are men, and the physical bodies which Pym finds most horrifying are also men, not the composite beasts he describes: Rogers’ bloated corpse, the sailor on the ghost ship, and Augustus’s leg which comes off in Peters’ hands are all in states of worse putrefaction and provoke in Pym more violent reactions than anything he sees in the natural world. The worst monsters are men, both in the things they do to each other and how they

[118] Mastroianni, p. 185.
[119] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. 12.

look as a result. Anthony Pagden famously writes that 'travel decomposes civilised man', and in *Pym* we see this decomposition is taken to physical and intellectual extremes.[120]

5.6 *PYM'S* GENERIC HYBRIDITY

Ultimately in *Pym*, domestic figures get wilder, and wild figures get more domestic; everything is hybridised and shifted toward a miscegenated centre. The hybridities of wild and domestic forms which so define *Pym's* humans and animals are also present in the actual literary structure of the novel, which is a discordant mixture of genres that further destabilises the text as a whole.

Pym embodies elements of a multitude of popular nineteenth-century literary forms: autobiography, epistle, novel, serial, adventure story, bildungsroman, didactic morality tale, polar travel narrative, ship's log, scientific study, ethnological treatise, and gothic horror story. He switches fluidly between them, sometime overlapping them into a strange and at times chaotic reading experience. Dated journalistic writing is a trope he comes back to several times. We might think of these logs as a domestication or an ordering of one's wild thoughts and experiences; the first time Pym lapses to from novel form to journal is while he is still holed up in his 'little apartment' after the mutiny: 'As the events of the ensuing eight days were of little importance, and had no direct bearing upon the main incidents of my narrative, I will here throw them into the form of a journal, as I do not wish to omit them altogether'.[121] He employs the journal format again at the end of the novel, this time citing exact dates for each. The first such entry:

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[120] Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 162.
[121] *Pym, p. 65.*

> March 1.* Many unusual phenomena now indicated that we were entering upon a region of novelty and wonder.[122]

The 'unusual phenomenon' of the utter change in form signals that the reader is also 'entering a region of novelty and wonder'. The asterisk links to a footnote which reads: 'For obvious reasons I cannot pretend to strict accuracy in these dates. They are given principally with a view to perspicuity of narration, and as set down in my pencil memoranda.' Ultimately, the novel lacks any sort of closure. There is palpable wrestling with creating a popular novel that feels at time hyperbolic, satirical, grotesque, and contemptuous of that public, yielding a novel that perhaps has more in common with *Northanger Abbey* than with *Castle of Otranto*.

This generic hybridity of literary forms within *Pym* also comes at a time of burgeoning literary hybridity. UC Knoepflmacher has argued that 'Victorian writers not only addressed hybridity as a subject but also incarnated it through a great variety of blended forms and discursive mixtures'.[123] In poetry too, Knoepflmacher also observes the 'recent' critical trend which has 'taught us to read Browning's and Tennyson's grafting of lyric and drama in that quintessential Victorian hybrid, the dramatic monologue'.[124] He is referring to an essay by Linda Shires, in which Alfred Henry Hallam argued in 1831 that Tennyson was already the inventor of a 'new species of poetry, a graft of the lyric on the dramatic'.[125] She deems Robert Browning a 'hybrid poet among his peers' because of his 'fusing poetics of dramatic lyrics and lyrical dramas'.[126] Shires notes that Alfred Austin asked of Browning: 'most people

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[122] Ibid., p. 195.
[123] UC Knoepflmacher and Logan Browning (eds), *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), p. 3.
[124] Knoepfelmacher and Browning, p. 4.
[125] Hallam, 'On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry, and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson' (1831), quoted in Shires, whose essay appears in Knoepfelmacher and Browning's *Victorian Hybrids*, p. 26.
[126] Shires, in Knoepflmacher, p. 26.

scarcely know what to make of this poetico-philosophical hybrid' and that Walter Bagehot deemed it Browning's 'odd mixture' which made the poetry 'great'.[127]

Even closer to *Pym*'s publication is Dickens' hybrid text, *Sketches by Boz* (1836). Danielle Coriale argues that *Boz* 'presents readers with a startling assemblage of tales and vignettes that can best be described as montage' to form 'a remarkable hybrid that combines journalistic reportage with excessive sentiment and pathos, places elaborate illustrations alongside corresponding text, and embeds static scenes among fluid, narrative passages'.[128] She is thus interested in the ways in which *Boz* might 'work as a testing ground for the promises or risks that hybridity presented in the literary landscape of the 1830s'.[129]

There is yet another important Victorian colonial genre that, while an implicit rather than explicit piece of *Pym*'s generic puzzle, may also yield insight into the novel: narratives of big-game hunting (particularly for dangerous game). The past several decades scholars have read these narratives as historiography and as literature, and I am inspired by Harriet Ritvo's analysis of the 'discordant' elements of those texts as a possible cypher for thinking about genre in *Pym*. In *The Animal Estate,* Ritvo anatomises and analyses the formal incongruence between the 'two most frequently emphasised features of the climactic scene' of these texts: (1) the 'anatomical'/'ballistic' description of the kill, and (2) the 'sentimentalised' description of 'how the animal faces its demise'.[130] This causes the text to shift rapidly from a 'fast-moving, emotionally-charged narrative' to an 'often coldly technical' description of ammunition calibre and penetration angles. These technical

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[127] Walter Bagehot, 'Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, or, Pure Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry' *The National Review* 19 (Nov 1864): p. 27-67 and quoted in Shires (ed. Knoepflmacher), p. 26.
[128] Coriale, in Knoepflmacher, p. 56.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ritvo*, The Animal Estate*, p. 265-66.

details are ‘jarring’; they ‘[interrupt] the narrative flow and implicitly [shift] its subject from romantic adventure to calculated butchery’. Often, Pym/Poe seems to pull the same trick, and for equally mystifying reasons. In the big game-hunting genre, Ritvo says this is not ‘discordant’ after all, but ‘insistent reminders that the pursuit of big game, which could be celebrated in the mythic terms of high romance, was also, and importantly, a brutal act of violence’.[131] And, ultimately, big-game hunting in British colonial Africa or India, where a successful English hunter might take thousands of skins in a single trip, is not an enormous ecological leap from a voyage to the South Seas where, as Pym says of the Tristan d’Acunha Islands, a single ship might take thousands of seal skins (and an Arctic voyage might also come home with polar bear pelts).

Pym is a generic hybrid—a pastiche of literary forms. I use ‘pastiche’ deliberately, as that term’s connotation as sometimes-parodic also reflects the complicated nature of the novel’s relationship with its market. The struggle between the wild and domestic elements of Pym’s character as a narrator also destabilise his already untrustworthy narrative. But at least we know whose ‘narrative’ it is. It is *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Or is it? Its authorship is similarly hybridised into discordant parts: the narrative voices the readers hear are, for the majority of the novel, Pym himself, though the first two sections were written by a ‘Mr Poe of Richmond’ and the final section was written by the ‘appendix writer’—further complicated by the fact that all of these voices are actually Edgar Allan Poe. *Pym* also benefits (or suffers?) from an authorial hybridity in which the Messieurs AG Pym and EA Poe are both agents, with literally invisible lines between their narratives. *Pym* has clear roots in the realist foundations of novels such as *Robinson*

[131] Ibid.

Crusoe, in which Defoe positions himself as 'editor' of the mariner from York. *Pym*'s generic hybridity is all the more important because the book as a material object reinforces the material hybridities within its narrative.

The title page of the original American edition titles the novel thus:

> *THE NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON PYM OF NANTUCKET, COMPRISING THE DETAILS OF A MUTINY AND ATROCIOUS BUTCHERY ON BOARD THE AMERICAN BRIG GRAMPUS, ON HER WAY TO THE SOUTH SEAS, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1827. WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE RECAPTURE OF THE VESSEL BY THE SURVIVERS ; THEIR SHIPWRECK AND SUBSEQUENT HORRIBLE SUFFERINGS FROM FAMINE ; THEIR DELIVERANCE BY MEANS OF THE BRITISH SCHOONER JANE GUY ; THE BRIEF CRUISE OF THIS LATTER VESSEL IN THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN ; HER CAPTURE, AND THE MASSACRE OF HER CREW AMONG A GROUP OF ISLANDS IN THE EIGHTY-FOURTH PARALLEL OF SOUTHERN LATITUDE; TOGETHER WITH THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES STILL FARTHER SOUTH TO WHICH THAT DISTRESSING CALAMITY GAVE RISE.*

Stories of mutiny, cannibalism, and general calamity at sea were precisely the desire of the reading public, and as Burton Pollin has pointed out, Poe was obviously 'trying to cater to the current popular taste for sea stories involving strange lands, shipwrecks and narrow escapes, and violent action' such as Cooper, Marryat, and Morrell.[132] Of the many advertisements for other 'Valuable Works Published by Harper & Brothers, New York' in the first edition of *Pym*, many reflect this appetite, including Benjamin Morrell's *A Narrative of Four Voyages,* from which Poe liberally quotes in *Pym*.[133]

Kennedy points out that 'At different moments, Poe evidently conceived of *Pym* as a sensational potboiler, as a plausible voyage narrative, as a story of symbolic conquest, and as a self-consciously parodic tale that flaunts its fictionality and mocks its own excesses' (as in Poe's satirical essay 'How to Write Blackwood Article').[134] Poe also harboured what Kennedy has called an 'underlying scorn for the reading

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[132] Burton R. Pollin, 'Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym and the Contemporary Reviews', *Studies in American Fiction* 2.1 (Spring 1974), pp. 37-56.

[133] The full descriptive title of Morrell's book, as advertised in this edition of *Pym*, is *A Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, Chinese Sea, Ethiopic and South Atlantic Ocean, and Antarctic Ocean. From the year 1822 to 1831. Comprising an Account of some valuable Discoveries, including the Massacre Islands, where thirteen of the Author's Crew were massacred and eaten by cannibals.*

[134] Kennedy. p. xiv. (Kennedy has usefully included 'How to Write a Blackwood Article' in his Oxford edition of *Pym*.)

public', and perhaps even a 'private pleasure in confounding the popular audience' after dangling in front of them the irresistible tale of shipwrecked cannibal mariners in the farthest reaches of the sea.[135]

Though Poe called *Pym* a 'very silly book' in an 1840 letter to the critic William Burton, it doubtlessly influenced the American giant of maritime literature, Melville. Baudelaire translated *Pym* into French, Jules Verne published a sequel to the novel called *Le sphinx des glaces* in 1897, and WH Auden lauded it as one of the 'finest adventure stories ever written'. Kenyon-Jones argues that in 'Romantic-period Europe and North America—and especially in Great Britain in this period […] humankind first seriously began to question its own centrality to the world in realisation to animals'.[136] *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* participates in (and problematizes) this intense anxiety by populating the South Seas with hybrid forms (of which the narrative itself is one), yielding unstable, readily permeable borders of species and self in the cultures and creatures imagined there.

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Kenyon-Jones, p. 1.

CHAPTER 6

'FISH CULTURE' AT THE 1883 INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION

Indeed, it is hardly necessary to go to fable for wonders,
for the actual natural world of fishes is a very wilderness of marvels.[1]

Thus Phil Robinson begins *Fishes of Fancy*, his handbook for the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition held at South Kensington between May and October of that year. The final chapter of this thesis will analyse the literature commissioned for the exhibition, arguing in part that the exhibition placed visitors under the surface of this marine 'wilderness' via architectural, visual, spatial, and literary cues.

The 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition may be the most important exhibition that practically no one has ever heard of. (Nor has it received any scholarly attention.) Frederick Whymper, who wrote *Fisheries of the World* as a companion to the exhibition, asserted that 'it is the most interesting *special* Exhibition ever held in any country up to the present date'.[2] By the time the Unites States' representative G. Brown Goode had sent his third paper back to the American journal *Science*, he reported 'London is thoroughly permeated by the interest in fish and fisheries'.[3] The *Standard* opined that 'in these days of incessant exhibitions it would not be at all surprising if the public did not as yet fully comprehend either the unusual importance of this great International affair, the vastness of its scope, or the magnitude of the interests involved'[4]. But the scope was not, in theory, 'vast'. It was about fish. It

[1] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy*, p. 13.
[2] Whymper, p. 98.
[3] Goode, 'Third Paper', p. 129.
[4] *The Standard* (London, England), Monday, April 30, 1883; pg. 3; Issue 18341.

was a purpose-built single-subject Great Exhibition of 'fish culture'[5] encompassed practically every facet of life in Britain and the wider empire. It was a place where Britain could work out where it had been and where it was heading through the medium of fish.

The previous chapters of this thesis all take place between 1820 and 1863. Studying the literature of the exhibition provides a way to reflect on the questions I have posed about Ballantyne, Tennyson, Shelley, and Poe, and it has all of the major figures from the previous chapters of this thesis: whales, sharks, serpents, krakens and monsters of every form, and even a heroic Newfoundland.[6] Understanding the exhibition is not a purely historiographic task. The literature published by the exhibition's Literary Department was so crucial to the exhibition's success and interpretation that understanding the exhibition *requires* a literary and philological analysis. The exhibition had its own Literary Department (interchangeably called the Literary Committee) who had the colossal task of documenting, compiling, and publishing the proceedings of the exhibition and also commissioning handbooks especially for the exhibition which would be available at different stages over the six months.[7] The Committee employed William Clowes and Sons to publish the exhibition literature in fourteen volumes, which included eighteen one-shilling

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[5] 'Fish culture' actually denotes the artificial cultivation of fish ('fish farms'); however, the homonymous idea of a fish culture (that is, the cultural importance *of* fish) was played on by multiple correspondents at the exhibitions, as I will show.

[6] The exhibition featured 'the boat of the ship *Ira*, which was lost in the Arctic Sea, and on board of which, under the command of Captain Leigh Smith, the saved crew contrived to weather storm and tempest, and to travel through 800 miles of Polar sea, during four months. Occasionally the famous Newfoundland dog who played so conspicuous a part in this often told and nearly incredible story of sea adventure is to be seen on board, coiled up in a corner, and apparently quite indifferent to the admiration his presence is cure to call forth' (*The Morning Post* (22 June 22, 1883) pg. 3; Issue 34631).

[7] AJR Trendell served as the Literary Superintendent and Commissioner for Conferences of the exhibition, assisted by Herbert AP Trendell and Frank Cundall. In his essay on 'Teachings of the Fisheries Exhibition', Trendell writes 'If it be permitted for the book cover to call attention to the book, if the bouquet-holder may be allowed to illustrate the beauty of the nosegay, then may I call attention to the literature of our Fisheries. Vital as is the acquisition of fresh knowledge it may be questioned whether the diffusion of correct information is not of almost equal moment with its attainment, even as the sun itself would give us no heat if it never rose above our horizon. To this end our literary department has been framed'.

handbooks by 'authorities of distinction',[8] forty-nine conference papers, thirty-one prize essays, the official catalogue, the opening and closing ceremony addresses, a 'special report' on the electric lighting, and analytical indices. As an appendix to this thesis I have catalogued the contents of the fourteen volumes literature (Appendix B), and I hope that in future I will be able to expand on this work and to collaborate with others whose work might be informed by the exhibition. Not included in the fourteen volumes are two official guidebooks and a second report on the electric lighting. Each national delegation—and many of the private exhibitors—also published catalogues, and at least one rogue publisher commissioned and printed their own guidebook: Frederick Whymper's richly-illustrated *Fisheries of the World*. In addition to the official literary output of the exhibition there were also hundreds of periodical articles and essays, including a piece on the 'fish diet' in *All the Year Round*.[9] The committees included a Fine Arts Department in addition to the Literary Department, which put forth art and literature as a way to understand—and manage—the human relationship to the sea and it creatures. The productions of the Literary Committee are highly literary indeed, almost entirely eschewing scientific language in favour of narrative and illustrative descriptions, seeming to put forth art and literature as a way of understanding (or at least appreciating) science, technology, and industry.

The *Official Catalogue* to the exhibition, edited by Trendell, is over six hundred pages, and 'may in a certain sense itself be considered as a valuable contribution to the literature of Sea and River Fishing, an almost a "Bibliotheca

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[8] 'Authorities of distinction have been invited to compile a series of popular Shilling Handbooks upon subjects with which they were specially acquainted' (Catalogue, p. xxxiv); Volumes I-III of the fourteen-volume Exhibition Literature collects the handbooks (see Appendix B).

[9] 'The newspapers, from *Punch* to the *Times*, be they social, commercial, literary, comic, or scientific in their scope, are full of the exhibition. Many of them announce special numbers, or series of special articles, devoted to its discussion; while at least two periodicals, one an illustrated monthly, are established as it special exponents' (Goode, 'Second Paper', p. 565).

Piscatorial" in itself', proclaims JJ Manley.[10] In Goode's 'Second Paper' for *Science* he reports that 'The official catalogue is said to have cleared $15,000 above its cost, through advertisements, before a single copy had been sold, and the first edition of 25,000 copies is nearly exhausted'.[11] In his 'Third Paper' he notes that in London 'Whenever one travels by public conveyance, some of his neighbours in the car or the omnibus are always laden with the ponderous blue catalogue of the exhibition'.[12] In Goode's 'Fourth Paper' he calls the catalogue a 'model for the guidance of future exhibition administration and he also notes that 'much serious work has been done by the English periodicals in recording the teachings of the exhibition'.[13] Manley also writes of the exhibition

> The 'Handbooks' and 'Papers' will be sent to every library in the world; and, owing to their large general circulation, they are likely to stimulate still further interest in both sea and over fishing and their surroundings. If only for this literary 'outcome,' the great International Fisheries Exhibition will not have been held in vain.[14]

Despite the detailed recording of the 'teachings of the exhibition' in periodicals and the thousands of pages of 'official' literature, there has never been any scholarly work in any field which focuses on the exhibition.[15] This may be because the primary source material is not readily available for study, especially not as an intact set. Of the fourteen volume of 'official' literature there are a few volumes each in the British Library, Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum, and Natural History Museum Library and Archives; within a day trip's reach of London only the Science Museum's Library and Archives at Wroughton holds an entire set of fourteen volumes. Though it has been exciting and rewarding to conduct research on something

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[10] Manley, 'Literature', Vol. III, p. 690.
[11] Goode, Second Paper', *Science* 1.20 (22 June 1883), p. 564.
[12] Goode, 'Third Paper', *Science* 2.26 (3 August 1883), p. 129.
[13] Goode, 'Fourth Paper', *Science* 2.40 (9 November 1883), p. 613.
[14] Manley, 'Literature', Vol. III, p. 690.
[15] I have given two conference papers on the exhibition this year (at the Nineteenth Century Studies Association and the North American Society for Oceanic History), to audiences of about twenty each, and when I ask who has every heard of the International Fisheries Exhibitions only a few people have put their hand up.

that has never received scholarly attention, it means that I have had to choose a manageable breadth and depth of material to include in this chapter. Though this research is the result of a year of archival research, I still feel I have only barely gone beneath surface (to borrow the metaphor which is in part the thesis of this chapter) of what stands to be learned from the exhibition literature.[16]

Each section of this chapter focuses on a particular text: Section 6.2 looks at the marine taxidermy work of TE Gunn as described by his self-published catalogue. Section 6.3 explores naturalist Henry Lee's two handbooks for the exhibition, *Sea Monsters Unmasked* and *Sea Fables Explained*. Section 6.4 is a close reading of the 'appendix' (titled 'A Sea-Dream') to naturalist-author Phil Robinson's handbook *Fishes of Fancy*, in which the exhibits come to life after dark and discuss how *they* would organise a fisheries exhibition.

The first overarching argument of this chapter is that this exhibition and its literature warrant study. After a year in the archives I can confidently say that the exhibition is critical to understanding Britain's relationship with the sea in this period, as in its literature and visual/material culture I see many of the issues of the age (and of this thesis) playing out through the medium of fish and 'fish culture'. It was a place were we can see abstract fears about nature and culture, and wildness and domesticity, negotiated in tangible ways, especially through the emphasis on the curious or the monstrous elements of the sea environment. Concluding this thesis with the exhibition literature is a way to bring together discussions of maritime material culture and monstrosity and to reflect on the issues this thesis has raised

[16] Examples of sections I drafted that did not make it into the this chapter include the economics and portrayals of eating fish at the exhibition (in the restaurants and the market); representations of Darwin's prehistoric sloth *Megatherium* in the exhibition literature; the Marquis of Exeter's whale skeleton in the exhibition courtyard which was painted with luminous paint so visitors could see it at night; and class and masculinity in the exhibition literature's portrayals of fishermen.

about taxonomy, hybridity (of creatures and of genre), and the wild and domestic in the sea environment in the nineteenth century.

I am interested most in how nineteenth-century aquatic technologies and discoveries addressed the simmering scientific and public question with which I began Chapter 1: Britannia rules the waves, but what creatures rule the depths? The plausible answers to these questions are playing out at the Fisheries Exhibition of 1883 in highly material terms. ‘Fish culture’, then, is not just the cultivation of fish but the homonymous social and historic culture around them (and, in Robinson’s *Fishes of Fancy* (6.4), also the anthropomorphic culture *of* the fish). The exhibition and its literature, however, also created hybrid spaces of wild and domestic, places to exaggerate and ‘sell’ sea monsters to the public but also to domesticate them with taxonomy. Thus, the exhibition and its literature also destabilised many of the barriers and categories they were intended to cement, as the spatial arrangement of the exhibition placed visitors ‘under the sea’, decentralising the anthropocentric perspective at the root of the exhibition itself.

6.1 Revisiting the Fisheries Exhibition

Though there had been previous National Fisheries Exhibitions (most recently in 1882 in Edinburgh), the 1883 ‘*Great* International Fisheries Exhibition’ was different. Between May and October of that year 2,689,092 people visited the exhibition at South Kensington for a daily average of over 18,500.[17] (The busiest day was 15 May, when the official visitor count was over 25,000.[18]) The queen was patron, though she was unable to attend the Opening Ceremony due to an accident, so the Prince of

[17] *The Belfast News-Letter* (1 November 1883).
[18] The *Dundee Courier & Argus* (16 May1883).

Wales took her place and served as President of the Exhibition as well.[19] Though the weather at the Opening Ceremony was poor, the summer of 1883 was the hottest on record since 1860, and the twenty-one acre site (delineated by the Royal Albert Hall to the north and the Natural History Museum to the south) was packed with visitors every day.[20]

Anyone of note in London was at the Opening Ceremony on 18 May, which began with a procession of leading scientific minds (including TH Huxley and Richard Owen) and royals, in which the Prince and Princess were surrounded by 'four hundred representative fishermen from all parts of the kingdom, costumed in their jerseys and sou'westers, their overalls and sea-boots, precisely as they would be when daring the perils of the deep'.[21] As the procession marched through the British Sea Fisheries Gallery 'the Queen's bargemen held their oars apeak at the salute' and fisherwomen, draped in decorative fishing nets, spread rose petals at the Princess's feet. (Figures 26-29 show two plans, an advertisement, and the opening ceremony of the exhibition, respectively.)

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[19] 'The Queen, who has all along felt greatly interested in the project, would have performed the ceremony herself, but that she still suffers from the effect of her recent accident' (*Glasgow Herald* (14 May, 1883)). (She had fallen down a staircase.)

[20] For reference, the Crystal Palace was twenty-six acres (though that was just inside).

[21] Whymper, p. 95.

Figure 26. Rail map to Fisheries Exhibition. (I found this map folded and tucked into a copy of an exhibition guidebook at the Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; it was a lovely surprise as it was not listed in the item details and I have never seen another like it. On the reverse is a map of the interior of exhibition.)

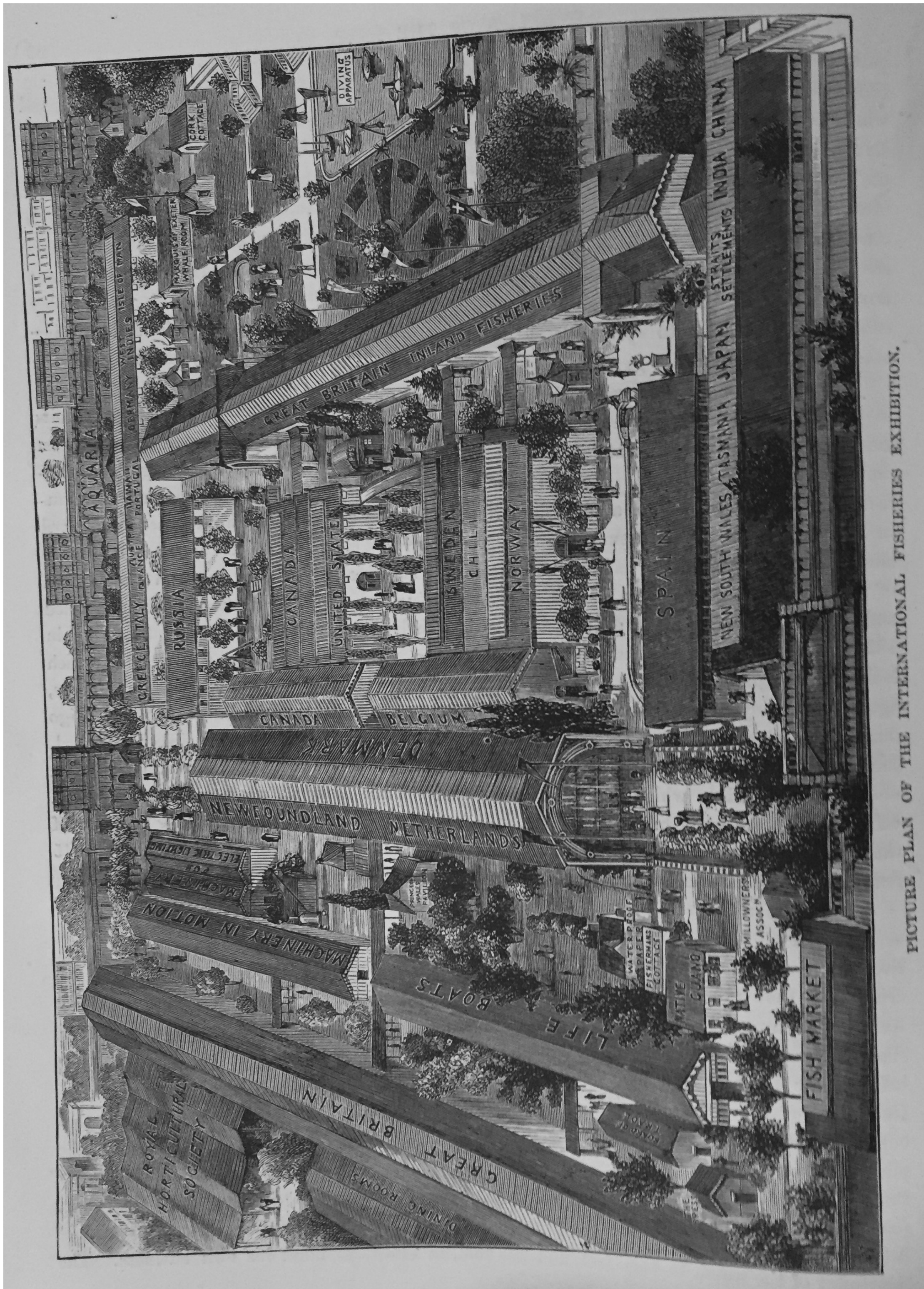

Figure 27. Picture plan of the Fisheries Exhibition, from Whymper, *Fisheries of the World* (1884).

