Saving the Stuffed Animal:
Narratives of Violence, Fictions of Comfort

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Saving the Stuffed Animal: Narratives of Violence, Fictions of Comfort defines a genre of "comforting stuffed toy animal fiction" (abbreviated as *stuffed animal fiction*) within the tradition of children's books featuring animals, and studies its role in the construction of the Anglo-American discourse on animals since the genre's inception in the turn of the twentieth century. The stuffed toy animals in stuffed animal fictions are not fake animals or humans in disguise, but are species of animal-made-commodities. Stuffed animal fictions produce and circulate comforting narratives in which the stuffed animal gets relieved from threats of violence, at the same time as selling these narratives as a product for naïve, animal-loving children. My dissertation makes visible the cultural process through which the genre of stuffed animal fiction manages the discomforting awareness of the predicament of animals—first, providing fictional narratives of animals' relief and then framing the need for such narrative as children's. Chapter 1 follows the development of the genre from its inauguration in A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) to its classic manifestations in Don Freeman's *Corduroy* (1968) and Joan Robinson's Teddy Robinson stories (1953-1964). Late twentieth century works still make use of the tropes of stuffed animal fictions established in *Winnie-the-Pooh*, but are as a rule more conscious of the genre's suspicious relationship to violence perpetrated on animals. Chapter 2 looks at how the comfort of stuffed animal fictions is questioned through a realistic depiction of the worn stuffed animal bodies in picture books such as Dom Mansell's *My Old Teddy* (1991) and Jane Hissey's

Old Bear stories (1986-2003). Chapter 3 discusses how the 2010s attempts at rewriting of the Pooh stories betray uncertainties as to the fate of "real" bears in history. Chapter 4 focuses on works that illuminate how the individual narratives of animal rescue help maintain the brutal system of animal commodification, E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) being one of the works that borrow from and question the stuffed animal fictions' trope of animal relief.

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Introduction

My study takes as its subject the stuffed toy animal in children's literature. I examine this subject to look into ways in which the human relationship with animals is culturally processed and justified in the age of industrial capitalism. To use academic shorthand, I am arguing that the stuffed toy animal in children's literature is the place where our relationship with manufactured and commodified animals is constructed. Cultural construction is a big term, and I am using it in a very particular sense in this work. When I use the phrase "cultural construction of animals in children's literature about the stuffed toy animal," I am not implying that the stuffed toy animal in chilren's books played a secret key role in the making of the material system of commercial-industrial exploitation of animals. Rather, I am saying that the stuffed toy animal in such books have had a role to play in the making of the cultural apparatus of making-do with the system of exploitation of animals. In other words, the literature studied in my dissertation does not make the system, but helps maintain it. Literature does so in making us bear with the system and its violence. As you can see, there are already quite a few assumptions involved in setting the research method and the research goal thus. My Introduction engages in the work of identifying and providing an understandable context for these assumptions—some of which might not ring an intuitive bell.

The first—and perhaps most noticeable—of my assumptions is that the stuffed toy animals in children's books (often called anthropomorphized animals) are not humans in disguise, but are related to the flesh-and-blood animals of industrial capitalism. The intuition that the two kind of animals are related is what brought this project into being. More precisely, I presume that

1) both are the animal-products of the age of the industrial capitalism; and 2) the stuffed toy animal stands for the flesh-and-blood animal in our cultural imagination by virtue of this shared provenance.

In veering away from the term "anthropomorphism," I make visible another assumption. It is that anthropomorphism is a term that is more confusing than productive when it comes to the discussion of animals in an age in which most animals are molded to human needs and wants. The term "anthropomorphic" often entails a confusion between anthropomorphic, manmade, and fake; as often as not, it presupposes the existence of an unanthropomorphized, real, and natural animal, and this I question. I believe that attempts to acknowledge the problematic existence of exploited and consumed animals and their suffering have often been dismissed under the label of anthropomorphism. I submit as my evidence the history of animal advocacy movements' struggles with the term and its pejorative ring.

We often consider stuffed toy animals as the emblematic anthropomorphized animal. But even though the body of the stuffed toy animal is indisputably manufactured, it does not necessarily resemble that of the human (or the species of "man")[1]. The process of the transformation of bears into today's teddy bears has not been directed by an impulse to make them look like humans: it has been directed by the need to make bears "softer and cuddlier" (Maniera 121), so that bears become "softer playmate[s] for small children . . . that could be held and comforted, and that could comfort" (120). Making animals into appealing playthings can

[1] I have chosen to use "man" throughout as the name for the human species, in part to do away with the baggage surrounding the concept of "the human," but also simply because it is shorter. In most of my uses of "man," I do not intend the term to be gendered.

entail making animals look like children (the neotonic look), but making animals look like children is also not the same thing as making animals look human: think of today's teddy bears who have acquired "larger heads, flatter faces, and shorter, thicker limbs" (Lawrence 149). And what about animals that are designed to meet the human penchant for the authentic-looking, non-humanlike animal—such as the animals of wildlife photos and wildlife television programs? Or flesh-and-blood animals that have been so genetically modified that they no longer look natural? Where do they fall on the anthropomorphic/real spectrum?

Anthropomorphism is less a descriptive term, and more a derisive label that points out an epistemological error. Thus, the term "anthropomorphism" has been at the center of an ongoing cultural dispute on how far we should recognize the suffering of animals in the system of animal exploitation. The battle pretends to be an epistemological one, but the matters on the table are really moral and political stakes. Frans de Waal warns against the potentially harmful ethical consequences of the current use of the term "anthropomorphism": "if a chimpanzee, who sits huddled in a comer after having lost her infant, is said to look depressed, this is not just a matter of speaking, a spurious anthropomorphism, unless one is convinced that apes, like machines, lack an emotional life" (270). Emanuela Spada also points out that, in attempt to avoid anthropomorphic "mistakes," we come close to "[categorizing] animals as machines" (45). The term has been used to dismiss "a reasonable assumption, that, in their own individual manner, mammals suffer only to a greater or letter extent than we do" (Linzey 73). We get a glimpse of the long history of the debate when Sarah Trimmer, an eighteenth-century author of animal stories for children, defends her "anthropomorphism" as "a way to develop a child's moral imagination with regard to animals" (Cosslett 42). Discussing anthropomorphic animal representations, Greg Garrard also points out how "the sceptical attack on sentimental views of

animals risks making it impossible to describe animal behaviour at all," and brings up research that shows how "scientific researchers insulate themselves from moral qualms by rejecting as 'inappropriate' the descriptive language more usually used for human behaviour" (138). What gets derided as sentimental—and anthropomorphizing—forms of animal-love could in fact be a form of "identifications and affections [that] traverse the species boundary" (Menely 246).

I am also working with the implicit assumption that animals of our time are manmade things rather than natural beings or the mysterious Other of humans, and should be understood and studied as such. In this vein, I argue that the stuffed animal toys in children's books—by virtue of their mass-produced thingness—stand in for today's living animals. I do not believe that this process can be reversed and animals can be freed from human systems so as to be returned to their natural state (or, to a state less-interfered-with by humans). Animals and humans are now fully entangled in a system that is making them both into something unnatural, and any appraisal or reimagination of the human-animal relationship has to take this into account. In this, my work is aligned with posthuman animal studies. However, I regret that we came to such a state, and my work attempts to remain aware—and critical—of the insensible amount of one-sided violence involved in the process of incorporating animals into the manmade system.[2] The

[2] For example, Donna Haraway beautifully explains how "companion species take shape in interaction": "they more than change each other; they co-constitute each other, at least partly" (366). My qualms with such an account of interspecies-making is that, to put it bluntly, it sounds too good. It is as if what is going on with us and animals is a wondrous, pleasurable, and reciprocal process, and it is as if, in acknowledging the wondrousness of this process, we are participating in deconstructing dominant and injurious ideologies such as anthropocentrism. A feel of liberation is certainly involved—but who is liberated from what? Not the animals who are even now being brutally reduced to things in the unchanged system of animal production/consumption. I suspect that it is our conscience that gets

human-animal relationship in this system is such an asymmetrical one that sometimes I do not think it proper even to call it a relationship; if it is a relationship, it is a relationship in which non-human lives are brutally reduced to things for human consumption. In comprehending the historical making of animals along these lines, I have been indebted to the theoretical and political insights of work in the fields of animal studies and ecocriticism, and I will attempt to self-define the place of my project in such a context.

I reach back to historical sources to support my understanding of stuffed toy animals and today's flesh-and-blood animals as both commodities that belong to the system of exploitative capitalism. In doing so, I wish to supplement the history of the thingification of flesh-and-blood animals[3] with an account of stuffed toy animals, while placing the birth and popularization of

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liberated through such sublimated accounts of interspecies making. In being guarded against the pleasure of posthumanist celebrations of boundaries-crossing, I am with Ramachandra Guha who points out that "invoking the bogy of anthropocentricism is at best irrelevant and at worst a dangerous obfuscation," when the fundamental ecological problem is "overconsumption by the industrialized world and by urban elites in the Third World" (74). We should beware of the faux-liberatory power of "hybridities and the free play of differences across boundaries" (Hardt and Negri 142), hybridity, mobility, and difference being consummate "capitalist schemes of commodity consumption" (152).

[3] New techniques of processing and molding animal bodies, and the systems that perpetuated them, transformed flesh and blood animals into veritable materials for human consumption. John Berger comments that "later in the so-called post-industrial societies, they [animals] are treated as raw material. Animals required for food are processed like manufactured commodities" (11). Antoine Traisnel recounts how animals are "recast as endlessly reproducible and thus eminently disposable . . . with the rise of the industrial biocapitalism" (13). Peter Atkins sums up the history of uses of animal bodies as the history of "the transformations of living organisms into industrial raw materials" ("The Urban Blood" 90). The beginning of the twentieth century saw the development of "some very

stuffed toy animals in the broader historical context of the establishment and normalization of the industrialized system of animal exploitation (epitomized in the meat production system) in the early twentieth century. My dissertation provides textual evidence for how stuffed toy animals stand for manufactured flesh-and-blood animals. In this, I am considering stuffed toy animals not as fake animals, but as one of the "animal-made-objects" of the twentieth century (Fudge 87): they come out of the same historical process as flesh-and blood-animals contemporary to them. Teddy bears, for example, are not un-bears, but "a version of a bear" that is "neutered, civilized, humanized, and sanitized" for the sake of human use (Lawrence 150). Stuffed toy animals, just as the farm animals of factory farms, belong to the industrialized system of animal production. The toy-making industry has been a "sector of the highly concentrated industrial economy" since the turn of the twentieth century (Kline 150), and is designed to make toys "available in large numbers" in a "mass market" (Cross 17). Stuffed toy animal production employed "a conveyer-belt system" since Steiff's introduction of it in 1921 (Maniera 91), and production has developed into even more intensified forms after "the emergence of multinational toy companies" in the 1960s (138).

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efficient tools with which to change [farm] animals intentionally," and "since the 1930s these tools have increasingly been used to make animal production ever more efficient" (Sandøe et al. 314). The creatures of the modern farmed animal production system are caught up in "the factory formula," which is to "keep cost down and manipulate animals' productivity upward" (Finelli and Mason 160). Helen Tiffin concludes that "so-called farm animals have been returned to a Cartesian dystopia in which they are represented as mere automata—'raw material' for the production of meat" in the mechanized meat industry (251). I discuss the predicament of farm animals in further detail in Chapter 4.

Next, I place the stuffed toy animal of children's books in a particular cultural history: the nineteenth- and twentieth-century process by which humans came to explain and justify the cruel system of animal commodification. I believe we have ample evidence concerning the existence of a widespread, shared discomfort with the ethics of the existing system of animal production and consumption. The animal advocacy movement itself is a form of unsettled response to the shock of the violence of the new industrialized system of animal management and production. The developing industrialized system of animal use caused cultural anxieties over the violence involved, some of these misgivings congealing in the form of the animal anti-cruelty movements proper. According to Peter Atkins, "the experiences of exploitation, slaughter and disassembly were common means for contemporaries [of growing nineteenth-century cities] to understand their animals," and this experience was mediated "through the morality of regret" ("The Urban Blood" 79). The widespread discomfort regarding industrial capitalism and its use of animals manifested, for example, in anxiety-ridden responses towards Eadweard Muybridge's mechanized images of horses: people were concerned how "the images' means of production enacted a kind of brutality upon the subjects of study" (Ott 419). It is because the condition of animals in nineteenth-century London overwhelmed and aroused people that "the outraged sought legal protection for working animals; and the collectively compassionate formed organizations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" (Mangum 15). Diana Donald shows how the protest at the treatment of animals constituted a protest at "the cutthroat commercialism that commodified men as well as animals" in the nineteenth-century London (528).[4]

[4] Caveat: in giving due appreciation to the role of the animal anti-cruelty movements in animal politics context, I do

What is more puzzling to me than the existence of such discomfort is how we learned to live with this discomfort, this unsettling knowledge, and how the impetus of the movements to get rid of the source of such discomfort came to be tamed. A thing to note about cultural anxieties regarding violence towards animals is that the system has not been compromised due to the existence of people's misgivings—or even protests—towards it. The workhorse protests tried to free horses-for-transportation from the violence that had been plaguing them in nineteenth-century cities, but then "the combustion motor consigned workhorse protests to the movement's back burners" (Beers 66). The livestock campaign "stayed at the forefront of animal advocates' fight against institutional cruelties," just as "the sheer volume of animals entering plant gates soared" in early twentieth-century America (103); it has been the way with things ever since. Neither the violence nor the discomfort seems to have been eliminated; rather, the discomfort came to coexist with the violence.

