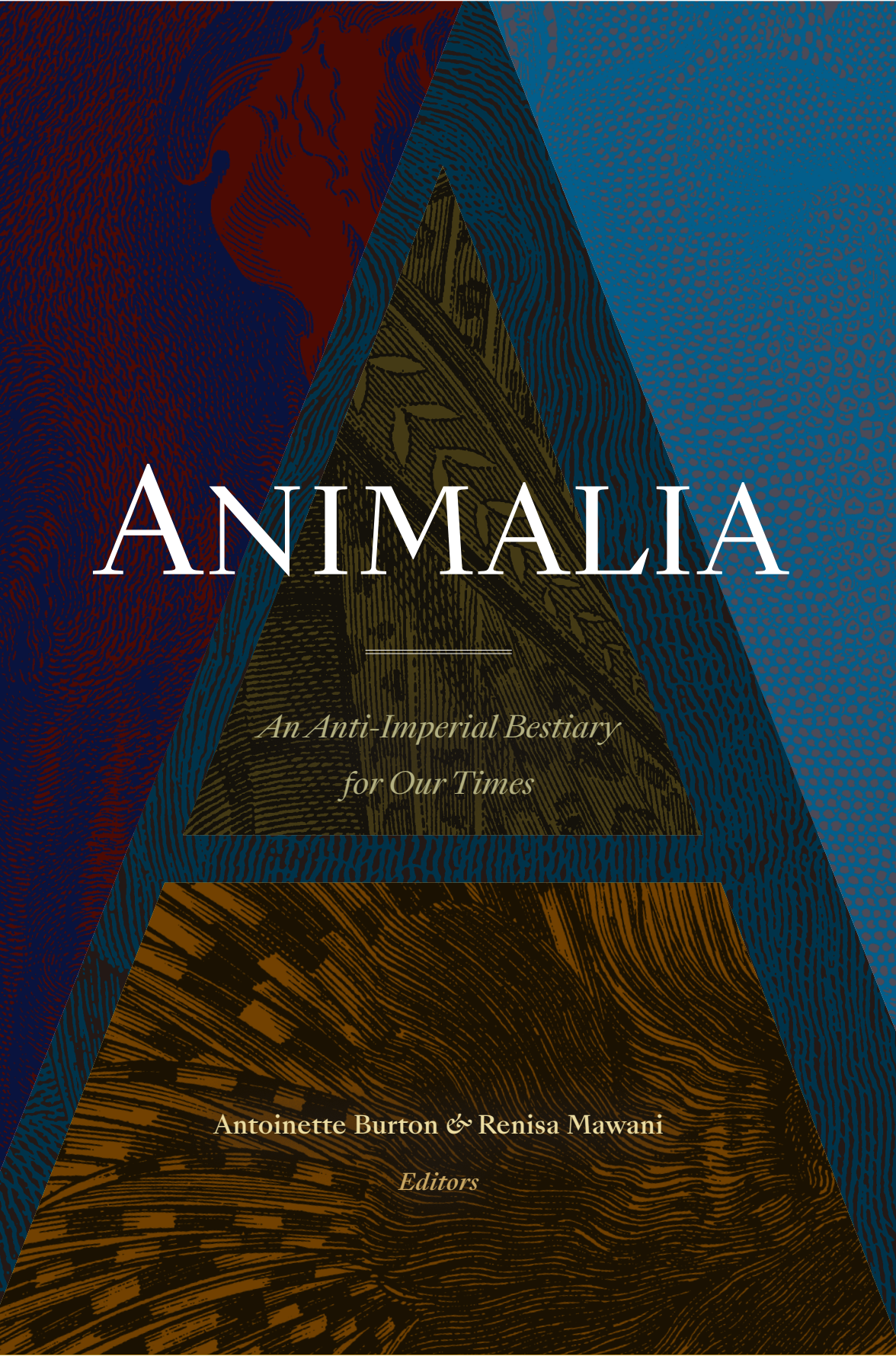




ANIMALIA

*An Anti-Imperial Bestiary
for Our Times*

Antoinette Burton & Renisa Mawani

Editors

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INTRODUCTION

Animals, Disruptive Imperial Histories, and the Bestiary Form

How trivial these symbols look; the simplest things we show to childhood!
But a sleeping force lies within them that revolutionizes the world.