Patron—Her Most Gracious Majesty THE QUEEN.
President—His Royal Highness THE PRINCE OF WALES.

International
FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

Largest Fisheries Exhibition ever held.

CONTAINING REPRESENTATIVE COLLECTIONS FROM ALL PARTS OF

THE UNITED KINGDOM,

AND FROM

Austria.	Denmark.	Italy.	Russia and Poland.
Belgium.	France.	Japan.	Spain and Portugal.
Canada.	Germany.	Netherlands.	Straits Settlements.
Ceylon.	Greece.	Newfoundland.	Switzerland.
Chili.	Hawaii.	New South Wales.	Tasmania.
China.	India.	Norway and Sweden.	United States.

West India Islands.

SEA and FRESH WATER FISHING IN ALL ITS BRANCHES:—

Aquaria.	Fish-Catching Birds.
Diving.	Life Boats.
Fishing Boats.	Life Saving Apparatus.
Fishing Apparatus.	Machinery in Motion.
Fish Culture.	Model Fishing Craft.

RETAIL FISH MARKET for the Sale of Fresh and Preserved Fish.

Fish Dinners, and How to Cook them—under the management of the National Training School for Cookery.

On Special Evenings the Exhibition will be Lighted by Electricity, and will be open till 10 p.m.

ADMISSION ***One Shilling,*** on every week-day, except WEDNESDAY, when admission will be 2s. 6d. Season Tickets, price Two Guineas, may be obtained by letter, or personal application at the Offices of the Exhibition at South Kensington; the City Office, 27, Great Winchester Street, E.C.; the Railway Bookstalls; and the Libraries.

Principal Entrance two minutes' walk from South Kensington Station, Metropolitan and District Railways; Trains every two minutes. Omnibus route from and to Piccadilly and Hammersmith.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, BELLE SAUVAGE WORKS, LONDON, E.C.

Figure 28. Reprint of advertisement for exhibition from Whymper, *Fisheries of the World* (1884).

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL POST-OFFICE FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 2300.—VOL. LXXXII. SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1883. WITH TWO SUPPLEMENTS | SIXPENCE. By Post, 6½d.

OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION BY THE PRINCE OF WALES.

Figure 29. Opening ceremony. *Illustrated London News*, 19 May 1883.

In addition to the overarching national exhibits from across the empire and the rest of the world, societies, museums, companies, and individuals also set up exhibits. Specimens were brought in from the Scottish 'Museum of Economic Fish Culture' amassed by the late 'Fish Culturist to the Queen' Frank Buckland, others from the ZSL, the Piscatorial Society, the Fishmongers' Associations, the Shipwrecked Mariners Associations, the Midlands Piscatorial Association, and more. In the British Gallery alone there were 1,051 exhibitors, the USA Gallery covered over 12,000 square feet and brought more than 25,000 exhibits, and Canada brought six hundred tons of exhibit objects. The Fisheries Exhibition bloomed into an enormous exposition of all things even remotely related to the sea in what Robinson calls the 'liberal "fish idea"' of the exhibition, and Ray Lankester noted, for example, that the whales skeletons on display in the Swedish Court were 'magnificent', but 'it must be admitted that they do not have any special important in realisation to the Fisheries'.[22] The exhibition was also one of the first major public events to have electric lighting throughout. (Figure 30, from the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, shows an assortment of scenes from the exhibition, and Appendix C features twenty-three more illustrations from books and periodicals.)

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[22] Ray Lankester, 'The Scientific Results of the Exhibition', *International Fisheries Exhibition Literature*, 14 vols (London: Williams Clowes & Sons, 1884), vol. 4, p. 4.

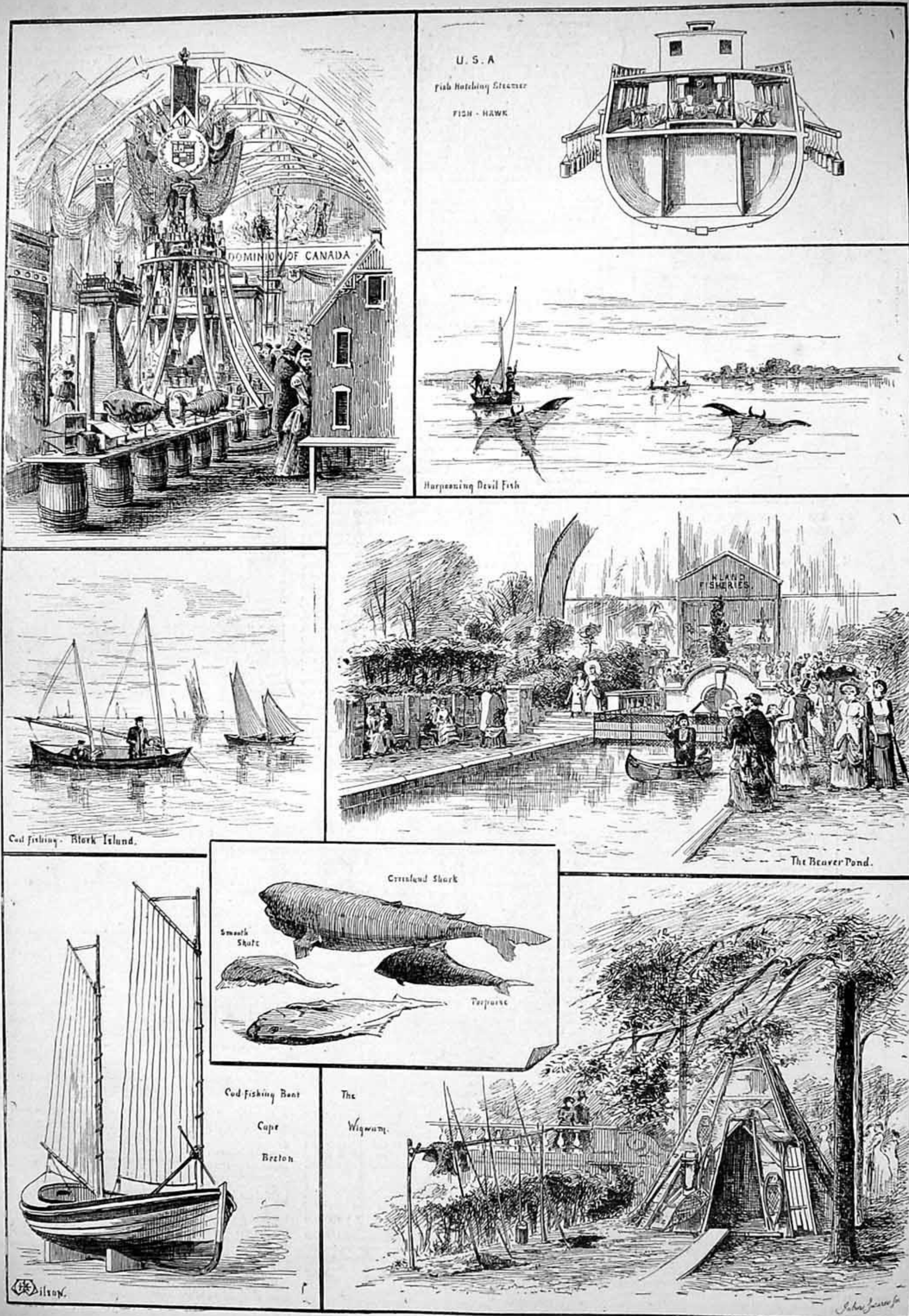

Figure 30. Canadian and American courts. ***Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*****, 2 June 1883.**

A season ticket could be obtained for two guineas, as the exhibition was designed to be visited multiple times, and it was practical to do so for several reasons. First, the live exhibits kept dying, so they would be replaced with something new. More static displays were constantly arriving as well; on the opening day of the exhibit the Russian delegation had not even unpacked their boxes yet (they were delayed due to political unrest), and just before the New South Wales exhibitors sailed for London they lost half of their exhibits to a warehouse fire, so more had to be procured and sent. New and different 'conferences' were held by prominent thinkers from across Europe (which then comprised the 'Conferences' section of the official literature). The *Ipswich Journal* remarked that 'A second visit to the Exhibition at South Kensington, while revealing countless fresh attractions, utterly fails to exhaust the list of wonder which are to be seen there'.[23]

The Exhibition aquarium was the largest ever constructed, containing 65,000 gallons of water. 'No section of the International Fisheries Exhibition is more generally interesting to all visitors than that devoted to the aquaria, with their many beautiful examples of river and sea-fish, and crustacea', writes Whymper in *Fisheries of the World*.[24] The aquarium building formed the entire eastern boundary of the exhibition and, with thirty saltwater tanks and nine freshwater tanks to keep full and healthy for six months, 'additions were being made daily from the fish-ponds on the grounds' and all over the world by the Stocking Committee (Figure 31).[25] The display of live creatures was not limited to fish in tanks: there was an aviary of live flamingos, pelicans, cormorants, and other fish-eating birds, a pond of otters, seals,

[23] The *Ipswich Journal* (2 June 1883).
[24] Whymper, p. 166.
[25] *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), Monday, May 28, 1883; Issue 127.

reptiles, and troupe of Canadian beavers which occupied a 'long stone basin' in the courtyard on the way to the West Gallery and the Aquarium'.[26]

Creatures (swimming in the aquarium, or stuffed in the national courts) were not the only attractions. The exhibition was also home to a salon-style picture gallery (Figure 32, a 'by no means indifferent collection of marine and piscatorial pictures, by ancient and modern artists'[27]). Out on the spacious grounds (near the enormous fountain) was a deep tank for demonstrating new diving technology, a small Marine Museum with a piece of the mast of the *Mary Rose* and a loaf of petrified bread found in a shipwreck. Whymper also describes a 'large and charming conservatory at the top of the gardens [which] is a great centre of attraction at all times, with its magnificent display of tropical and semi-tropical shrubs and plants, interspersed with the gayest flowering plants of our own climate. One can sit there and quietly read the papers and magazine on a large table thoughtfully provided by the management, sip a cup of coffee or tea, dally with an ice cream, tart, or bun, and eat a more substantial lunch of lobster salad or pickled salmon, cold meat or game pasty'.[28] It was not just a place to *see* but to be seen, as Godfrey Turner glosses a section of his *Official Guide*: 'The Exhibition a popular resort'.[29]

[26] 'In the direction of the West Gallery and the Aquarium, we shall find Russia on our left, beyond the open space in which is the long stone basin appropriated to the beaver' and ''on the way [to the Aquarium] we may either visit the beavers and the Canadian canoe, at the basin previously mentioned; or we may leave this for our stroll on the open grounds, northward of the mean exhibition, at that later part of the day when the Grenadier Guards band make the lawn and terraces doubly attractive' (Turner, *Official Guide*, p. 42 and 48).
[27] Whymper, p. 160.
[28] Ibid., p. 103.
[29] Turner, *Official Guide*, p. 51.

Figure 31. Aquarium at the Fisheries Exhibition. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World* (1884).

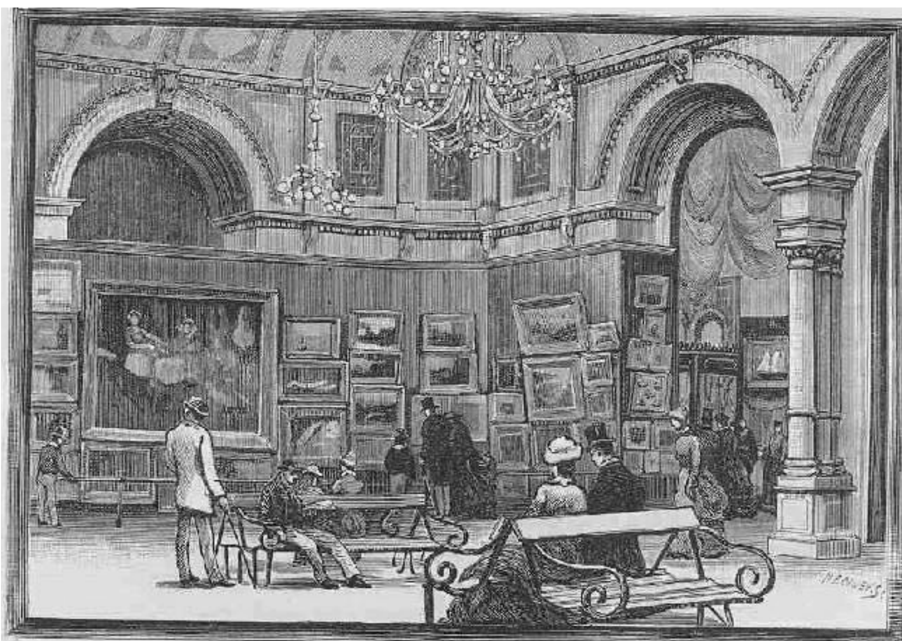

Figure 32. Picture Gallery at the Fisheries Exhibition. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World* (1884).

6.2 (LITERAL) CASE STUDY: T.E. GUNN'S TAXIDERMY

Frederick Whymper's exhibition companion, *Fisheries of the World,* describes the creatures at the exhibition:

> It was not to be expected that the aquarium could include
>
> > 'All *fish from sea or shore,*
> > *Freshet or purling brook, or shell or fin,'*
>
> but those not included in the tanks can generally be found in dry and mummy form. [...] All in all, sea fish,
>
> > *'The glittering finny swarms*
> > *That heave our friths and crowd upon our shores,'*
>
> are particularly well represented at South Kensington[30]

Whymper reassures visitors (with aid of Milton and Thomson, in a poetic interlude which epitomises the sort of generic hybridity at play in much of the exhibition literature) that those sea creatures not present live in the aquarium could likely be seen in some state of preservation elsewhere in the exhibition.

Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle declared on 12 May that 'there has never before in one building been such a show of stuffed fish, and other natural history specimens, directly or indirectly connected with the subject of fish and fishing' than at the exhibition.[31] Within this category of the dead animal on display there were three media: articulated skeletons, preservation in spirits, and taxidermy.[32] These forms of preservation were also widespread at the exhibition because of the inherent mortal danger to the animals being shipped to London from all over the world (and rarely under the supervision of anyone who could properly attend to them). When a live specimen intended for the aquarium died in transit, then, it could

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[30] Whymper, p. 167. The lines of poetry are from *Paradise Regained* (II.344-45) and James Thomson's 'Autumn', respectively.
[31] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (12 May, 1883), p. 3.
[32] The catalogues sometimes also refer to 'casts', which are impressions of the animals (in plaster or another substrate), not the animals themselves, and thus a different not really under the purview of carcasses on display.

still be displayed in one of the three methods for preservation: an articulated skeleton, preservation in spirits, and taxidermy.[33]

An articulated skeleton, places emphasis on the interior structures of an animal, and is also advantageous when an animal has already decomposed beyond preserving its skin (however, studying only an animal's skeleton can lead to misunderstandings about its actual appearance, as in early anatomical drawings of dinosaurs and marine mammals deduced only from bones). Preserving an animal in spirits (genesis of the title of the Natural History Museum's 'Spirit Collections') remains the least invasive way to display an animal. The animal does not have to be prepared as carefully because its tissues remain intact; however, it is impractical for large animals, and early preserving fluids were less effective and often evaporated too quickly. (Furthermore, preserving in spirits meant that the animal could be dissected at a later time.) Taxidermy, from the Greek 'arranging skins', appealed to nineteenth-century sensibilities as both a science and an art, whose anthropomorphic possibilities had major implications for taxonomy and public material culture as it allowed—even *requires* by *OED* definition—the taxidermist to 'present the appearance, attitude, etc. of the living animal.'[34] To do this faithfully the taxidermist, acting as both animal behaviourist and artist, had to articulate the creature in a physical context and a pose which captured the implicitly anthropomorphised 'character' of the animal. Taxidermy was thus well suited to the Fisheries Exhibition as an inextricable collision of art and science for instructive and entertainment purposes.

Taxidermy abounded at the exhibition, which provided the unique opportunity for visitors to view the life-sized intact integuments of sea creatures. Taxidermy

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[33] Francis Day's notes on shipping his live specimens from the Calcutta Imperial Museum to London indicated that both of his cormorants and one his two 'snake birds' died in transit and were thus displayed dead (though he did not say by what medium).
[34] *OED*.

displays included a specimen of West Indian Turtle presented to the Brighton Aquarium by Victoria in 1875; AD Bartlett and Son showed a stuffed manatee, dugong, and walrus; the United States court showed an entire colony of stuffed seals and a blackfish; and the Canadian court showed an 'enormous' stuffed mackerel ('considered to be very good for the table'), a 600lb. basking shark, a 465lb. Halibut from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, a 63lb. Lake Huron trout, 'great sea bass and sturgeon' and 'occupying a case all by itself, and worthy of its enormous bulk and of such isolated treatment' visitors saw the rare 'white porpoise or white whale of Canada', which weighed two hundred pounds and was 'very valuable for its skin and oil'. The *Glasgow Herald* correspondent clarifies 'it is not a model, but the actual fish, barring the oil and blubber. These porpoises when in the water are as white as snow, and they go in droves of 300 or 400'.[35] The exhibition also had its share of 'trophies'. The *Dundee Courier* described the trophy erected at the exhibition by their hometown whaling heroes, Stephen and Son of Dundee as a fourteen-foot gilded array of whaling and sealing implements on top of which stood a stuffed adult polar bear holding a seal in its claws, encircled by walrus's heads and a variety of furs, skins, and narwhal horns.[36] The trophy representing the Canadian court was a

[35] *Glasgow Herald* (19 May 1883). This animal is likely a beluga whale.

[36] 'The trophy, which is in the form of a pyramid, rises to a height of fourteen feet, is seven feet square, and rests on a base of twelve foot square, which is raised eight inches above the true level of the floor. It is surrounded by ebonised rail, with gold mouldings. At the corners of the trophy are placed the different implements used at the whale fishing and the various tools employed in tanning leather. The trophy is surmounted by a fine specimen of a polar bear sitting on its haunches with a young white-coat seal in its paws. In from, resting on the rails, is an assorted case of fish oils. A large and splendid selection of different kinds of furs, made from seal skins, from the skins of the male and female blubber-nosed seals, and the hide of the white whale or porpoise, hang like drapery found the trophy. In the centre is poised a white whale's skull, and at the foot are a number of walrus's heads set on shields. There are also two capital specimens of the [?] rat seal and white coat seal. At the four corners of the railing are narwhal horns. The trophy, when erected in the Exhibition rooms, will present a fine appearance, and the skill and taste displayed in its construction reflect the greatest credit on the Messrs Stephen, and will provide an honour to the [?] of seal oil.' *(The Dundee Courier & Argus and Northern Warder* (1 May 1883).)

'conglomeration of fish barrels and fish cans, decorated with lobsters and surmounted by a stuffed beaver and a large flag'.[37]

The press was impressed by the quality of the taxidermy at the exhibition (the *Spectator* called a stuffed otter a 'triumph of taxidermy'), often describing exhibits not just in the anthropomorphic context of the display itself but in light of British society. The correspondent from the *Ipswich Journal* described two stuffed otters as 'snarling terribly [...] very like the typical Brighton landlady when you have disputed some item in her bill. This section is, more or less, a "Chamber of horrors."'[38] The same correspondent reports that this 'chamber of horrors' is also home to Mr Butt's depiction of life-sized river bank on which a stuffed crocodile had seized the paw of a stuffed panther, wherein 'the look on the poor brute's face is wonderfully rendered'.[39] (The correspondent for *Bell's* calls this piece 'from first to last high art', though he identifies the animals as an alligator and tiger, respectively.[40]) In the inventory of deceased animals at the exhibition there is also a noticeable emphasis on the 'odd', 'queer', or 'curious'.

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[37] The *Ipswich Journal* (2 June 1883).
[38] The *Ipswich Journal* (9 June 1883).
[39] Ibid.
[40] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (12 May 1883), p. 3.

Figure 33. TE Gunn's collection for the Fisheries Exhibition.

While others 'murdered to dissect' (to take literally Wordsworth's charge against the 'meddling intellect'), Thomas Edward Gunn murdered to display. His complication of wild and domestic is one of his tools for creating a sense of the monstrous, strange, or 'curious' in this collection. He is less interested in the instructive potential of taxidermy but instead in the spectacle of displaying the monstrous (monstrous in size, in countenance, or just the monstrous cruelty of the natural world). As a 'naturalist' and fellow of the Linnaean Society, it seems he was less interested in anatomy and more interested in the range of animals to be found in a specific location. For Gunn, this location was the coastal and inland waters of Norfolk, and the variety of species found there. This focus on Norfolk made his exhibition a sort of a microcosmic ecosystem in which each glass display scene placed a microscope on a corner of that self-contained world free from human interference (though of course the grim irony is that it took the human intervention of

killing the animal to display this human-free world). His most famous displays were in wood and glass boxes that might have resembled a tabletop aquarium, while others were under glass domes (called 'shades')— glass-worlds both completely self-contained *and* totally exposed to the human gaze.

Fish presented a special challenge to taxidermists. In 1854 CD Badham opined 'the inhabitants of the sea cannot be preserved except as mummies; they are the opprobrium of taxidermy; stuffing and alcohol alike absorb their hues; and in museums their blanched scales form a ghastly contrast to the gay and gaudy integuments of the denizens of the earth and air by which they are surrounded'.[41] No exhibitor of taxidermy attracted such interest and admiration for overcoming these challenges as TE Gunn. Describes one reporter: 'a distinct pause will have to be made before Mr Gunn's natural history collection. He has something near 600 specimens of birds and fishes, and he has with marvellous success aimed at representing them "in character". [...] These representations are really high art, both in the pictorial group, faithful portraiture, and taxidermist skill'.[42] Gunn (1844-1923) ran 'one of Britain's oldest and most respected taxidermy operations', working with his 'distinctive style of high-quality taxidermy'.[43] Nicknamed 'Robinson Crusoe' because of the 'eccentric, floppy-brimmed hats' he wore in the field, he was elected a fellow of the Linnaean Society the year of the Exhibition, where he set up his 'Grand Collection' of fish and fish-eating birds, animals, and reptiles in the Western Quadrant. Gunn wrote his own catalogue for his collection, which sold for sixpence; it features a handsome cover illustrated with facsimiles of his previous prize medals,

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[41] CD Badham, *Prose Halieutics*. London: Parker and Son (1854). p. 112. (Most of this volume was previously published as articles in *Frazer's*.)
[42] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (12 May 1883), p. 3.
[43] Pat Morris, 'Gunn, Thomas Edward (1844–1923)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, May 2009 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/98029>, [accessed 21 Jan 2016].

including the ‘only gold medal’ at the 1881 National Fisheries Exhibition and an ornate plate featuring a butterfly, bird, squirrel, and fish (Figure 34).[44]

Though Gunn’s taxidermy is an act of anthropomorphic interpretation it is not entirely anthropocentric, as his displays (interpreted by his catalogue) invite the viewer to peer into a human-less world of animal interactions with a prototypical underwater perspective which was also obsessed with the ‘monstrous’. These ‘windows’ are hybrid spaces of wild and domestic, and his catalogue for the exhibition is a generic hybrid whose mix of science, art, and literature complicates boundaries between disciplines, between above and below the surface, and between man and beast. Gunn also employs time as an important dimension in his tableaux and their narratives, using his catalogue to carefully manage visitors’ interaction with his collection.

[44] *A Catalogue of the Grand Collection of British Sea and Fresh-water Fish and Fish-eating Birds, also Animals and Reptiles, Exhibited in Class V., Divisions 51, 52, 53, and 54, Western Quadrant, near the Albert Hall, by T.E. Gunn, Naturalist, Norwich, England*. Printed by Fletcher and Sons, Norfolk (1883). (I have studied originals at the British Library and at the Science Museum Archives at Wroughton.)

YA.1993.a.8527

THE GREAT

International Fisheries Exhibition

LONDON, 1883.

A CATALOGUE

OF THE

Grand Collection of British Sea and Fresh-water Fish and Fish-eating Birds, also Animals and Reptiles,

EXHIBITED IN

CLASS V., DIVISIONS 51, 52, 53, AND 54,

WESTERN QUADRANT, near the ALBERT HALL,

BY

T. E. GUNN,

NATURALIST,

NORWICH, ENGLAND.

Only Prize Medal, 1867.

ONLY GOLD MEDAL, National Fisheries Exhibition, 1881.

ESTABLISHED 1826.

T. E. GUNN

Naturalist,

NORWICH, ENGLAND.

Exhibition of Grand Collection of British Sea & Fresh-water Fish, Fish-eating Birds, &c.

CLASS V., WESTERN QUADRANT,

INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION, LONDON, 1883.

Only Gold Medal, National Fisheries Exhibition, 1881.

Silver Medal, 1881.

Prize Medal, 1871.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Figure 34. Cover of Gunn's catalogue to his collection (1883).

Gunn's descriptions are heavily anthropomorphised, but often by a different means than other taxidermists. In the static animal medium of stuffing and mounting, the taxidermist must give a sense of life, to pose, and therefore to domesticate the animal through an anthropomorphism of the animal's 'character'. To characterise this as part of the archetypical Victorian desire to control nature seems both true but also far too simplistic. While the act of taxidermy did allow the taxidermist to enact a physical control over the body of the animal and thus how its 'character' will be perceived to the viewer, the descriptions of the taxidermy at the exhibition suggest that of equal importance and interest to viewers was the skill of the 'art' of the piece and the sense of a narrative or the story that it tells.

Gunn is an especially interesting figure because his taxidermy is a range of anthropomorphic visions. He exhibited angling prises stuffed and mounted on wall plaques, but also scenes of nature's cruel power complete with the utmost care taken to include the correct vegetation. Sometimes he invented narratives for his specimens, but his most admired pieces were scenes based on the narrative that nature herself presented—that is, he prepared, posed, and exhibited them exactly as he found them. His work is also significant because of the care taken in compiling his catalogue including dates and specific locations. The focus of the collection on the waterways and littoral spaces of Norfolk also roots the collection and its literature deeply in the context of Britain.