My hypothesis is that such cohabitation was made possible through removing the *sight* of violence towards animals from our daily life, in place of removing the violence itself (which cannot be removed). Teresa Mangum mentions that in the nineteenth century, there existed a "social ambition to hide animals and their suffering from public view and hence, from public responsibility" (Mangum 31). Atkins's work on "the 'Great Separation' of human residence from animal production" shows how this project was successful ("Introduction" 2): "society's growing

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not intend to defend these movements against accusations of their suspicious involvement in other human-political discourses. The humanitarian anti-cruelty movements can be a genuine and meaningful attempt at opposing the advent of the all-consuming industrial capitalism, at the same time as being a hypocritical middle-class project of consolidating the social order and constructing national identity (as Harriet Ritvo so well explains). It is just important that we get a rounded picture of the truth.

queasiness and guilt about the killing of animals could be mitigated because it was out of sight and out of mind" ("The Urban Blood and Guts Economy" 86). Now, As Helen Tiffin points out, "much of our cultural apparatus is directed towards . . . converting their [animals'] potentially disturbing presences into more easily ignored absences," with "the hiding away of factory farms and abattoirs" being just one of those apparatus (251). There are moments in which it seems as if the very impulse of the animal protection movements is to protect humans from sights of violence, rather than protecting animals from actual violence. Jonathan Burt writes how "a great part of animal welfare history in the nineteenth century . . . dealt with the question of how animals were *seen* to be treated and implicitly linked the issue of cruelty to the visual order" (217; italics mine). Kathleen Kete also tells us that "the animal protection movement in the nineteenth century" was informed by "the need to quarantine violence . . . so [that] the sights and sounds of dying animals would not disturb neighborhood life" (27). For example, the "removal [of Smithfield Market] to the suburbs . . . was from the start the prime objective of the anti-cruelty groups and journals" in nineteenth-century London (Donald 530). My dissertation tracks this historical change; I believe the turning point comes somewhere around the turn of the twentieth century in the Anglo-American context. My dissertation is an attempt to partially solve the big puzzle through a look at the function of the comforting stuffed toy animal fictions of the early twentieth century and onwards.

My study locates a subgenre of the comforting stuffed toy animal fiction (hereafter *stuffed animal fiction*, in accordance with everyday language and for the sake of brevity) within the tradition of children's books featuring animals, and studies its role in the construction of the twentieth-century discourse on animals. I argue that this subgenre is defined by how it conceives of the relationship between the innocent child, the animal, and violence: it is invariably about

stuffed toy animals being rescued from threats of violence by the innocent child (the fictional figure) and for the innocent child (the implied reader of the fiction). In this, I am considering the innocent child as a cultural construct that is used to mediate the shared cultural discomfort at violence towards animals. My study is informed by work in children's literature studies that consider children's texts as a place where the figure of the innocent child is constructed and mobilized in favor of various ideological discourses. Considering "the stories told to children" as a place where "the idea of the child is repeatedly made and remade" (Sánchez-Eppler 35), my work hopes to provide another convincing example of how "belief in the universal and unchanging essence of childhood can make all sorts of cultural arrangements and power structures appear natural" (35-36) as a contribution to critical children's literature studies. Along with Jacqueline Rose, I am interested in "important political repercussions which follow from [the] concept of childhood innocence," and especially in how "culture is *infantilized*" when it is made children's (50). That is, I am interested in how a particular group of children's texts forges a cultural association between childlike/childish innocence and concern for animals, and how this cultural association figures into the construction of the normative adult discourse on animals—one in which conscientiousness towards animals is trivialized as a children's thing. Robin Bernstein, in her discussion of the construction of race, shows how "childhood innocence provided a perfect alibi" in "the production of racial memory through the performance of forgetting" (8). Bernstein's insight into the role of childhood innocence in the construction of adult cultural discourses informs my discussion of how the figure of the child innocently concerned for animals provides an excuse for adult unconcern to the issue of the exploitation of animals.

My main interest in this project is in how stuffed animal fictions clandestinely accomplish their work as animal texts by offering themselves as "mere" children's texts, My scope does not extend to the question of how these animal texts shape real children or real children's reading. I also take a brief look at historical variations and changes in the forms taken by the association of animals, innocence, and children in Anglo-American culture. Stuffed animal fictions inherit as well as reinvent this traditional association, when the genre constructs the child as a figure who is (and should remain) innocent/ignorant of violence towards animals. The Anglo-American relationship with exploited and abused animals has been mediated through the figure of the innocent child ever since the problem gained popular attention in the late eighteenth century. The now-popular version of the innocent child—who is imagined in terms of "emotional attachment to animals" (Kline 149) and who is, I argue, the very product of stuffed animal fictions—should be understood in the context of such a history. In animal anti-cruelty literature since its inception in the late eighteenth century, anxieties about the ethics of the relationship between animals and humans have *manifested as* anxieties about the relationship between animals and children: children who might commit—or might be complicit to—violence towards animals due to their lack of knowledge. Ultimately, the figure of the uneducated-but-educatable child helps make anxieties manageable. The texts of the animal anti-cruelty literature tradition bring up the problem of violence towards animals, at the same time as promising to educate people away from their proclivity towards violence.[5] Harriet Ritvo tells us that "the only

[5] My take is that the animal anti-cruelty literature problematizes the animal condition in a way that is more comforting than truthful. As long as the source of violence towards animals is the childhood/childlike ignorance of individuals, the violence can theoretically be eliminated through education of those individuals, the anti-cruelty texts

genre of eighteenth-century literature that focused repeatedly on humane issues" was "books written specifically for children," and that these books were "loaded with uplifting messages about the need to treat them [animals] kindly" (131). Tess Cosslett also brings into view how eighteenth-century animal stories for children "convey[ed] lessons about animals in the real world . . . and how we should behave towards them" (39). From Diane Beers, we learn that "publication [of animal advocacy campaigns] targeted all age groups, but humane educators remained . . . committed to the instruction of children" (88), and that "the campaign [of animal advocates in early twentieth-century U.S.] directed much of [the] faith in the transformative power of knowledge towards children" in their literature (97).

The innocence of the child in the stuffed animal fictions manifests in an "unrealistic" concern for animals, instead of in the form of uninformed violence towards animals. That is, it is no longer a dangerous lack that calls for educational intervention through anti-cruelty literature, but an adorable foolishness that is to be protected through comforting fictions that tell of unexploited animals. My chapters will show how this figure of the adorable, foolish, and animal-loving child helps manage the discomfort with the predicament of animals: it is childlike—and thus somehow less sensible—to be too seriously concerned about what is going on with animals. The stuffed animal fictions delight in, indulge, and, most importantly, make light of the child's innocent concern for animals, so that the concern is "idealized, treasured, adored" at the same time as being "easily disposed of, abused, neglected, abandoned," as in James Kincaid's account of what happens to the child himself/herself (17).

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themselves being the means of this transformative education. However, is the root of violence truly in the educatable ignorance of individuals, rather than in the system of industrial capitalism that surpasses and encompasses individual?

One last thing: when I conceived of this project, I wanted to make each chapter about a different species of stuffed animal. What I found in my process of research is that so much of stuffed animal fiction is about stuffed bears, and that those bears do not represent flesh-and-blood bears in particular, but animals-in-the-system in general. The children's books I study are about animals that come to be defined by their function as a things-for-humans, rather than in terms of species; this marks, in fact, a new phase of the epistemological and real domination of animals. I hope to make this violence visible through my readings of stuffed animal fictions as manufactured-animal fictions, rather than to participate in the violence, but I am more hopeful than confident in this regard.

1.0 A Fable of Commodified Animals

Stuffed animal fictions are understood as anthropomorphized "fake" animal stories for children, and as timeless classics. I propose to understand these fictions as stories about real, commodified animals that serve adult cultural needs of the twentieth century. These stories are, after all, about toy animals of the twentieth century, and toyfication is an ultimate form of commodification.

Stuffed animal fictions aim to soothe Anglo-American cultural guilt over the capitalist system of animal commodification, helping society deal with an awkward gap between the brutal system of animal production and the demands of collective conscience: I will call this *the animal problem*. The cultural work of these fictions is two-fold. The fiction offers a relieving narrative in which the commodified animal almost gets, but avoids being, crushed by the system; it recalls the prevalence of violence to animals, only to dissipate the threat. It either delivers the animal to a pastoral place where affection rather than commercialism rules human relationship to animals (often the home of the good private consumer), or shows that the animal has been in such a place all along. These stories are meant to provide a false sense of resolution to the animal problem, thus letting the system continue on, unseen and undiscussed. These stories function as narratives of consolation based on an implicit contract with readers. Stuffed animal fictions are supposed to keep to their known narrative conventions, and readers are supposed to enter these stories reassured in the knowledge that animals will ultimately be safe from the system in these stories (if mostly not in reality), and that they themselves will be safe from the bite of conscience while reading these stories.

The stuffed animal fiction, at the same time, provides a subtle justification for the existing system of animal commodification, precisely in that its relief narrative is circulated as a product for children. The straw figure of a less-knowing but caring child is essential to the construction and circulation of the relief narrative: the animals are often delivered by—and entrusted to—the care of children in individual narratives, and the consolation of relief narratives itself is ostensibly for children. This frames not just the need for consoling stories but also the discomfort with the existing system itself as a childish and unrealistic response, thus normalizing the status quo of the animal industry as an adult reality—the kind of reality that should be accepted even when it is not exactly desirable.

1.1 Constructing the Codes of Reading

A. A. Milne's Pooh stories (1926-28) provide a good place to start exploring the cultural function—as well as the defining characteristics—of the stuffed animal fictions. Its stuffed animal narrative[6] is couched in a frame narrative in which the stuffed animal stories are fabricated and read. By showing scenes in which the stuffed animal narrative is read, the Pooh stories provide a look into the social and cultural context surrounding stuffed animal fictions. It makes apparent what remains unspoken but known when we read the stuffed animal fictions: the cultural agreement on what these fictions are supposed to be, and how these fictions are

[6] I will call the stories within the frame *Hundred Acres Wood stories* to distinguish them from *Pooh stories*, which will refer to the whole that includes the frame and its contents.

supposed to be taken in, on both affective and intellectual planes. In other words, the Pooh stories are among the genre-defining stuffed animal fictions that set up the contract in a written form, thus providing a guideline for future readers of stories similar to the in-frame Hundred Acres Wood stories.

The defining feature of the Hundred Acres Wood stories, which they share with later stuffed animal fictions, is their reassuring and reassuringly-repetitive narrative structure in which the threat of violence to the thingified animal body is raised and then deflected. In almost every episode, the animal body is put under danger of being crushed, caught, drowned, etc., evoking the familiar plight of animal bodies (both stuffed and not) in the real world, but a fortunate turn of events prevents violence from ultimately taking place. When you think about it, the deflection of violence towards animals is the most fantastic thing about the Hundred Acres Wood stories, even more so than the fact that animals talk. This fantasy is what differentiates the Hundred Acres Wood stories from other animal stories in which we can hear animals talk. Critics notice the ironic centrality of violence in the Hundred Acres Wood stories, though they tend to pass over the fact that the violence in question is that of violence to animal bodies. Paula Connolly writes that the Pooh stories appeal as "an alternative vision to the violence and upheavals of the present world" (8); Robert Hemmings characterizes the Pooh stories as "an idealized version of that childhood . . . in which violence is barred and threats and danger are circumscribed by whimsy" (73). It seems as if it is impossible not to think about the un-actualized but looming presence of violence when reading the Pooh stories. The comfort of the Hundred Acres Wood stories derives from the predictability of the repetitive narrative structure in which it is promised that violence to the animal body will be deflected, as much as from the repeated deflection of the threat itself. The Hundred Acres Wood stories constitute a recognizable pattern: Pooh gets into

trouble, gets stuck, gets "into a tight space," then comes out unscathed. (We can see this in the very name of the second episode of Pooh stories, "*In Which* Pooh Goes Visiting and Gets into a Tight Place.") There is very little suspense; readers are expected to know that animals in the Hundred Acres Wood stories will narrowly but invariably avoid harm.

The relief narrative of the Hundred Acres Wood stories comes close to slapstick comedy, when it asks readers to sit back and smile at Pooh getting himself into all kinds of places. In both genres, the sight of the body in danger is not supposed to be an object of alarm, but an object of pleasurable entertainment. Though entertainment in both cases has to do with dissipation of the concern over the bodies in question, the structure of entertainment is a bit different. In the Hundred Acres Wood stories, readers are supposed to smile because of the knowledge that violence will be inconsequential to animal bodies in these stories—despite the persisting and pervading presence of violence to animals. In the slapstick comedy, the bodies in question become objects of entertainment because the work makes violence towards those bodies inconsequential to the audience, in line with Miriam Hansen's reading of Theodor Adorno. In the comedy of the Donald Duck animations, "sadistic pleasures are mobilized" to familiarize the audience to the violence of industrial capitalism (Hansen n.p.).[7] However, the end result might be the same in that both help the audience unsee the full impact of real-world violence to particular types of bodies.

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[7] Both Hansen and Adorno understand the Donald Duck figure as a stand-in for the human audience, rather than an animal character, but I believe their analysis of violence in Donald Duck animations applies to Donald Duck as an animal as well.

The frame narrative of the Pooh stories serves to introduce these stories of reassurance to readers. It defines the Hundred Acres Wood stories as narratives of comfort, at the same time as defining where the comfort of these stories stands in relation to the persistent and pervasive system of animal commodification. In setting up expectations instrumental to the function of the Hundred Acres Wood stories as stories of comfort, the frame narrative provides a useful window to look into the cultural work of these stories.[8] A short dialogue from the frame narrative gives enough cues as to what the Hundred Acres Wood stories are, and how they are supposed to be read.

> "What about a story?" said Christopher Robin.
>
> "*What* about a story?" I said.
>
> "Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?"
>
> "I suppose I could," I said. "What sort of stories does he like?"
>
> "About himself. Because he's *that* sort of Bear."
>
> "Oh, I see."
>
> "So could you very sweetly?"
>
> "I'll try," I said. (*Winnie-the-Pooh* 4)

The Hundred Acres Wood stories are "sweet" bedtime tales for children, and are to be appreciated as such. There is no big claim as to the status of these stories; it is not meant to be representative nor critical. It is made up for the child Christopher Robin, and on the spur of the

[8] Many later stuffed animal fictions skip the part of explicitly setting up such a contract with readers. These fictions work in the expectation that readers' experience of their stories is already informed by existing cultural knowledge of the narrative pattern of stuffed animal fictions.

moment.[9] The dialogue promises that the Hundred Acres Wood stories will provide a comfortable account of Pooh's life in which nothing bad will happen to Pooh. At the same time, it announces that these stories will be a mere feel-good fiction: the Hundred Acres Wood stories are not, nor will attempt to be, a truthful or meaningful account of a thingified animal's life, stuffed or not. The table of contents with its repetitive and tension-underplaying chapter titles promises as much: what follows will be no more than another inconsequential, routine, and laughable ("foolish") "episode" in an imagined good life of animals ("*In Which* Eeyore Loses a Tail and Pooh finds One," "*In Which* Eeyore Has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents," etc.).