LUTHER MARSH, ADDRESS ON THE ALPHABET,
THE VEHICLE OF HISTORY (1885)

The British Empire was entangled in animal life at every possible scale. Whether as imaginative resources, military vehicles, settler foodstuffs, status emblems, contested signs, or motors of capital, animals drove both the symbolic and political economy of modern imperialism wherever it took root. If imperial sovereignty was biopolitical—determining who could live and who must die—it was because the quest for racial supremacy was a pursuit of species supremacy and vice versa. And if empire was a project dedicated to organizing hierarchies of lives worth living, the human/animal distinction served as a recurrent reference point for who was expendable and who would flourish. How we talk about the animalia of empire, then, is critical to how we narrate the force of imperial power, including its unruly targets and its disruptive histories.

By foregrounding the British Empire as a multispecies enterprise, this bestiary offers one format and orientation for thinking through the workings of imperial power. Focused on a wide range of nonhuman animals—domestic, feral, mythical, and predatory—the collection invites readers to take stock of “animalia,” the taxonomic “kingdom” category

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first developed by Carl Linnaeus in his *Systema Naturæ* (1735), which informed and shaped nineteenth- and twentieth-century British imperial thought. By exploring human/animal relations of various kinds, the volume offers a critical reflection on how racial assertions of species supremacy played out in animal form. It tracks the ways Victorian “animal dreams” were bound up in imperial aspirations and vice versa. Representations of species supremacy were and are visual aids not simply to mark the unstable boundary between the human and nonhuman animal, but to highlight the history of dissent and disruption they index.¹ As an A to Z of animals and empire, *Animalia* illustrates how, why, and under what conditions the Anglophone imperial world was shaped and troubled by a variety of creatures—real, imagined, and underfoot.

To be clear, the bestiary was not an especially popular modern European genre; nor was it a common imperial one. Its heyday was in the middle ages, where it was an aesthetic object with a pedagogical purpose, most often as an instrument of catechism. A category of “illustrated ABC” texts emerged in English from the eighteenth century onward. Some of these dealt with animals, especially in the Victorian period, where X IS FOR *XERUS* and Y IS FOR *YAK* might appear complete with semiscientific images in children’s books. But these abecedarium texts were not dedicated exclusively to animals, imperial or otherwise. Anglophone readers had access to a vast array of animal portraits and images—from the paintings of Stubbs and Landseer to zoological drawings both scientific and popular—that suffused modern British culture. The visual field had primacy in this domain.² Given the centrality of animals to the English imagination, and their indispensability to the workings of the modern British Empire, the lack of a text-based bestiary form seems counterintuitive. If the bestiary is broadly defined as a classification tool—a naming device—designed to order and arrange the living world through a combination of words and images, then a wide range of nineteenth-century texts including natural histories, children’s fictional books, *Boys’ Own* stories, and even “memoirs” like Richard Owen’s on the gorilla, might be said to be bestiaries by another name.³ Format is key. As Luther Marsh notes in the opening epigraph above, classification systems—in his case, the English alphabet—may at first seem trivial, but “a sleeping force lies within them,” one that organizes, taxonomizes, and potentially “revolutionizes the world.” We follow Marsh’s provocation and use the English alphabet as one possible format for considering how the British Empire organized scientific and popular knowledge on humans and animals in the Anglo imperial

world. We also use it to index the ways these taxonomic orders were disputed and disrupted by animals and humans alike.

Charles Knight's two-volume *Pictorial Museum of Animated Nature*, published in 1844, offers one example of popular animal knowledge in the Victorian period. A comprehensive survey of mammals (elephants, jackals, oxen, and bats) and birds (warblers, wrens, and honey-sucklers), Knight's catalogue is arguably a bestiary, albeit not in alphabetized form. The same might be said of John Lockwood Kipling's lavishly illustrated *Man and Beast in India*. First published in 1891, the book begins with an epigraph from Walt Whitman:

*I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid
and self-contained
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania
of owning things.*