On closer inspection, however, the individual creatures populating the displays often represented a slightly sinister—or at least 'curious'—side of nature, and Gunn took a special interest in the odd and the 'monstrous'. He exhibited a range of 'malformed' animals: a pike (Case 6), perch (Case 9), bream (Case 35), dace (Case 43), and a 'remarkable monstrosity of a toad having five distinct and well-formed

legs' (Case 78). Some were monstrous because of their size: he exhibited Britain's largest minnow at four inches (Case 48) and his 'champion bream' was a 'monster fish' which—at 11 pounds—was the largest ever caught in Britain (Case 31). ('Economic Fish Culturist to the Queen' Frank Buckland even visited the bream at Gunn's home in Norwich and reported on it in *Land and Water*, monstrously terming it a 'scaly baby'.[45]) Of his 'rare' species and curiosities he also showed only the fourth flying fish ever caught in Britain (Case 50), an array of 'rare' birds, two smooth-hound sharks caught off of Sussex (Case 76), the 'very rare British species [...] the electric ray or torpedo-fish' (Case 75), a lesser grebe choked to death by the spines of the ruffe it was trying to swallow (Case 110), and a 'hybrid fish' of the roach and the common bream (Case 36). To the astonishment of many he showed 19lb. pike and a 5lb. eel who died when the pike seized the eel and the eel attempted to escape through its gills (Case 5). A reported remarked: 'there is a pike which has seized an eel, and the eel has contrived to slip its head and shoulders through the gills, and *the dramatic character of the situation may be imagined*. There is, never the less, a touch of drollery about the determination of the eel to beat the pike and the mixture of astonishment and anger in the expression of the fish'.[46] The very first case he describes in his catalogue shows a

> singular instance of the voracity of the Pike, that occurred on Hickling Broad, in February 1867. Both Pike and victim were found washed ashore, dead, the latter still protruding from the captor's mouth. The unfortunate Duck, when searching for food under the surface, was seized by the Pike, and being apparently too large to swallow, and unable to extricate itself, both fell victims. The scene is a representation of the commencement of the attack, with the Drake's startled flight.[47]

If the accompanying sketch (Figure 35) is true to the scale of the case it describes, then the portion 'under the surface' comprised just over half of the vision. The vegetation in the background can be seen both above and below the surface, as can

[45] Gunn, p. 7.
[46] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (12 May 1883), p. 3.
[47] Gunn, p. 3.

the duck itself as the pike drags it underwater. Gunn relates that the duck and the pike were found dead (the duck in the mouth of the pike), and so he inferred this narrative. He chooses, however, to include a second duck in the scene, 'the Drake's startled flight' suggesting that it has witnessed its mate being snatched headfirst by the voracious pike.

Furthermore, as Gunn had to imagine the narrative based only on the position of the carcasses, I believe he looked to a familiar source: Henry de la Beche's 'Duria Antiquior, of a More ancient Dorset', discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 (Figure 13). 'Pike and Wild Ducks' is in the style of the genre-defining 'Duria antiquior': the predator seizes its prey at the surface, from right to left; the second duck's flight mimics the pterodactyls; the majority of the background setting and vegetation is weighted on the left of the piece, drawing the eye to the plight of the prey. This imitation gives a further sense of timelessness to the dramatic human-less marine world that Gunn depicts in his Norfolk collection: just as the antediluvian ichthyosaur hunted the plesiosaur, such prehistoric scenes of predation still happen in England (albeit on a smaller scale).

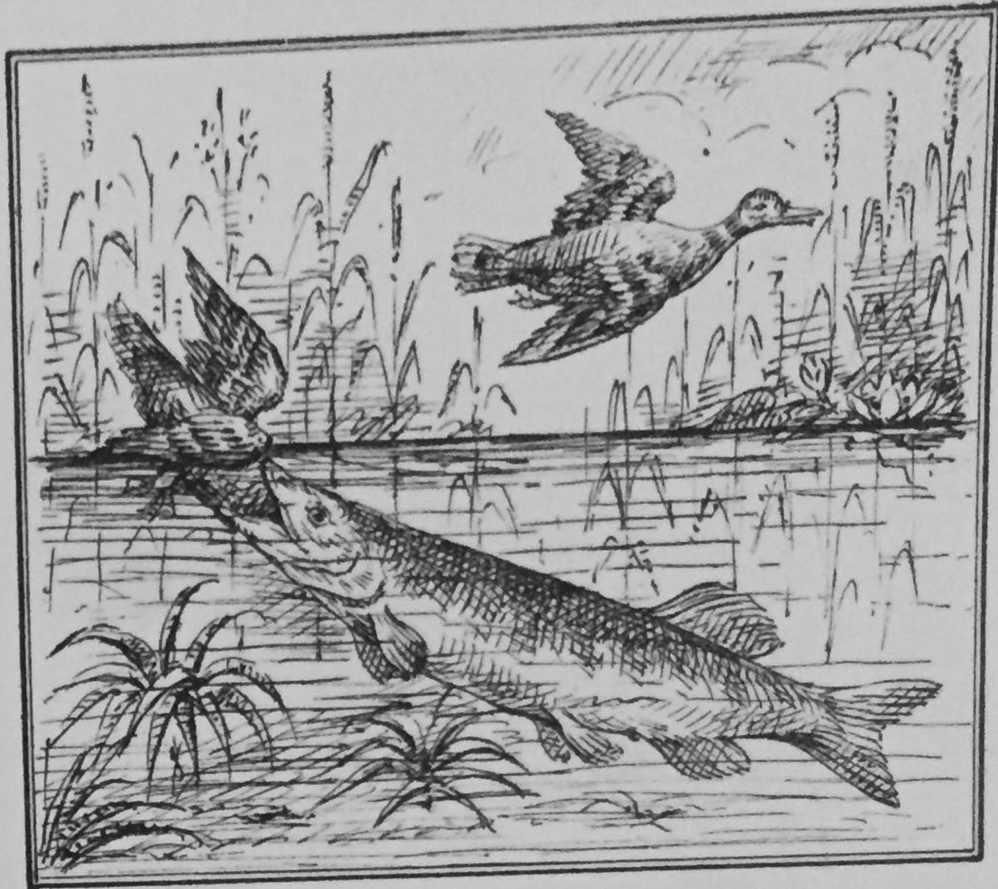
Case 5, 'Pike and Eel' (the only other case which has also been illustrated in the catalogue) shoes a second breaching of the boundary of the surface by the pike. The scene

> illustrates another singular incident of the voracity of the Pike. In attempting to swallow a large Eel, the latter had somehow managed to twist itself partly through its extended gills, and the Pike compressing its jaws, death from suffocation resulted to both captor an victim. Both were found in the position depicted by the bank-side of the river Bure, at Horsford, in October, 1882. The Pike is about 19 lbs. weight, the Eel nearly 5 lbs.[48]

The illustration of the case shows the pike and eel entwined on the riverbank with the belly of the pike just touching the water. The significance of this scene is that it disturbs the boundary of the surface by literally a placing 'a fish out of water'. In

[48] Gunn, p.3 (figure from p. 2 of his catalogue).

Case 1 the avian duck is dragged under the surface to its death, and in Case 5 the aquatic pike and eel are out of their element as well and depicted dead. Gunn's collection, though ironically relying on the visually permeable boundaries of glass, strongly suggests that the boundary of the water's surface is mortally rigid. Creatures meet their demise if they cross to the opposite side. Furthermore, to include these two illustrations in the catalogue suggests Gunn's intent that after perusing his collection at the exhibition the visitor might wish to retain the catalogue as a souvenir; fortunately, he has placed an advertisement for his bespoke taxidermy services (and as a 'dealer' in 'natural curiosities') on the back cover, perhaps suggesting the more commercial motive behind his place at the exhibition.



CASE 1. PIKE & WILD DUCKS.

CASE 5. PIKE & EEL.

Figure 35. From Gunn's catalogue, p. 2 (1883).

In the previous chapter I have posited *Pym* as a structural hybrid. In the space of just twenty-five pages Gunn's catalogue behaves similarly. It is a straightforward numbered inventory of items, an object history (as a museum might write), a personal history of a life spent in the field, a scientific treatise, a broadside to a monster show, and a narrative of the lives of brutes. Gunn's voice lapses between the first and third person and his descriptions swing between poetic verse and rigid prose. The style of Gunn's catalogue descriptions—like his taxidermy—is hybrid, using the language and structure of his prose to evoke the animals and their habitat. The description for Case 81, which shows a family of kingfishers, reads simply

> Winter Scene. A frozen stream near Norwich. December 1880.[49]

The simple prose reflects and reinforces the starkness of the winter landscape. Case 133, by contrast, features a short narrative of an unnerving familial scene entitled 'At Bay', in which an otter on Barton Road, Norfolk has been 'tracked to its home by dogs, where it is surrounded by its anxious young ones, awaiting the distribution of the prey—and enormous roach of 2 and 1/4lbs weight—it had just caught.'[50] By locating the otter's home 'on Barton Road, Norfolk' he gives a strong sense of the domestic in this wild creature. That the dogs (typically associated with domesticity, not wilderness) seem poised to disrupt this happy domestic scene reverses wilderness and domesticity. Otters would have been an especially evocative species at the exhibition, too. There were live otters on display in the courtyard of the exhibition, two of which (brought from India by Francis Day) wore collars and had been trained to fish, complicating this tableau of wild and domestic (and reinforced further by

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[49] Gunn, p. 14.
[50] Ibid., p. 20.

showing the otter about feed its family a fish dinner, as the Fish Market at the exhibition was intended to teach the lower classes).

Case 87 is particular ontological, titled 'The Struggle for Existence':

> Case 87. The Struggle for Existence. Heron and Eel. This group is an illustration of a singular incident that occurred near Swaffham, in Norfolk, a few years since. A Heron, in striking his prey—and Eel—thorough the eyes, the victim, in its agony, in turn twisted itself so tightly around the bird's throat as to cause suffocation; both being found dead.[51]

Again, in comparison to the sparser language of the simpler scenes, Gunn notes the precision of the predator and the 'agony' of the victim'. Scenes like 'The Struggle for Existence' seem to suggest an ability (and a willingness) to use 'fish culture' to work out larger ontological issues.

Gunn's displays are also a hybrid genre within the rigid taxonomy of the exhibition. They are hard to categorise; are they art or are they science? Titling these scenes lends a further sense of the artistic or pictorial to them which, in the context of the exhibition, makes them almost seem more akin to the paintings in the picture gallery than to the fish in the aquarium. Gunn's taxidermy practice more generally also dealt not only in the didactic but the purely decorative. The back cover of the catalogue is an advertisement for his bespoke services (below and also Figure 36):

> ANIMALS' HORNS & HEADS MOUNTED ON SHIELDS.
> SKINS DRESSED & MADE INTO RUGS & MATS.
> BIRD SCREENS, FEATHER HATS, & PLUMES TO ORDER.
> Dealer in British Birds, Skins, Eggs, Insects, and Natural Curiosities.
> GLASS SHADES AND STANDS.[52]

His emphasis on 'curiosities' and domestic and decorative items situates his business as emblematic of the complicated meeting points between art, science, commerce, and the Victorian home. Gunn's work makes more fluid some of the borders that Victorian taxonomy had tried so hard to secure. Catalogues and displays defy disciplinary categorisations as art, literature, and science; however, I hope this chapter

[51] Ibid.
[52] A 'shade' is a glass dome.

in general makes clear that the entire exhibition did this by putting forth art and literature as integral to scientific practice and dissemination. Gunn is perhaps the epitome of this hybridity of genres, and also a careful hybridity of wild and domestic, man and beast. For the price of sixpence his catalogue told the visitor not just what they were viewing, but placed it in spatial and temporal dimension, and coached them how to feel about it.

ONLY GOLD MEDAL, National Fisheries Exhibition, 1881.

Prize Medal, 1867.

Awarded upwards of Forty
First-Class Prizes
(including Five Gold Medals)
at National
and other Exhibitions.

Prize Medal, 1871.

T. E. GUNN,

NATURALIST,

Preserver of Animals, Birds, Fish, &c.

ANIMALS' HORNS & HEADS MOUNTED ON SHIELDS.

SKINS DRESSED & MADE INTO RUGS & MATS.

BIRD SCREENS, FEATHER HATS, & PLUMES TO ORDER.

Dealer in British Birds, Skins, Eggs, Insects, & Natural Curiosities

GLASS SHADES AND STANDS.

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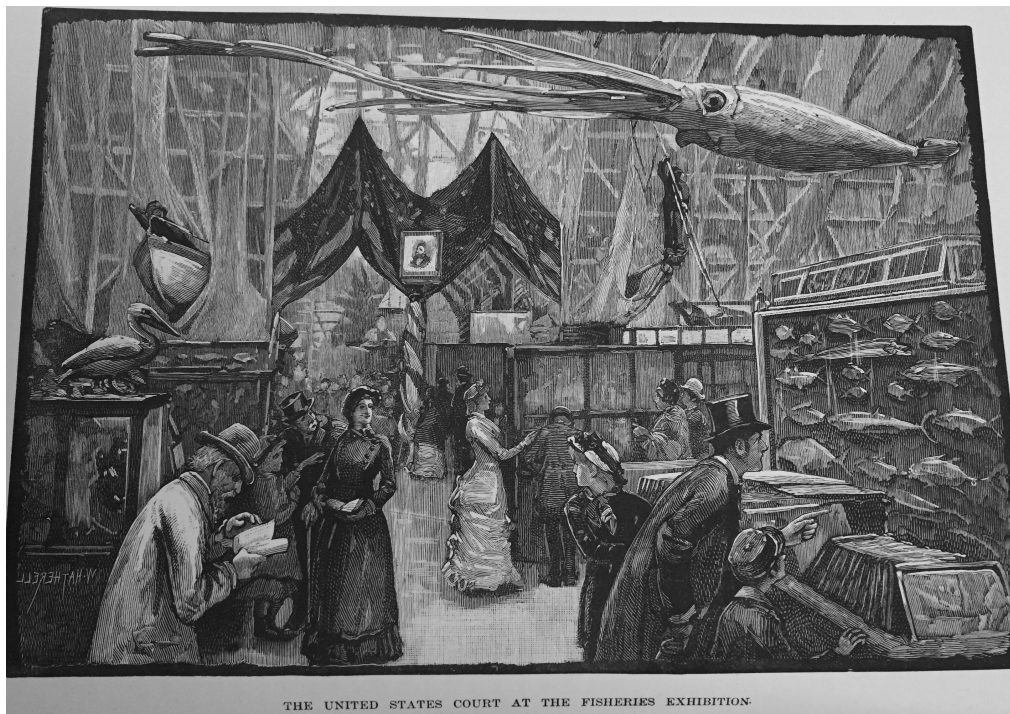
47 ST. GILES' STREET, NORWICH,
ENGLAND.

Figure 36. Back cover of Gunn's catalogue (1883).

6.3 Breaking the neck of popular error in Henry Lee's *Sea Fables Explained* and *Sea Monsters Unmasked*

AMERICAN SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION IN LONDON.

Figure 37. American court, featuring JH Emerton's giant squid model. From Goode, 'Fourth Paper on the London Fisheries Exhibition', *Science* (1883).



THE UNITED STATES COURT AT THE FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

Figure 38. American court, featuring JH Emerton's giant squid model. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World* (1884), frontispiece and reprinted on p. 306.

Figures 37 and 38 show different angles of the United States Court at the Exhibition, looming large above which is JH Emerton's forty-foot model of *Architeuthis*, the giant squid. Emerton designed the model in the States and shipped it to London in pieces; he had no idea that it had been the victim of improper reassembly until he saw the image which accompanied Goode's fourth report on the exhibition for *Science*.[53] The sea monster with its body parts wrongly assembled is an almost comically convenient emblem for the anxiety that sea monsters (and polypi, as I have discussed in light of 'The Kraken') caused Victorian scientists and public alike.[54] In addition to his giant squid, Emerton also created a model of a 'giant octopus' or 'devil fish of the Northwest' by studying small specimens and scaling their dimensions to those of the largest discovered specimens (the arms alone were sixteen feet long). In keeping with the sentiment espoused by Henry Lee that an aquarium without an octopus or squid is like a 'plum pudding with the plums', live and dead specimens and models of the 'head-footed molluscs' abounded at the Exhibition.[55]

Henry Lee (FLS, FGS, FZS) was a natural choice to write the exhibition handbooks which would take on sea monsters such as the Kraken, since he had

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[53] 'In [...] SCIENCE for Nov. 9, you have copied without correction a photograph of part of the London International Fisheries Exhibition, which shows my model of Architeuthis wrongly put together. For convenience of packing, the tentacular arms were made to take apart in three pieces; but, when the model was set up, the basal and terminal pieces were put together, making the tentacles ten feet too short. The man who had charge of the work, not knowing what to do with the remaining pieces, stuck them in at the sides of the mouth, thinking that he might find in some other box a part of terminal clubs to put on them. In this way the model was left at the opening of the exhibition, until some visitor happened to notice the mistake, when, I believe, the extra pair of arms was taken out, leaving the tentacles still too short. —JH Emerton. New Haven, Nov 11, 1883.' (*Science* 2.42 (23 November 1883), p. 683.)

[54] Emerton's *Architeuthis* model was a copy of a specimen which washed ashore at Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, 24 September 1877. The body was eight feet long, the head one and half feet, the tentacles thirty feet, the arms between eight and half and eleven feet, and the body diameter just over two feet at its widest. (Winslow, *Descriptive Catalogues of the Collections sent from the United States to the International Fisheries Exhibition, constituting a report upon the American Section* (United States Bureau of Fisheries) 191-234.)

[55] 'Among the specimens of large mollusks are squids, semi-transparent creatures like winged arrows, which when alive dart to and fro with great rapidity, and are so excitable that they constantly change colour, seeming to blush rosy-red when startled. There are small octopi, and a specimen of the very rare paper-nautilus, with its transparent shell' (*Daily News* (17 April 1883)).

already published *The Octopus* in 1874, which Rebecca Stott notes was 'in the wake of immense public interest in octopi' after Lewis Mercier's translation of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.[56] Lee describes himself as 'Sometime Naturalist of the Brighton Aquarium' and seems to have fancied himself an ambassador between science and the arts. He name-drops his 'friend, Mr Samuel L. Clemens' (Mark Twain), and later 'my friend Mr Frank Buckland'. Lee contributed two handbooks to the exhibition literature, *Sea Fables Explained* and *Sea Monsters Unmasked,* which appear together in Volume III of the collected literature along with Phil Robinson's *Fishes of Fancy* (*Fables* appears before *Monsters* in the volume but *Monsters* was issued as a standalone handbook at the exhibition before *Fables*). They are longer than most of the other handbooks at nearly one hundred fifty pages each compared to the typical length of one hundred, with forty-four figures in *Fables* and twenty-six in *Monsters*. Lee's handbooks are the only parts of the exhibition literature to have attracted any scholarly attention; Rebecca Stott notes that *Fables* and *Monsters* are two of the thirty-two books and articles which Bram Stoker's 'working notes' list as sources for *Dracula*, and she argues that 'an understanding of the context of the production and reception of Henry Lee's books and other popular books on marine zoology like them, published in scores since the early 1850s, provides an important and neglected opportunity for understanding Victorian conceptions of evolutionary, anthropological and anatomical monstrosity'.[57]

Lee concludes his 1875 volume *The Octopus* with his customary mix of science and literature which prefigures *Monsters* and *Fables*:

> The existence of gigantic cephalopods is no longer an open question. I now more than ever appreciate the value of the adage:
>
> 'THE TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.'

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[56] Stott, p. 306.
[57] Ibid., p. 305.

THE END.

In *Fables* and *Monsters*, he repeats some of the 'truth' and 'fiction' of his *Octopus* material with an emphasis on the interaction between science and the humanities. In *Fables* he aims to identify the natural bases of popular myths including mermaids (seals, walruses, manatees, and dugongs), hydras (octopi or squid— those 'modern' polypi), Scylla and Charybdis (also octopi or squid), the whale's 'spout' (an optical illusion of vapours), the 'sailing' of the nautilus (just swims, cannot actually fly). Though talk of monsters abounds in the literature and around the exhibition, *Monsters* is by far the most literal sustained treatment of the subject, discussing all of the creatures this thesis has taken up, but focusing on debunking the two most pervasive figures of sea monster lore: the kraken and the sea serpent. He argues that one animal is responsible for sightings of both and, like the roots of several of the 'fables', that animal is a large squid or octopus. Of the lower classes' perpetuation of such myths, he laments that 'the neck of popular error is difficult to break'.[58]

For Tennyson in 1830, 'ancient' and 'modern' polypi symbolised uncertain, shifting taxonomies, but for Lee, who has inherited these systematic shifts including the effacement of 'ancient' vs. 'modern' polypi as proper terms, cephalopods are an emblem of a problem solved and a threat contained. However, though *Fables* and *Monsters* do their share of debunking, they also reinforce the physical, geological, and cultural hybridity of the animal which made it such a prime subject for Tennyson. New aquarium technologies meant that scientists, artists, writers, and the public alike could now not only see these animals alive, but under the surface. Thus, Lee argues that the knowledge that the Kraken is a huge squid simply could not have been ascertained until the nineteenth century. Just as Emerton scaled up his giant octopus

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[58] Lee, *Fables*, p. 263.

model based on smaller specimens, Lee applied a similar rationale to his revelations about several sea monster myths: by studying the small squid in the aquarium he deduced that the behaviour of much larger squid must be responsible for stories of the Kraken, the sea serpent, and even Lernean hydras, Scylla, and Charybdis.[59] He argues that studying the humanities alongside science gives the fullest possible picture of an animal. And though the Kraken and the Sea Serpent are myth, the cephalopods on which Lee believes them to be based can be frightening in their own right for a familiar reason: they are hybrid creatures that transgress the physical boundary of the ocean's surface, the geological boundary of time, and the boundary between wild and domestic—all of which separate man from monster but all of which are also fragile and anxiously permeable.

When he moves on to debunking the myth of the sea serpent, his theses begin to take on a pattern:

> We shall be able to discern that more than one of the most famous and hideous monsters of old classical lore originated, like the Kraken, in a knowledge by their authors of the form and habits of those strange sea-creatures, the head-footed mollusks. There can be little doubt that that the octopus was the model from which the old poets and artists formed their ideas, and drew their pictures of the Lernean Hydra, whose heads grew again when cut off by Hercules; and also of the monster Scylla, who, with six heads and six long writing necks, snatched men off the decks of passing ships and devoured them in the recessed of her gloomy cavern.[60]

Like the fables of the hydra, Scylla, and Charybdis, and the monstrous legends of the Kraken, Lee believes that the animal responsible for many sightings of the sea serpent is probably a 'giant' cuttle—that is, a large squid.[61] How did Lee reach such a conclusion? By being an observer of the new technologies for confining cephalopods

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[59] Or a similar cephalopod such as the octopus or cuttlefish.
[60] Lee, *Fables*, p. 236.
[61] Though he also theorises that the sea serpents described by Aristotle, Pliny, and Diodorus were probably actual snakes whose size was exaggerated (*Monsters*, p. 379), and that other sightings around Britain have turned out to be conger eels, ribbon fish, a flight of ducks (p. 432), migrating basking sharks (p. 395; this was confirmed by Richard Owen), or multiple basking sharks, whales, or dolphins swimming in a line (p. 428).

at the Brighton Aquarium. He asserts that animals must be seen alive to be able to know that the sea serpent was a giant cephalopod (and so was the Kraken):

> It was only by watching the movements of specimens of the 'common squid' (*Loligo vulgarism*), and the 'little squid' (*L. Media*), which lived in the tanks of the Brighton Aquarium, that I recognised in their peculiar habit of occasionally swimming half-submerged, with uplifted caudal extremity, and trailing arms, the fact that I had before me the "sea serpent" of many a well-authenticated anecdote. A mere knowledge of their form and anatomy after death had never suggested to me that which became at once apparent when I saw them in life.[62]

Figures 39 and 40 on the following page illustrate the significance two elements of scientific observation allowed by new aquarium technology: the animal could now be seen alive, and these live movements could be viewed under the surface. The figures illustrate how seeing a single tentacle of a giant squid above the surface of the sea could certainly look like a serpent. The aquarium, and the technology to keep animals alive in this confinement, thus breaks a barrier which had prevented important progress in marine zoology. Furthermore, the visual art of depicting marine zoology, an integral aspect of its dissemination, could improve exponentially, as trying to sketch a live animal from a dead specimen made it nearly impossible to imagine what the animal looked like when healthy and suspended in the water (this led to a lot of depictions of whales in particular as oddly oval). The aquarium then fully inaugurated the visual genre of the underwater image in the nineteenth century, fulfilling Cohen's notion that 'the monster is best understood as an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category, and a resistant Other known only through process and movement, *never through dissection-table analysis*'.[63]

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[62] Lee, *Monsters*, p. 322.
[63] Cohen, *Monster Theory*, p. x-xi.

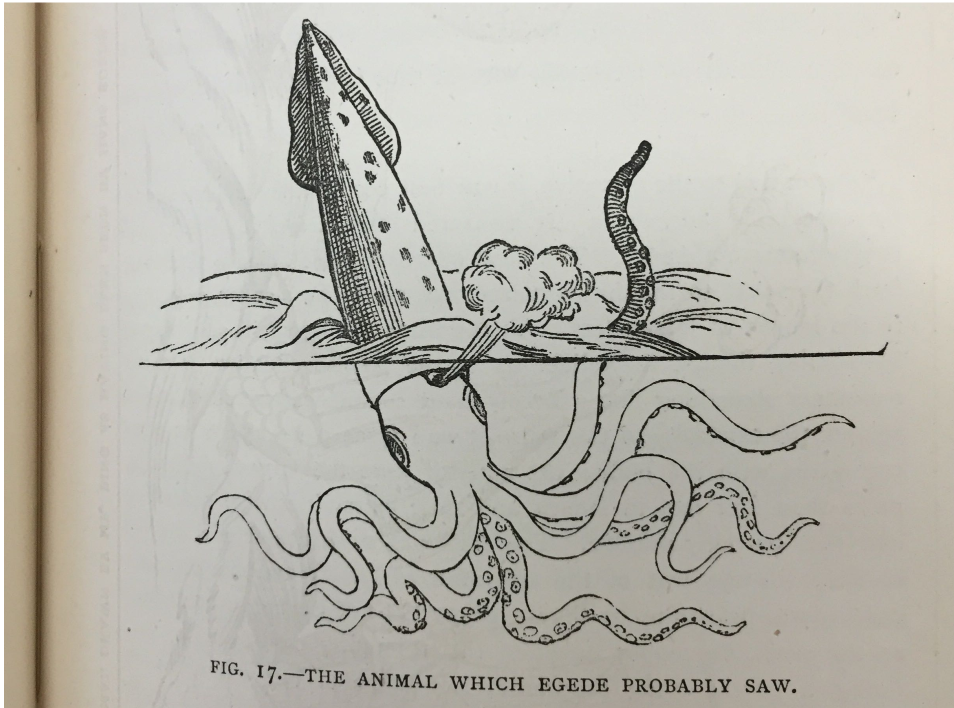
FIG. 17.—THE ANIMAL WHICH EGEDE PROBABLY SAW.

Figure 39. Giant squid appearing like a sea serpent. From Lee, *Sea Monsters Unmasked* (p. 67).

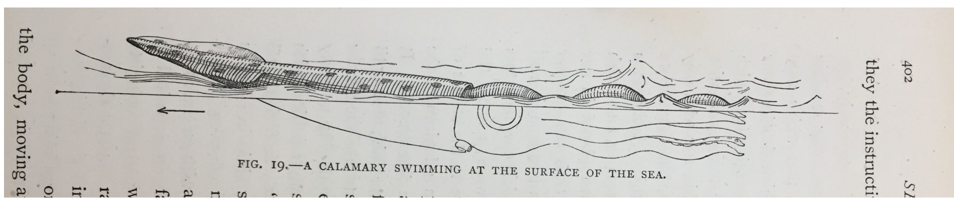
FIG. 19.—A CALAMARY SWIMMING AT THE SURFACE OF THE SEA.