So, the Hundred Acres Wood stories are not meant to deceive readers as to the real predicament of commodified animals; rather, these stories perform their ideological work by offering comfort to readers despite pre-existing cultural knowledge about the persisting violence of the overall system of animal commodification. The pleasure of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is in being affirmed and reaffirmed in the expectation that nothing bad will happen to Pooh and his friends—at least in the fictional confines of the Hundred Acres Wood stories. The knowledge that such comfort is only available in the limited space of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is not supposed to interfere with the enjoyment of these stories; rather, it is necessary to the appreciation of these stories. The guilt-ridden awareness of the real predicament of commodified animals goes hand in hand with the consoling expectation that the Hundred Acres Wood stories will spare readers from such a sight. These fictions—which promise not to show

[9] The experience of reading these stories get shaped by the awareness that these stories are for children. I will get back to how later in the chapter.

animals getting hurt—intend to be comforting, despite and because of the shared cultural awareness of the system that will continue to hurt animals.

In expressly presenting the Hundred Acres Wood stories as stories intended to comfort readers living in a less-savory reality, Milne is also writing his stories into "a discourse of escape into rural reassurance" like those of Georgian pastoral poets who offered their works—and their rural peace—as objects of comfort in face of "the wider crisis of modernity and modernisms" (Gifford 71-72). The Hundred Acres Wood stories imagine animals into a countryside in which the relationship between man and animals is not entangled in the violence of industrial capitalism, thus responding to "the continuing need for a discourse of retreat in the culture" in regard to animals (75). The pastoral vision figures in an altered form in later stuffed animal fictions in which the affectionate private consumer's home functions as a pseudo-pastoral haven for animals in the market. There are also works in which the pastoral vision of these narratives of animal relief becomes more than what it is supposed to be—a comforting diversion from the systematized violence towards animals—and turns into a utopian vision that seriously questions the status quo of the animal industry. These works will be discussed in later chapters.

The first chapter, "In Which We Are Introduced to Winnie the Pooh and Some Bees and the Stories Begin," does much introductory work: it introduces readers to the to-be-repeated pattern of relief in the Hundred Acres Wood stories, as well as to how—and in what relationship—these stories coexist with persisting violence in animal consumption outside of Hundred Acres Wood. The first episode revolves around the "bumping" of the animal body. Pooh's body is or is on the verge of being bumped around in both the space of Hundred Acres Wood and in the space of reading the Hundred Acres Wood stories. In the space of the frame narrative in which the Hundred Acres Wood stories are being told, Pooh's body is and remains a

thing to be routinely and brutally bumped around. At the same time, the Hundred Acres Wood stories are about how Pooh's body—with the assistance of some fortune and of Christopher Robin—avoids the bump. The telling of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is shown to be a response to violence ("bump") to commodified animals in the world of the frame narrative, but it does not help change Pooh's status as a thing-to-be-used in the world of the frame narrative. It is a feel-good fiction that compensates for the guilt-ridden experience of the consumption of commodified animals (in this case, the experience of violent play with toy-animals); the reality is neither criticized nor completely forgotten, but comes to be overwritten with these stories that are more pleasurable to read.

The Hundred Acres Wood stories can be understood as a narrator's response to the uncomfortable awareness of violence to thingified animals, which is represented by the sound of the bump. The first chapter of the Pooh stories opens with the narrator's observation of Pooh being bumped down the stairs; the narrator imagines that Pooh would not like the feeling of being constantly knocked on the head, and would question if "there really is another way" of coming downstairs (*Winnie-the-Pooh* 3). However, whether the animal likes it or not, he is bound to the system of animal commodification that bumps him around, as he is (symbolically and literally) a thing: "it [bumping] is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs," and he cannot "stop bumping for a moment" no matter what he feels (3). He is one among many animal-things that are to be used according to the need and whims of the consumer. The Hundred Acres Wood stories react to the uncomfortable scene and its question by imagining a compensatory scenario in which the animal is saved from the bump.

Pooh of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is safe from what would have been his fate as an animal-thing in the commercialized and industrialized space of the frame narrative and the

readers' world. In the Hundred Acres Wood stories, his body is not a replaceable thing to be thoughtlessly toyed with, but an object of affectionate attention: both Christopher Robin and the narrative voice look after Pooh. The stuffed animal body is engaged in potentially violent play both in and outside the Hundred Acres Wood stories, but the status of the body in relation to violence could not be more different: the Hundred Acres Wood stories are founded on a promise that Pooh will be infallibly delivered from the threat of violence through a benign turn of events orchestrated by the narrative voice, if not by the timely help of Christopher Robin. In the following episode of the Hundred Acres Wood stories, Pooh runs into multiple dangers of bumps in his attempt to reach a beehive up in a tree, recalling the bumps he received in the frame narrative. However, when he first falls off while climbing the tree, it turns out to be more of a tumble than a bump (9). Pooh runs into another danger of a bump in his second trial, when he gets too high off the ground using a balloon borrowed from Christopher Robin ("If he let go of the string, he would fall—bump—and he didn't like the idea of that"; 18). This time, to avoid the danger of a greater bump, Christopher Robin is forced to intervene and take aim at the balloon that is holding Pooh. A gun pointed at the bear body recalls the violence of frame-narrative Christopher Robin's handling of the stuffed bear, as well as invoking another familiar form of violent play with biological animals (or bears, in particular)—the hunt. When Christopher Robin manages to only hit the balloon, the shadow of real-world violence to animals is again exorcised. Pooh suffers a minor arm-ache from holding on to the balloon for too long, but that is all.

The sound of the bump closes the first chapter of Pooh stories, just as it opened the chapter. The casual continuance of the bumping of the animal outside the confines of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is the context in which these stories—in which un-bumping is so

important—are told and enjoyed. After listening to the made-up account of himself and the stuffed bear, Christopher Robin asks:

> "I didn't hurt him [Pooh] when I shot him, did I?"
>
> "Not a bit."
>
> He nodded and went out, and in a moment I heard Winnie-the-Pooh—bump, bump, bump—going up the stairs behind him. (21)

Christopher Robin's need for reassurance over the animal's safety in the stories can—and does—go hand in hand with the continued infliction of violence on the animal body. Satisfied with the comforting conclusion of the narrative, Christopher Robin drags the animal upstairs with the resounding bump, the same way he carried it downstairs. The narrator's casual observation on the continuance of everyday violence indicates that this is how his stories are supposed to work: it is not that his storytelling has failed, nor that Christopher Robin turned out to be a bad audience who did not understand the import of the stories. The Hundred Acres Wood stories are not supposed to criticize or clash against the status quo of the consumer's relationship with commodified animals, nor are these stories meant to be educative. The Hundred Acres Wood stories are supposed to perform an imaginative rescue of the animal, and the rescue is supposed to be emotionally fulfilling in making up for the lack of relief for animals outside the confines of such stories. Symptomatically, Pooh is silent after the narrator's telling of the Hundred Acres Wood stories, and the narrator is (at least temporarily) freed from the animal's unsettling question of whether "there really is another way" of relating to animals. The pang of conscience concerning thingified animals has been assuaged.

However, this is not how these stuffed animal fictions are usually read. Stuffed animal fictions rarely get seriously interpreted, critically or otherwise, outside the frame of the child's consumption: that is, outside of how they function as children's products. The Pooh stories are both an exception and a non-exception in that these stories do often attract serious critical attention, but when they get seriously discussed, it is as an individual masterpiece, not as a stuffed animal fiction that belongs together with other stuffed animal fictions. In understanding stuffed animal fictions first and foremost as animal narratives that provide a false sense of reassurance about the predicament of animals, I am reading against the grain of the dominant code of reading stuffed animal fictions. But it is not to brush aside the dominant code of reading as a simple misunderstanding of the stuffed animal fictions. The agreement that the stuffed animal fictions are for children plays an indispensable role in the structure of reception of the stuffed animal fictions. What does this code of reading do? What happens when these comforting narratives of animals' escape from violence gets circulated as stories for children?

In this section, I look into how stuffed animal fictions help ease the cultural conscience regarding the system of animal commodification, not only through their narratives of relief of animals, but through framing the need for fictional relief of animals as the exclusive need of the child. The stock figure of the innocent child—as the well-intentioned but less-knowing other of the adult—plays in. The child figure of the stuffed animal fictions is an interesting variation of the innocent child who is too good to be versed in the ways of the world. The stuffed animal fictions frame his/her innocence as more of a naïve ignorance, rather than the meaningful insight of the Romantic child. After all, the innocence of the child in stuffed animal fictions manifests in his/her attachment to mere animal-things, toys at that, in contrast to the innocence of the Romantic child which manifests in his/her special bond with nature/natural animals. But the

naïve ignorance of the innocent child in stuffed animal fictions is also to be differentiated from the ignorance of the child-in-need-of-education in traditional anti-cruelty literature for children, in that it never manifests in unthoughtful acts of cruelty to animals. His/her innocence is to be protected in a fictional world "magically and wonderfully separate from" adult life (Sánchez-Eppler 40), but with affectionate condescension rather than with a degree of reverence. Through the insertion of this child reader figure as an implied reader of stuffed animal fictions, the discomfort with the existing system of animal commodification gets trivialized as a childlike, and even childish, response to the animal industry, while the compliant acceptance of the status quo becomes normalized as a knowledgeable, mature response. It is through the medium of the figure of the innocent child that the animal gets constructed as "the sign of all that is taken not-very-seriously in contemporary culture; the sign of that which doesn't really matter," and the consequent "trivialization and belittlement" of the animal has ethical consequences (Baker 174).

Again, the Pooh stories provide a good place to investigate into how the normative adult position towards the animal problem gets established in fictional works that are ostensibly for children. The Pooh stories show how the narrative of comfort (the Hundred Acres Wood stories) is supposed to be read differently by the adult and by the child, making explicit the dual code of reading that remains ingrained yet implicit in other stuffed animal fictions. It is not that the classification of the Hundred Acres Wood stories as children's fiction forbids adult reading, but that the adult reading of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is to be governed by a set of expectations generated by such classification. The Hundred Acres Wood stories are one of those works of "children's literature" that "offers what must seem like a utopian fantasy or idyll for adults, one that operates with the assumption that children will take that fantasy for truth" (*The Hidden Adult* 221). The frame narrative of the first chapter makes clear that the Hundred Acres

Wood stories are meant to please and comfort the child, and meanwhile prescribes a proper adult reading of these stories that is differentiated from that of the child. The adult reading of the Hundred Acres Wood stories is to be characterized by its intellectual and emotional distance towards such stories, and towards the childlike/childish need that these stories address. A claim that a text belongs to childhood easily translates into a claim that it is "not subject to [serious] interpretation," as Sue Walsh points out (31). Thus, the Pooh stories construct the commonsensical adult position as one that makes light of any sense of discomfort with the cruelties of the animal commodification system, as well as of the false comfort provided by the Hundred Acres Wood stories. The adult is relieved of the sense of unfulfilled obligation to animals, as it is structurally handed over to the care of children.

In other words, the function of the frame narrative of the Pooh stories is to deflect any suspicion of the broader-scoped ideological work of the Hundred Acres Wood stories by advertising these stories as stories that perform the necessary work of comfort for children. The frame narrative skillfully constructs adult readers as ones who do not question the ideological work of the Hundred Acres Wood stories due to their superior knowledge of how these stories work.[10] It is made clear that it is in response to the need of the child audience that the Hundred Acres Wood stories will be told. To quote again the dialogue from the frame narrative of the first chapter:

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[10] Still, there are moments in which Pooh stories frame the Hundred Acres Wood stories in a way that betrays guilt-ridden awareness towards real historical predicament of animals—instead of clearing up that guilt: these moments will be discussed in later chapters that will turn attention to how individual works of comforting stuffed animal fiction question this structure of comfort.

"What about a story?" said Christopher Robin.

"*What* about a story?" I said.

"Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?"

"I suppose I could," I said. "What sort of stories does he like?"

"About himself. Because he's *that* sort of Bear."

"Oh, I see."

"So could you very sweetly?"

"I'll try," I said. (*Winnie the Pooh* 4)

The child is the one who feels the need for comforting stories of commodified animals in which animals fare better. The emphasis on a "very sweet" story hints at the child's vague bur serious discomfort with the real predicament of animals, which is not so sweet. The position of the adult reader is also constructed in this scene, if more tacitly so. The narrator/father does not do or say much, other than complying to the request of the child for comforting stories. His lines are shorter than those of the child. He either simply consents to the child's demand, or asks back to ascertain the exact need of the child. Still, the narrator marks his adult distance towards the stories that he is about to tell—and the need for such stories—through his reticence, thus giving enough cues to adult readers as to what the normative adult reading of the Hundred Acres Wood stories should look like.

The adult reader is one who knows more about the whole issue of animals, and thus knows better than to feel the need for stories of comfort. The narrator does not let us forget that he is indulging the "sweet" demand of the child, not his own need, in participating in the telling and listening of the Hundred Acres Wood stories with the child. The impression is that the narrator is withholding his knowledge on the matter to temporarily condescend to the

unblameable but ultimately naïve needs of the child. So, the adult reader need not be hostile to the Hundred Acres Wood stories, as long as he understands these stories correctly as a mere children's thing; he may enjoy these stories as texts of not much importance and, at most, sentimental value. Critics point out how the Hundred Acres Wood stories call for an adult reading that is characterized by ironic—and sometimes wistful—pleasure at the content of the stories. According to Ellen Tremper, adult readers of the Pooh stories do not share "a child's earnest response" to them, but "laugh in sympathetic amusement" at what happens in it (34, 36). For Roger Sale, adult readers love Pooh stories for its association with childhood and its "relaxed, lazy, cozy, nonsensical" quality (168). For Niall Nance-Carroll, the Pooh stories allow for a "credulous romantic" reading for younger readers, while inviting an ironic or nostalgic reading for more grown and knowing readers (66).

I will read the concluding dialogue of the first chapter again with an eye to how a conscience of the system of animal commodification gets framed as a naïve child's concern.

> "I didn't hurt him [Pooh] when I shot him, did I?"
>
> "Not a bit."
>
> He nodded and went out, and in a moment I heard Winnie-the-Pooh—bump, bump, bump—going up the stairs behind him. (*Winnie the Pooh* 21)

It is again the child who shows a serious interest in how it turns out for animals. Christopher Robin's need for reassurance is a need for reassurance about the fate of commodified animals, as much as it is a need for reassurance about the fate of one fictional animal. The Hundred Acres Wood stories make clear that Pooh's body has been relieved from the threat of the bump as well as from the danger of being shot. Still, it is as if the comforting wrap-up of the incident in the Hundred Acres Wood stories has not been enough to chase off the shadow of all-encompassing

violence that surrounds animal bodies. The question is if "I," the child, had hurt "him," the animal, implying that what the child wants to shake off is a sense of his own culpability as a consumer in the system of animal exploitation.