Idealized via a critique of God and Mammon in Whitman's poem, animals in Kipling's text serve a distinctly racial and imperial purpose. They support his argument that, contrary to popular opinion, Queen Victoria's colonial subjects were as cruel, if not more so, than Britons in their treatment of animals. Written at a moment when the cow-protection movement in India was gaining prominence, and in the wake of the passage of an animal rights act, *Man and Beast in India* is an attack on what British authorities viewed to be Hindu and Muslim practices of animal brutality. The well-being of animals was a primer for why the British should continue ruling India and remain vigilant in their civilizing mission, for the sake of the creaturely world, if nothing else.⁴

If bestiaries, strictly speaking, were not a common imperial form, books that elaborated taxonomies of animal life were. Volumes and periodicals abounded in and across the British Empire, from expansion through decolonization and beyond. The discipline of zoology took off at the high mark of Victorian empire. Textbooks on the subject, whether written from the perspective of the field or the laboratory, offered history lessons for medical students and students of empire alike. The writings of Charles Darwin, including his 1871 *Descent of Man*, and those of his contemporaries, such as George Romanes's 1882 *Animal*

Intelligence, are a small part of the vast nineteenth-century archive of animalia that made its way into the hands of professional and lay readers. These writings spawned new specialized fields of study, such as ornithology, and at the same time blurred the lines between science, expertise, and popular culture. Bestiaries, in this capacious sense, were plentiful in the age of empire, embedded as they were in the discursive landscape of exploration, conquest, and administration: activities that constituted the backbone of modern British imperialism's expansive reach and its enduring knowledge regimes. One example is Sir Harry Johnston's *Uganda Protectorate*, a 1904 account of his work as an imperial special commissioner. Over one hundred pages of volume one are dedicated to a chapter on zoology that serves as a minor bestiary, complete with elaborate taxonomical analysis prepared by the eminent professor of natural history and British museum official E. Ray Lankester and overseen by Johnston himself. The full text contains more than five hundred photographs and illustrations, most of them of animals who come in for deep description and what we might call the "imperializing" classification system of natural history. Johnston's narrative serves as a moral tale about evolution and the white man's progress. His expeditionary forces were key to the domestication of a baby elephant they encountered, an animal that the local chiefs had been unable to control. Acknowledging that it was difficult to tame, Johnston was pleased by the results of his "experiments," which turned the young elephant into a "most delightful pet."⁵

It would be easy to take Johnston's proconsular faith in white men's dominion over the animal kingdom as a measure of imperial hubris. Importantly, however, the story of the elephant is followed by an account of the local rhinoceros population, which proved less docile and accommodating than the baby elephant had been. Johnston describes the African rhinoceros as a "blustering creature" and a "grotesque survival from the mammalian epoch." The rhino is a downright nuisance because he routinely engages in "unprovoked charges," goring men before they have a chance to get out of the way. This "unprovoked wrath" was most evident along the Uganda railway lines, where the rhino proved a "dangerous nuisance" to Indian and African workers and especially to British travelers. Johnston's palpable frustration at the capacity of this creature to defy regulation and disrupt imperial transport all at once—and simply because it can—reminds us that animal life, whether large or small, could and did often work against the grain of imperial control. Animals regularly disrupted imperial agendas by de-

fying taxonomies and categories imposed by the British on the natural world. Even when such interruptions were minimal, they represent a challenge to histories of untrammelled species mastery that continue to shape grand narratives of modern British imperialism. By centering animalia, the imperial bestiary points not only to the significance of animals in imperial expansion; it also backlights the instability and vulnerability of empire in ways that cannot be fully appreciated through a focus on the colonizing activity of *Homo imperius* alone.⁶

In *The Order of Things*, in his famous remarks on Borges, Foucault argues that the bestiary is always an arbitrary and highly selective form. What he finds compelling in Borges's efforts to quote a "certain Chinese Encyclopedia" is his attempt to destabilize western systems of classification, an objective that would ultimately inspire Foucault's own writings and lectures. Foucault's interests are in how "our culture has made manifest the existence of order" and which of these "have been recognized, posited, linked with space and time, in order to create the positive basis of knowledge."⁷ In other words, Foucault's project is to confront the "order of things" by questioning the ontologies and epistemologies that inform it. Admittedly, by obeying "the alphabetical series (a, b, c, d)," the bestiary that follows may seem to limit the critical potential of Foucault's project by reiterating the familiar hierarchies of language, culture, and civilization that his work has so steadfastly challenged.⁸ However, our approach to the making of British imperial histories may also invite other ways to problematize classification schemas. As critics have noted, Foucault did not explicitly question the colonial, racial, or imperial basis of western systems of taxonomy and order.⁹ The contributors to this volume extend this project by situating species classification firmly within a dynamic and aspirational British imperial culture, one that projected racial regimes of authority, order, and control by engendering scientific and commonsense knowledges of nature, biology, and species. Among the animals enlisted for this volume, some—like fox or lion—evoke shared European traditions deriving from Aesop and later. Others, including scorpion or ibis, hail particular colonial environments. But the way each creature circulated within and without the spheres of imperial governmentality is typical of how all subjects designated for colonization might at once challenge and elude the grasp of their masters. A combination of iconic and minor figures, the animal species included here are not intended to fully represent empire's symbolic, material, or violent reach. Rather, the alphabetic form allows for juxtapositions that generate unexpected connec-