Figure 40. Giant squid appearing like a sea serpent. From Lee, *Sea Monsters Unmasked* (p. 77).

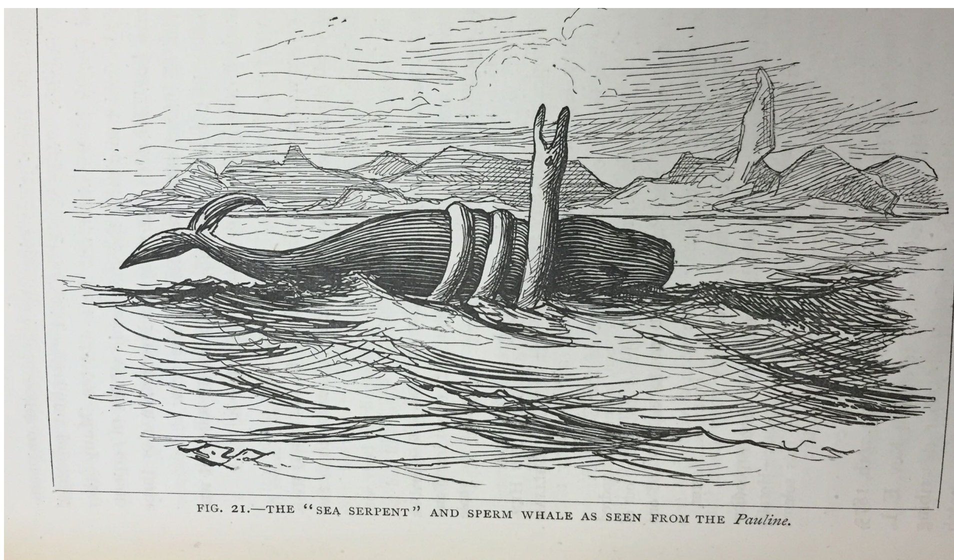
FIG. 21.—THE "SEA SERPENT" AND SPERM WHALE AS SEEN FROM THE *Pauline*.

Figure 41. Giant squid tentacle appearing to be a sea serpent. From Lee*, Sea Monsters Unmasked* (p. 93).

Though he blames 'the hands of poets' for the 'boorish exaggeration' of the cephalopod which led to the 'legend of ignorance, superstition, and wonder', his insistence on the titular *Fables* seems to suggest that the inescapable fact that the Kraken is a squid is precisely why the scientist cannot (and must not) function autonomously from a healthy knowledge of the humanities: 'We must search deeply into the history of mankind to discover the real source of a belief that has prevailed in almost all ages, and in all parts of the world'.[64] And the public can take part in this; even if they cannot read or are unacquainted with history, they now have 'the instructive privilege, possessed of late years by the public in England, of being able to watch attentively, and at leisure, the habits and movements of these strangely modified mollusks living in great tanks of sea-water in aquarium', surmising that 'if they had thus been acquainted with them, I believe they would have recognised in their supposed snake the elongated body of a giant squid'.[65]

There is a class element to Lee's arguments. He wants 'well-meaning persons' to continue to report strange sightings, but in the same breath he laments that 'the neck of popular error is difficult to break' and blames some fables, such as the whale's 'spout' on zoologists who 'sought for any original information on marine zoology [and] obtained it chiefly from uninstructed and superstitious fishermen'.[66] He accuses these 'well-meaning persons' of 'no intentional deception of exaggeration' and writes

> I am obliged to say, reluctantly and courteously, but most firmly and assuredly, that these perfectly credible eyewitnesses did not correctly interpret what they saw… In these cases, it is not the eye which deceives, nor the tongue which is untruthful, but the imagination which is led astray by the association of the thing seen with the erroneous idea.[67]

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[64] Lee, *Fables*, p. 185.
[65] Lee, *Monsters*, p. 402.
[66] Ibid., p. 250.
[67] Lee, *Monsters,* pp. 400-01.

As Lee argues, science is a fundamentally interpretive act, as much a product of culture as nature. Though not the gargantuan monsters with which maritime lore had taunted sailors and titillated the public for ages, Lee acknowledges that there is a 'substratum of truth' in these 'gross exaggerations', which is to say that large octopi and squid can still be frightening and dangerous. *The Octopus* is full of such stories, but in *Monsters* he settles for saying 'I have often been asked whereto an octopus of the ordinary size really can be dangerous to bathers: 'Decidedly, "Yes" in certain situations. [...] That men are occasionally drowned by these creatures is, unhappily, a fact too well attested', and giving just a few accounts that sound like truthful *Toilers of the Sea'*.[68] Part of the sustained monstrosity of those real monstrous mollusks is their hybrid nature.

Cephalopods routinely—and without mortal consequence—break the physical barrier of the surface. Tennyson's Kraken dies when it reaches the surface (whether it dies because it is on the surface or whether it is on the surface because it is dying is up for debate). I have argued that 'The Kraken' ushers in the new material culture ethos of capture and domestication even as the Kraken rises, 'roaring', against it. Lee, fifty years later, is the beneficiary of this culture, but also in the position of now having to consider the ways in which the cephalopod transgresses the physical barrier of the surface as well as the anatomical barrier of monstrous hybridity and the temporal/geologic barrier of being prehistoric. Lee's titular 'unmaskings' were also rooted in the familiar dimension of prehistory—the conflation of deep sea and deep time at play in Tennyson in 1830 and Ballantyne in 1863, among the Crystal Palace dinosaurs and their attendant literature, and indeed at the Fisheries Exhibition. Lee notes the 'great calamari, the same which gave rise to the stories of the kraken [...]

[68] Ibid., p. 348.

has probably been a denizen of the Scandinavian seas and fjords since time immemorial'.[69] He refers to the 'fables' as 'even now not utterly *extinct'* among the lower classes, and asserts that 'only a geologist can fully appreciate how enormously the balance of probability is contrary to the supposition that any of the gigantic marine saurians of the secondary deposits should have continued to live up until the present time'.[70] In invoking prehistory he also more firmly vests his own generation in a version of geologic, intellectual, and cultural modernity:

> Viewed by [the] aid [of earlier naturalists], and seen in the clearer atmosphere of our present knowledge, the great sea monster which loomed so indefinitely vast in the *mist* of ignorance and superstition, stands revealed in its true form and proportions—its magnitude reduced, its routine distance, and its mystery gone—and we recognise in the supposed Kraken, as the Norwegian bishop right conjectured that we should, an 'animal of the Polypus (or cuttle) kind, and amongst the largest inhabitants of the oceans.[71]

Whereas in the past the sea monster was 'indefinite', existing in a literal and figurative 'mist', Lee positions 'modern' Victorian naturalism as a 'clearer atmosphere' in which the monster that looked huge in the ancient mist is revealed to be far smaller than the haze made it seem. His emphasis on dark depths, scale, and geologic language reinforces the content of the passage and the common depiction of the prehistoric past as geologically and epistemologically foggy and unclear (as in 'The Kraken's' 'sickly light' and 'abysmal sea').

A final set of boundaries or limits transgressed by the cephalopod, according to Lee, is the familiar hybridity of wild and domestic. Drawing on descriptors from various zoological embranchments, human and animal, exotic and domestic, the pictures of the animal come together as a pastiche worthy of Victor Frankenstein (a hybridity of hybridities, if such a term could be permitted, as he uses multiple hybrid metaphors to describe the same animal). Much about *mollusca* (the squid in

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[69] Ibid., p. 401.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., p. 377 (quoting Pontoppidan).

particular) is avian; in *The Octopus* Lee calls cephalopods the 'falcons of the sea'.[72] He describes a beak like a parrot and 'prehensile and lacerating talons' like a bird of prey. The squid and the nautilus sport 'wings' on their mantles that allow them to 'fly' through the water 'like a hawk in the air', and he devotes a section of *Fables* to debunking the myth that the paper nautilus actually leaves the water and flies above the surface. Along the animal's cuttle bones they sport a bone like a 'quill pen', which is well-aligned to their infamous ability to deploy a cloud to ink into the sea (hence the scientific name of one group of them, the *Sepia*). A similarly abject description of these creatures is a reimagining of the avian 'talons' as feline 'claws' which '[resemble] those of a cat and, like them, were retractable into a sheath of skin from which they might be thrust at pleasure'.[73] Similarly domestically, one of the monsters possesses a 'bull-dog expression of eyebrow, visible at 500 yards'.[74] Another description of the monster is ethnological—a 'war-like Comanche vidette'—while another category of description is decidedly industrial: Lee describes their hearts as a series of 'pistons' pumping, and other parts of their anatomy as an 'air pump' and a 'throttle valve', and asserts that 'there is no mechanical contrivance which surpasses [the] structure' of the animals' hooked tentacles when they lock together'.[75] He seems to suggest that the animal is somehow more perfect than the machines which are the pride of his age. Lee does not land on one metaphor for the creature. Rather, it remains a composite of different hybridities reminiscent of when Ballantyne's young Bob Ledbury asks Tom Lokins in *Fighting the Whales*, 'What like is a whale?' and Tom replies 'Why, it's like nothin' but itself'. Like the whale before its mammalian taxonomy was cemented, Lee seems to offer that the creature

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[72] Lee, *The Octopus*, p. 31.
[73] Lee, *Monsters*, p. 423.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid, pp. 338-343.

responsible for the kraken and sea serpent myths is indeed 'like nothin' but itself'. The 'head-footed' mollusks (the cephalopods) transgress the physical boundary of the ocean's surface (as Lee describes his octopi at the Brighton Aquarium skulking around to other tanks and eating the fish), the geological boundary of time, and the boundary between wild and domestic—all of which separate man from monster but are also fragile and anxiously permeable.

6.4 'To see things as they really were' in 'A Sea-Dream'

For his part in the exhibition literature, writer-naturalist Phil Robinson contributed a handbook which is a fluid mix of narrative, science, ethnology, philosophy, and personal commentary titled *Fishes of Fancy: Their Place in Myth, Fable, Fairy-Tale, and Folk-Lore, with Notices of the Fishes of Legendary Art, Astronomy, and Heraldry*. Echoing Henry Lee's observation that the 'truth really is stranger than fiction', and using fiction as a point of organisation, Robinson asserts in *Fishes of Fancy*:

> Indeed, it is hardly necessary to go to fable for wonders, for the actual natural world of fishes is a very wilderness of marvels… So the wonder of fish-land, the real world of fishes, is as startling and as marvellous as the fictions of mythology itself, and we need go to no Islands of the Pescadores, nor cruise on the bewitched shores of Calypso, to meet with abundant matter for astonishment.[76]

He aims to treat 'animism in some of its widest and latest aspects', the importance of which he considers 'intrinsic' to his countrymen-readers.[77] It is published in the same volume of the exhibition literature as Lee's *Sea Fables Explained* and *Sea Monsters Unmasked* (Volume III) and follows many of the same principles; however, Robinson does not endeavour to 'explain' or 'unmask', but to depict and catalogue, cultivating rather than dispelling wonder at 'fish-land'.

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[76] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy,* p. 13.
[77] Ibid, p. 4.

Robinson was born in India in 1847 while his father served as an army chaplain, and he lived much of his life there. In 1873 he was appointed Professor of Literature, Logic, and Metaphysics at Allahabad College, but he returned to England in 1877 to write for the *Daily Telegraph*. His publications include *The Poets' Birds* (1882) and *The Poets' Beasts* (1885), *The Poets and Nature* (1893), *Birds of the Wave and Woodland* (1894), and other naturalistic texts in addition to a volume of stories he co-authored with his brothers and published the year of his death.[78] This section will consider *Fishes of Fancy* as well as the book from which its material is adapted (sometimes word-for-word): Robinson's 1882 *Noah's Ark, or 'Mornings in the Zoo', Being a Contribution to the Study of Unnatural History*.[79] As Robinson has never received any scholarly attention, I hope that this section might be a springboard for further study on his work in the future, as he has a keen eye toward human-animal interaction which will make his body of work of interest to ecocritics and animal studies scholars.

Robinson marketed himself as a naturalist-writer, not conducting scientific research but interpreting for his readers the natural world and its relationship with human culture and cultural productions such as art and literature. This made him an ideal writer for the exhibition; however, he is often sympathetic to animals in ways that are not seen elsewhere in the exhibition literature. The handbook in general is an Anglo-centric and imperialistic view of human engagement with sea creatures (especially 'monsters'), using a curious mix of geological time and fish to categorise geographic spaces as 'primitive' or 'modern'. This section will argue that his

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[78] *Tales by Three Brothers* opens with the rather science-fictional 'The Last of the Vampires' in which the bones of an antediluvian 'man-lizard' are found in the Amazon, but turn out to be the mixed-up bones of a professor and the 'vampire' dinosaur he has found, who die in each other's arms as they kill each other. Another of the *Tales* depicts the hunting of the African monkey-man, the 'Soko', in which the hunter eventually kills the creature but, upon seeing how human it seems, buries it like a man rather than taking its skin as a trophy.

[79] London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1882.

handbook mimics the spatial organisation of the exhibition itself, 'wandering' and ultimately placing the reader in a contrived underwater world. The focus of this section, however, will be Robinson's 'Appendix: A Sea-Dream' (which closes *Fishes of Fancy*) in which he envisions all of the exhibits coming to life at night after the exhibition has closed. The appendix satirises the impossible task of showing the whole ocean on a few blocks of South Kensington, leaving the impression that humans will never—and can never—truly understand the sea. 'A Sea-Dream' writes back to Robinson's more formal handbook, realises the exhibition as an underwater space, and decentralises the human perspective: a literal example of the abyss gazing back at you. I will then refract the actual exhibit through the same lens, showing the spatial organisation and literary output to place visitors 'under the sea'.

In 6.4.1 to 6.4.4 I will ague that the material-spatial world of the exhibition (and the artistic/architectural/curatorial/literary decisions made about it) positions the visitors as entering an underwater ecosystem by first creating a sense of descent (6.4.1, 'Descent') into a space where the visitor takes on the perspective of a sea creature (6.4.4 'A fish's perspective'). This forced perspective shift creates taxonomical confusion in the depiction of the exhibition *and* the creatures within it and for the first time in the nineteenth century normalises a sub-surface visual culture (6.4.3, 'Troubled arrangement'). The exhibition space as an underwater world unto itself also had larger repercussions as people began to see in the exhibition an analogue for London (6.4.4, 'London ('Cod save the queen')).

Lamenting the roughly hundred-page limit placed on him by the exhibition's Literary Department, Robinson's organisation of the handbook mimics the exhibition itself; in his Preface, he acknowledges that

> the range of this Handbook is extensive, that it is obviously impossible to accomplish more than a very superficial review in the compass of a hundred pages. [...] Moreover, following the

> liberal "fish-idea" of the Exhibition, it has been necessary to wander from the cetaceans on the one hand through fishes proper to the crustacea and mollusks on the other.[80]

He will 'wander' this way quite literally in his Appendix to the handbook; however, he chooses the 'persistence of ancient fancies in modern superstitions'—sea monsters—as a unifying point through the text.[81] In the handbook's original, larger form, *Noah's Ark*, contents include discussion of the ark as well as chapters on what the animals in the ZSL might think about their captivity, marrying nature and culture, decentralising a human perspective and radically affording the 'beast-folk' an agency not present seen in the writing of his contemporaries.

Depictions of the handbook's eponymous 'fish' are heavily anthropomorphised: 'In character, [sea creatures] range through every variety of temperament, from the gentle carp, that in Java and elsewhere are tamed into playfulness and familiarity [of] caged birds, or the Adonis, "darling of the sea", to the dog-fish, that are cruel and fierce beyond all mammalian comparison'.[82] The salmon is guilty of 'arrogant obliquities'; the shark is 'that awful Attila of the sea'; the 'philanthropic dolphin' is a 'friend of man' and 'creature of gladness'; the turtle is 'cosmopolitan'; flat fish 'have a distinctive character, their grotesque facial arrangement suggesting superciliousness, and a general kind of wry-mouthed ill-nature'; the pike is 'the dispeopler of the lake, that by its ferocity of countenance and manners usurps the autocracy of the reedy waters, and compels the vigilance not only of the otter that comes to poach, but of the beasts of man that come to drink, and even of man himself'.[83] Robinson concludes the first chapter of *Fishes*, 'Primitive Fish-Beliefs', with the section glossed 'What fishes might think of us', suggesting that as we look into the tanks at them they might be looking back at us (the abyss gazing

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[80] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy,* p. 4.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid, p. 13.
[83] Ibid, pp. 9-22, 55.

back at us). In this short section, Robinson inverts the world on the fulcrum of the surface of the sea, and challenges his reader to see the fishes' potential perspective that the continents might be viewed as 'interruptions of rock and sand, which now prevent their swimming everywhere', as opposed to the human view of the sea as separating continents. He directly foreshadows his appendix (asterisk his):

> If, again, the fish were to hold an Exhibition, * they would divide their sections according to water-spaces and rivers, and not, as man does, according to the geography of dry land…
>
> *See Appendix to Handbook

He supposes that this exhibition hosted by the fishes themselves 'would possess such a thrilling interest for humanity as nothing could surpass, except that apocalyptic solution of all the world's mysteries at the Last Day—when the sea shall give up its dead' (the generally-understood premise of 'The Kraken'). And, though the first-time reader of his handbook would not know it yet, imagining a Fisheries Exhibition by the fish is precisely the topic of his 'Appendix: A Sea-Dream' (pp. 93-98). Zooming out into Robinson's *Noah's Ark*, on which *Fishes of Fancy* is based, sea monsters take centre stage. Just as Lee argues that sea monster myths might be debunked by being able to watch real sea creatures in an aquarium, Robinson argues that a public view of sea monsters might indeed set the record straight. He does this both seriously (invoking the powers of Victorian science) and fancifully (through his hypothetical exhibition held *by* the fish). If only the fish could hold their own exhibition, 'we should be set right for ever as the existence of the Great Sea Serpent', and the fish 'would inform us, also, where, if anywhere, the kraken and the anker troll, the great Sea Worm and the pieuvre are to be found; to what size the cuttle-fish can grow'.[84]

After the section he glosses as 'Unlimited poulpes' (a clear reference to Tennyson's 'unnumbered polypi), he notes that in 1882 the Kraken 'remains still

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[84] Robinson, *Noah's Ark*, p. 388.

without identity; and though, from a patriotic and conservative point of view, I trust the British public will never abandon any of its "glorious old tradition", especially such a fascinating one as the sea serpent'.[85] (There really is 'nothing so fascinating to the British public as a sea monster'.) Robinson alludes to Tennyson again when referring to 'Pontoppidan's fabulous monsters—the krakens with lions' manes, that got up and roared', and more specifically to Tennyson in his volumes *The Poets' Beasts* and *The Poets and Nature*.[86]

6.4.1 Descent

Just as Owen and Waterhouse-Hawkins' *Geology and Inhabitants of the Ancient World* (the Crystal Park dinosaurs) transported visitors back in time with the immersive use of vegetation and life-sized models, so the Fisheries Exhibition used similar cues (both intentional and practical, it seems) to transport visitors underwater.

By depicting the exhibition's animal models and taxidermy as coming to life after dark in a sort of Victorian *Night at the Museum*), Robinson's appendix to *Fishes of Fancy* ('A Sea-Dream') portrays the exhibition itself as a sort of underwater space. 'A Sea-Dream' does not plunge the reader underwater all at once but slowly immerses them beneath the surface, making even more personal the familiar first-person tone of the handbook:

> I had to go on business the other evening, after the regular hours, to the Fisheries Exhibition. The public, duly informed by placards that 'the Exhibition will close to-day at seven o'clock', had already ebbed out of the buildings and, trickling away by a thousand rills, had disappeared into its hidden springs in the suburbs.[87]

Describing the crowd as ebbing or trickling away like a tide into 'a thousand rills' (small streams) and 'hidden springs' invokes the common depiction of the exhibition spaces—and the city of London—as a sea with shoals of people moving around.

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[85] Ibid, p. 299.
[86] Ibid, p. 302.
[87] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy*, p. 93.

Images of 'descent' into an underwater space abounded at the exhibition. One of the first things visitors would have seen when they entered the exhibit's entrance gallery was a 'magnificent display of glass', suggesting the surface of the sea—a boundary to be crossed.[88] Further inside visitors would have seen (rather like Gunn's taxidermy on a far larger scale) 'A clever and interesting model of a fishing ground off the Norfolk coast […] which is on two levels, showing the fishermen at work in their boats on the surface, and the bottom of the sea, with the intermediate section of water'.[89] From the Entrance Hall, visitors go further down: 'Descending a handsome flight of steps, we now enter the great gallery devoted to the British Sea Fisheries'.[90] The Canadian court also experimented with visually representing a descent below the surface. The *Daily News* reported

> Instead of being in a state of everlasting fog, as some might imagine everything connected with Newfoundland to be, this is a very bright court, and facing you, as you enter, is a large window representing a deep blue sea, in which fish a are innocently disporting, while a seal appears in bold confidence upon a rock which suggests an iceberg.[91]

These vertical representations suggest the vertical panes of an aquarium in a similar way to Gunn's taxidermy 'windows'. In *Fishes of Fancy* Robinson quotes Pantagruel at length, including reading the biblical parting of the Red Sea in this way, so that he might looks at the fish on either side of him as if looking in the vertical glass panes of an aquarium, seeing there 'a thousand godlings and sea monsters'. (And, of course, the aquarium literally brought visitors face to face with the denizens of the deep.)

When Robinson visits the exhibition after dark, the further in he goes the deeper into the sea he feels and the more animate the exhibition creatures become until he

[88] 'In addition to several oil painting and water-colours—the subjects of the pictures being of a seafaring character—there is a magnificent display of glass' (*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (13 May 1883)).
[89] Turner, p. 13. This particular model was a gift to the Princess of Wales from the 'Mayor and citizens of Norwich'.
[90] Whymper, p. 118.
[91] *Daily News* (19 May 1883).

swears 'that I was really and truly at the bottom of the sea'.[92] An important aspect of this descent is light (or the lack thereof), which mirrors the importance placed on light at the Exhibition at large. Keen to put the 'descent' in 'incandescent', Robinson's immersion into the undersea ecosystem of the exhibition at night is facilitated by an interplay of illumination and darkness. Before he has seen any of the exhibits come to life he describes:

> Occasional lamps threw a spot here and there into sudden reliefs of light and shade, but between them stretched long and dim spaces of twilight, an eerie sort of gloaming in which all the exhibits conspired together to look mysterious.[93]

He begins by undoing the humanness of the exhibition, literally de-humanising the environment. The spottiness of the light corresponds to the spottiness of knowledge about the world beneath the waves, the difficulty for the reader and protagonist to understand the scene, and likely also a reversal of the electric lights' ability to light an entire space. 'The exhibits [conspiring]' not only personifies the exhibit items and spaces, but also foreshadows that this 'dream' will literally personify the object of the exhibits as the fish discuss the exhibition with one another. The transition from land to sea (in that liminal twilight between light and darkness) continues as the lack of light means that the speaker cannot see the racks holding up the display boats, so that 'yawl and smack and canoe seemed veritably afloat' in the darkness.[94] This 'deep-sea gloom that surrounded me' makes the speaker begin to 'fear that perhaps some mistake had occurred; that I was really and truly at the bottom of the sea'.[95]

The first paragraph is a transition from land to sea: the descent into the artificial underwater space of the exhibition. The (new and improved electric) light of science which literally and figuratively illuminates these creatures during the day

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[92] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy,* p. 93.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

reverts to gloom after the human interpreters and their audiences are gone. In the first paragraph the 'desolate' and 'mysterious' space, the 'waste' of the 'gathering gloom' tempered by 'sudden reliefs of light and shade' shows the speaker a 'black-beetle creature of the twilight' who is the last terrestrial creature he sees before descending into the murky depths of the exhibition. The further inside he goes, along the 'long dim spaces of twilight' he begins to describe the quality of the light as 'deep sea gloom' with those 'occasional lamps [throwing] a spot here and there into sudden reliefs of light and shade' into the 'dim space'. And Robinson, though hyperbolising, was not the only one to observe this phenomenon. In Frederick Whymper's companion volume to the exhibition, *Fisheries of the World*, writes

> In the evening the electric light's
>
> > 'Perpendicular rays
> > Illumine the depth of the sea'[96]

Whymper is specifically describing the exhibition's aquarium, but, as I hope to show in this section, the aesthetic and spatial (and consequently epistemological and cultural) similitude between the sea, the aquarium and exhibition space (and, larger yet, London) were noticed and interpreted by Robinson and others. A pamphlet published by the exhibition Literary Department was 'An Illustrated Description of the Electric Light Machinery', which proclaims:

> It will be a distinctive feature in the history of the Fisheries Exhibition, that was lighted by what at its date was the largest electric lighting installation in one building that has been attempted. Large displays of electric lighting have been made at the Paris and at the Crystal Palace Exhibitions, but these have consisted in a number of small, separate, and distinct installations, with separate motive power and apparatus supplied by each exhibitor of the light. For lighting the Fisheries Exhibition, however, a single installation has been arranged, and in one engine and machines room, the whole of the electricity required throughout the Exhibition buildings is generated and distributed their the illuminations by the several arc and incandescent lamp systems, favoured by those who have lent the dynamo-electric machines, lams, conductors and other plant for the purpose.[97]

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[96] Whymper, p. 166. The verse is common but difficult to track to its origin. (I am indebted to Adam Roberts for supplying me with the earliest usage I have seen: an 1812 entry in Aaron Burr's notebook in which Burr purports to record the words of a 'poetaster' and acquaintance, though of course it is also possible that Burr is either or both.)
[97] 'An Illustrated Description', p. 3.

According to the Time, 'Altogether 15 or 16 companies will take part in the lighting of the building supplying about 400 powerful lights and some 3,300 incandescent lamps'.[98] Over 1,200 lamps illuminated the 800-foot long British Sea Fisheries Gallery alone, powered partly by same substance which powered the Industrial Revolution and the new speedily-circumnavigating ships: steam. Some of the exhibition maps I have looked at have a table in the upper left corner detailing who outfitted which parts of the exhibition with lights (Figure 42).[99]

[98] 'International Fisheries Exhibition', *Times* (25 Apr. 1883), p. 4.
[99] Also with regard to light at the exhibition, Godfrey Turner capitalises on the *Sunbeam*, the circumnavigating yacht from which Lady Brassey collected a variety of objects she lent to the exhibition 'brought to light by the diver'. The ship proves a 'sunbeam, indeed, that has yielded a goodly storage of light' (p. 25).