It is also implied that the adult does and should know better than to feel actively guilty about the predicament of animals, or seriously dream of their release from systematized violence. The adult narrator's assurance that Pooh is "not a bit" hurt is a bit too ready and off-handed, especially when set against the child's earnest need for reassurance about the animal's true fate. It shows the narrator's willingness—for a time being and at least verbally—to condescend to the child's need for the un-hurting of animals, while also revealing that the narrator himself does not share the child's anxieties on the matter of animals in or outside Hundred Acres Wood.

The adult narrator reveals his position towards violence on animals most clearly in his chapter-concluding observation of the continuation of violence to commodified animals in the hands of the consumer, while conjuring up adult readers as sharers of this position. The narrator casually remarks on how, after the whole fuss over the hurting or un-hurting of Pooh, Christopher Robin drags his stuffed animal back to his bedroom, with the resounding "bump, bump, bump." The observation captures how violence to commodified animals continues despite the child's concern over what happens to Pooh. However, with this observation, the narrator is not simply exposing the everyday violence to commodified animals that coexists with comforting stories of animal relief; he is establishing complaisant realism—one that considers the continuation of such violence as the inescapable reality—as the commonsensical adult position on the animal problem. The narrator hints that the cruelties of the system are the commonsense knowledge of adults when he makes the off-handed observation that the caring child himself is another unknowing perpetrator of violence towards animals. That is, the narrator

shows his familiarity with the animal commodification system permeating all corners of our lives and constructing our subjectivities. There is enough indication that the observation is not meant for children's ears, as it is literally made after the child turns his back. The narrator is making a wink at adult readers, behind the child reader's back. Also, what he shares is not supposed to be of news-value: it is not supposed to be shocking, newly disturbing, or particularly critical. The narrator shares his observation matter-of-factly without much emphasis and no further comment, then moves on to tell the next episode of the Hundred Acres Wood stories. It is no more than a passing observation on what adult readers should already know, even if the child does not (for now).

So, what kind of knowledge makes the adult an adult? Adults know that violence pervades animal lives under the current system of animal commodification, but it is implied that children somehow know this as well. What adults know—and children do not know—is that violence ingrained in the animal commodification system is a necessary, if unpleasant, fact of life. A commonsensical adult is supposed to, accept this fact, with perhaps a dose of regret, unlike children who cannot stand the sight of it. The adult also knows—though he would not tell the child—that the child's demand for a happy resolution for animals is no more than a naïve wish and, more importantly, an unrealistic one. Christopher Robin's request for the un-hurting of Pooh is juxtaposed with the repeated sound of the bump representing the unchanged and unchanging system of animal consumption. The repetition of this sound at the beginning and the closing of the chapter produces a sense of the immutable weight of the system of violence, while the child's need is a transient one, by definition. Moreover, the adult notices that the child is the one producing the sound: it is implied that the caring child himself is already irrevocably involved and incorporated in the system, despite his innocent concern for the fate of animals.

The figure of the child is essential to the process of constructing the genre of stuffed animal fictions: the child who cares too much for animals—and needs to un-hurt animals—is both the implied reader and the stock character of stuffed animal fictions, as we can see in the figure of Christopher Robin. He is present throughout as both the intended reader of the Hundred Acres Wood stories, and a reliable helper who always comes to the relief of animals within them. I consider this child-attached-to-animals as more or less a straw figure necessary for the construction of the adult position towards the ethical question of animals. My dissertation will continue to focus on the adult use of this figure—and of the stuffed animal fictions' status as children's stories—in construction of the adult animal discourse, rather than on the real-world children's relationship with the stuffed animal fictions or animals. As discussed above, through the invention of the caring child figure, a guilt-ridden sense of discomfort at the exploitative commodification of animals can be distanced off as a childlike, unreasonable take on the system. Furthermore, this child figure—who is naive enough to care so much about animals while being naïve enough to be appeased with mere fictions of comfort—provides an official excuse for the production and circulation of the comforting narrative of the stuffed animal fictions.

The other side of this equation is the following: an uncomfortable sense of obligation to protect animal bodies from violence is twice displaced as—and turned into—a sense of obligation to shield children's eyes from uncomfortable sights of violence. This helps place the stuffed animal fiction and its politics within the more general structure of the seeing/unseeing of animals in the industrialized world. The same sleight of hand occurs when movements to eliminate newly-visibilized animal suffering go together with—and become interchangeable with—movements to eliminate shocking sights of animal suffering from public sight in the name of protecting children: "if cruelty was to take place it was to be behind closed doors and under

license" (Burt 292). The demand that sights of industrialized animal production (that is, the bodies of meat animals, work animals, and lab animals) be removed from public sight goes hand in hand with the demand that animal bodies in public sight (pets, zoo-animals, etc.) be made safe from violence. The objective of many campaigns has been to "either rid the city of animals or improve their welfares" (Velten 8); these movements, in the end, are movements towards a "cleansed and de-animalized 'modern' city" (Atkins 14) with special spaces reserved for show-animals and pets. Following this line of thought, we can suspect that pets and zoo animals occupy the same cultural place as that of animals that belong to the stuffed animal fictions: their protected status is justified on the pretext of the child's need, while their actual function is to save the adult conscience's burden about the invisibilized system of animal exploitation with the safe-and-comforting sights of unhurt animals.

1.2 Is it Market Adventure, or Animal Rescue?

In this section, I will look at how stuffed animal fictions develop their classic strategies of comfort. Two of the most popular and recognizable narrative tropes are often used together: the market adventure of stuffed animals and the rescue of stuffed animals by a good consumer. The market adventure narratives shake off anxieties surrounding thingified animal bodies by portraying the animal's circulation through the system as a harmless and fun adventure for the animal. The animal rescue narratives do the same by introducing a caring child figure who comes to take the animal out of the system and its dangers.

Despite the fact that the Pooh stories are undoubtedly one of the seminal and most representative stuffed animal fictions, they are by no means the typical stuffed animal fiction. Most stuffed animal fictions cannot—or do not—use the same strategies as that of the Pooh stories in giving reassurance about the plight of animals. Pooh stories generate their comforting feel through promising readers in advance within the frame narrative that nothing bad will happen to animal bodies before the readers' eyes in the confines of the Hundred Acres Wood stories, as much as they do so through dramatizing the escape of animals from various bodily threats in the Hundred Acres Wood stories themselves. The Pooh stories imaginatively move animals away from the market and into a safe pastoral space in which animals are no longer things in the market: the animals in Hundred Acres Wood are not inhibited by the physical and non-physical rules that govern stuffed animals and biological-and-commodified animals in the outside world.

The stuffed animal fictions of more realistic settings—and with no frame narrative—are confronted with a more difficult task when it comes to reassuring their readers, as these narratives have to work against shared cultural knowledge to convince readers that animals in the market will ultimately end up well. The preexistence of other comforting stuffed animal fictions—along with their classification as children's stories—serves as a sort of a safety net when it comes to managing readerly expectations, but this is not enough in itself. A typical stuffed animal fiction takes place in a setting more realistic than the Pooh stories in that it makes animals remain in the market: it portrays animals as commodities. The animals in typical stuffed animal fictions are, after all, playthings to be sold, bought, and discarded when out of use; as such, they are subject to violence in the process. The animals are rarely able to communicate with their consumers, though readers are privy to their thoughts and feelings and the caring child

somehow recognizes their need.[11] As a rule, the animals of the stuffed animal fictions can be moved but cannot move themselves. Even in cases in which they are allowed to move, it is a secret that should be kept out of humans' knowledge, and the animals' movements are severely restricted by the limits of their toyified bodies. So, in a sense, the stuffed animal fictions are "thing narratives." The stuffed animal fictions' relationship with the thing narrative will be further discussed in the second chapter.

To downplay the tensions caused by the precarious status of toyified animal bodies in the marketplace, the stuffed animal fictions draw from either (or, more often, both) of the abovementioned two narrative tropes. In the market adventure narratives, the market itself is portrayed as a benign place that does not really do much harm to animals, its dangers glossed over as the stuff of playful adventure. Anxieties concerning violence towards animals are more or less nullified in advance, when the market itself is presented as a version of Hundred Acres Wood. In the animal rescue narratives, the dangers of the market are recognized to a degree, but the animals are promised a benign intervention in the figure of a concerned and affectionate child. This child—who loves and cares for stuffed animals as if they are not mere commodities—provides a safe, semi-pastoral haven for animals in his/her home. These stories make readers wait for the heart-warming, all-resolving scene of rescue, but it comes in the end, making up for and melting away all anxieties concerning endangered animal bodies.

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[11] There are narratives in which the relationship between readers and animals generate illuminating and uncomfortable moments, putting readers in a position in which they are the only ones who can see the animal suffering; later chapters will deal with such narratives.

The child character—whose innocence manifests in his/her affectionate care for thingified animals—comes to the fore and plays an essential role in the animal rescue narratives, while not so much in the market adventure narratives. The child who cares too much for commodity animals is there to make readers feel better about the violence of the system of animal commodification in being an individual innocent exception to the sins of the system. At the same time, the caring concern over animal bodies, implicitly or explicitly, gets equated with childlike ignorance of the system as a whole, and the serious concern over the potential suffering of commodified animals is comfortably brushed off as a product of childish misrecognition of the animal's real status as a thing or its true market value. As a result, the moment of heart-warming relief—essential to the animal rescue narratives—is left uninterpreted as a moment of the demonstration of childish innocence—as far as it concerns adult readers.

With a focus on how these two classic tropes produce the comfort essential to the stuffed animal fictions, this section will take a look at three stuffed animal fictions in which the animals get lost in the (human) world. The world is the market for these animals in that, in it, they are things to be traded and used by humans. First, I analyze Susan Meyers's *Bear in the Air* (2010) to show the abiding popularity of the trope of the market adventure up to the present moment, and to illustrate how it is employed to exorcise the uncomfortable sense of the vulnerability of animal bodies as things. I go on to discuss two older "children's classics" to show their already-fraught implementation of these two major tropes. Joan Robinson's Teddy Robinson stories (1953-1964) waver undecidedly on what happens to Teddy Robinson when he repeatedly gets lost and found: has he been to a fun adventure, or has he been rescued to the relief of readers and himself? Don Freeman's *Corduroy* (1968) gives us a chance to study the trope of animal rescue in depth, as it overwrites the market adventure narrative with the animal rescue narrative.

Bear in the Air follows a stuffed bear who gets moved through different hands, before landing in the hands of its original child owner by happy accident. The narrative portrays the animal's ordeals as a series of harmless, inconsequential, and enjoyable adventures, preempting any potential sense of discomfort with the violence involved in the process of the transaction and use of the animal-thing. There is an unmistakable element of violence in the circulation of the bear in the world of *Bear in the Air*, but the picture book reassures readers that the process of the circulation of the animal as a thing is not as exploitative or damaging as it looks. The bear—as an unnamed plaything un-endowed with Pooh's abilities to move—is helplessly and frantically moved from hand to hand, totally subject to the whims of fortune. The bear is "bounced" around in quite unexpected and violent ways, as various actors/forces lay claim to it and toy with it: we see it "bounced from the stroller" to be taken up by a dog who "shook it and tossed it high in the air," and then by the wave that "[takes] the bear for a watery spin," and so on (*Bear in the Air* n.p.). The bear, not only metaphorically but literally, gets consumed and devoured in the process: the dog chews it and tears its ribbon off, the "fish [comes] to nibble its nose and its toes," and the bird scoops it up in a beak, mistaking him for "a dish."

Still, this is not supposed to cause much alarm or suspense on the part of readers as to how this process will turn out for the animal. The picture book makes it difficult to register violence as violence in its full impact, even while showing how the bear loses part of itself (its ribbon), gets drenched, and munched in the process of its circulation. Every stage of the bear's movement in the world is presented—literally and rhetorically, visually and verbally—in a solid, recurring framework. Each new actor-consumer is introduced in the form of a framed photo, along with the repeated lines of "this is a ____ who ____ a bear." The repetitive structure itself signals to readers in advance that what follows will be another happening, one that is not at all

surprising and of not much consequence, rather than an accident to be alarmed at. This is the effect produced by the quality of the narrative voice as well. The narrative voice is a matter-of-fact and all-knowing one. It is also a condescending and reassuring adult voice that reminds readers that *Bear in the Air* is a comforting animal narrative for children that belongs together with the Hundred Acres Wood stories: nothing really bad is supposed to happen to animals in it. The whole process of the bear's circulation is further laundered of the taint of systematic exploitation of animals when it gets subtly naturalized. Wind, waves, and animals participate in the moving-around of the bear as a thing, together with humans. It is the dog who is introduced as the first actor, and humans come in between animals and forces of nature in passing the bear around. It is as if human consumers are interacting with the animal-thing in a way that is not fundamentally different from "natural" forces.

When the animal-thing's circulation in the market is full-on romanticized as a good adventure, the uncomfortable element of one-sided violence is further disavowed. From the first, the picture book frames what the bear will go through as a fun adventure, introducing the bear as "the bear that went for a ride." In the concluding pages, the bear is reintroduced as "the bear that's been everywhere," and we get a satisfying, calming bird's-eye shot of a pastel-toned and seemingly peaceful world that the bear has moved through. It is as if the bear came back from a world tour. The impression generated is that the bear has not been bounced through the market as a plaything, but has engaged itself in a fun adventure—like Pooh in the Hundred Acres Woods. At the same time, the market is portrayed as a benign and almost pastoral place to be traveled through and played in. It is a world in which the whims of the market ultimately do good to animals: in the end, the bear gets dried, somehow re-acquires a ribbon, and becomes miraculously recovered by its original child owner.

The element of the animal rescue narrative intervenes, as the ultimate resolution comes in the form of the loving child reclaiming the animal, saving it from further bounces: "Tucked in safe so it won't bounce away, This is the bear that's come home to stay." However, the child is not a full-fledged good consumer, and the resolution does not bring much relief as in more developed animal rescue narratives. On the one hand, this is because the market itself is not depicted as a dangerous or hostile place, and, on the other, it is because there is not much noticeable difference in the child's handling of the bear from the rest of the actors/consumers. The first sight of their interaction is that of the bear being literally devoured by the child who chews on his ear, and it is the child's mishandling of the bear that triggers the process of the bear's bounce-offs. This will not be the case in both the Teddy Robinson stories and in *Corduroy*.