tions. We hope that these may serve as further invitations to rethink the central and often unruly place of animals within British imperial ventures and to conceptualize empire as a multispecies project (for more, see “Some Ways to Read This Book”). The bestiary form is, in this sense, both hybrid and unconventional: neither history nor literature per se, it offers a provocation to new ways of seeing and writing about empire and its biocultural creatures.¹⁰

To be sure, animals featured prominently in European and non-European empires alike, including the Mughal, Qing, and Egyptian dynasties. What is notable in the Victorian British variant is how imperial authorities and ordinary empire enthusiasts alike drew on animals—as symbols, companions, and machines—to advance projects of would-be imperial extension and consolidation through fictions and fantasies of racial, cultural, and species supremacy. The entries to follow ask questions, trouble, and challenge these assertions in important ways. Together, they illuminate how the ideological and practical contests of empire, which are too often traced only through the archive of human subjects, are thrown into bold relief when explored through animal form. As powerful representations and vehicles for dominion, hegemony, and desire, animals shaped the British imperial imagination in virtually every production it undertook. The British lion symbolized an “interspecies birthright.” The imperial raccoon—a transliteration of the Algonquian Powhatan word *arakunem*—came to represent a particular white masculinist “frontier wilderness” that was deeply enmeshed in the racial and colonial violence of Indigenous land appropriations, resource extractions, and African slavery in what is now the United States. Eventually, the raccoon became a symbol of American anti-imperialism, thus proving to be an unstable and disputed marker of British imperial dominance. Animals also signaled the vulnerabilities of empire. Mosquitos, as threats to mammals of various kinds, posed serious challenges to imperial aspirations. Disease outbreaks hindered European control over land and resources but opened possibilities for Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans—who had immunity—to further resist colonial dominance. By the mid-twentieth century, mosquitoes were commonly used in wartime propaganda to signal the imperial hubris of American power against the alleged racial threat posed by Japanese forces.

Wherever they went, British colonists and emigrants took animals with them, whether as domestic companions, foodstuff, or markers of property and status. The importation of animals formed a central part

of the British imperial ethos. In settler colonies including Australia, Canada, and South Africa, animals helped to further Indigenous dispossession by advancing settler claims to landownership through regimes of property, while engendering an accumulation of colonial wealth. But animals were not always obedient companions. New species often devastated local ecologies in settler colonies through deforestation, as in the case of cattle. They also impinged on the subsistence economies of Indigenous peoples and destroyed thriving communities, as evidenced by the wild boar. Native and foreign animals also fought back against pastoral economies and their attendant imaginaries. In the Cape, jackals regularly averted fences and feasted on livestock, thereby threatening the food supplies and property regimes upon which white settler domination relied. The disruptive power of the jackal lay, too, in its relationship to another undesirable, the dingo—so much so that their histories were written as one continuous species (the *Canidae*).¹¹ In Australia, the red fox—introduced to the colony only so that white settler men could recreate the English foxhunt—became a serious danger to farm animals and to indigenous flora and fauna in ways that both mirror and mimic politically predatory imperial forms. Ivan Kreilkamp has suggested that normative categories like the human, the novel, and the home were all “conceptualized in relation to an animal existence that is at once marginal or excluded but symbolically central and always a shaping influence.” If this is so, then empire in all its variations must be considered a major protagonist in the story of how animals came to accrue such imaginative and material power, both at home and “away.”¹²