GREAT INTERNATIO

K E N

Electric Lighting by the following systems:

1. Siemens Brothers & Company, Limited	Conservatory; Main Gallery, Great Britain	4 Arc Lights, 6000 Candle Power.
		1200 Incandescent Lamps (Swan).
2. Swan United Company, Limited	Royal Pavilion	280 Incandescent Lamps (Swan).
3. Gülcher Electric Light Company, Limited	China, New South Wales, &c.; Canada & United States; Norway & Sweden	600 Incandescent Lamps (Crookes). 30 Arc Lights, 1000 Candle Power.
4. Electric Light Supply Company, Limited	Fish Market	7 Arc Lights (Volta). 50 Incandescent Lamps.
5. Ferranti, Thompson, & Ince	Aquarium and West Corridor; Machinery in Motion	1000 Incandescent Lights.
	Electric Light Machine Shed; Greece, Italy, Great Britain	25 Arc Lights, Ferranti, 5000 Candle Power each.
6. H. Edmunds	Promenade; Upper Terrace	50 Arc Lights. 6 large Arc Lights on Mast.
	Eastern Corridor and Fine Arts Vestibule	500 Incandescent Lamps.
7. Charles Lever	Council Room; Lecture Hall; Dining Rooms; Kitchens	28 Arc Lamps (Lever).
8. Jablochkoff Electric Light Company, Limited	Netherlands, Belgium; Part of United States, &c.; Part of Sweden, &c.	60 Lamps (Jablochkoff).
9. Mackie	Life-Saving Apparatus Shed.	15 Arc Lamps (Lea).
	Board of Trade Shed	6 Arc Lamps (Werdermann).
10. Brockie	North Corridors, for Exhibition of Stuffed Fish	20 Arc Lamps (Brockie).
11. Gérard	Spain & Russia.	36 Arc Lamps (Gérard).
12. Sun Lamp Electric Light Company	Entrance Vestibule	24 Lamps (Soleile).
13. Goulard & Gibbs	16 Stations in Different Parts of Building.	Arc and Incandescent Lamps of various characters.

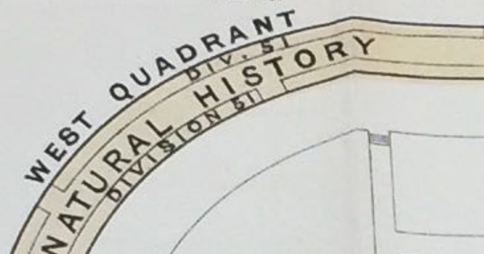

Figure 42. Key to electric light systems at the Fisheries Exhibition, on foldout map included in *Official Guide* (1883).

From the May opening of the exhibition, the doors closed at 7pm; however, in July the exhibition acquired more electric lighting and was able to keep the exhibition open until 10pm, which allowed the working classes to attend after work:

> And [with the] desire to make the exhibition instructive to classes who will have few opportunities of visiting it in the daytime, special attention is being devoted to the lighting of the building that the collection may be advantageously seen at night, and there seems ground for anticipating that the show of electric lights will be in itself a feature full of interest.[100]

Godfrey's Turner's *Official Guide* says of the electric lighting: 'Much that we see in the department of Machinery is calculated to awaken the idea that there is a close connection between fish-culture and light.'[101] And the *Official Catalogue*'s preface to the chapter on the aquaria describes the difficulty of creating a public aquarium: 'The first question is the quantity, quality, and direction of the supply of light, which, if not of the most perfect and direct kind, will entirely prevent the finest aquarium from ever becoming a success.'[102] This was not a problem, however, at the exhibition, as the *Glasgow Herald's* correspondent reported: 'An aquarium is usually a perplexing delusion. It is dark and damp, and its glass fronts are so cloudy that nothing can be seen; if the glass should happen to be in a state of transparency, it may only reveal an empty interior, still resulting in nothing. In the Fisheries Exhibition, on the other hand, the aquarium is all that it professes to be'.[103] Robinson, keenly aware of this, uses the interplay of light and shadow to create the descent in 'A Sea-Dream', while in the main body of *Fishes of Fancy* be has invoked electric light in a more imperial fashion:

> We ourselves […] have long ago learned to look down as from a pedestal upon the beast-world, and loftily bespeak sympathy for the 'poor dumb brute.' But it is not so all the world over; for there are nations breathing the same air with us, sharing the same sun and moon, launching boats on the same seas who still to-day, in the nineteenth century, the age of electricity, speak respectfully of beasts, birds, and fishes as of equals.[104]

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[100] 'International Fisheries Exhibition', *Times* (25 April 1883), p. 3.
[101] Turner, p. 6.
[102] Ibid.
[103] *Glasgow Herald* (14 May 1883).
[104] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy*, p. 79.

In this, this 'age of electricity' Britons have the lighting to literally and figuratively 'look down as from a pedestal upon the beast-world'. The lighting at the Exhibition illuminated the beast-world beautifully during opening hours; however, when the electric lights are turned off after closing the 'pedestal' seems to descend—with 'we ourselves' still on it—putting 'us' eye to eye with the beast-world and, by extension, the 'poor dumb brute' who speaks respectfully of him. As I will show, however, this is not only the imperial diatribe it seems to be, as Robinson is actually interested in a more zoocentric understanding of animals.

6.4.2 A FISH'S PERSPECTIVE

The descent into the dim spaces of the exhibition after dark also has a radical implication, giving Robinson and consequently the visitor the visual perspective of a sea creature:

> turning round a rock, I found myself suddenly face to face with a gigantic specimen of a thresher shark. Turning to retreat, I found a bottle-nosed whale barring the doorway, while some fathom and a half above me a Japanese spider-crab, with all its legs outstretched, was hideously floating down through the dim space upon my hat.[105]

The 'specimen' of the thresher shark reinforces the scientific exhibition space while the use of 'fathom' completes the transition from land to sea in which the space is now measured by units of depth rather than height. The speaker now has the perspective of a small sea creature, as the crab 'hideously floats' above him. Furthermore, the choice of thresher shark is significant, as this particular stuffed shark was often commented on in the press accounts of the exhibition. The *Morning Post* reported that

> The thresher shark, an odd marine monster, with an immense fin like carving knife, seems to contemplate the incessant stream of visitors which pass him with a peculiarly ugly expression.

[105] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy, p. 92*.

> […] The skin is said to be equal to the best kid, but has not yet been turned to much commercial account.[106]

Like the sharks in *Fighting the Whales* whose skins are prized for sandpaper (though unlike the sharks whom Pym and Peters cannot best), these fearsome beasts can be domesticated through the use of their skins, connecting them with the taxidermy displays at the Exhibition.

After 'retreating' from the shark Robinson narrates

> I sped on, narrowly escaping collision with a great white whale that lay glimmering under the shadow of the rock-wall and passing directly under an enormous ribbon-fish—a slab-sided ghost of misery—that happened to be crossing overhead.[107]

The narrowly escaped collision is humorous allusion to *Moby-Dick*, lighting up the darkness by 'glimmering under the shadow of a rock-wall'—a seeming contradiction which suggests that these creatures thrive in darkness away from human eyes. Here Robinson continues to reinforce his own smallness; the ribbon-fish (a sea serpent of sorts) is 'overhead' along with the 'floating' boats and spider crab and everything is larger than he is. His use of 'fathoms' and the way the creatures are 'swimming' above and around him calls attention to how the myriad of stuffed fish, models, and live fish would have placed visitors in the middle of this 'sea' of sorts even in the electric light of day.

Robinson's more perspective shift to that of a sea creature tacitly also points out how the exhibition did the same. In the electric light of day at the exhibition, the visitor's perspective was as a small creatures moving among huge stuffed specimens and models of real creatures around and above them. Fishing nets were deployed as decorative canopies above most of the exhibition spaces, which (though probably unintentionally) furthered the sense of visitors as a sub-surface shoal of small fish being herded around the space, coming face to face with predators and free to move

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[106] *The Morning Post* (6 July 1883), p. 6.
[107] Robinson, *Fishes of* Fancy, p. 93.

about the continents without the limits of geography, geology, or politics. In addition to the Dundee polar bear trophy described earlier, stuffed specimens and life-sized models of large marine predators abounded at the Exhibition. In the Canada exhibit visitors could see the stuffed carcass of an 'enormous mackerel', a 600lb. basking shark, and a 465-pound 'white porpoise or white whale' which the *Glasgow Herald* reinforced 'is not a model, but the actual fish'. At the USA court stuffed animals included an entire colony of seals, and of course the 60-foot model of the giant squid suspended from the ceiling above visitors (reinforcing the scale and depth of the undersea exhibition space) and the 'giant octopus' or 'devil-fish' also constructed by JH Emerton. Also in the United States, the exhibit on Yankee whaling reinforced that the floor of the exhibition was the floor of the sea by placing two life-size whaleboats high above visitors with two mannequin whalemen in the their bows with their harpoon and lance, respectively, pointed directly down at visitors as if they were the animals about to be struck (visible in figure 37 and 38 at beginning of 6.4).

The narrative invites the reader to re-interpret the exhibit through a different lens by deliberately misinterpreting it:

> Far away in the distance were lights and what seemed to be human figures moving to and fro—Naiads and Tritons, no doubt—but strangely provided, for folk of that kind, with long-handles brooms and poke bonnets; yet as I sat there watching them sweeping the sea floor and dusting the rock, with the figures of the ocean-monsters looming up between me and them, I became aware that the great sea things talking together.[108]

The evening janitorial crew is transformed into 'sea-folk' (as Robinson calls later terms them). Having descended into the underwater space his perspective, now that of a fish, is so skewed that he does not understand why they have brooms. The floor of the exhibition space is now the 'sea floor', and the other surfaces 'rock', reinforcing the geologic so often at play in depictions of the sea. The white whale begins an address to the crowd, while the 'husky voices of narwhal and shark,

[108] Ibid, p. 94.

sturgeon and sun-fish, speaking as one would who was stuffed with hay might speak, murmured a subdued "House-of-Lords" applause'. They speak this way because they *are* stuffed with hay, reinforcing both the artificial nature of the taxidermy animals in the exhibition but also their utter believability. The speaker continues with a series of sensory engagements on the sounds of water 'trickling', 'bubbling', and 'sluicing', in 'plashings' or 'splashes'. At one point, 'so many trout were hatching in the ponds close by that it was difficult to follow' the whale's speech'.[109] Difficult to follow indeed, and many correspondents assigned to the exhibition describe a sort of sensory overload at the amount of things to see, hear, feel, and eat there.

Robinson goes back and forth between quoting and paraphrasing what the whale says:

> Who had ever heard of studying the manners and customs of whales and sharks on dry land? Why was not the Exhibition held off the Digger Banks in thirty fathoms of good sea-water? *There* was the place to see things as they really were.[110]

The whale espouses Lee's vision in *Monsters* that animals must be seen live in their own environment to be understood. He reinforces that taxidermy is an act of interpretation which is not 'seeing things as they really are' but a reminder to the viewer that they are seeing a representation based on humans' 'dry-land point of view'. The whale continues that 'The right way to study the manners and customs of a shark […] was for the public to get into the water out of their depth'.[111] Advising a step further even than Lee siting in the Brighton Aquarium watching the small squid, Robinson is being fanciful but perhaps also alluding the new diving bell technology on display in the courtyard of the Exhibition. His sense of 'depth' here is also obviously epistemological, with the visual and literary metaphors of descent poised to

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

plunge visitors out of their depth in terms of knowledge as well. For instance, the whale

> had been informed that sharks always turned over on their backs before disposing of swimmers, and the public would the have the opportunity of seeing both sides of the shark. At present they could only see one side, as the late Frank Buckland had cemented the other down to the blocks they lay on.[112]

Here he uses his humorous satire to indict the didacticism of taxidermy, as the rigidly cemented taxidermy shark cannot instruct visitors how a real shark would flip over to attack its prey. Taxidermy, like all exhibitions in which man is interpreting another species, are anthropomorphic and thus insufficient in truly understanding an animal. Robinson's 'Sea-Dream', reinforced by the spatial arrangement and scale of the exhibition, radically decentralises the 'tacit human perspective' (to use Ralph O'Connor's excellent phrase) of the exhibition. 'A Sea-Dream' artfully points out how the spatial arrangement of the exhibition is comically at odds with the anthropocentrism on which it is based.

In a passage repeated in both *Fishes of Fancy* and *Noah's Ark* Robinson writes more plainly of this transfer of perspective:

> But this tendency to see in the water a reflection of everything on land is only an instance of human self-consciousness, for if we were to be just to our seniors in creation, and more modest, we should call ourselves land-manatees, our elephants land-whales, and our tigers land-sharks.[113]

To depict this human immodesty using the hybrid language of humans as 'land-manatees', et al, seems radical for 1883. In *Noah's Ark* he terms this a 'similar selfishness of sympathies' as if whales organised an exhibition purely around 'marine objects and pursuits' (which include ramming and sinking boats).[114] For Robinson, this 'selfish' human perspective is reinforced by live animals in menageries and zoos. At the ZSL he observes of his fellow observers:

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid, p. 385.
[114] Ibid.

> Each beast and bird in turn is recognised by some association already in mind. It stands there as an old symbol verified. And so, with this class of visitors, the morning passes in a pleasant proves of translating off into fact from the great book open before them chapter by chapter of the romances of wild life that they have been familiar with from childhood… It is like revealing a palimpsest.[115]

Using the literary/textual metaphor of the palimpsest, he both reinforces the importance of literature as the compass by which people navigate the 'sea' of the exhibition, and also that the anthropomorphic Victorian depictions of animals are too pleasant, too uncritical, too indoctrinated from youth as to be unhelpful in actually thinking about our place the human place in the world (instead of just asserting oneself, imperially, atop it). This view also problematizes the entire exhibition because, in trying to anthropomorphise the creatures on display, it instead ends up destabilising the border/hierarchy it was meant to cement by giving the animals a sense of agency. Certainly, these particular specimens did not evade the grasp of man, but the sea is teeming with countless that do. The specimens, intended to represent man's management (at the heart etymological heart of *menagerie*) of 'fish culture' instead stand in for static symbols of the immeasurable hoards of monsters underneath those waves which Britannia is suppose to rule. The monstrous potential of the sea creature on display is that, instead of being the trophy it was intended to be, the caught creature is an unmistakable, anxious avatar of the uncaught.

Robinson's appendix also normalises the undersea image—in the literature and visual culture—especially depicting people descending below the surface. The public can analogously take part in the descent through popular literature such as the recent English translation of *Twenty Thousands Leagues Under the Sea,* and the exhibition literature which includes many sub-surface images (or the dual vision of above and below the surface in one image), not just depicting the underwater space but also showing humans going *into it*. There were diving bell demonstrations in the

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[115] Ibid, p. 43.

lake in the courtyard, and Frederick Whymper's exhibition companion *Fisheries of the World* includes sketches of divers salvaging artefacts from the wreck of the *Royal George* and of free-swimming pearl divers below the surface.[116]

6.4.3 Troubled arrangement

The arrangement of national exhibits within the exhibition, and the amount of space set aside for them, is similarly 'readable'. With some exceptions the 'eastern' countries are on the east side of the exhibition and the 'western' countries to the west. This Orientalising layout does not assign the British Sea Fisheries Gallery a side; instead, the British Sea Fisheries Gallery spans the entire width of the exhibition space east to west (Figure 43). In Godfrey Turner's *Official Guide*, as he directs his reader on a 'tour' of the exhibition he remarks:

> Westward our course, *like the tide of empire*, again takes its way; and, crossing those apartments of the Western Gallery which we have already seen, we each the arcade where, at its north part, the operations of pisciculture are exemplified.[117]

And because the oceans are all interconnected (as *Fishes of Fancy* fancifully reminds its reader) a fish/visitor could conceivably swim between continents/exhibits with ease. And, imperially speaking, in 1883 a Briton might traverse the whole world while still never leaving 'home', as the sun never set on the British empire, and the British Gallery of the exhibition traversed the east to west arcades. Robinson reinforces this scale in the preface to his handbook:

> The range of this Handbook is extensive, that it is obviously impossible to accomplish more than a very superficial review in the compass of a hundred pages… Moreover, following the liberal 'fish-idea' of the Exhibition, it has been necessary to wander from the cetaceans on the one hand through fishes proper to the crustacea and mollusks on the other.[118]

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[116] Recalling, though not directly, Keats' lines: 'For the Ceylon diver held his breath | And went all naked to the hungry shark | For [pearls] his ears gushed blood'. See Appendix C for more of Whymper's sub-surface imagery.
[117] Turner, p. 47.
[118] Robinson, *Fishes of Fancy*, p. 4.

In the context of the larger ecocritical argument his handbook makes, the self-consciousness of Robinson's preface yields an accounting of the confusing taxonomy of the exhibition itself. The medium is the message again: in the cursory wandering across geographic boundaries the handbook mirror the exhibition, which mirrors the sea itself.

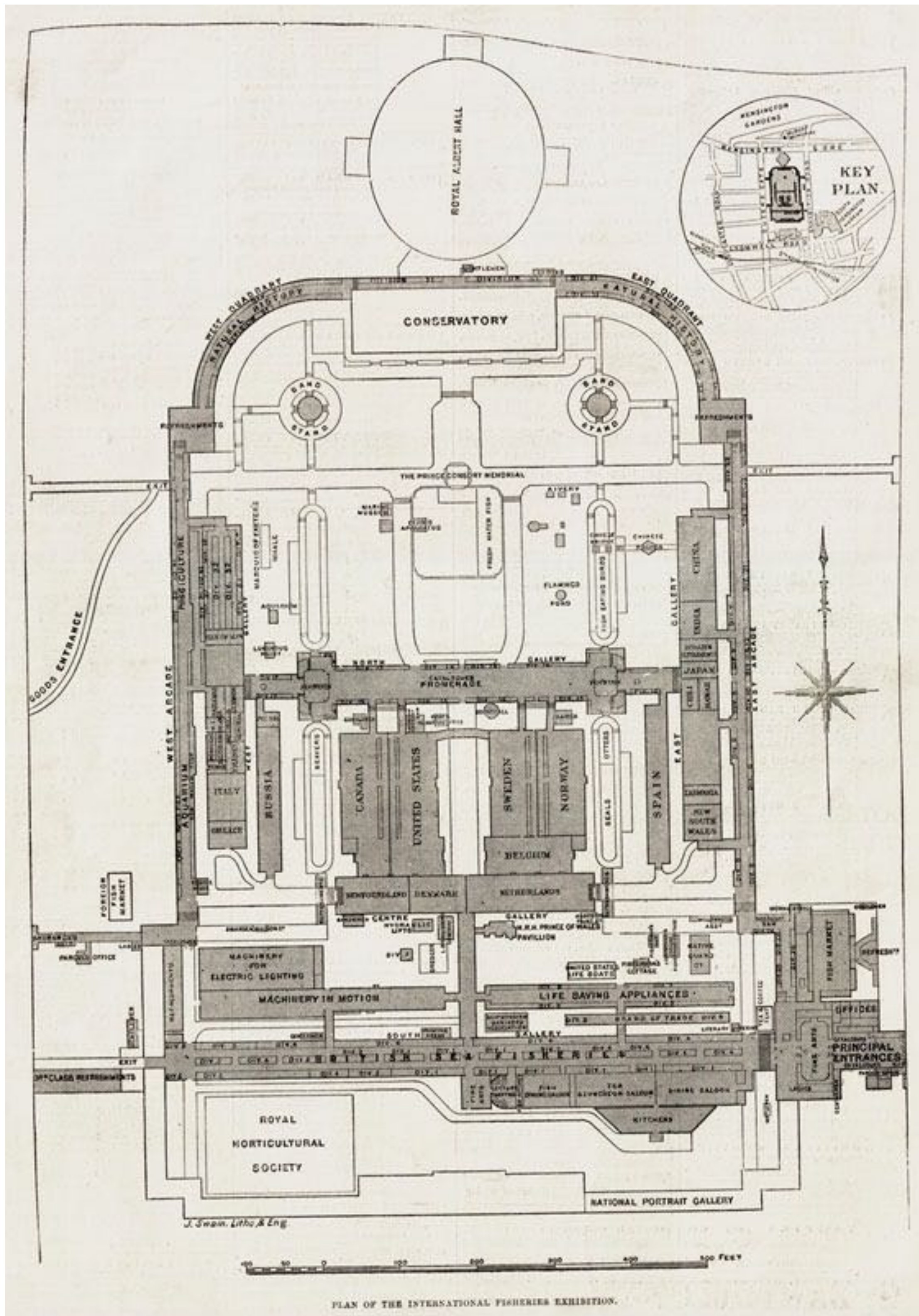

Figure 43. Exhibition plan. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World* (1884).

Robinson builds on this 'wandering' to call attention to the uniquely human nature of geographic boundaries as opposed to geologic ones. Geographic borders put in place by politics are arbitrary and suit only humans; the only boundaries which matter to nonhuman forms of life on earth are geologic, as a fish can conceivably swim until it bumps into a continent. Of course, in practice a sea creature is bounded by forces such as climate and depth, but those sort of concerns do not factor into Robinson's argument, creating an interesting implied sort of miscegenation of all the different types of aquatic environment as, for instance, he would probably have known that a fish of the tropics could not—and would not—nip up to the Arctic. In a section glossed 'What the Fishes might think of us', Robinson tips the world on the fulcrum of the surface of the sea, and challenges his reader to see the fishes' potential perspective that the continents might be viewed as 'interruptions of rock and sand, which now prevent their swimming everywhere'.[119] He mirrors this in his appendix in which 'turning round a rock, I found myself suddenly face to face with a gigantic specimen of a thresher shark'.[120] He seems to relish in reminding his reader that, in the world of sea creatures, humans are out of their depth, just as the whale says human *should* be in order to have a proper Fisheries Exhibition.

The taxonomy of the exhibition spaces was strictly controlled, and the Executive Committee, via the *Official Catalogue*, sternly asks exhibitors not to deviate from the official numberings in their catalogue and in their physical numbering of their items on display, which were to be labelled thus:

Class I: Fishing (Divisions 1-20)
Class I, Section I: Sea Fishing (Div. 1-12)
Class I, Section II: Freshwater Fishing (Div. 13-20)
Class II: Economic Condition of Fishermen (Div. 21-24)
Class III: Commercial and Economic (Div. 25-34)
Class IV: Fish Culture (Div. 36-41)

[119] Ibid., p. 94.
[120] Ibid.

> Class V: Aquaria (Div. 42-56)
> Class VI: History and Literature of Fishing, Fisher Laws, Fish Commerce (Div. 57-61)
> Class VII: Collections within the Scope of the Foregoing Classes (No Div. #s)

Robinson's 'deputation of monsters' that come alive after closing, however, have their own ideas about how such an exhibition should be laid out, which he first describes in the main body of *Fishes of Fancy* (and previously, word-for-word, in *Noah's Ark*). He supposes that the fish

> would divide their sections according to water-spaces and rivers, and not, as man does, according to the geography of dry land; while their exhibits would possess such thrilling interest for humanity as nothing could surpass, except that apocalyptic solution of all the world's mysteries at the Last Day—when the sea shall give up its dead.[121]

This seems an especially loaded passage because the 'that apocalyptic solution [...] when the sea shall give up its dead' is how many people read Tennyson's 'Kraken'—as the 'Last Day', confirming that the only thing more interesting to people than real fish are un-real fish: sea monsters such as the Kraken (as discussed first in his '*Unnatural History'*, *Noah's Ark*). The whale points out that humans 'have arranged this Exhibition solely according to the divisions of the surface of the dry land, instead of according to the division of the sea'.[122] The whale orates to his incredulous audience of 'ocean monsters':

> [Humans] are disputing, believe me, as to whether there is such a thing as the sea-serpent or a cuttle-fish big enough to seize and founder a yacht under full sail! Now, if these humans are sincere in their desire for information, why do they not let us organise a Grand Inter-elementary Fisheries Exhibition, and, in a proper spirit of justice, content to see things for once from the sea-things' point of view? Think of the exhibits we produce relating to lives and ships lost at sea in what can an "inexplicable" way. Why, our Polar Expedition relics alone would suffice to draw the whole world together to see. Who but ourselves knows the true story of the Arctic explorers that have disappeared?[123]

Robinson's lovely turn of phrase 'see things for once from the sea-things' point of view' highlights the homonymous sea as a space to *see* as never before, and also a space where humans *cannot* see. The invocation of the 'Polar Expedition relics'—a clear allusion to Franklin's lost expedition—might have still been considered in bad

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[121] Ibid., p. 16.
[122] Ibid., p. 94.
[123] Ibid.

taste at the time, but it serves its purpose to illustrate that the sea has its secrets, and man will never know them until he gets in 'out of his depth' to see the animal's point of view.

This mapping of an artificial geographic taxonomy onto the natural world (and thus the exhibition) was mirrored in the problematic taxonomy of the exhibition's animals themselves. Robinson satirises this in 'A Sea-Dream' by having some of the 'ocean monsters' debate their places or lobby for their own category changes as a 'deputation of monsters' address the group. Their spokescreature, the walrus, asserts, 'it appears to me that, as I am fished for, I am a fish, and entitled, therefore, to be treated as such', to which he received a 'chorus of approval from the narwhals, seals, sea-lions, manatees, and dugongs'.[124] However, 'another difficulty arose, for the polar bear, who had walked over from the Terra Nuova annexe, gruffly put forward a claim on his own behalf', which was that the exhibition was also for fishermen and he wanted to be called a fishermen. The fish found this to be in 'outrageous bad taste' and a 'disgraceful scene' which only ended when 'the sea-lions were deputed to chuck-out the polar bear' which they did. The passage reminds us that the project of taxonomy in general is a fraught and changeable business which does not always have tidy answers. And, as this project has seen time and again, when the proverbial Victorian zoological 'they' try to force a creature into a category it often breaks free or spills over into multiple categories and thus hybrid monsters become man's fault, for if he made better categories then the creatures might fit.

The speaker closes:

> I followed the party out of the building, and when I had seen the polar bear—still grumbling immensely and threatening public demonstrations when he got back to Greenland—balanced in his old place on the top of his pyramid in the Terra Nuova annexe, and the sea-lions on

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[124] Ibid., p. 96.

> guard all around him, I turned back. But whether I missed my road, or whether the fish had had the doors shut, I could not find my way back into the convention. So I went home.[125]

The arrangement of the exhibition, standing in for the taxonomical arrangement of the natural world in the nineteenth century, is always shifting; entrances and exits appear and disappear.

The problem with sea monsters, according to Robinson, is their hybridity, and the sea serpent has been particularly obstinate in providing uniform description. In *Noah's Ark* (the text on which *Fishes of Fancy* is based):

> The whole marine fauna, from the narwhal to the octopus, was drawn upon for contributions to the hybrid thing which we were asked to believe was the veritable Kraken; when all the tusks and tails, legs and manes, fiery eyes and scales, horses' heads and wings came to be fitted in to a serpentine form of prodigious bulk and length, the miscellaneous result was so strange outrageous that credulity was staggered, and men, in despair, refused to believe even in a decent sea-serpent, or any sea-serpent at all.[126]

The boundaries of credulity are hybrid: land and sea, wild and domestic. He describes a prototypical sea monster, according to the British public, as

> a heterogeneous patchwork monstrosity that stood up from its middle to rest its chin on the topgallant-stunsail-boom of a three-masted ship; that spouted and roared at one end and lashed up the sea into little bubbles at the other; that reared horned heads out of the water, glaring the while with eye of flame upon the trembling mariners, shaking aloft a more than leonine mane of hair, and paddling in the air with great uplifted paws.[127]

He congratulates 'the scientific world' for showing 'judgment in withdrawing its approbation from such a *disorganising beast*'. The beast is not just disorganised, it is *disorganising*, implying that contact with its has a disorganising effect. He theorises: 'Nature insists on her proprieties being observed, and so long as man remembers this, his zoological beliefs will remain fit to lie upon every breakfast table'.[128] In personifying Nature as having Victorian taxonomic values, he says that as long as animals can be kept in their rightful places, then zoology is a suitable study for the home and for all classes. However, to get control over monsters, the 'scientific

[125] Ibid., p. 97.
[126] Robinson, *Noah's Ark*, pp. 302-03.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid, p. 304.

world' must get control over the public opinion (to 'break the neck of popular error', as Lee says). Facing the 'dismal prospect of scientific chaos', Robinson imagines the current popular opinion moving forward into the future and glosses this section 'Credulity as to monsters disastrous':

> If once the key is turned to let in these disturbing dualities, a mob of indeterminate things—gryphons and sphinxes, wolf men and vampires, unicorns and cockatrices—will crowd into the orderly courts of knowledge, and, breaking down all the bulwarks of rational beliefs, will seat themselves triumphantly among the ruins of science![129]

He envisions a metaphorical physical barrier to keep out hybrid creatures who do not fit in a proper category (such as the animals who are half human and therefore especially threatening). To again borrow Lee's phrase, Robinsons seems to advocate breaking then neck of popular error early before it crashes past the scientific gatekeepers and irrevocably destroys zoological taxonomy (and, thus, the delicate feeling of control fundamental to Victorian society).