The Teddy Robinson stories attempt to cope with a conscience of the system of animal commodification through its narratives of the lost-and-found stuffed animal. The loss and retrieval of Teddy Robinson is the subject of many episodes collected in *The Teddy Robinson Storybook*. In these episodes, the eponymous stuffed animal is saved time and again from the danger of being reverted to a mere replaceable mass-market commodity, to the relief of readers and himself. He repeatedly gets forgotten, misplaced, or left outside of Deborah's safe home, and almost gets lost to the market, but invariably comes to be rescued from the crisis by the loving child. Resurfacing anxieties about the precarious status of commodified animals are expelled again and again through the unfailing intervention of the affectionate child and the ensuing scenes of happy reunion.

The first episode sets up a pattern of lost and found, at the same time as establishing Deborah as the good consumer who considers the stuffed animal as more than a plaything, and thus rescues him from his predicament as a thing. We meet Teddy Robinson safely and

comfortably installed in Deborah's semi-pastoral garden. Deborah cares for the commodified animal as if he is a sentient being, not a mass-market product. Teddy Robinson is introduced as a "comfortable" teddy bear (*The Teddy Robinson Storybook* 1), and Deborah prepares the garden-picnic for both herself and Teddy Robinson ("We can play out there"; "She fetched a coloring book and some chalks for herself, and a book of nursery rhymes for Teddy Robinson" 1-2)

However, we soon get an uncomfortable and familiar glimpse of the stuffed animal as a mere thing, when Deborah forgets to take him back to the house. Teddy Robinson is powerless to move himself where he has been left, except hoping for Deborah to come back: "Deborah will come and fetch me soon, he thought" (4); "She will come and fetch me soon, he thought" (5); "He guessed something unusual must have happened to make Deborah forget about him" (6). Suddenly, Teddy Robinson is a thing that can be forgotten, disused, and disposed of. He is an unnoticeable and unattended thing that may be moved around and claimed by any force. And, without Deborah's presence, there is a question as to what kind of place the garden is, and whether it still is a safe home for the stuffed bear—when he is left "[watching] the birds flying to their nests in the trees above him" (4).

Teddy Robinson gets twice relieved from this doubtful moment that recalls the fate of most animals, stuffed and biological, in the animal industry. Teddy Robinson gets relieved first through finding that the garden in the night is a surprisingly benign place full of harmless adventures, and again when Deborah comes to find him in the morning with love enough to compensate for her mistake. The first episode draws from the market adventure trope as well as from the animal rescue trope to recast the disturbing moment into a comforting narrative. Teddy Robinson is completely and dangerously left at the mercy of outside forces in the garden as in *Bear in The Air*, but, again, the forces that the bear encounters all turn out to be benign. The

garden in the night is almost a Hundred Acres Wood in which the tree sheds its blossoms to blanket the bear, the animals come to bid goodnight to him, and the stars sing him to sleep (4, 6-9). Teddy Robinson himself accounts for the night out as a fun, low-stakes adventure in his chapter-concluding conversation with Deborah ("I was camping out, and it was lovely"; 12).

Come next morning, Deborah arrives to reembrace the animal into her protection with the pathos of a full-on animal rescue narrative: "she picked up and hugged him and kissed him and . . . ran through the wet grass an in at the kitchen door and up the stairs into her own room" with an exclamation of "you poor, poor boy" (11-12). The good consumer is taking the animal back to the physical safety of "her warm little bed" (11), at the same time as symbolically reasserting his status as a legitimate object of care: Teddy Robinson is a "poor boy," not a mere thing. Deborah and Teddy Robinson are not quite agreed on what happened to the bear during the night: has he been to a fun adventure and safe all along, or has he been rescued from a more serious danger? The bear's undisturbed assessment of the incident as a "camping out" coexists with Deborah's more alarmed understanding of the situation as a crisis. Still, the clash between these two interpretations does not detract from the overall comforting feel of the episode, but rather reinforces it. Deborah's less hopeful view of the animal's predicament in the outside world goes hand in hand with—and reassuringly testifies to—her serious care over the well-being of the animal.

However, the animal rescue narrative does not sit so comfortably together with the market adventure narrative in later episodes in which Teddy Robinson gets lost in less pastoral settings: in the field in which the cows almost run over him (106-10), by the seaside where the tide is coming up (122-26), in a tool shed, on a bench in the park, etc. Deborah comes to recover the bear from the crisis, while the bear keeps accounting for the incident as his adventure into the

world. However, the impression is that Teddy Robinson is dangerously mistaken about his own predicament as a thing, which makes him further vulnerable in the world. This generates an uncomfortable feeling that interferes with the comfort provided by the recurring animal rescue narrative.

The Teddy Robinson stories take a clearer form as an animal rescue narrative in two episodes in which Teddy Robinson confronts his status as an animal-toy. In stuffed animal fictions, the toyshop visit is always a strange moment filled with potentially perturbing encounters. When "Teddy Robinson goes to the Toy Shop," the bear gets lost in the market, this time not physically but symbolically. During his tour of the toy stalls with Deborah, Teddy Robinson starts anxiously comparing himself to toy-shop commodities that are "a lot dearer" than him in terms of price (22). This is the moment in which Teddy Robinson, in spite of himself, gets reincorporated into the market, slipping back into the status of a commodity assessed in terms of its market value: he realizes that he is comparable to and—replaceable by—other commodities. Even after being taken home safely in body, the animal is not at home and unable to sleep. The intervention of the good consumer is required to comfort him of his fears, and lift him out of the frightening system in which he is a replaceable thing. When Deborah reassures the bear that "you are very dear Teddy Robinson, and you're quite the dearest person in the whole world to me" (27), she is demonstrating that she is a different, good consumer whose relationship to the animal is not dictated by the terms of the market, but by affection. She is the child who in her innocence and/or ignorance loves the commodity animal regardless of its exchange value. Thus, the meaning of the word "dear" is different to her. It is through this love, and this love alone, that Teddy Robinson gets differentiated from other playthings, and rescued from the spell of the market that makes him a mere thing. Teddy Robinson expresses his relief on "how lucky

he was not to be just a doll or a hot water bottle" (28); he can finally rest "so warm and cosy" in the knowledge that he is in a place that is not ruled by market logic (290).

In an episode in which "Teddy Robinson Goes to Hospital," Teddy Robinson turns into a mere plaything in the hospital ward when Deborah neglects to take him to her bed. Left alone, he is seen and treated as a mass market product that exists to be used and disposed of. Teddy Robinson is picked up and handed out by the nurse as the most easily available plaything around for crying children. Children take pleasure in using Teddy Robinson, but this does not necessarily mean that they have or acquire a caring affection for the toy-animal. Teddy Robinson can do nothing but endure a series of violent handlings until Deborah comes to the rescue. Deborah the good consumer provides awaited relief to Teddy Robinson and readers, first through promising to mend his ear and then reinstating him into the status of a "dear brave boy" (140). The promise of mending itself proves that the stuffed animal is more than a disposable commodity to Deborah.

The recurrence of similar rescue-episodes, on the one hand, constructs a predictable, reassuring pattern as in the Pooh stories: readers are expected to know that Deborah will come to the rescue of Teddy Robinson, and each moment of crisis will be rewarded by warm scenes of reconfirmation of Deborah's love. On the other hand, the need for the reiteration of a happy resolution for Teddy Robinson testifies to the lingering anxieties concerning the true status of the animal in the market. It is as if the good consumer is never enough to fully make up for the violence inherent in the system, as Deborah unwittingly lets her animal slip back into the dangerous status of a thing, repeatedly forgetting or dropping him, despite her genuine love for the bear. This side of the animal rescue narrative will come into clearer focus in my reading of *Corduroy*.

Corduroy is as much about the successful rescue of a commodity animal from the market as it is about the failed adventure of an animal in the market. It is an uncomfortable market adventure narrative at the same time as being a comforting animal rescue narrative. *Corduroy* looks as if it is going to turn into a market adventure narrative when the animal rescue narrative initially fails to happen, but the adventure of a stuffed animal in the mall ends up looking not so harmless and inconsequential. *Corduroy* is, in a sense, a mock market adventure narrative in that the market is revealed to be a place unfit for adventure for commodified animals. We get a glimpse of the violence of the system of animal commodification, and the vulnerability of animal bodies in it—until the good consumer returns to the relief of both the animal and readers. Corduroy's ultimate, fortunate escape from the system compensates for the uncomfortable moments of suspense, giving a false feeling of resolution even though the system remains where it has been.

Corduroy opens with an unglamorized description of the market and the animal's place in it. The market is not a place for fun adventure for animals, but rather where the animals are in the grip of the system of animal commodification. We meet the bear stuck on the shelf of a shopping mall with other toy-animals, waiting for the intervention of a good consumer:

> Corduroy is a bear who once lived in the toy department of a big store. Day after day he waited with all the other animals for somebody to come along and take him home.
>
> The store was always filled with shoppers buying all sorts of things, but no one ever seemed to want a small bear in green overalls. *(Corduroy* n.p.)

The picture book shows that the bear is in desperate need of the good consumer's rescue, while setting up expectations for the relieving turn of the animal rescue narrative. A fairytale-like introduction (there "once lived . . . ") is followed by—and jars with—a familiar, unglamorized

description of the animal as a thing "in the toy department of a big store." This, on the one hand, generates a sense of discomfort at the status of the commodified animal as a living-thing, while, on the other, implicitly promising a happy resolution for the bear in the form of a reassuring, all-knowing narrative voice that talks in a comfortable past tense.

It is not only the bear who hopes for relief in the form of a good consumer, imagining the "home" of the good consumer as a haven. *Corduroy* makes its readers place their hope in the animal rescue narrative as well, as it is apparently the only (good) way out of the fix for the thoroughly commodified animal. In this world of the market, the bear is a thing that may not move itself, but is to be moved according to the need/want of the consumer.[12] He cannot but wait on the shelf where he has been placed—until a shopper (hopefully a good one) comes along. Corduroy is in a more vulnerable status in the market as he is not even a particularly valuable or looked-after thing: the animal body is just another mass-produced thing among "all sorts of things" that the store provides. The coming of the good consumer has to happen, because the other options are unthinkable, too unsettling. The anticipation of relief that is coming for Corduroy offsets the uncomfortable glimpse of the system of animal commodification that makes "all the other animals" wait for that rescue.

However, the bear's—and the readers'—expectation gets initially frustrated when a little girl who falls in love with the bear at first sight is unable to afford the bear. As in most stuffed animal fictions, the good consumer comes along in the figure of a child who relates to animals in a way that is innocent of the commercialized system. The little girl recognizes the bear as more than a mere thing when she "look[s] straight into Corduroy's bright eyes": she does not take into

[12] His generic name also indicates that he is but a thing defined in terms of his thingness.

account his price or his objective flaw as a product in deciding that she wants the bear. However, the little girl's want—or, her recognition of the bear as a lovable being—is not enough to take Corduroy out of the mall. The adult reminds the child—and to the overhearing bear—of the status of the bear as a thing with a price tag that should be assessed as such: the mother, with a bit of exasperation, points out that she is out of budget ("I've spent too much already") and that the bear does not seem to be worth the money ("He doesn't look new. He's lost the button to one of his shoulder straps"). We see the rules of the system of commodity exchange prevail over the child's love in this scene.[13]

There is an excitement of adventure when Corduroy steps down from the shelf—and readers discover that he can move—in search of a missing button. Corduroy is still moving within the system of animal commodification in that his quest is prompted by his need to match the market demand, and that it is taking place inside the physical space of the shopping mall. Still, it looks as if *Corduroy* could now turn into a comforting narrative of fun, harmless adventure in the night-time mall. It does not. *Corduroy* turns the market adventure narrative inside out. The ensuing sequence does not turn the market into a pastoral space full of exciting encounters for the animal; it shows the mall to be the same indifferent and potentially dangerous place that it has been to Corduroy during the day. It is the bear who misrecognizes his wanderings through the mall as fun adventure: mistaking the escalator for a mountain that he had

[13] This is the first time we see the adult refusing to indulge the child need due to economic reasons. It shows that the affectionate child figure of the stuffed animal fictions—whose need for feel-good animal consumption is looked down on but always indulged in—is in fact the middle-class child. The class difference interferes with the comforting narrative of animal rescue in a more visibly way in Lynd Ward's *The Biggest Bear* which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

"always wanted to climb," and mistaking the furniture display room for a palace that he had always wanted to live in. *Corduroy* shows that there is a gap between the bear's understanding of his "adventure" and what really is happening to him. The images of the picture book show the bear helplessly lost in a system that is alien and indifferent to him; the darkened and mysterious shopping mall does not look like it is a place for adventure in the style of Hundred Acres Woods. The walls, the sofas, and the beds loom over the small body of Corduroy with silent, unresponding, and immoveable materiality.

So, there is suspense as Corduroy blunders through the machines and the furniture without quite understanding what they are. The mall is a place full of unexpected and potentially dangerous turns for him, the more so as the bear does not recognize it: "suddenly he felt the floor moving under him" when "quite by an accident he had stepped onto an escalator." And the bear incurs a series of knock-on effects when he yanks at the mattress button too hard. There is an element of fun in these sequences, but this fun comes dangerously close to that of the slapstick comedy. Readers can laugh at Corduroy as he struggles with the mattress button, topples, and falls with a "*bang*," but there is a cruel side to the fun that is not neutralized by the Pooh stories' type of reassurance that the animal bodies are not really in danger. The story comes close to laughing off the predicament of animals in the system of animal commodification, the laugh occurring at the expense of the animal. And, in the end, the market does not benignly and magically grant the bear what he wants. It does not return the missing button to the bear, unlike with the ribbon in *Bear in the Air*. Corduroy's "adventure" culminates in his misrecognition of a mattress button for his own sought-after button, his misinformed pull at the button bringing on a series of falls that summons the watchman. We can say that Corduroy is safely returned to where

he has been when he is found and retrieved by the watchman, but he is being returned to the unsatisfactory and unstable status of a thing in the market, not to the safe home he dreamed of.

Corduroy compensates for the built-up anxieties about the fate of the animal in the market with a perfectly satisfying happy ending in which Corduroy finds a safe home in the hands of the good consumer. The little girl proves that, for her, the bear is really more than a substitutable and forgettable thing: she does not give up on the bear, but comes back next morning with the saved money to "bring [him] home." The girl, Lisa, further demonstrates that her relationship to the animal is not dictated by the terms of the market, when she refuses the offer of "a box" for Corduroy, choosing instead to "[carry] Corduroy home in her arms."