Animals interrupted colonial and imperial projects at every turn. Debates about animal agency are rife in animal studies, inspired in part by Harriet Ritvo’s provocation thirty years ago that “animals . . . never talk back” and by new work on the vitalism of nonhuman matter, whether living or not.¹³ Contributors to *Animalia* engage the question of animals as actors in a general way; however, our aim is not to attribute intention or will. Rather, we track the trouble that nonhuman creatures of different sorts created for imperial officials, settlers, policies, and ambitions, and the disruptive anti-imperial histories they produced in the process. There are others who share our ABC format and its possibilities in foregrounding the willfulness of creaturely worlds. Hugh Raffles’s *Insectopedia* is a marvelous account of the longstanding entanglements between human and insect worlds. “So much about insects is obscure to us,” he writes, “yet our capacity to condition their existence is so vast.”¹⁴ Weaving between natural science, literature, and philoso-

phy, Raffles documents the porosity of human and insect life, the ways in which humans habituated insects and vice versa. In light of animal studies, in which we include Raffles's compendium, it may seem self-evident to claim that the politics of empire played out in multispecies registers, human/animal, native/foreign, and among species of various kinds. Surprisingly, however, there is still no comprehensive account of how and why this was the case for the modern British Empire, despite the fact that those dynamics can be traced across so many different archives. *Animalia* is not intended to be comprehensive in scope. To paraphrase Raffles, there are just too many animals to include; they are active, indifferent, and always on the move.¹⁵ But even with all its gaps and omissions, *Animalia* offers a sustained discussion of how imperial power was extended through and disrupted by animal species.

One important feature of the bestiary form is that, as a set of short entries, it allows us to see—with particular vividness—just how thoroughly imperial histories have been shaped by nonhuman animals in the Anglophone imperial world. As the essays in this volume show, animal bodies collided with the forces of empire in powerful ways that gave new shape and intensity to the politics of gender, race, sexuality, and class. Hunting offers an obvious example. “The hunt” symbolized the projected racial strength and displayed the material triumphs of empire, and at the same time signaled the vulnerabilities of British imperial manhood. Hunting wild game became a favored pastime for British colonists in the dominions, colonies, and protectorates. If the fox hunt in Australia represented the virtues of the English gentry, the tiger hunt in the forests of South Asia and the whale hunt in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans were unsurpassed tests of white “manly courage.” As a performative conquest over nature, hunting carried other violent effects, as evidenced in the further displacement of Indigenous and tribal peoples from their lands and waterways. Hunting literally gave material flesh to gendered, racial, and class hierarchies along other registers as well. In the imperial metropole, the proceeds of hunting—including whalebones and vulture and kiwi feathers—became highly coveted objects that furnished upscale women's fashion. Animal taxidermy that was proudly displayed in public and private spaces became “physical symbols of the power of the British over colonised lands—and colonised wildlife.”¹⁶ Thus, animals and animal parts were status symbols of masculinity, femininity, race, and class mobility through consumption, display, desire, and the relentless quest for military conquest and white settlement. But British consumers witnessed

only a small part of hunting that mistakenly signaled the triumph of imperial power. For all the animals killed, many others fought back and escaped. The coveted species of “the hunt” routinely put white British manhood to the test.

Animals signaled inter-imperial contests and connections that were overt and subtle. The British lion and the Russian bear were a common pairing in political iconography, a face-off that signaled imperial rivalries for political and territorial dominance over the Victorian globe. The sacred ibis, a bird that was long revered in Egyptian mythology, newly emerged in nineteenth-century imperial science and spawned a contest between French, British, and American naturalists. Following Napoleon’s defeat in Egypt, the mummified bird became “scientific evidence” that ostensibly supported some racial theories of human origins over others. But conflicts between European and Anglo empires were perhaps nowhere more evident than on the high seas. Oceans and continents featured differently in the imperial order of animalia. In the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, animal species—large and small—crossed jurisdictional divides and dramatized the reality that claims to imperial sovereignty were porous, unstable, and frequently at the mercy of nature. This volume contains two entries on whales (N IS FOR NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE and W IS FOR WHALE), each of which points to different ocean regions and to distinct yet shared imperial politics. Whaling in the Atlantic and Pacific tells discrete histories of the animal’s significance in Indigenous cosmologies and Anglo-imperial economies and imaginaries. These two entries bring the British and American empires together in ways that foreground competing ambitions over sovereignty and jurisdiction in coastal waters and on the high seas. They also signal the troubled projections of Anglo-imperial control.