Robinson does not object to sea monsters outright; in fact, so long as they are not completely unreasonable (a spectrum which is impossible to quantify), humans might even feel a sense of control over a 'well-regulated Kraken'.[130] Of such an 'organised' beast, he ventures that some measure of control is to be found in the more classic description of the sea serpent as a 'somewhat magnified conger eel'. The conger eel falls for Robinson within the 'compass of human understanding', and thus the humorous but awfully seriously 'well-regulated' take on sea monsters also preserves the fragile boundary between citizens and science, nature and culture.

He fears that

> For the monster cuttle-fishes [...] the British public has the permission of science to believe anything it likes; and, in fact, the more the better. It may swell out the bag-like bodies of the poulpe to any dimensions consistent with the containing capacities of an ocean, and pull out their arms until, like [de Montfort's] octopus, they are able to twist one tentacle round each of

[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., p. 299.

> the masts of a line-of-battle ship, and, holding on with the rest to the bottom of the sea, to engulf the gallant vessel with all sail set.[131]

This is not a 'well-regulated Kraken'. In order to be suitable for the 'breakfast table', a monster must not 'swell out' infinitely but should have a certain uniformity and domesticity in its descriptions.

6.4.4 London ('Cod save the queen')

That the exhibition space was presented as an undersea ecosystem also had larger repercussions as the literature began to portray the exhibition as an analogue for London. When Robinson turns his attention to naming and describing the correspondences between sea and land creatures, he turns to Christopher Pitt's 'Ode to John C. Pitt, Esq':

> Where, like our moderns so profound,
> Engag'd in dark dispute,
> The cuttles cast their ink around
> To puzzle the dispute.
>
> Where sharks like shrewd directors thrive,
> Like lawyers rob at will,
> Where flying fish, like trimmers live,
> Like soldiers, swordfish kill.
>
> Where on the less the greater feed,
> The tyrants of an hour,
> The huge royal whale succeed
> And all at once devour.
>
> Thus in the moral world we now
> Too truly understand
> Each monster of the sea below
> Is match'd by one at land

Robinson employs the poem to discuss the similarities between land sea creatures (especially in name), but he misses entirely (or else does not acknowledge) that Pitt casts London as an ocean ecosystem. Perhaps nowhere else is this similitude more sharply achieved than in the illustrated periodicals' reporting on the exhibition. The

[131] Ibid.

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News published a full page entitled ‘Notes on the Past Month’, which depicts the contemporary issues of London as the ‘WONDERS OF THE DEEP’ ‘TO BE SEEN ALIVE’ behind the curtain of the Fisheries Exhibition, ‘Cod save the queen’ on a crumpled pamphlet (Figure 44).

Figure 44. 'Notes on the Past Month', which casts London news as the Fisheries Exhibition. From *Illustrated London Sporting and Dramatic News* (June 1883).

Similarly, the 19 May issue of the London illustrated magazine *Funny Folks* comically portrayed 'The "Procession" At the Fisheries Exhibit (as It was Originally Intended to Be)' (Figure 45).[132] Relying on puns on par with 'Cod save the queen', the caption points out the 'Prince of Whales and the Princess in their of*fish*al costumes', a 'Miss Ann Chovey', etc. The motley assortment is a hybrid human-animal mix, and the 'procession will be wound up by the great Sea Serpent, by a long way *out of sight* the most imposing monster of the deep'.[133] The very humorous illustration depicts these London fixtures either in a maritime context or as sea creatures themselves.

[132] *Funny Folks* (London, England), Saturday, May 19, 1883; pg. 157; Issue 442.
[133] The whole captions reads: 'The Procession will be headed by the Prince of Whales and the Princess in their offishal costumes. Following their Royal Highnesses will be Representative Fishermen—including the Senior (wr)Angler and Champion Tittle-batsman of Great Britain; Fisher Maidens and Matrons from Boulogne and Billingsgate; Old "Soldiers" (from the "line"); The Cali Pasha of Terrapin Island and Cali Pee-r, introduced by an Alderman of the City of London; a real Whitstable Native, who, despite his indisposition at this season of the year, has risen from his bed to be present at the opening ceremony; John Dorey, Esq., and Miss Ann Chovey; Chorus, conducted by Sir M. Coster; Representatives of the Flour-y Land; Band of Lady Marine (whose performance everyone knows is *comb il faut*); and the Procession will be wound up by the great Sea Serpent, by a long way *out of sight* the most imposing monster of the deep.—*Extract from Unpublished Official Programme.*'

Figure 45. 'The "Procession" at the Fisheries Exhibition (as it was originally intended to be).' From *Funny Folks* (1883).

There was certainly a precedent for general depictions of London as a sea, including James Greenwood's *Low Life Deeps: An Account of the Strange Fish to be Found There* (1876), and *Punch* co-founder Henry Mayhew's vision of London from the suburbs:

> Line after line sparkles like the trails left by meteors, and cutting and crossing one another till they are lost in the haze of distance. Over the whole, too, there hangs a lurid cloud, bright as if the monster city were in flames, and looking from afar like the sea at dusk, made phosphorescent by the million creatures dwelling within it.[134]

At the Fisheries Exhibition, as WM Adams ('formerly of New College, Oxford') writes in his Preface to the 'History and Literature of River Fishing—Fishery Laws—Fish Commerce' for the *Official Catalogue* that the reader of the catalogue could learn how fish could be a 'valuable food for the teeming and ever multiplying millions of our poorer population'.[135] That 'teeming and ever multiplying' lower class is portrayed in the same terms as the microscopic monsters in Heath's 'Microcosm'.

Robinson further participates in this allegory by having the congress of 'ocean monsters' give a 'House of Lords applause' at the conclusion of their colleague's address. And as I have notes earlier with regard to Robinson, he compares the masses of visitors to a shoal of fish who 'ebb' like a 'tide', which also rings true in the literary comparisons of London to the sea, such as PB Shelley's letter to Maria Gisborne upon her 1820 arrival in London (the same year he published 'A Vision of the Sea'):

> You are now
> In London that great sea, whose ebb and flow
> At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
> Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
> Yet in its depths what treasures![136]

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[134] Henry Mayhew, 'Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts, Letter 1' (*Morning Chronicle*, 1849), reprinted in *The Criminal Prisons of London* (F. Cass, London, 1862), p. 29.
[135] *Official Catalogue*, p. 202.
[136] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Letter to Maria Gisborne', Virginia Tech hyptertext <http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/TextRecord.php?action=GET&textsid=36326> [accessed 11 March 2016].

It makes sense that Robinson would make these comparisons. Though Robinson's whale says that under 'thirty fathoms of good seawater' is a place where one can 'see things as they were' (that is, see the 'sea-things' as they really are); perhaps then, it is Robinson's opinion that the exhibition saw its creatures as too much of a palimpsest on which the Literary Department could re-inscribe old symbols rather than 'get in out of their depth'. Thus, he adds a third interpretation to 'Fish Culture' as not just the artificial cultivation of fish, not just the human culture around fish, but the culture of the fish themselves in the sea where humans cannot see them as they really are.

CODA:
'EMIGRATION EXTRAORDINARY'

Henry Lee argues in *Sea Monsters Unmasked* and *Sea Fables Explained* that in addition to observing the behaviour of small cephalopods at the Brighton Aquarium, he was able to 'unmask' and 'explain' legends of sea monsters through an understanding of their historical and literary origins. An interdisciplinary perspective is also critical to understanding today's ecological crises, as Greg Garrard argues:

> Environmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as scientific terms because they are the outcome of an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflection. This will involve interdisciplinary scholarship that draws on literary and cultural theory, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and environmental history, as well as ecology.[137]

'Environmental problems' such as overfishing, illegal fishing and whaling, endangered and invasive species management, and climate change demand an interdisciplinary solution and a humanistic approach to better public understanding and political will. I hope that going forward my work can draw on nineteenth-century literature to provide context for current environmental discussions. I have a couple of projects in preparation which will based on this thesis, including a chapter on the relationship between whaling and geologic time in a collection titled *Nineteenth-Century Ecocritical Visual Cultures* (edited by Maura Coughlin and Emily Gephert) and a chapter on Tennyson and marine material culture in a collection titled *Underwater Worlds* (edited by Will Abberley).[138]

There is also still much to do with the literature of the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition, including those topics I outlined in Chapter 6, Footnote 17, but I

[137] Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).
[138] In 2015 I was asked to write the 'Maritime' entry for the new *Oxford Bibliography of Victorian Literature*, edited by Juliet John. It was an excellent opportunity to test and grow my foundational knowledge in nineteenth-century maritime literature and to work through the editorial and peer review process for the first time. (It has been accepted for publication barring final editorial approval.)

also have my sights set on a project exploring the textual bodies of whales as monstrous palimpsests (in Ballantyne, Melville, and others). The whale's body is a text that is marked again and again in novels such at *Fighting the Whales* and *Moby-Dick* and should be read as such. Historically, whalemen 'read' the bodies of whales as texts and could thus create a biography of sorts of the whale: scars from battles with giant squid or other whales, and potentially harpoons remaining from botched attempts at landing the whale. These harpoons often had ship's names and years inscribed on them, and veteran whalemen knew roughly when and where other ships fished and could therefore figure out where the whales had been and how old they were. In our current cultural moment in which the sensitivities of whales are still hotly debated—as in the blockbuster documentary *Blackfish*, SeaWorld's recent decision to phase out performing whales, and continued whaling by Japan, Norway, and Iceland—there is still much to be learned from nineteenth-century whaling literature.

I would like to conclude this thesis with a final example of how 'there is nothing so fascinating [...] as a sea monster' in Britain at this time. An item in the 21 May 1832 *Caledonian Mercury* relates story of two fishermen at sea several miles off of Findhorn, just northeast of Inverness, who encounter a creature in the water:

> 'A sea monster!' exclaimed one of the men. 'Something unearthly!' cried another. [...] [They] made towards it, when to their utter astonishment they found it was a pony. [...] With some difficulty they got the pony into the boat, and carried it with them ashore. [...] The facts are strange, but they are true. We are not sure that we can say as much for a hypothesis started by certain philosophers at the seaside, namely, that the 'shilty' has become infected with the mania for emigration to America, where it has expected greater freedom than in this oppressed and over-taxed land.[139]

[139] 'Emigration Extraordinary', *Caledonian Mercury* (21 May 1832). I am also currently undertaking my own 'emigration extraordinary' as I move back to the USA to teach at the University of West Florida this Autumn.

The little equine defector reminds readers that potential sea monsters take many forms in many places, and his repatriation underscores the narrative of the domesticating influence of British soil on (even temporarily) wild beasts.

APPENDIX A

A VISION OF THE SEA (1820)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin 5
And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,
Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders, made silent around, 10
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale 15
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
With splendour and terror the black ship environ, 20
Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea. 25
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven
Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven. 30
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up by the waters below, 35
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose, 40
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,

The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain 45
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep 50
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around, 55
And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array, 60
But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck. 65
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee;
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder 70
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye, 75
While its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed, 80
Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
To be after life what we have been before? 85
Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,
Those lips, and that hair,--all the smiling disguise
Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day,
Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?'--Lo! the ship 90
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,

Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously, 95
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
The hurricane came from the west, and passed on 100
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast, 105
Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain, 110
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed,
Like the dust of its fall. on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where 115
The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate. 120
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea, 125
And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love, 130
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure smile,
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where 135
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress 140
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins

Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash 145
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other 150
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel,--the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn 155
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,--
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,--
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously. 160
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child 165
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst—

Appendix B

Contents of the Fisheries Exhibition Literature

(A full accounting of the 'official' exhibition literature published by William Clowes and Sons did not exist, so I prepared this one by piecing together volumes and parts of volumes from the British Library, Natural History Museum, Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum, and the archives of the Science Museum held at Wroughton Airfield. This does not include privately printed 'unofficial' catalogues and pamphlets distributed by individual exhibitors such as Thomas Gunn, few of which still exist.)

Volume I – Handbooks – Part I

The British Fish Trade	Sir Spencer Walpole
Marine and Freshwater Fishes of the British Islands	W Saville Kent, FLS, FZS
The Fishery Laws	Frederick Pollock, Barrister-at-Law, MA, &c.
Apparatus for Fishing	EWH Holdsworth, FLS, FZS
The Place of Fish in a Hard-Working Diet, with Notes on the Use of Fish in Former Times	W Stephen Mitchell, MA
A Popular History of the Fisheries and Fishermen of All Countries from the Earliest Times	WM Adams, BA

Volume II – Handbooks – Part II

Fish Culture. With 4 Plates	Francis Day, FLS, FZS
Zoology and Food Fishes.	George Bond Howes
The Unappreciated Fisher Folk: their Round of Life and Labour	James G Bertram
The Salmon Fisheries	Charles E Fryer
Angling in Great Britain	William Senior
Indian Fish and Fishing. With 4 Plates	Francis Day, FLS, FZS

Volume III – Handbooks – Part III

Fishes of Fancy: Their Place in Myth, Fable, Fairy-Tale, and Folk-lore, with Notices of the Fishes of Legendary Art, Astronomy, and Heraldry	Phil Robinson
Angling Clubs and Preservation Societies of London and the Provinces	JP Wheldon
Sea Fables Explained	Henry Lee, FLS, FGS, FZS
Sea Monster Unmasked	
Practical Lessons in the Gentle Craft	JP Wheldon
Literature of Sea and River Fishing	JJ Manley

Volume IV – Conferences – Part I

Inaugural Address by Professor Huxley, FRS	
Notes on the Sea Fisheries and Fishing Populations of the United Kingdom. Arising from Information	Vice-Admiral HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, KG

and Experience Gained During Three Years Command of the Naval Reserve	
Principles of Fishery Legislation	Right Hon G Shaw-Lefevre MP
Fish Transport and Fish Markets	Sir Spencer Walpole
The Economic Condition of Fishermen	Prof Leone Levi
A National Fisheries Society	Charles E Frye
River Pollution by Refuse from Manufactories and Mines. Together with Some Remedies Proposed	VB Barrington-Kennett, MA, LLM
Practical Fishermen's Congress Comprising the Following Subjects: Destruction of Immature Fish. Harbour Accommodation. Better Means for Prevention of Loss of Life at Sea. Railway Rates. Fishing Vessels' Lights.	Minutes from the discussion chaired by Edward Birkbeck, Esq, MP
The Scientific Results of the Exhibition	Prof E Ray Lankester
Notes on the Food Fishes and Edible Mollusca of New South Wales, Etc.	Edward Pierson Ramsay, FLS
The Fisheries of Spain	Lieut.-Col. Francisco Garcia Solá
The Fisheries of the Bahamas	Augustus J Adderley
West African Fisheries, with Particular References to the Gold Coast Colony	Captain CA Moloney, CMG

Volume V – Conferences – Part II

A Review of the Fishery Industries of the United States and the Work of the United States Fish Commission	G. Brown Goode
Oyster Culture and Oyster Fisheries in the Netherlands	Prof Hubrecht
The Fisheries of Canada	Louis Z Joncas
The Fisheries of China	J Duncan Campbell
A Sketch of the Fisheries of Japan	Naninori Okoshi
Newfoundland: Its Fisheries and General Resources	Ambrose Shea
The Swedish Fisheries	FA Smitt
Notes on the Fish Supply of Norway	Frederik M Wallem
Notes on the Food Fishes and Edible Mollusca of New South Wales, etc.	Edward Pierson Ramsay
The Fisheries of Spain	Francisco Garcia Solá
The Fisheries of the Bahamas	Augustus J Adderley
West African Fisheries, with Particular Reference to the Gold Coast Colony	CA Moloney

Volume VI – Conferences – Part III

Fish Diseases	Prof Huxley, FRS
The Culture of Salmonidae and the Acclimatisation of Fish	Sir James Ramsaw Gibson Maitland, Bart
The Herring Fisheries of Scotland	RW Dupp, MP
Mackerel and Pilchard Fisheries	Thomas Cornish
Salmon and Salmon Fisheries	DM Home, FRSE
Coarse Fish Culture	RB Marston

The Destruction of Fish and Other Aquatic Animals by Internal Parasites	T Spencer Corbold, MD, FRS, FLS
The Food of Fishes	Francis Day, FLS, FZS
Molluscs, Mussels, Whelks, Etc., Used for Food or Bait	CW Harding, Assoc. M, Inst. CE
The Artificial Culture of Lobsters	W Saville Kent, FLS, FZS
Crustaceans	Thomas Cornish

VOLUME VII – CONFERENCES – PART IV

Fish as Food	Sir Henry Thompson, MB, FRCS, ETC.
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The Fisheries of Ireland	JC Bloomfield
Improved Facilities for the Capture, Economic Transmission and Distribution of Sea Fishes, Etc.	RF Walsh
Seal Fisheries	Captain Temple
Saving Life at Sea	Richard Roper
Fish Preservation and Refrigeration	JK Kilbourn
The Basis for Legislation of Fishery Questions	Lieut.-Col. Francisco Garcia Solá
Forest Protection and Tree Cultivation on Water Frontages, Etc.	D. Howitz, Esq.
Line Fishing	CM Mundahl
Trawling	Alfred W. Answell

VOLUME VIII – PRISE ESSAYS – PART I

The Commercial Sea Fishes of Great Britain	Francis Day, FLS, FZS
The Effect of the Existing National and International Laws for the Regulation and Protection of Deep Sea Fisheries. With Suggestion for Improvements of Said Laws	CW Morris
Salmon Legislation in Scotland. The Legislation at present Applicable to the Salmon Fisheries in Scotland and the Best Means of Improving it	JM Leith

The Commercial Sea Fishes of Great Britain	Francis Day, FLS, FZS
The Effect of the Existing National and International Laws for the Regulation and Protection of Deep Sea Fisheries. With Suggestions	

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The Best System of Life Insurance for Fishermen, and of Insuring Boats, Gear, Nets, Etc.	JW De Caux
The Relations of the State With Fishermen and Fisheries, including all Matters dealing with their Protection and Regulation	CE Fryer

The Relations of the State With Fishermen and Fisheries, including all Matters dealing with their Protection and Regulation	FJ Talfour Chater
The History of Dutch Sea Fisheries: Their Progress, Decline, and Revival, especially in Connection with the Legislation of Fisheries in Earlier and Later Times	A. Beaujun

VOLUME X – PRISE ESSAYS – PART III

The Natural History of Commercial Sea Fishes of Great Britain and Ireland	Rev W Houghton, M FLS
Improved Facilities for the Capture, Economic Transmission, and Distribution of Sea Fishes	HP Blake
A Central Wholesale Fish Market for London	JJ Cayley and HH Bridgman
The Best Appliances and Methods of Breaking the Force of the Sea at the Entrance to Harbours and Elsewhere	WA Smith

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Propagation of Salmonidae	T Andrews
Propagation of Salmonidae	W Oldham Chambers, FLS, FRIBA
Salmon Disease	John Clark
Salmon Disease: Its Cause and Prevention	W Anderson Smith
Cultivation of Freshwater Fish Other than Salmonidae	RB Marston
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Herring Fisheries	RJ Munro
Herring Fisheries	HJ Green
Scotch East Coast Herring Fishing	WS Milne
Natural History and ***Cultivation of the Sole (ha!)***	Rev. W. Houghton, MA, FLS
Oyster Culture	Commander CV Anson, RN, and EH Willett, FSA
Oyster Culture	PPC Hook
Best Means of Increasing the Supply of Mussels	TF Robertson Carr
Best Means of Increasing the Supply of Mussels	JC Wilcocks
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Conditions of the Sea in Relation to Fish	W Watt
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VOLUME XII – OFFICIAL CATALOGUE. AWARDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL JURIES.

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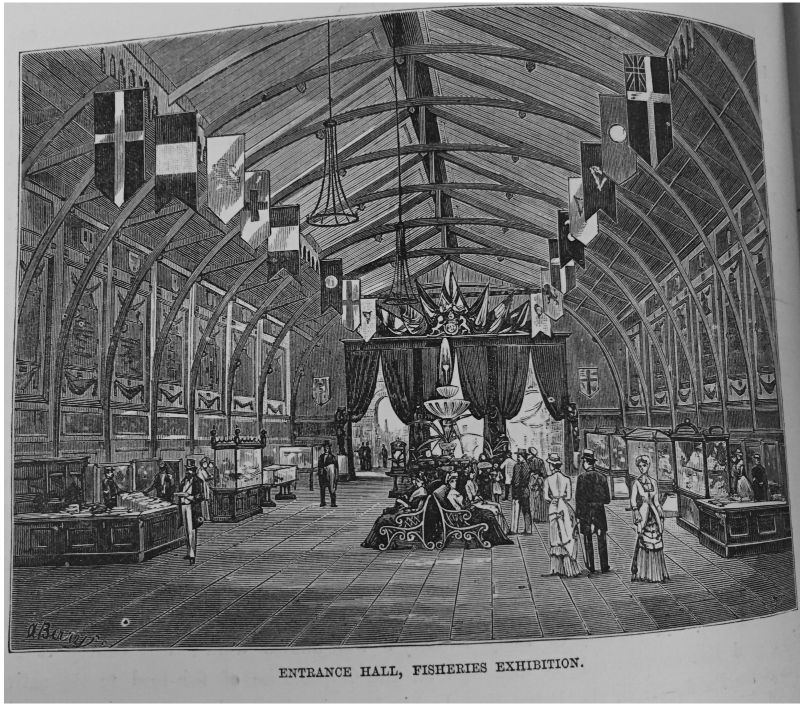
Official Report on the International Fisheries Exhibition	Spencer Walpole
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements	
Special Report on the Electric Lighting of the Exhibition	William Gooch
Ceremonial at Opening of International Fisheries and Addresses at Closing	
Report of Executive Committee to General Committee	
Statistical Tables	
Condensed Reports on the Condition of the Fishing Industry in the United Kingdom and Abroad, Used in the First Instance in the Official Catalogue	

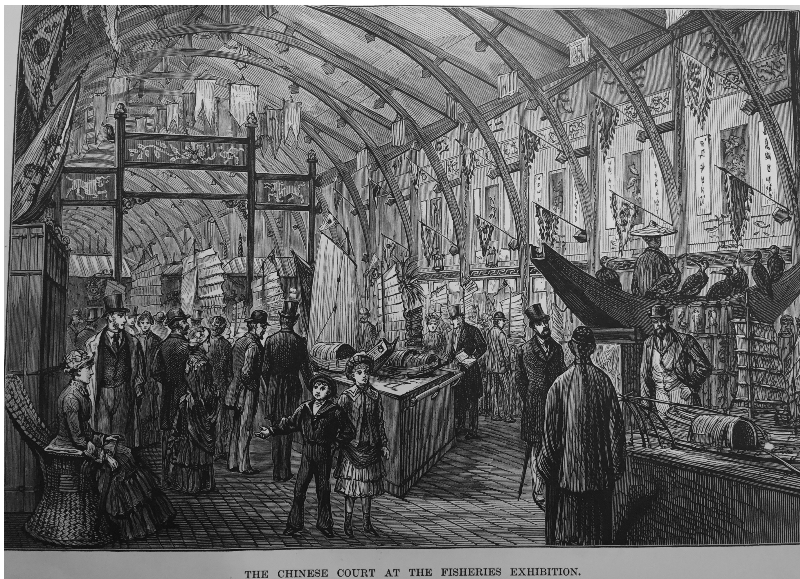
Volume XIII – Analytical Index

Appendix C

Images of the International Fisheries Exhibition from *Fisheries of the World*[1] and London Periodicals[2]


ENTRANCE HALL, FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

Entrance Hall at the Exhibition. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.

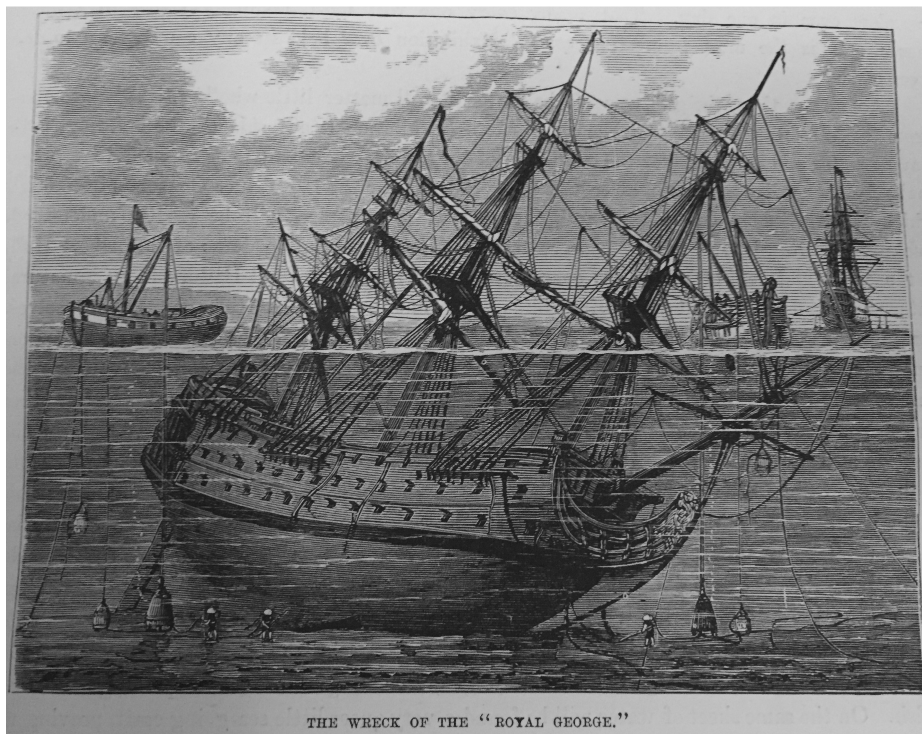

THE CHINESE COURT AT THE FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

Chinese Court at the Exhibition. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.