Lisa's home is a semi-pastoral haven for the animal. The bear immediately senses that Lisa's room is a safe space that is set apart from the overwhelming space of the capitalist mall: he notices that "the room was . . . nothing like that enormous palace in the department store," and murmurs "this must be home." The room is almost pastoral, with its flowerpot, flower-patterned curtains, and a framed picture of a blue bird. The color scheme of the illustrations also sets this place apart from the department store and its risks. The dominating color has been blue and yellow in the closed mall: blue for the walls, the floors, and the beds, and yellow for the elevator lighting and the flashlight of the watchman. Lisa brings in bright pink (the color of her clothing, her sewing-chair and her flowerpot) to the picture, the addition of pink somehow making blue less cold and yellow not so alarming. The first thing that happens in this room is the mending of Corduroy. Again, hand-sewing is an act of love that demonstrates that the stuffed animal is more meaningful than a disposable commodity to the good consumer, as in the hospital episode of the Teddy Robinson stories. Corduroy does not have to reacquire the button to be loved by Lisa, but Lisa's love can reattach it for him. Lisa declares that "[she likes him] the way

[he is]" but that "[he'll] be more comfortable with [his] shoulder strap fastened": she is willing to take Corduroy regardless of his lack of a button (that is, his deficiency as a commodity), but also willing to labor for his sake.

Corduroy closes with an emotionally fulfilling scene of a "big hug" between Lisa and the bear in which Lisa gives a promise to be like "a friend" to Corduroy, rather than using him as a thing. It is as if the kindness of a good consumer is an answer to the violence of the system of animal commodification, even though the system remains where it has been and Corduroy's rescue by Lisa does not prove much else than his luck. The narrative turns away from the unresolved problem of "all the other animals" that have been waiting with Corduroy, equivocating all in the moving warmth of the bear's unbelievable happy ending: the bear is still dazed and blinking in the warmth of Lisa's room. However, there are also works in which the knowledge of the fate of "all the other animals" creeps into and interferes with the comforting narrative, which I will address in the next chapter.

The development of the narrative of *Corduroy*—and its culmination in the heart-warming home-coming scene—resembles that of the episodes of non-stuffed animal rescue that are popular across various media forms. The resemblance between the two gives us a chance to rethink the function of this familiar branch of non-stuffed animal stories: non-fictional narratives in which the flesh-and-blood animal gets rescued from abuse. These narratives' cultural function rarely gets questioned, and the satisfaction of these narratives is generally understood as unequivocally good and wholesome, due to the animal rescue narrative's traditional role as the educational text of humanitarian animal advocacy movements. Animal anti-cruelty rhetoric has been informed by—and popularized through—both fictional and non-fictional accounts of animal rescue, and the early animal rescue stories of the long nineteenth century have been

produced in the context of anti-cruelty movements. For example, Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877), the seminal work of animal anti-cruelty literature, takes the form of an animal rescue narrative; early Victorian annual reports of the RSCPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) consist of accounts of animal abuse followed by the intervention of the RSCPA agent, mostly resulting in court justice, if not in the actual rescue of the animal (Ritvo 136). Such texts were supposed to wake people up to the wrongness of the system of animal use; the development of such awareness has been promoted as an essential part of the citizen's humanitarian education by animal anti-cruelty organizations (Beers 86-87).[14] Contemporary narratives of animal rescue—even when no longer directly associated with animal advocacy—are still being implicitly justified in this context. However, in light of our discussion of *Corduroy*, we can question if these rescue narratives still serve the educational purpose and that purpose alone in regard to the systematized exploitation of animals. Do these narratives open our eyes to the predicament of all the unrescued animals—and the system that produces these animals—or help turn our eyes away from it? Where does the peculiar pleasure of these stories come from?

[14] This idea can be traced back to Locke's argument that "animals provide a testing ground for benevolence and humanity" (Cosslett 10).

2.0 Things That Get Hurt

2.1 Stuffed Animal Fictions and Stuffed Animal Things

This chapter will look at the complex relationship between comforting stuffed animal fictions and material stuffed animal toys. It is in association with the stuffed animal fictions that stuffed animal-things acquire their aura of comfort—which is their selling point as commodities as well. However, the actual consumer experience of engagement with stuffed animals does not turn out to be so unambiguously feel-good, as it does not match the promise of the narratives of comfort in which stuffed animals do not come to real harm. Stuffed animals *do* come to harm in our (and our children's) consumption of them as mass-produced toys. In a sense, stuffed animal consumption is always a troubling experience of failing to live up to the demands of the animal rescue narrative—of failing to be the good consumer who pulls the animal out of the ruthless system of commodification. In this context, we can understand stuffed animal fictions as works that attempt to overwrite guilt-ridden memories of the exploitative use of stuffed animals with feel-good accounts of the happy rescue of animals from such violence. The stuffed animal fictions' false reassurance that all is well with animals depends on getting rid of uncomfortable memories of stuffed animals as usable and disposable things.

This chapter will first look at how the visual depiction of unhurt animal bodies in the stuffed animal fictions is essential to the construction of substitute memories, as much as the narrative pattern of relief itself. The narratives of relief culminate in reassuring images of magically indestructible and forever brand-new stuffed animal bodies, which never bear signs of

violent use. The chapter will go on to focus on stuffed animal fictions in which a repressed awareness of the fate of stuffed animals as things creep into—and create fissures in—the narrative of comfort, mainly through a realistic depiction of the stuffed animal bodies, especially those of obsolete, used stuffed animals. The uncomfortable sight of destroyed and destructible stuffed animals exposes the narrative of comfort to be an unrealized pastoral dream. It brings into consciousness a gap between how it is with animals and how we feel it should be with animals: in other words, a cultural sense of an unfulfilled obligation of care towards animals.

There are previous academic works that notice that consumption of stuffed animals as mass-produced things is an uncomfortable experience ridden with violence and guilt towards that violence, despite the common classification of stuffed animals as comfort objects. However, these works point to the material design of stuffed animals as the source of discomfort: stuffed animals' soft, adorable, and unthreatening look appeals to consumers, both inducing and protesting the consumption of stuffed animals as things. My study differs from and complements these works by throwing light on the role of stuffed animal fictions in burdening consumers with irreconcilable demands in the consumption of stuffed animals. Stuffed animal fictions are part of the system of marketing stuffed animals as comfort objects: for example, one of the most visible functions of the Pooh stories has been "successful merchandising of [its] characters" in various forms including that of stuffed toys (Connolly 9). At the same time, stuffed animal fictions incorporate stuffed animals into narratives in which they are more than things, setting up an impossible standard of good consumption for consumers of stuffed animals.

Consumption of stuffed animal bodies is far from unambiguously comforting, but involves deep anxieties about animals' potential suffering and consumers' culpability in it. The teddy bear is commonly viewed as "an essential childhood friend that could be held and

comforted, and that could comfort" (Maniera 120). However, Elizabeth Lawrence, in her discussion of teddy bears as "idealized beings adapted solely to specific human needs" (151), points out that the teddy bear still inadvertently "gives us a way to reflect upon what has been lost in the [forceable] transformation" of living bears into "tame dependent and dependable" things (150). Carmen Caldas-Coulthard and Theo van Leeuwen point out how real-life stories of teddy bears are full of "the theme of destruction and mutilation" (Caldas-Coulthard and Leeuwen 20), despite the fact that the teddy bear is designed "as an object on which to bestow . . . love and affection" (10). Private testimonies of teddy bear experience that Caldas-Coulthared and Leeuwen record show that love of stuffed animals often manifests as anxiety at causing suffering to the animal: "I remember lining my bears up around my bed at night so that none of them got lonely or felt left-out" (19). Sometimes, the damaged stuffed animal body becomes so much a source of guilt that it is pushed out of sight: "I guiltily pushed him [a damaged teddy bear] to the back of a cupboard. I had to stop myself thinking about how claustrophobic he must feel" (19).

Citing stuffed animals as exemplary cute objects, theories of cuteness explain how the cuteness of commodities makes for a problematic experience of consumption in which guilt goes together with pleasure. Sianne Ngai defines cuteness as "an aesthetic foremost aligned with playthings designed for children," and thus a form aligned with "the stuffed animal or manufactured plush toy" (73, 75). A cute thing calls for a conflicted response in which the desire to unscrupulously consume the thing ("the pleasures of easy consumption"; 59) collides with the felt demand to protect it from such violence. It invites consumption at the same time as "resisting the logic of commodification" (13), making "a demand for care" that exceeds its commodity value (11). Daniel Harris points out that the "defenseless immobility" and "thingness" of cute objects—well exemplified in stuffed animals—induce mixed affective responses to the pitiful

thingness of commodities (7). While my reading of disturbing visual depictions of stuffed animals in stuffed animal picture books in this chapter benefits from the insight of these works, I believe that there is a portion of the discomfort of stuffed animal consumption that cannot be wholly attributed to these animal bodies' look of cuteness, and requires consideration of the cultural narratives to which these animal bodies belong. This chapter is an attempt to provide that extra explanation through discussion of how stuffed animal fictions write our relationship with stuffed animals.

2.2 Indestructible Animal Bodies of the Stuffed Animal Pastoral

I start my discussion again from the frame narrative of the Pooh stories, as it makes visible the process of the repression of uncomfortable memories of the exploitative use of stuffed animals. A dialogue from the frame narrative of the first chapter shows how the Hundred Acres Wood stories—as comforting narratives of a violence-free relationship with animals—are also being offered as alternative memories of childhood play with stuffed animals.

"Is that the end of the story?" asked Christopher Robin.

"That's the end of that one. There are others."

"About Pooh and Me?"

"And Piglet and Rabbit and all of you. Don't you remember?"

"I do remember, and then when I try to remember, I forget."

. . .

Christopher Robin nodded.

> "I do remember," he said, "only Pooh doesn't very well, so that's why he likes having it told to him again. Because then it's a real story and not just remembering." (*Winnie-the-Pooh* 20)

Before proceeding to tell the remainder of the Hundred Acres Wood stories, the narrator offers his stories as memories of the relationship between the stuffed animal and the child ("Don't you remember?"), and Christopher Robin accepts this offer ("I do remember"). In this, the child is agreeing to remember the Hundred Acres Wood stories as "real" accounts "about Pooh and Me [the child]." Continuing to read the Hundred Acres Wood stories, readers are also entering a contract to remember and accept the Hundred Acres Wood stories as the definitive account of childhood play with stuffed animals, rather than Christopher Robin's ruthless bumping of Pooh. Reading the Hundred Acres Wood stories is supposed to be an experience of replacing uncomfortable memories of violent play with stuffed animals—what we witnessed in the first pages of Pooh stories and what we remember from our own experience—with the pastoral of the Hundred Acres Wood stories in which the child engages in harmless and affectionate play with the stuffed animal.

The reassuring images of inviolate stuffed animal bodies are essential to the function of stuffed animal fictions as comfort narratives, even as they are the successful end-product of that very function; these images overwrite existing memories of stuffed animals as destructible and destroyed things. The function of such images is made most visible in the concluding pages of the Pooh stories. The Pooh stories attempt to imprint readers' minds with the image of never-ending pastoral play with an unhurt and unhurtable Pooh, driving out any guilt-ridden awareness of the fate of stuffed bears as things in the "world." This can be seen clearly in the final scene of the Pooh stories:

> Still with his eyes on the world Christopher Robin put out a hand and felt for Pooh's paw.
>
> "Pooh," said Christopher Robin earnestly, "if I—if I'm not quite" he stopped and tried again —"Pooh, whatever happens, you will understand, won't you?"
>
> "Understand what?"
>
> "Oh, nothing." He laughed and jumped to his feet. "Come on!"
>
> "Where?" said Pooh.
>
> "Anywhere," said Christopher Robin.
>
> So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest a little boy and his Bear will always be playing. (*The House at Pooh Corner* 179-80)

This is the only scene in which the Hundred Acres Wood stories have "eyes on the [outside] world"; it brings back into Christopher Robin's sight/mind the stuffed animal's status as a usable and to-be-used thing. The outside world is a place where "whatever" might happen to the stuffed animal—things that are quite unutterable and likely impermissible. There is a sense of guilt—and even of his own culpability—on the part of the child. Christopher Robin feels compelled to ask for the understanding of the stuffed animal but finds it impossible, and equivocates. We get a sad, haunting glimpse of the fate of stuffed animals as disposable things.

However, Pooh stories wave away these images as does Christopher Robin, offering in their stead an "enchanted" vision of the indestructible bear engaged in unending pastoral play with the child, a vision constructed through words as well as pictures. The final page's illustration shows Pooh's silhouette frolicking on the grass hand in hand with that of Christopher Robin; the Pooh stories leave readers with this image. This is how Pooh stories memorialize the stuffed animal. And this is how Pooh and his play with Christopher Robin becomes

remembered—not as being dragged down the stairs in unheard suffering, nor as on the verge of being left to his fate in the world. The scene also offers to be more than a memory of a particular child and a particular stuffed animal; it is supposed to be the universal childhood memory of "a little boy and his Bear," with the silhouettes of Christopher Robin and Pooh standing for all children and all stuffed bears.

The pattern is repeated in the stuffed animal fictions we looked at in the first chapter. The comfort narratives of *Bear in the Air* and *Corduroy* both culminate in similar images of the safe and undamaged stuffed animal. The stuffed animal is in the loving arms of the child, and looks no worse for what it has gone through: the bear in *Bear in the Air* has been dried clean, and *Corduroy* has in fact acquired a button that had been missing. Neither work shows much actual play with stuffed animals; both deal with the animal's adventures in the market which culminates in its rescue by the child. Also, both unremember the violent consumption of stuffed animals with images of an affectionate and non-violent hug between the child and the stuffed animal. *The Teddy Robinson Storybook* wraps up its collection with an episode in which Teddy Robinson is literally memorialized in a perfect image that makes both Deborah and Teddy Robinson happy. He is drawn and "put in a book" by the neighbor painter (the title of the final chapter is "Teddy Robinson is Put in a Book")—in a perfect undamaged form in which he, for example, does not "look smudgy and unbrushed" (*The Teddy Robinson Storybook* 241). It is these fun and peaceful images of Teddy Robinson in different poses that decorate the front cover and the back cover of *The Teddy Robinson Storybook*, producing a vision of never-ending pastoral play with the stuffed animal as in the Pooh stories.