Imperial systems of classification were established on an ostensible dividing line that separated humans from animal species. These differentiations are dramatically reflected in the bestiary form, which organizes animals into ascending taxonomies of worth, value and importance. Yet, human/animal distinctions, including their underlying claims to purity, were produced in time, space, and in situ. The lines that divided human from animal were the result of contingencies of time and place that shaped the limits and possibilities of imperial power on the ground and, equally, in the metropolitan imagination. Distinctions between humans and animals, though always informed by assumptions of race and species, were neither static nor stable. In distant colonial outposts and frontiers where European settlement was sparse,

white colonists relied heavily on animals for physical and psychic survival. Zebus were crossbred to provide milk, meat, and labor to furnish the material needs of white settlers; dogs offered protection, entertainment, and companionship in foreign and inhospitable environments. Amid the intimacies of human/animal relations, British authorities expressed concerns about other forms of affection that potentially threatened prevailing racial orders. Given that Indigenous and colonial populations were not always regarded to be fully human—and certainly not on equal footing with white Britons—cross-racial desire, many cautioned, was a type of “interspecies” mixing. From the dominions to the colonies, fears of white men “going native” often played out in animal form, as colonial anxieties over the wild boar remind us. Much like European men, feral pigs also broke away from “their domestic enclosures to roam, to prey, and to reproduce” (B IS FOR BOAR). This bestiary seeks to materialize these troublesome and disruptive histories. Imperial narratives of domestication and disorder, we argue, are not often visible in human-centered accounts of British imperial rule.¹⁷

The bestiary, as this volume makes clear, is a discrete inventory of the British imperial past, and a nod to the present and future as well. In recent years, research in the field of animal studies has expanded in the North American academy and has deepened our appreciation for the permeable boundaries, interconnections, and interdependencies of human and animal life. The study of nonhuman animals has emerged during an extended historical moment that some have called the “Anthropocene,” an epoch which signals the devastating effects of human-induced climate change and calls for, among other things, a new set of relationships among humans, animals, and other life forms. As several essays in this volume argue, the transport of animals to different imperial regions, combined with overhunting and overfishing, resulted in the destruction of local ecosystems and the extinction of animal species. The quagga, for instance, which was once indigenous to the Cape, vanished through settler agricultural practices. Whale-hunting in the colonial era significantly depleted the population of North Atlantic right whales, rendering them nearly extinct today. What these animal histories reveal is that the British Empire *must* feature prominently in discussions of the contemporary Anthropocene. British imperial pursuits were among the causes of climate change, though its effects are not often recognized in the crisis of human and nonhuman life or in the future of the planet.

Debates on climate change, which have been shaped in part through the rise of animal studies, need to critically question their own guiding assumptions of species supremacy. The human/animal divide that continues to animate discussions of the Anthropocene today still requires some troubling. The urgencies of planetary destruction demand a better understanding of how human/animal relations have been produced historically, particularly at the high mark of Victorian imperialism, when the British Empire extended control over 85 percent of the world. “Thinking with animals” is perforce an interdisciplinary task to which history is central and a better appreciation of the ideological, symbolic, and material work of empire is indispensable. Despite important case studies that illuminate the centrality of imperial history to animal studies, the latter field has developed mainly out of literary criticism and cultural anthropology. By the same token, British history has yet to grapple fully with imperial biopolitics at multiple scales.¹⁸ *Animalia* works to bring imperial histories to bear more intentionally on emergent conversations about the vibrancy of nonhuman worlds—not only by marking out where animals appear but when, where, and under what conditions they made the project of imperialism more difficult for its agents to accomplish. In that sense, this bestiary works against rather than along the grain of empire history. To the extent possible, it seeks to exceed the “given-ness” of imperial triumph without claiming to fully or finally decolonize.¹⁹ Our emphasis on the disruptive and disorderly force of nonhuman animals is not intended as a triumphalist case for animal resistance. Given the violence to which animals were subject and the extinction rates under global imperial regimes, “agency” must be carefully calibrated. Yet the nonhuman world did pose recurrent challenges to modern British imperialism, interrupting the best-made plans and reminding would-be colonizers on a regular basis that the terrains they sought to conquer were not uninhabited but were populated both by humans and by unruly animal species that refused to go away.