[1] Frederick Whymper, *Fisheries of the World: an Illustrated and Descriptive Record of the International Fisheries Exhibition* (London: Cassel and Co. Limited, 1883).
[2] The *London Illustrated News,* the *London Sporting and Dramatic News,* and *The Graphic*, respectively (as noted in captions), May through October 1883 (specific dates noted in image).

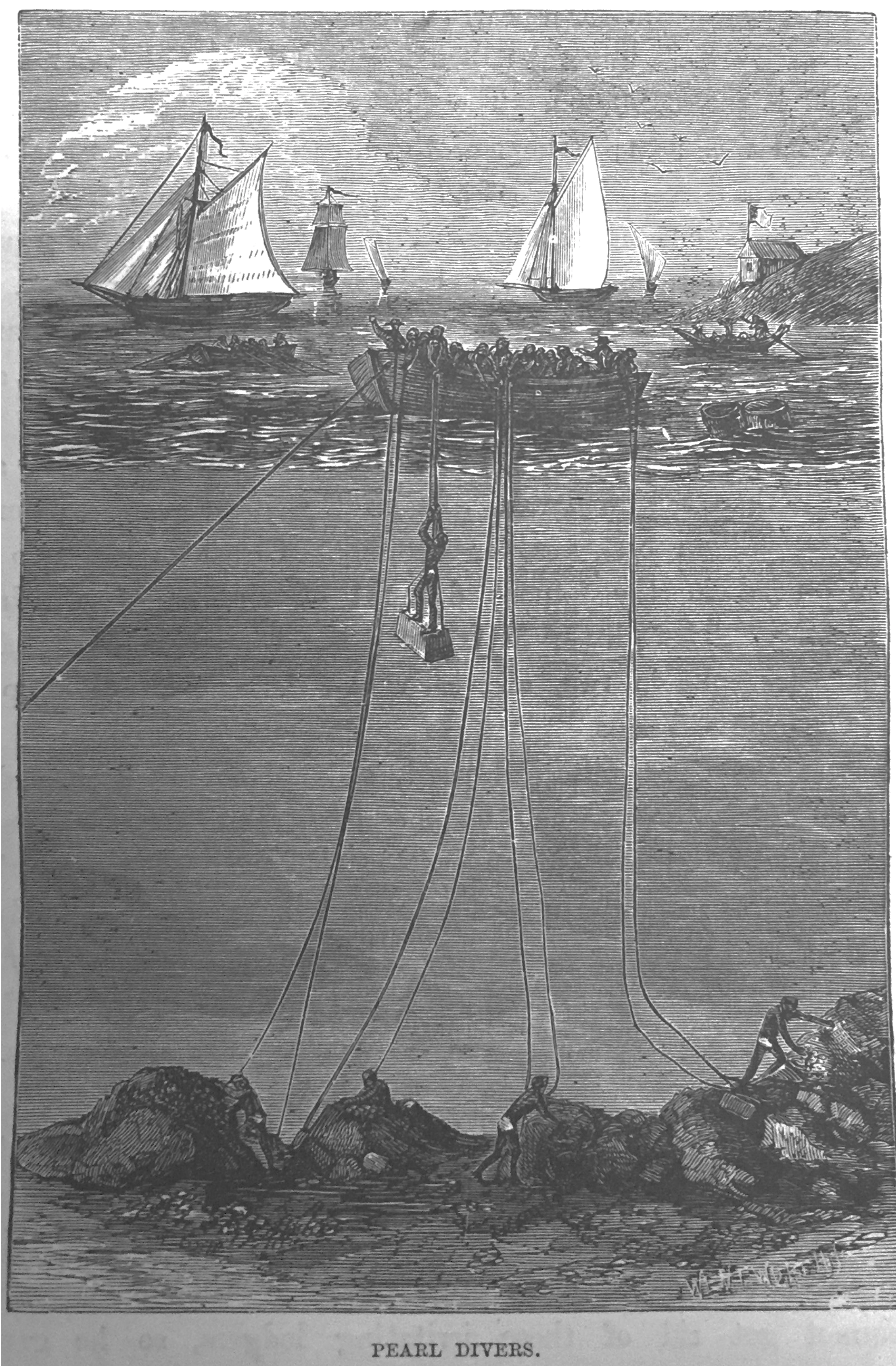
THE FISH MARKET, INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

Fish Market at the Exhibition. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.



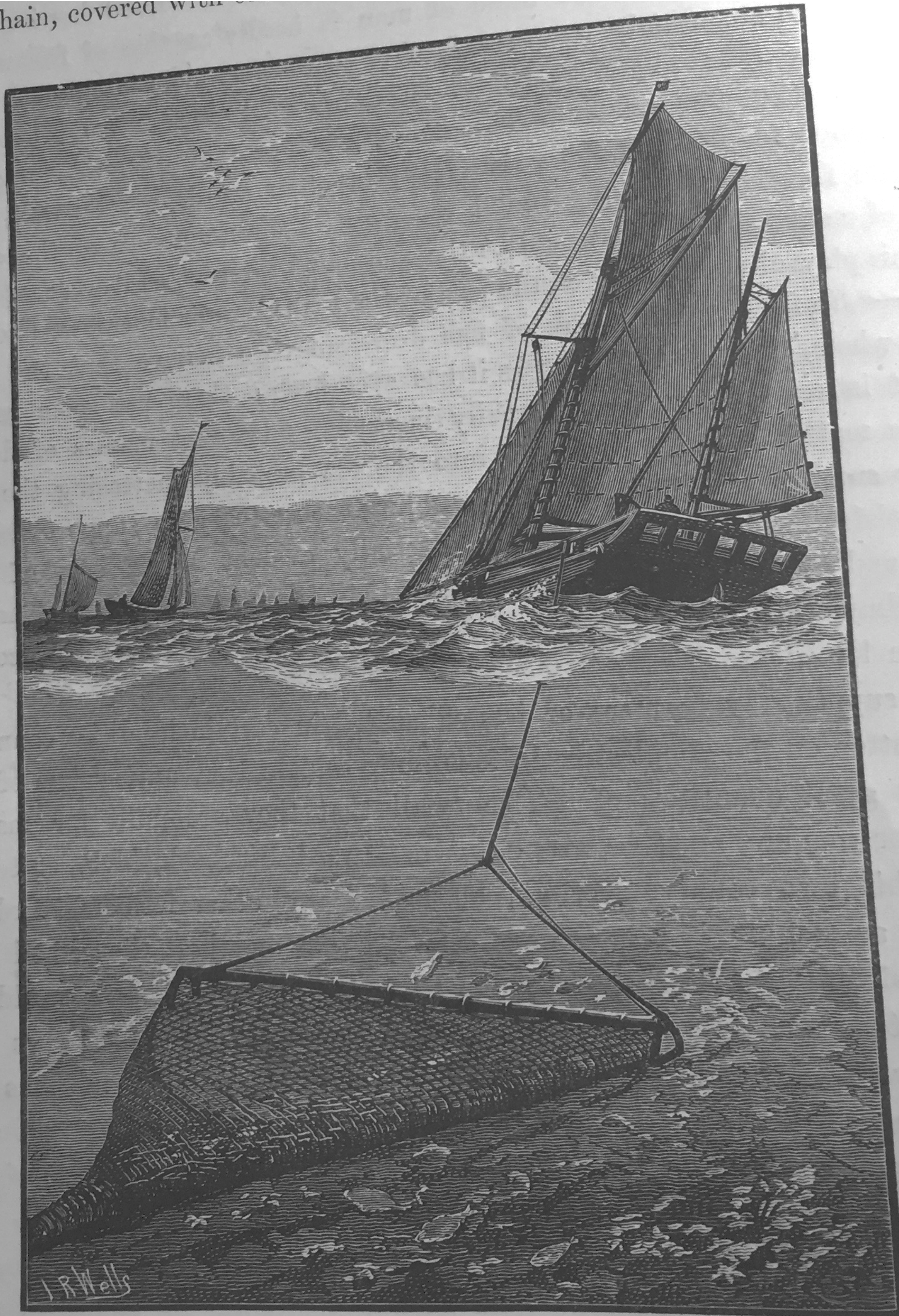
THE WRECK OF THE "ROYAL GEORGE."

Divers salvaging the wreck of the *Royal George*.
From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.



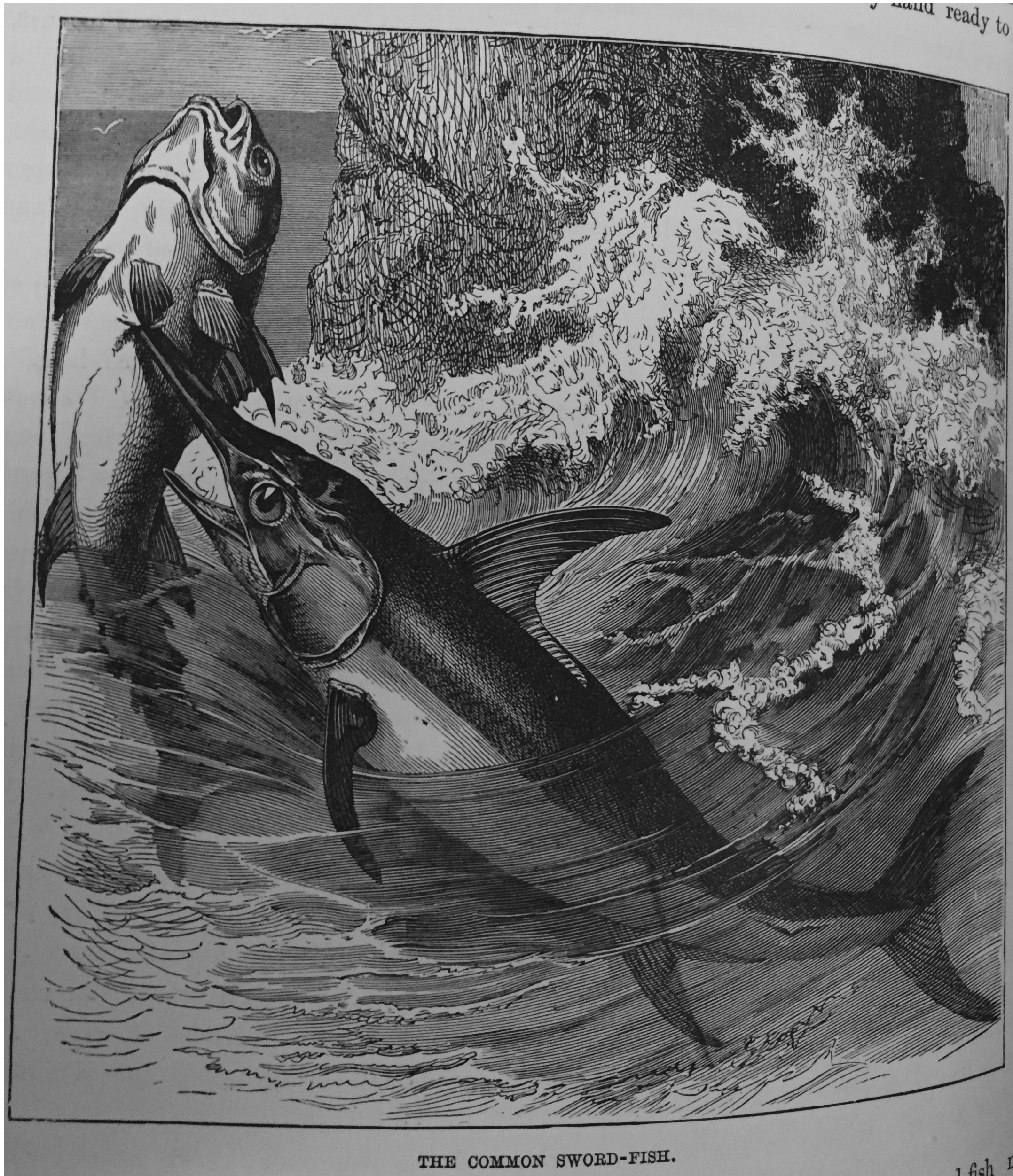
PEARL DIVERS.

Pearl Divers, Ceylon.
From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.



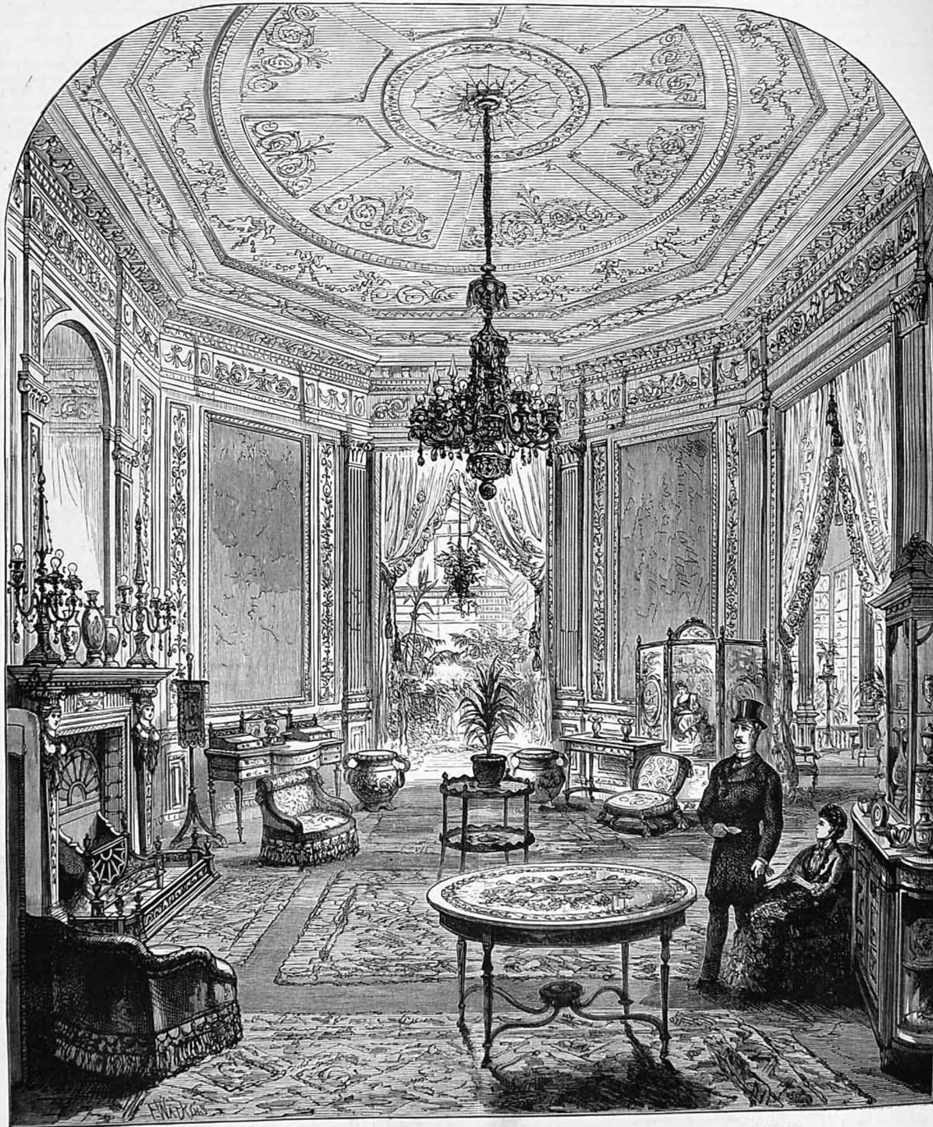
TRAWLING.

Trawl net.
From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.



THE COMMON SWORD-FISH.

Swordfish skewering prey. From Whymper, *Fisheries of the World*.

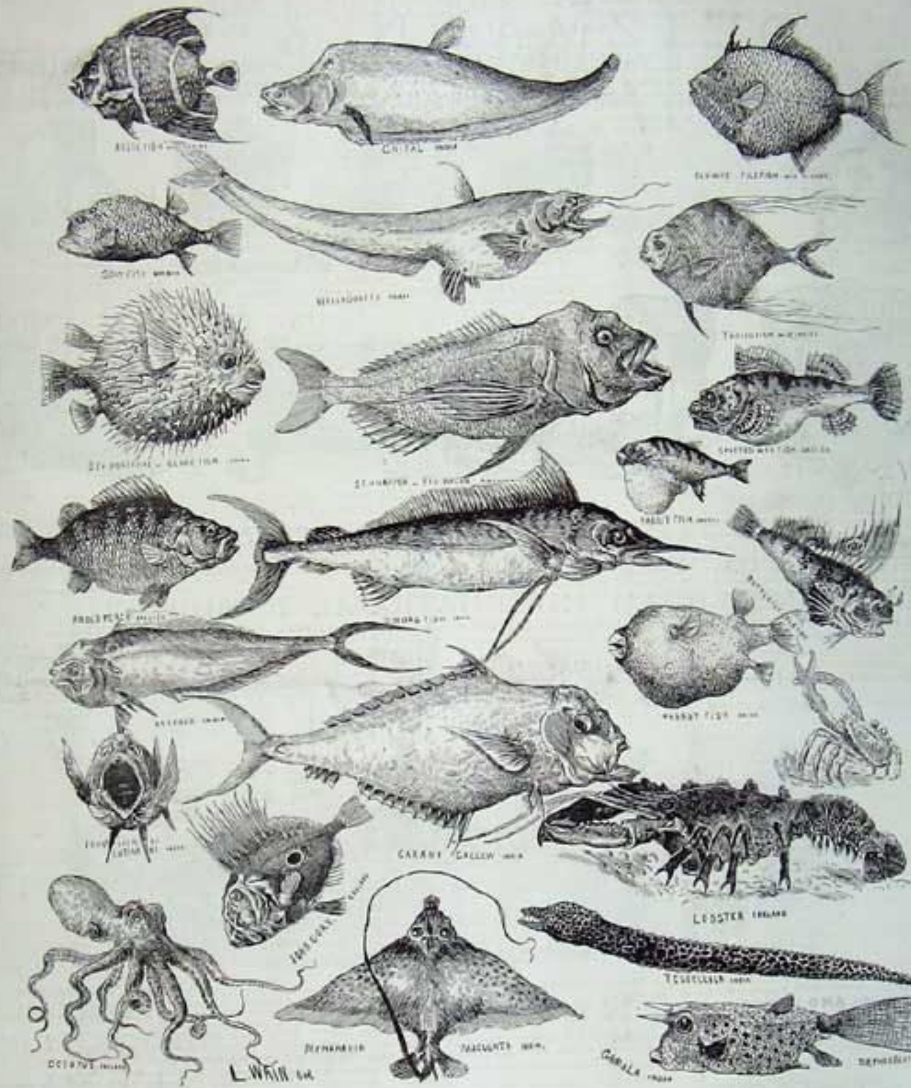

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL POST-OFFICE FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 2301.—VOL. LXXXII. SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1883. WITH SUPPLEMENT AND COLOURED PICTURE SIXPENCE. By Post, 6½d.

THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION: BOUDOIR IN THE PAVILION OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

Royal Pavilion at the Exhibition.
From *The Illustrated London News*.

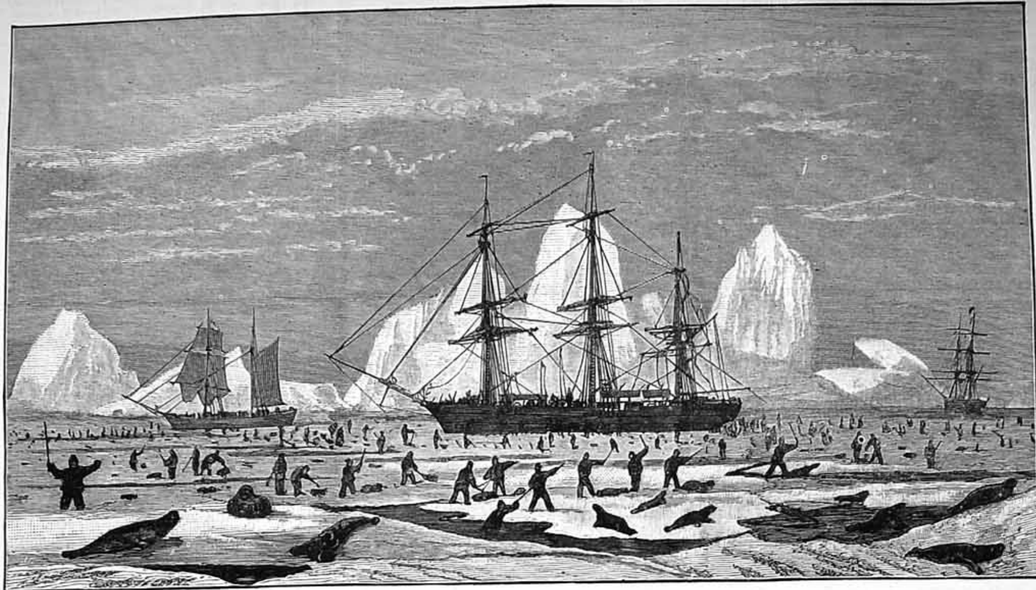


‘Odd Fish at the International Fisheries Exhibition.’
From *The Illustrated London News*.

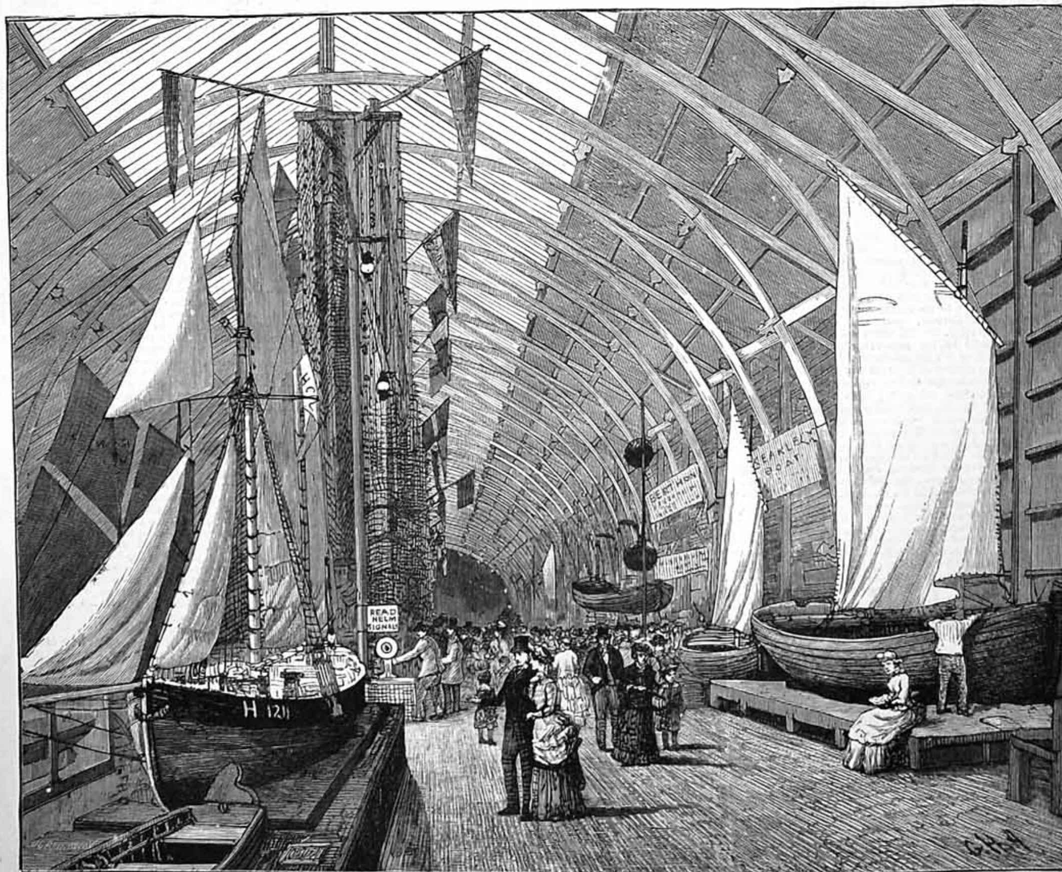
Scenes at the Exhibition. From *The Illustrated London News*.

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, Aug. 25, 1883.—196

THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

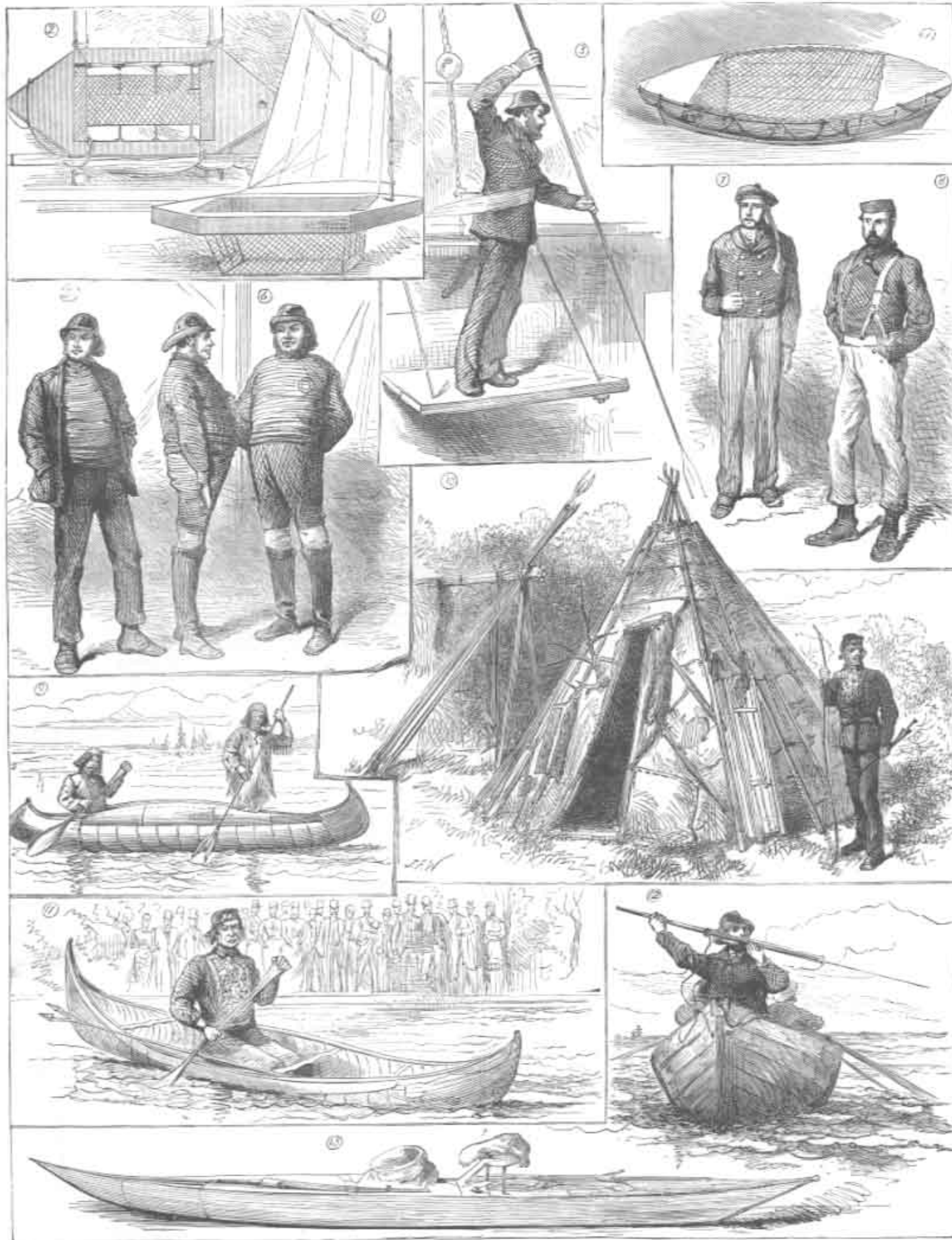


MODEL TO ILLUSTRATE SEAL-HUNTING: IN THE NEWFOUNDLAND SECTION.