However, there are stuffed animal fictions in which a different style of depicting stuffed animals becomes the means of recalling memories of the violent use of stuffed animals as commodities, interfering with the production of unambiguous feel-good endings in which it is as if all is resolved regarding animals. These are fictions in which we are given what I call "realistic" histories of stuffed animals.[15] The realistic image of stuffed animals is troubling not just because it exposes the narrative of comfort to be a lie, but because it shows the narrative of comfort to be a pastoral dream of a better relationship with animals that is yet unrealized. It is a reminder of an uncomfortable gap between our pastoral dreams in which animal bodies do not and should not come to harm, and the system of animal mass-production/consumption in which animals are being used and disposed of as things. These "realistic" stuffed animal fictions also muddle the pre-established relationship between the childhood stories and the adult reader, because these works do not let readers safely sit back, watching a heartwarming drama of the animal being rescued by the innocent child (or by the benign world). The child is also a more complicated figure in these works, as they, in their realistic depiction of use of stuffed animals, show that the child consumer is implicated in the violence of animal consumption. These stories range from depicting the child consumer as oblivious of his/her own involvement in the systematized violence, which throws the animal problem back to adult readers, to depicting him/her as painfully aware of it, which also makes it structurally impossible for adult readers to ignore the animal problem.

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[15] Though it may be counter-intuitive to use the term "realistic" in any way regarding "fake" animals, I use the term "realistic" here to describe stuffed animal fictions that, in one way or another, remain faithful to the materiality of the stuffed animal as a thing, which entails being faithful to the violence involved in its consumption.

In Don Freeman's *Beady Bear* (1954), there are uncomfortable moments in which the stuffed animal looks too much like an immobile, disposable thing to be incorporated within either the animal adventure narrative or the animal rescue narrative. These moments reminds us too much of the ultimate fate of commodified animals (both stuffed and unstuffed), leaving a bad aftertaste even after the ostensible happy resolution of the narrative. Dom Mansell's *My Old Teddy* (1991) faithfully records the damaging of the animal body in the process of the child's play with the stuffed animal, leading to an unexpected ending in which the child has to face the mangled, obsolete stuffed animal—and the guilt that the child has incurred. Jane Hissey's Old Bear stories (1986-2003) seem to be a mix of the animal rescue narrative and the Hundred Acres Wood stories when we just look at the narrative form, but the photorealistic depiction of old, tattered stuffed animals testifies to the impossibility of rescuing animals from the system of violence.

2.3 Realistic Images Speak

Beady Bear is an animal rescue narrative that borders on becoming un-comforting, because it reminds us too much of the disturbing fate of stuffed animals outside the comforting stuffed animal fictions—mainly through its materialistically realistic depiction of Beady's predicament as an abandoned thing, both visually and narrative-wise. *Beady Bear* generates uncomfortable suspense as to what will happen to its stuffed animal, as it keeps threatening to become a realistic account of the stuffed animal's use and abandonment. Insofar as Beady belongs to the work of the stuffed animal fiction, Beady should somehow be reincorporated in

one form or another into the narrative of animal relief. However, there are moments in which Beady is too much like an immobile, disposable thing that is destined to be used and disposed of—in other words, too much like a material stuffed animal. Reading *Beady Bear* is an experience in which literary expectations of what "should" happen to stuffed animals in stuffed animal fictions jars with the shared cultural knowledge of what is likely to happen to stuffed animals in the real-world system of animal commodification. *Beady Bear* asks readers to be conscious of the gap between what is *feel-good* and what is *likely* when it comes to commodified animals.

The main narrative of *Beady Bear* starts at a moment in which it seems like the animal rescue narrative abandons the stuffed animal to its fate as an out-of-use commodity. We see Thayer the good consumer purchasing/rescuing Beady from the market and "gently" engaging in affectionate, harmless play with the bear. However, when the child leaves the bear behind without explanation, it is as if the animal rescue narrative stops to function, and the bear is returned to its status as a thing, and a used thing at that. The obsolete stuffed animal body in itself—even more than the unsold animal body—is a reminder of the animal problem in that it points out a feature of the violence of the animal consumption system that does not match the promise of the stuffed animal fictions: the obsolete stuffed animal is not just waiting for the unfulfilled promise of the animal rescue narrative, but has outlived that promise. The story's illustration at this point shows the bear in the posture of an immobile thing among other things, as opposed to more animated depictions of the bear with Thayer in previous pages. Even his face looks expressionless and thing-like on this page with emphasis on the beady eyes staring into nowhere, whereas previous pages depicted Beady with more emphasis on mouth-expressions.

The rest of the book concerns Beady's attempt to rescue himself out of his predicament in the system of animal commodification by writing himself into an animal adventure narrative; not the market adventure narrative of the stuffed animal fictions, but a Jack London–style narrative of a return to the wild. However, what *Beady Bear* shows is a stuffed animal who struggles but fails to move out of his abject thingness, both intradiagetically and extradiagetically. It keeps turning attention to the problematic stuffed animal body that definitely cannot be returned to nature, and should have belonged to the narrative of animal rescue, but instead looks as if it just belongs to the system of animal consumption and its violence. Beady imagines himself as setting out on a "brave" adventure to find a new home/refuge in the non-human wilderness, thus escaping his fate as an out-of-use commodity: he decides to be like "'an animal brave who lives in a cave'" as in the book he looks at, and wonders "'if there could be a cave for [him] away up in those hills'" (*Beady Bear* n.p.) Adventure fails to take place, as *Beady Bear* symptomatically returns the stuffed animal again and again to his original place as an abandoned thing: it keeps returning Beady to Thayer's home in the process of his attempts to make the cave a home it cannot be, while constantly recalling the disturbing image of Beady as an immobile, abandoned thing. *Beady Bear* again and again brings readers face to face with the reality of material commodified animals that remains unchanged beyond any feel-good narrative of animal relief or liberation.

Beady's adventure into the wild turns into unlaughable farce, when it comes to take the form of Beady's trips back and forth between his new wild home and his previous human home. Though the cave looks at first sight like "'a perfect place for a brave bear like [him],'" Beady is not able to make himself at home in it: it is "dark and stilly" plus "chilly," and Beady is unable to

sleep in it. In the next pages, Beady decides to go and fetch his pillow from Thayer's house as a remedy:

> "There's something I need in here to make me truly happy. I wonder what it could be?"
>
> "Oh, I know!" and up he got and out he trotted down the snowy hillside to his house far below.

The narrative development as well as the accompanying illustration make apparent that the return to nature has been but Beady's dream of escape, and that Beady is still bound to the system of animal commodification. The moment that Beady realizes that he must return to his previous human home is the moment that *Beady Bear* returns its readers to Beady as an immobile stuffed thing. There is an illustration of Beady that shows that he is still the same helpless thing he was in the moment when he was first abandoned: Beady's body looks stiff and inanimate, with blank eyes staring into nowhere. He looks nothing like a bear in his habitat, but like a "real" abandoned stuffed animal.

Beady's futile attempt also reveals a "return to nature" to be more of a feel-good fiction—in the line of the animal rescue narrative or the market adventure narrative—than a real solution for animals such as Beady who are already irrevocably caught up in the system of commodification. It is not just that the stuffed animal's ultra-commodified body denies him any possibility of re-inclusion into the unhumanized wilderness. There is a dark hint that the wilderness as Beady imagines it might not exist,[16] and all animals might be Beady in the sense of being incorporated into the system of animal commodification. It is not just that Beady belatedly

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[16] Beady imagines the wilderness as the home/refuge of animals and an alternative to the human environment; he leaves a note declaring that "[he has] gone to live where a bear is sposed [sic] to live."

and “sadly” gains access to knowledge of the wild bears through the manmade medium of a children’s book, and ominously sights his supposed natural habitat with the most artificial “beady eyes.” Beady obviously cannot become the wild animal, but neither does he encounter one, even though he expects to; what he thought was “a bear” in a moment of terror turns out to be Thayer who has come looking for him. The wilderness is a strangely empty place, and, in the end, the wild bear only exists as an image and learning material for children in “‘The ABC Animal Book.’” Beady’s world is a world in which all bears are the stuff of consumer culture, whether as images or as bodies, whether stuffed or “wild.” Chapters 3 and 4 will further engage with how stuffed animal fictions provide an occasion to think on the ethical problem of manufactured and commodified animals in the absence of the “nature” solution.

A pattern is repeated as Beady trots back and forth between his two pseudo-homes. But the repetition does not set up a comforting predictable pattern in which the stuffed animal always gets scooped out of its precarious status as a thing. Rather, the repetition serves to postpone the intervention of the animal relief narrative, while dramatizing the failure of the return-to-nature narrative. It thus confronts readers with the question of what happens to commodified animals outside feel-good fictions. The book shows Beady pulled back again and again into the uncomfortable position of an abandoned thing, despite his efforts to imagine himself into the narrative of animal liberation (in absence of the narrative of animal rescue). Even with acquisition of the pillow, Beady does not feel comfortable in the cave but feels that “there still seems to be something missing.” He also looks disturbingly like a thing propped up against the pillow.

The book leads up to the doubtful moment in which it looks as if Beady has met a dead end as an used thing: that is, to the point at which it is as if the narrative could take us no further.

The most anxiety-ridden moment arrives when Beady finally equips himself with all he can think of: the pillow, the evening papers and a flashlight. It is in this moment that Beady himself starts to doubt his plan of escape ("After reading all the papers, Beady began to worry and wonder"); in this moment, Beady, surrounded with the pillow, the evening papers and a flashlight, looks more than ever like a mere abandoned thing. Beady stares at readers with the empty eyes of an abandoned thing, producing a strange Magic Eye moment that brings out questions on what would—and what should—happen to him. On the one hand, he looks like the familiar stuffed animals of the comforting stuffed animal fictions, and looks like he should be rescued sooner or later; on the other, he looks like a "real" animal-thing that is bound to be disposed of when it has outlived its use value. What if it turns out that he does not belong to one of those stuffed animal fictions? What happens to animals—both stuffed and biological—that do not belong to such fictions' narrative of relief? What is plausible and what is permissible when it comes to commodified animals?

It is adult readers, not children, that are accosted with these questions. The classic stuffed animal fiction—especially one that employs the animal rescue narrative—lets the figure of the caring child stand between adult readers and animal suffering. The stuffed animal fictions in effect consign care of animals to the figure of the child who cares too much for animals, both in and outside the narrative; through the production of stories in which the child innocently takes up the care of commodity animals, the adults get doubly released from ethical responsibility towards commodified animals. However, in the prolonged absence of the child who should respond to the animal in distress, Beady reaches out to adult readers with his imploring stare which is a form of a morally loaded question. Adult readers are put in an uncomfortable position in which they are

helpless yet somehow responsible witnesses to what happens to commodified animals—more responsible because they are supposed to be more knowing than the child.

Beady Bear threatens to abandon Beady at this realistic dead end, when it gets revealed that Beady is literally an immobile thing. It is a mysterious noise that first wakes Beady up from the moment of doubt. In the process of looking "so slowly and shakily" for the source of the noise:

> Suddenly he came to a stop—
>
> and over he toppled—kerplop!

The bear has run out of his power as a clockwork toy. This is a quasi-horror moment of overturning realization: it is not only that he is now immobile, but that he has been immobile all along. It calls back into the narrative what has been left almost forgotten: that "[Beady would] come unwound" and "Thayer … would gently wind him" in their earlier play. So far, it has been as if the animal's free movement is powered by the imaginative generosity that we are familiar with in the stuffed animal fictions. But at this point, *Beady Bear* reveals Beady to be powered only by the left-over power of previous wind-ups of his spring, while also revealing that he is in a more realistic kind of narrative-world in which the materialistic limits of commodity animal bodies are not so easily imagined away. The readers and the bear are both faced with the reality of the stuffed animal as it is: a thing that is unable to move itself, unless moved. With this, the narrative of Beady's "adventure" is really forced to "[come] to a stop."

Beady Bear reincorporates Beady into the stuffed animal fictions' narrative of animal rescue with another big turn of the narrative. On the surface, it turns out all well for Beady when Thayer shows up to reclaim the animal into the safety of the affectionate consumer's care, and it is revealed to be Beady's misunderstanding that he has been abandoned by Thayer. However, the

disturbing images of the used commodified animal linger after the narrative closure, recalling the problem of all the unrescued commodified animals that is not resolved with the narrative's rescue of Beady. Thayer shows up with a key—literal and metaphorical—to Beady's predicament as a thingified animal, when it is revealed that he has been looking for Beady with a key to wind him up. Thayer's words on their reencounter are:

> "For goodness' sakes, Beady, don't you know you need a key?
>
> "And me?"
>
> "Yes, but if I need you, who do you need?"
>
> "I need Beady!"

The loving child relieves Beady from his fate as a replaceable and disposable thing when the child declares that he loves the animal as much as the animal needs him—with a hug. It is not only that Beady is now more than a mere thing, but that he has been so all along. What happened in between is explained away as a product of misunderstanding and a sort of bad dream. The scene of rescue is then followed by a hand-holding journey reminiscent of the pastoral image in the concluding pages of the Pooh stories ("So down the hill to home they went, paw in hand and hand in paw"; *The House at Pooh Corner* 180). The picture book shows Beady safely and comfortably reinstalled at the home of the loving child as "the truly happiest bear." However, the resolution of the crisis is not meant to leave readers unambiguously satisfied with the good consumer's love as the answer to the animal problem as it did in *Corduroy*. The explanation that all has been a product of misunderstanding comes too late after protracted suspense, and does not quite answer the question of what awaits commodified animals in the end, even if it clears up Beady's immediate problems. Beady's question about the "need" of Thayer is also loaded with

uneasy weight—even though the good child turns it into a question of love—and turns attention to the precarious status of animals as commodities.

Through its depiction of the stuffed animal body that borders on (but does not quite become) realistic, *Beady Bear* points to the system of animal commodification (in which violence to animals is prevalent) that exists side by side with the stuffed animal fictions (in which violence never takes place). Mansell's *My Old Teddy* and Hissey's Old Bear stories go straight against the stylistic convention of the depiction of stuffed animal bodies in the stuffed animal fictions, in which stuffed animal bodies are always clean of traces of the violence involved in the use of animal bodies as things. Both works remain graphically realistic in their depiction of the wear and tear of "old" stuffed animal bodies. If the classic stuffed animal fictions overwrite our memories of the violent use of thingified animals (both stuffed and biological) with more pleasurable memories of indestructible and unhurt stuffed animal bodies, *My Old Teddy* and the Old Bear stories turn the stuffed animal picture book into a medium of remembering the violence done to commodified animal bodies, and of remembering the unfulfilled promise of the stuffed animal fictions that animals will be safe.