As with any classification system, our ABC is not comprehensive, nor is it intended to be. Such a survey is likely the work of a lifetime, and in this digital age may be a project best achieved beyond the confines of a single book between two covers. The sheer vastness of a multispecies world that the forces of British imperialism struggled with and against suggests the limits of linearity and narrative coherence when it comes to telling anti-imperial animal histories. Though this volume is far from

an encyclopedic account, each bestiary letter does more than represent a single animal artefact or tell a cohesive animal story. It serves as what Sara Ahmed calls an orientation device, aimed at uncovering different genealogies of how racialized imperial supremacy took shape in Anglophone cultural production over the last 150 years.²⁰ These processes were not static, nor were they solely human. They were the site of imperial power and anticolonial struggle represented potently in and through the forms and forces of entangled human/animal worlds. The illustrations that accompany each letter reveal the ways in which interspecies relations were indispensable in British claims to racial superiority—and Indigenous/colonial inferiority—precisely through the relationality and interdependence of the “human” and the “animal.” This dynamic might be called “mutual ecologies,” a term coined by the primatologist Augustin Fuentes.²¹ The entanglements of human and animal worlds is so broad and so deep that animal scholars speak of the codevelopment or coevolution of the horse or the dog and the historical human over wide swaths of time.²² Nonhuman animals also share intertwined histories, as the okapi, with its links to the equine, the giraffid, and even the mythic unicorn suggests. These genus histories and the social, cultural, and economic conditions that produced them extend, in some cases, from the ancient world to the present. For practical purposes, we focus more narrowly on the British Empire from the 1850s to the post–World War I period, though some of the contributors reach further back and forward in time as a way to highlight specific patterns and developments. As an entry point into more-than-human imperial worlds, we hope that this book will provoke reflections on the bestiariums still to be excavated from other colonial histories, contexts and empires.

Finally, *Animalia* is an imperial bestiary and an archive of anti-imperial histories. Conventional imperial histories are themselves a genre framed by colonizer-colonized models that emphasize extension, hegemony, and settlement over the persistently troubled ground of empire’s lived reality.²³ This is not the same as a chronicle of imperial criticism of the kind attributed, say, to Edward Lear for the “anti-colonial bestiary” of his animal limericks.²⁴ Nor is it equivalent to arguing that the boundaries that might be said to distinguish the domestic from the wild, or the colonial subject from the colonial animal, were constantly blurred (though they often were). What the texts and images that follow illuminate—with startling variety and consistency—is the concerted *attempt* to legitimate the supremacy of *Homo sapiens* (often

as white and male bodies) through a symbolic and material mastery over animals across the many territories of imperial dominion, and the recurrent *limits* placed on those efforts by a variety of nonhuman animals. Even when these limits appear as minor or insignificant, they signal the vulnerability of the imperial project to a variety of antagonists: humans, nonhuman animals, and combinations thereof. As with all histories of imperial power—and despite the savagery and violence its agents wrought—the real story is in the struggle over whether and to what extent such supremacy was actually achieved. *Animalia* offers a multispecies archive of the aspirations for human dominance that underwrote the British imperial enterprise, and how the “natural world” and its denizens challenged these claims on various scales. The animal archives pieced together here expose the uneven and contested ground of species ambition, and with it the drag on notions of unqualified imperial “success” that animal forms exercised in the realm of representation and cultural production. The combination of texts and images suggests the histories of contradiction and instability that a catalogue of imperial animals has the potential to materialize. Readers might approach the book as an unruly taxonomy that works at odd angles, through idiosyncrasies, and across historical and geographical storylines in ways that open new juxtapositions and conversations (see more in “Some Ways to Read this Book”).