BOATS AND NETS IN THE BRITISH SEA FISHERIES GALLERY.

Above: Sketch of the deal-hunting model in the Newfoundland Court.
Below: British Sea Fisheries Gallery.
Both from *The Illustrated London News*.



1. The [illegible] Life-saving Apparatus, invented by Colonel the Hon. O. G. Lambart. 2. The same folded up. 3. A Newfoundland whaler's cutting-stage (Old Style).
4. Fish-carrier, invented by Mrs. E. [illegible] of Hastings. 5. A Yarmouth fisherman. 6. A Lowestoft fisherman. 7. An Arbroath fisherman.
8. A Yarmouth smacksman. 9. Indians fishing (model from Canada). 10. A Milicete Indian fisherman and his wigwam (Canada).
11. A Milicete Indian in his fishing canoe. 12. A Canadian whaler throwing his harpoon. 13. Greenland fishing canoe.

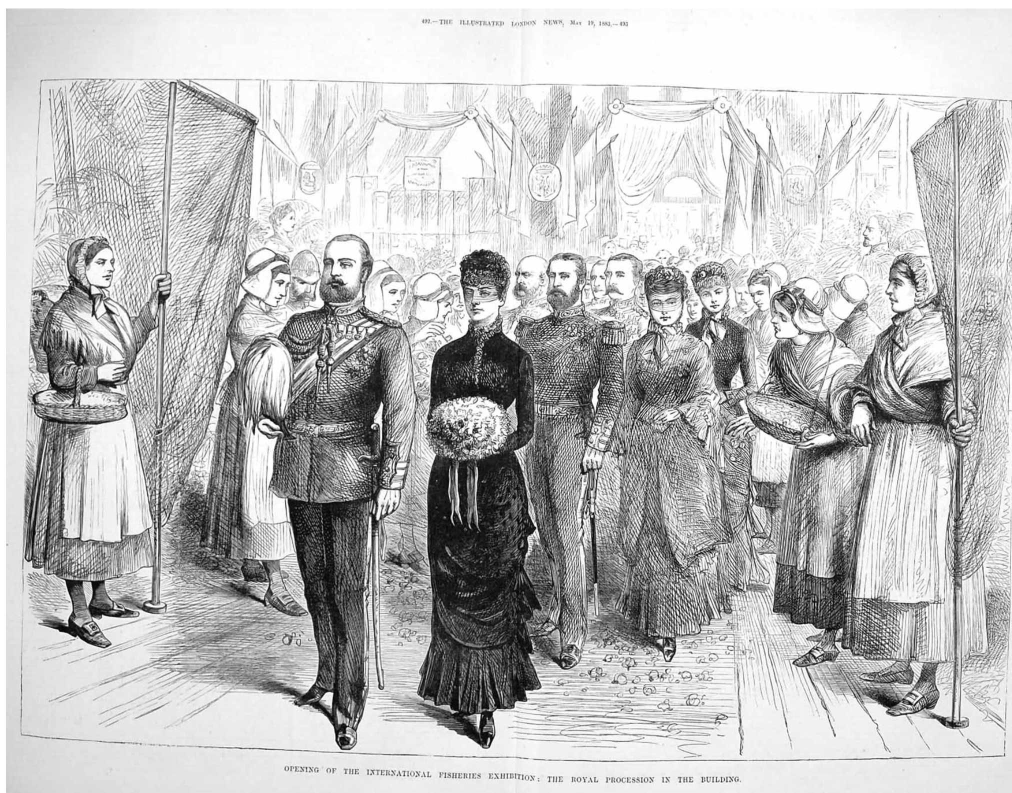
SKETCHES AT THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION.

Scenes at the Exhibition.
From *The Illustrated London News*.

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1883.

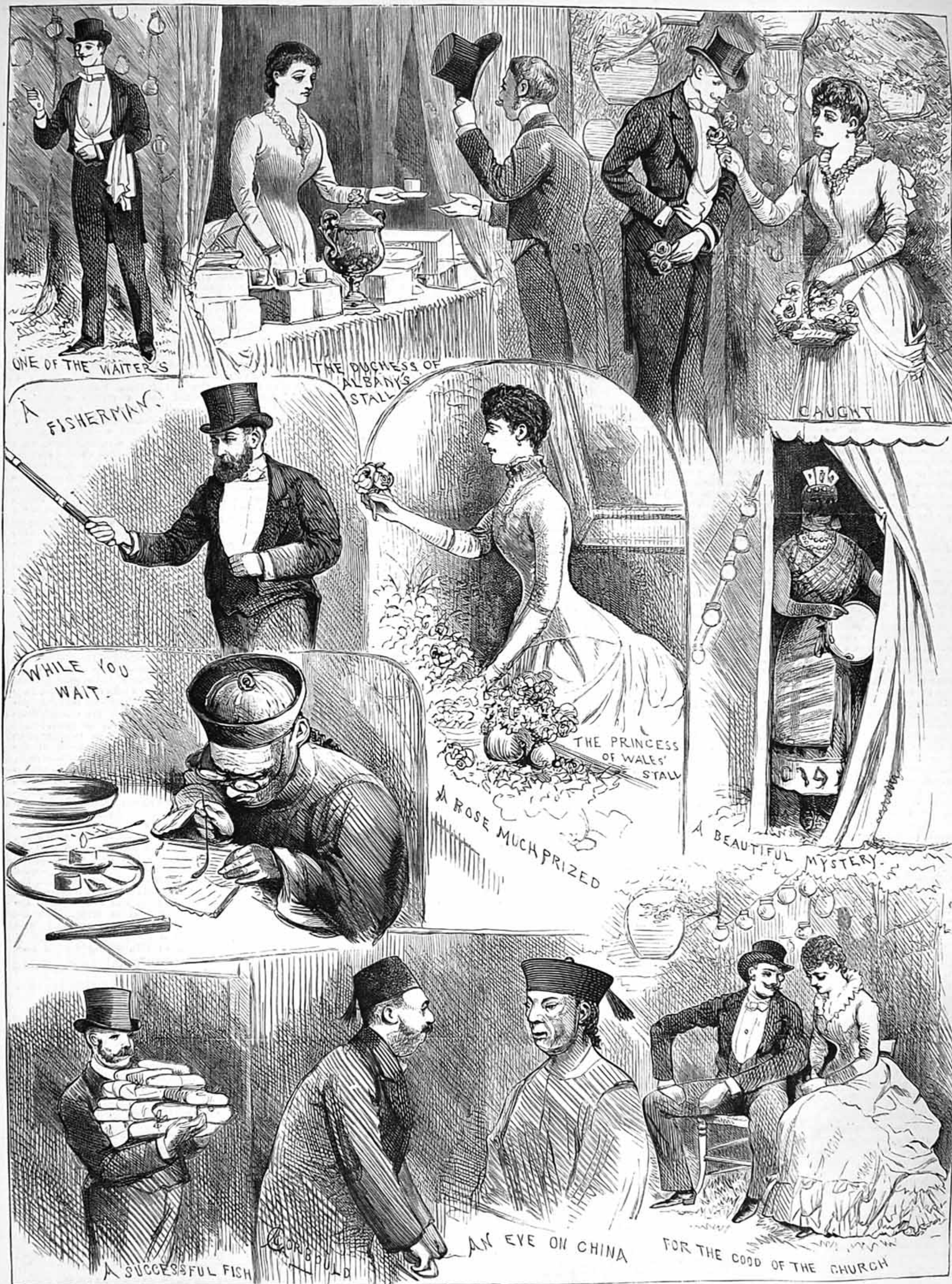
Scenes at the Exhibition. From *The Illustrated London News*.



492.—THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, MAY 19, 1883.—493

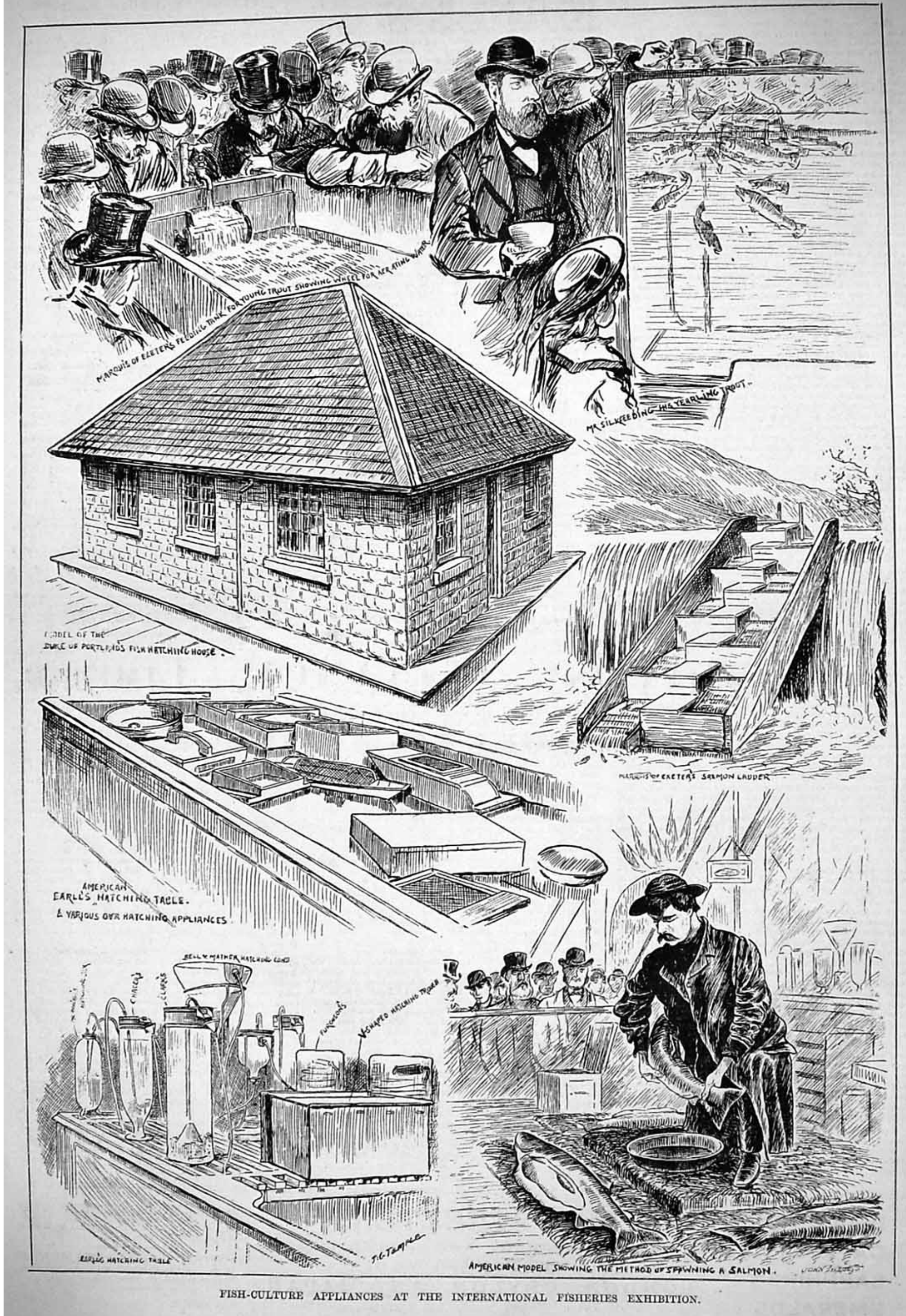
OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION: THE ROYAL PROCESSION IN THE BUILDING.

Prince and Princess of Wales at the Opening Ceremony. From *The Illustrated London News*.



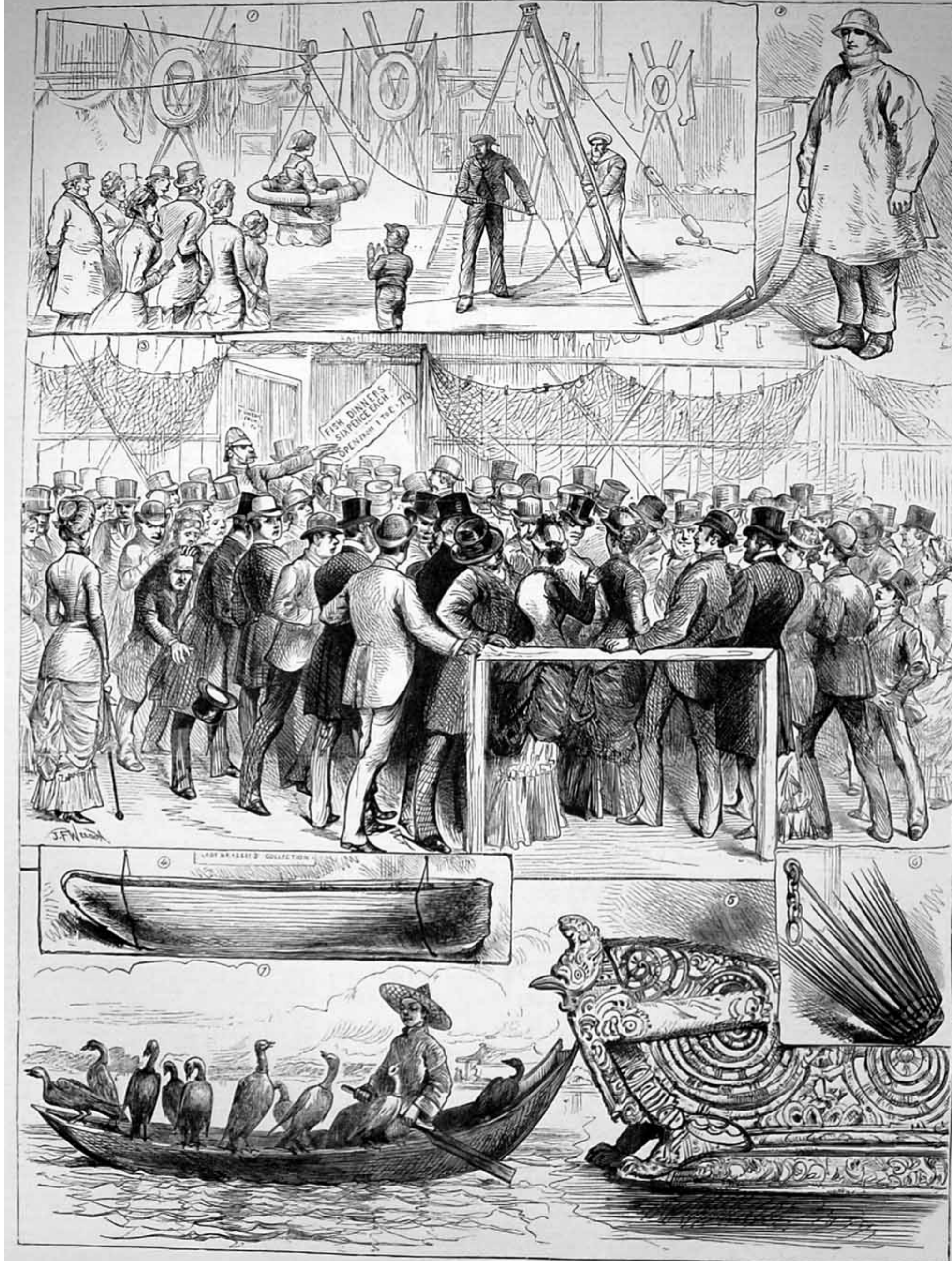
Scenes at the Exhibition.
From *The Illustrated London News*.

Opening Ceremony.
From *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (London).

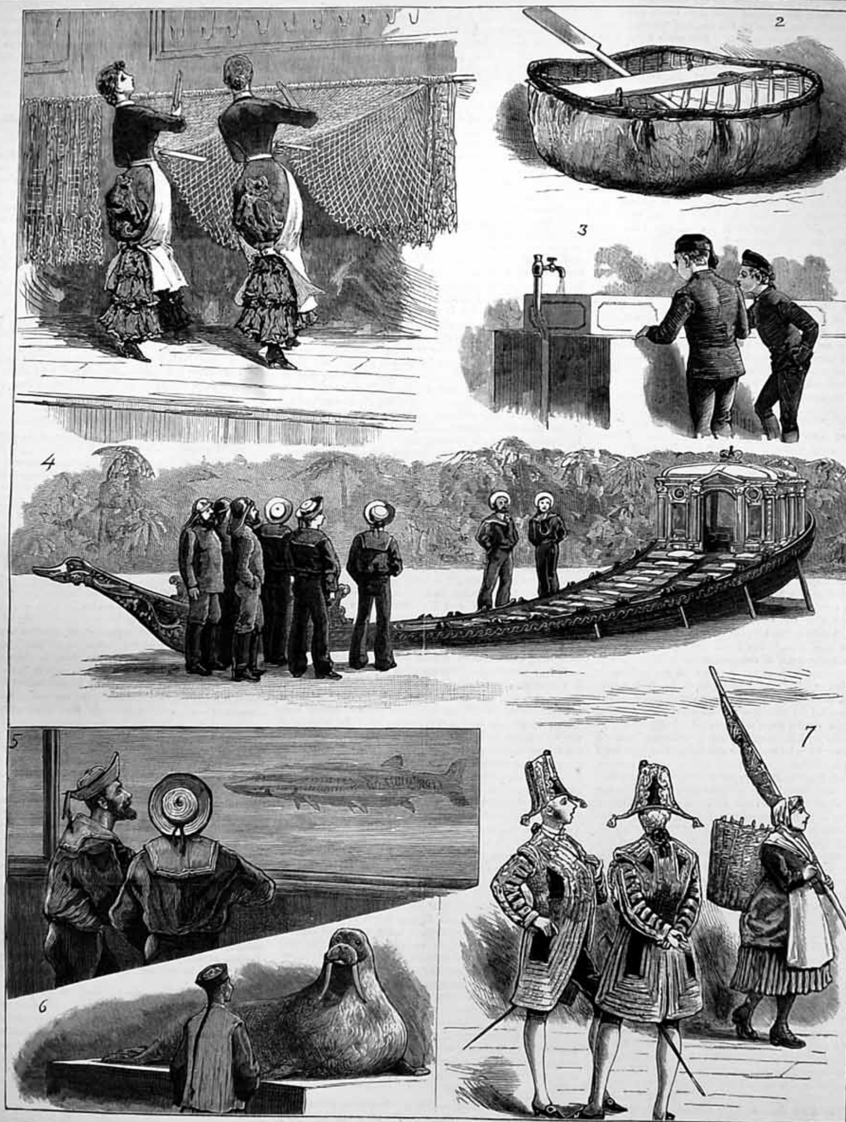


Fish farming at the Exhibition.
From *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (London).

Scenes from an evening event at the Exhibition.
From *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (London).



Scenes at the Exhibition.
From *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (London).



THE GRAPHIC

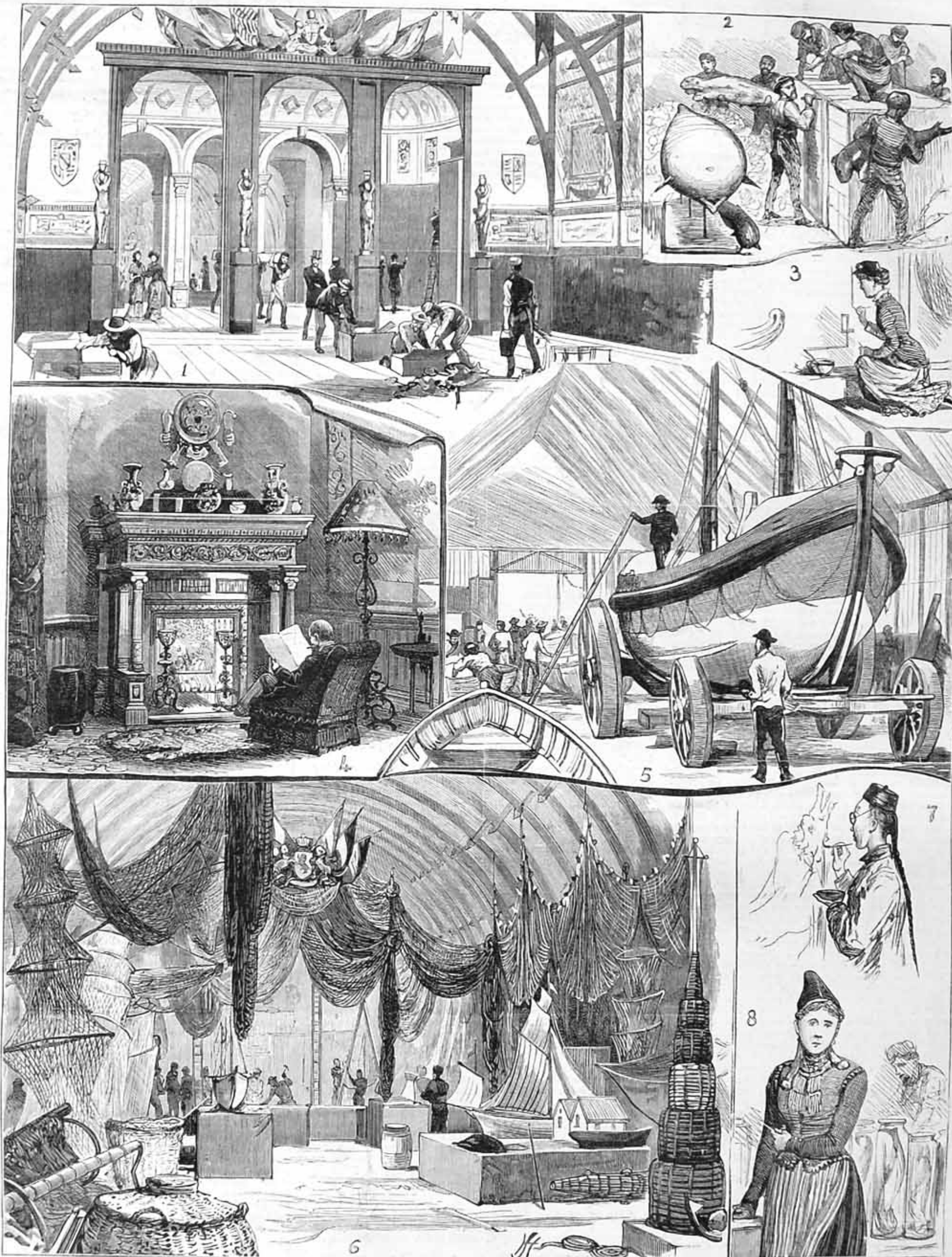
AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

No. 703.—Vol. XXVII. Reg^d. at General Post Office as a Newspaper | SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1883 | WITH EXTRA SUPPLEMENT | Price Sixpence Or by Post Sixpence Halfpenny

1. The Art of Netting.—2. A Coracle Used for Salmon Fishing on the River Boyne.—3. Young Fish (A Rearing Tank).—4. Bluejackets and Fishermen Looking at the State Barge.—5. Jack.—6. Foreigners.—7. Goldfish and Caller Herring.

THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION AT SOUTH KENSINGTON

Scenes at the Exhibition.
From *The Graphic* (London).



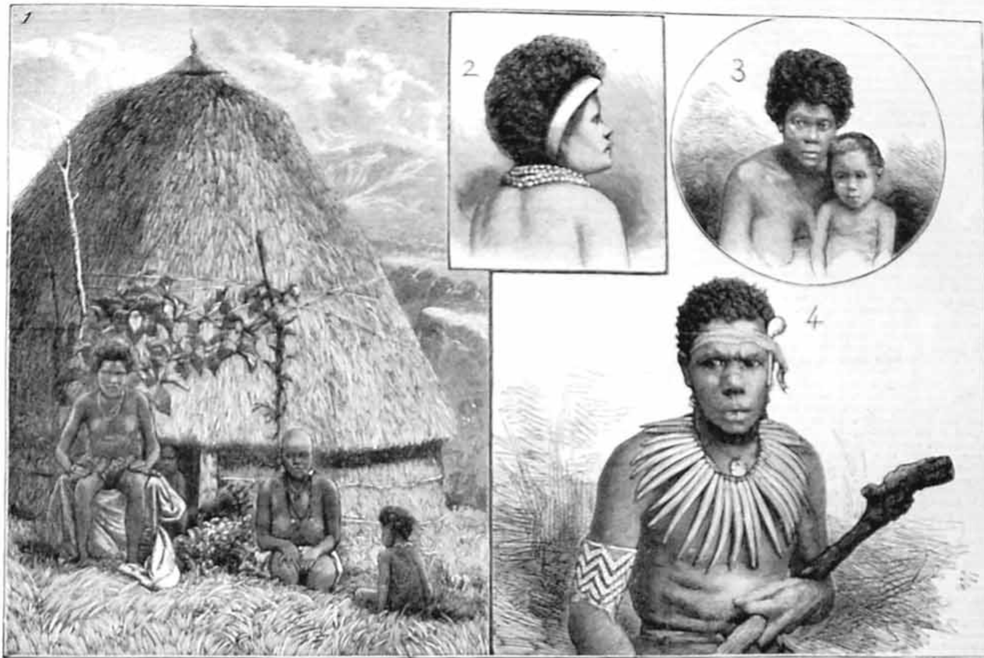
476 THE GRAPHIC May 12, 1883

1. The Entrance Hall.—2. Unpacking Seals, Canadian Court.—3. A Lady Decorator.—4. A Corner in the Prince's Pavilion.—5. The Lifeboat Shed.—6. The Netherlands Court.—7. A Celestial Artist.—8. A Fair Swede.

NOTES AT THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION, SOUTH KENSINGTON

Scenes at the Exhibition.
From *The Graphic* (London).

April 28, 1883 THE GRAPHIC 429



1. A Native Family and Hut.—2. A Native Woman of the Better Class.—3. Female and Child.—4. A Male Native.

A CRUISE OF H.M.S. "DIAMOND" AMONGST THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES, EXHIBITION AT SOUTH KENSINGTON—PREPARATION

Scenes at the Exhibition.
From *The Graphic* (London).

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Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle (UK)
Daily News (London) (BL)
Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country (BL)
Household Words (DJO)
Illustrated London News (BL)
Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News (BL)
Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper (BL)
The Morning Post (BL)
The Spectator (BL)
The Sporting Gazette (UK)
Times (Times Digital Archive)

PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS

(All via BL.)

*Dundee Courier (*also called *Dundee Courier & Argus* or *Dundee Courier & Argus & Northern Warder)*
Liverpool Mercury
Glasgow Herald
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