That searing critiques of the limits of the human are unfolding today—alongside the ongoing struggles of Indigenous peoples, descendants of African slaves, and the formerly colonized who are fighting, even now, to be recognized as human—deserves some serious consideration. That such a contradiction should manifest at a moment of historically unprecedented neo-imperialism on a global scale is remarkable, yet little remarked on. *Animalia* represents a particular kind of archive of imperial and racial thinking that reflects how human species supremacy was asserted through struggles over nature, including efforts to dominate and domesticate animals in the modern British Empire. By making a case for the urgency of visualizing that contest now, as we confront ongoing struggles for social and racial justice against the threat of planetary extinction, we offer this bestiary as a historical intervention into a contemporary moment, fixed resolutely on the present and the future. If the ABC appears to be an elementary form that seems easy to apprehend, the anti-imperial bestiary is a mode of reading that is opposed and antagonistic to the protocols of conventional empire history. It is a reminder of how powerfully genres of representa-

tion and forms of narrative matter in how we understand the entanglement of human/animal worlds, imperial ambitions, and the horizon of planetary life itself.

Notes

- 1 Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin Danahay, eds., *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007).
- 2 Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750–1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).
- 3 Richard Owen, *Memoir on the Gorilla* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1865). For fiction, see John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body: Violence, Identity and Ecology in Victorian Adventure Fiction* (London: Anthem, 2012).
- 4 John Lockwood Kipling, *Beast and Man in India: A Popular Sketch of Indian Animals in Their Relations with the People* (London: Macmillan, 1892).
- 5 Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London: Hutchison, 1904), 1:371. See also E. Ray Lankester, *The History and Scope of Zoology* (New York: Humboldt, 1892).
- 6 Johnston, *Uganda Protectorate*, xx. For a luminous reflection on how Victorian pets backlight this generalized precarity in a rapidly industrializing—and, I would add, imperializing—world, see Teresa Mangum, “Animal Angst: Victorians Memorialize Their Pets,” in *Victorian Animal Dreams*, ed. Morse and Danahay, 15–34.
- 7 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2002), xxiii.
- 8 Foucault, *Order of Things*, xvii.
- 9 For a critique of Foucault’s lack of attention to colonialism and racism see Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).
- 10 Here we borrow from Samantha Frost’s evocative title, *Biocultural Creatures: Toward a New Theory of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
- 11 St. George Jackson Mivart, *Dogs, Jackals, Wolves and Foxes: Monograph of the Canidae* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1890).
- 12 Ivan Kreilkamp, *Minor Creatures: Persons, Animals and the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 1–2.
- 13 Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 5.

See also Erica Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion, 2002). On the new materialisms, see Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontologies, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); *Social Text* ("Interspecies," special issue edited by Julie Livingston and Jasbir K. Puar) 29, 1 (Spring 2011). The challenges here are epistemological as well as ontological; as Walter Johnson shows, in some historical and historiographical contexts the very definition of agency is bound up with the striving to "preserve humanity." See Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37, 1 (2003): 114.

- 14 Hugh Raffles, *Insectopedia* (New York: Random House, 2010), 44.
- 15 Raffles, *Insectopedia*, 4.
- 16 Alice Would, "The Curious Creatures of Victorian Taxidermy," *History Today*, July 4, 2018. <https://www.historytoday.com/alice-would/curious-creatures-victorian-taxidermy>.
- 17 For a different example of the abecedarium, see Antoinette Burton, ed., *An ABC of Queen Victoria's Empire; or, A Primer of Conquest, Dissent and Disruption* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
- 18 Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mittman, eds., *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). For examples of such case studies, one well established and two more recent, see John McNeil, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Julie E. Hughes, *Animal Kingdoms: Hunting, the Environment and Power in the Indian Princely States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); James Hevia, *Animal Labor and Colonial Warfare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). For an astute assessment of the prospects of animal histories in the age of empire, see Jonathan Saha, "Among the Beasts of Burma: Animals and the Politics of Colonial Sensibilities, c. 1840–1940," *Journal of Social History* 48, 4 (2015): 912–13; Kathleen Kete, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).
- 19 For one discussion of the stakes of these methodological challenges, see Billy-Ray Belcourt, "Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought," *Societies* 5, 1 (2015): 1–11.
- 20 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
- 21 Cited in Jane Desmond, *Displaying Death and Animating Life: Human-Animal Relations in Art, Science, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 21.
- 22 Elaine Walker, *Horse* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 12; Edmund Russell, *Greyhound Nation: A Coevolutionary History of England, 1200–1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

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23 See Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

24 Ann C. Colley, "Edward Lear's Anti-Colonial Bestiary," *Victorian Poetry* 30, 2 (1992): 109–20.

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