My Old Teddy is a metafictional work in that it brings into sight the fictionality of the comforting narrative of animal relief through images that realistically depict the violence of the child's play with the stuffed animal. It juxtaposes the child narrator's attempt to imagine herself and her bear into the comforting narrative of the stuffed animal fictions—in which animals get un-hurt—with faithful visual depictions of injuries that Teddy's body sustains in their play. In remembering play with the stuffed animal that does not live up to the pastoral dream of the stuffed animal fictions, *My Old Teddy* also remembers the moral burden of the consumption of

commodified animals, instead of getting rid of the burden of the animal problem with a feel-good account of pastoral play with the stuffed animal.

My Old Teddy consists of four-page cycles in which the child—who is also a first-person narrator—finds that the stuffed bear is hurt, and takes him to the Teddy Doctor (that is, her mother) so that he is "better."

> My old Teddy's leg came off.
>
> Poor old Teddy!
>
> I took him to the Teddy Doctor
>
> She made Teddy better. (*My Old Teddy* n.p.)

The narrative voice writes her Teddy into the pastoral narrative-world of the stuffed animal fictions in which the animal engages in unending harmless play with the child. The sound of repeated accounts of successful restoration of the animal body almost generates a safe, predictable pattern in which the animal invariably gets saved by the child—even if he gets endangered from time to time. However, the too-precise description of mutilation interferes a bit with comfort: it is a "leg," an "ear," an "arm," and then a "head." And the illustrations full-on bring back to sight the violence involved in the child-narrator's play with the stuffed animal, which does not quite live up to her pastoral dream. The illustrations give the account of "I" as an attempt to imagine away the disturbing material reality of the consumption of toy-animals. The first two-page spread is arranged in such a way that it brings to the fore the violence inherent in the supposedly pastoral play of the child and the stuffed animal—violence that goes underacknowledged in the text. Opening the picture book, the first thing that meets the eyes of readers is the sight of the severed stuffed animal leg on the left-hand page. On the other side of the spread is the almost-pastoral, bright-colored image of a child hand-holding the stuffed bear,

on the grass with a bird flying over them, but it is impossible to overlook the lack of the bear's leg.

The images—despite the simplified cute style that instinctively makes us classify *My Old Teddy* with more classic stuffed animal fictions—choose not to imaginatively make up for damages to the animal body. The illustrations of *My Old Teddy* meticulously record the material consequences of use of the stuffed animal in the form of increasing needle marks and bandages on the smiling stuffed animal body. The stuffed animal body does not remain the same, but wears out as the cycle of hurting and 'fixing' is repeated. These indelible marks speak against the reassurance of the narrative voice that the animal is rescued and restored, pointing to what cannot be undone. As the cycle continues, it is also made clearer that the child is more than an innocent bystander or eventual rescuer of the bear. She is implicated in the continuation of violence as a consumer of the stuffed animal-thing. The bear's arm comes off when the child tugs at the bear too hard to snatch it from another child, and the bear's ear comes off when the child spins it around.

The material reality of accumulated damage on the animal body brings to a halt the reassuring pattern of the text when "Poor old Teddy's head [comes] off," tumbling down the stairs in a scene reminiscent of the "bumping" scene of the Pooh stories. Violence lurking in everyday play with stuffed animals is emphasized with another two-page spread in which readers are first made to witness the severed head of the bear on the left-hand page, and then later gets introduced to the supposedly harmless context of a child in pajamas dragging the bear upstairs to her bedroom. The next four pages bring the child—as well as readers—face to face with the troubling material reality of animal consumption in the form of an old, out-of-use stuffed animal. Teddy Doctor's decree that "Teddy's had enough now" brings to attention the non-pastoral side

of child's play with the stuffed animal. The next two-page spread displays across its pages the tattered, immobile, and forever smiling bear propped up against a pillow. Unanimated by the child, we see Teddy as unmistakably a thing that has been subject to some rough use, and now is obsolete. The mother's attempt to somehow bring the stuffed animal body into the comforting narrative of animal relief only highlights the impossibility of doing so (she explains to the child that "Teddy has to rest"). At the same time, this is the moment in which the bear makes the most emphatic appeal to readers with his smiling face, which looks like it should belong to the comforting narrative of the stuffed animal fictions—invoking the promise of pastoral, reciprocal play with animals that has not been carried out.

My Old Teddy leads to a conflicted conclusion in which the child wants to—and probably will—continue on with the feel-good fiction of pastoral play with a new animal, but cannot be rid of the moral and affective burden of the memory of the old animal. The child seems to forget the irremediable violence inflicted on commodified animals when she accepts "a new Teddy" in place of the old Teddy whose body now resists incorporation into her pastoral fiction. It is as if she has decided to move on with her pastoral fiction, deliberately oblivious of the gap between it and the material reality of violence-ridden play with stuffed animals. The child greets "a new Teddy" offered by the Teddy Doctor with the same joy she greeted old Teddy when he had been treated by the Teddy Doctor; her ready declaration of love for the new stuffed animal ("I love my new Teddy very much") is accompanied by another image of a swinging-around of the stuffed animal that intimates a continuation of violence.

However, the sentence "I love my new Teddy very much" is an incomplete one that ends with a comma, instead of a period. When we turn the page, the sentence concludes with an

unexpected, emphatic declaration of enduring love towards old Teddy, the picture book closing with an image of an embrace between the damaged stuffed animal and the child.

but I love

poor old Teddy best.

Dear old,

poor

old

Teddy.

The child narrator again declares her love for the stuffed animal, but it is not an expression of easy, oblivious joy in the use of the commodified animal as in the previous pages. It is a form of guilt-ridden acknowledgement of an unfulfilled sense of obligation towards the "dear old, / poor / old" animal. Embracing the stuffed animal—accompanied by a declaration of love—in *My Old Teddy* reminds us of the cathartic moment of the animal rescue narratives. However, it is not an innocent child's promise of safe care for the stuffed animal as in *Corduroy*, nor does it give a vague all-resolving satisfaction in regard to the animal problem. In holding onto the used stuffed animal, the child is not looking forward but taking on the burden of memories that she does not know what to do with. The title *My Old Teddy* takes on a new layer of meaning, as the narrative turns out to be about remembering the old Teddy as "my" belonging, and thus as "my" responsibility. The embrace in *My Old Teddy* remembers the violence towards stuffed animals that goes under-registered in other stuffed animal fictions. It is not supposed to be cathartic, but instead meant to leave readers with an affective residue of unresolved guilt.

In reconfiguring childhood play with stuffed animals as an experience riddled with violence and guilt, *My Old Teddy* also asks for an adult reader that holds a different relationship

to the child and childhood than the one expected in the stuffed animal fictions. There is not much distance between the animal-knowledge of adult readers and the child protagonist in the concluding pages, and readers are called in to share the same inner conflict as that of the protagonist. Thus, in *My Old Teddy*, childhood is not a time marked by innocent immersion in the comforting fictions of pastoral relationship to stuffed animals, one that contrasts with adult acceptance of systematized violence towards commodified animals as a fact of life. Rather, it is a time in which we experience in advance, through our engagement with stuffed animals, the unresolvable gap between how we would like it to be with animals and how it is with animals.

To sum up, *My Old Teddy* is a work that does not let us forget the used stuffed animal and the violence to commodified animals to which it testifies. *My Old Teddy* interrupts the normalized practice of use and replacement of stuffed animals as things when it chooses to hold on to memories of the old Teddy that uncomfortably jar with expectations generated by the stuffed animal fictions. Barbara Dillon's *The Teddy Bear Tree* (1982) is another interesting work of stuffed animal fiction that helps us understand the peculiarities of the narrative decisions of *My Old Teddy*. *The Teddy Bear Tree* deals with the theme of obsolescence and replacement of stuffed animals and the guilt involved in it, only to free the protagonist child—and readers—from the affective and moral burden of used stuffed animals. It facilitates and justifies the continuation of use of commodity animals as things, helping to process the cultural sense of unfulfilled obligation towards animals that is incurred by the sight of stuffed animals that could not quite be Pooh.

The Teddy Bear Tree starts off with the problem of stuffed animals that are obsolete but yet unforgotten. The stuffed animal is a thing, but also uncomfortably more than that. On the one hand, the stuffed animal is a thing to be used and replaced, and to be assessed according to its

use value. Bertine is going to the rummage sale to purchase "a good bear" in place of her lost or unsatisfactory stuffed bears (*The Teddy Bear Tree* 7). She has Howard, but Howard is "too big to take places" and does not serve her needs (8). At the same time, there is a side to stuffed animal consumption that makes Bertine uncomfortable, despite her excited plan for the purchase of a new bear. She does not want to be reminded of her lost bear because his memories burden her with sad thoughts ("Don't remind me . . . I really get sad every time I think of poor Willis sitting inside that sand castle all alone"; 8). There is also a sense of vague unresolved guilt when she wants to imagine that the obsolete Howard is "happiest just sitting quietly by himself" (8). When the mystery bear she picks up at the rummage sale looks too old and used, Bertine again gets stuck with the unwieldy burden of a stuffed animal that is not good enough as a product, but can neither be simply disposed of as a thing. When it gets violently carried off into the night by the neighborhood dog, leaving only a severed eye, Bertine at the moment is filled with expectations of a "new, decent" replacement bear: "Bertine sobbed, peeking out between her fingers to see if her mother or father looked sorry enough to buy her a new, decent one" (18). But her feeling of relief is tempered with a hampering sense of guilt, as she "[keeps] fingering the sad little eye in her jeans pocket" "all through dinner" and decides to make a grave for the mystery bear (20).

However, *The Teddy Bear Tree* does not let the child linger with uncomfortable memories of old, sad, and lost animals, moving the narrative on with magical introduction of new bears that fascinate Bertine. Not only does *The Teddy Bear Tree* effectively take the material burden of the unwanted bear off Bertine through the Deus-ex-Machina-like intervention of the neighborhood dog, it also grants her "beautiful, perfectly formed teddy bear[s]" in place of the lost bear (30). The tree literally grows in the place where the eye of the mystery bear has been buried, and blooms with new bears in no time. With the tree, the book introduces a whole

new narrative in which the failure to take care of past bears is no longer an issue. When Bertine inquires of the new bear Joel about his origin, Joel gives a pastoral account of "finding [himself] curled up in a cozy little green cocoon" (44), overwriting the violent process of the use and replacement of animals that led up to his birth.

The rest of the narrative concerns the conflict between the animated new bears who want to be distributed to and played with by the neighborhood children, and Bertine who wants to keep them for herself and safe. (It is again ambiguous how much of Bertine's motivation for keeping the bears involves bears as valuable things and how much involves bears as beings that deserve care). *The Teddy Bear Tree* resolves the conflict when the bear Joel makes a speech that frees the child—and simultaneously the story's readers—from any residue of guilt in use of stuffed animals as things:

> "Soon you'll be grown up and will no longer care about bears. Then we'll all be left sitting forever. We have to make hay while the sun shines. We have to make our good times now." (70)

These animals have already accepted their fate as commodities, and these animals want to be used. "Bear Trouble" is caused when walking and talking bears protest against being kept unused (the title of Chapter 4), not against the use of their sentient bodies as toys. The concluding chapter is that of a "Teddy Bear Bash" in which the distribution/acquirement of new bear-toys is celebrated, and the old bears are more than completely forgotten.

The Old Bear stories are another work that imagines a different relationship between childhood, the adult reader of stuffed animal fictions, and commodified animals in trying to remedy childhood violence to stuffed animals with adult knowledge of violence. The Old Bear stories rewrite the stuffed animal fiction with its photorealistic rendering of old and tattered

animal bodies. These stories are stuffed animal narratives that do not reassure readers that all is well with animals, but points to an unbridgeable gap between the heartwarming stuffed animal fictions and the predicament of thingified animals. The Old Bear stories offer themselves not as alternative, feel-good memories of play with animals, but as an impossible dream of compensation for already-committed violence to animals. The picture books of this series "look" like a stop motion animation or a puppet show in which the old, immobile animal bodies are moved and staged to reenact the pastoral drama of the stuffed animal fictions. In staging an attempt to make up to obsolete animals through imagining them into the stuffed animal pastoral, the illustrations of the Old Bear stories point to the impossibility of doing so. The stuffed animal fiction is turned into a record of irremediable violence to animals in the system of animal commodification, against which the narrative of animal relief is but a dream.

Old Bear, the first book of the series, draws used stuffed animals into the genre of stuffed animal fictions. Its narrative is a mix of Hundred Acres Wood-type stories and the animal rescue trope: the stuffed animals luckily and invariably avoid getting hurt from "crashes" and falls in their quest to rescue Old Bear from the attic. *Old Bear* shows the animals almost getting crushed in their failed attempt at "building a tower of brick," "making themselves into a tower," "bouncing on the bed," and "climbing up the trees" (n.p.). But all ends up well as fun episodes in a heart-warming tale of animal rescue when, making use of handkerchief parachutes, "they [Old bear and Little Bear] floa[t] gently down… landing safely in the blanket," as planned and without a crash. Old Bear is welcomed home ("Welcome home, Old Bear"), and the book concludes with a "happy" image of the protagonist animals all safely "tucked up in bed." However, the stuffed animals look too much like real, used things in *Old Bear*—and remain so—for it to read unambiguously as a happy narrative of successful animal relief. *Old Bear* reads

more like a sentimental attempt to imagine too well-used animal-toys into a pastoral world in which they are more than things.[17] The look of their bodies—represented down to the clumped coat, greased fabric, and stiff joints—argues that they belong to a different kind of world in which animals are indeed things, and attests to what they have gone through there.

From the beginning, the narrative announces that it will be about remembering the violence towards commodified animals, as much as it will be about the restorative plan of animal rescue. The stuffed bear Bramwell has to remember the violence of "a very long time ago" when "the children were being too rough with him [Old Bear]," in order to realize that Old Bear is still in the attic and in need of rescue. And the final scene—in which "Old Bear was dreaming about the good times he would have now he was back with his friends"—reassures us that the to-be-continued series of Old Bear stories will be comforting tales of "good times" of old stuffed animals, at the same time as indicating that it is still but a dream. The Old Bear stories are a dream as warm, appealing, and improbable as one stuffed friend's dream in which "he could really fly and was rescuing bears from all sorts of high places."

The Old Bear stories also engage the adult reader in a different way than the classic stuffed animal fictions, depicting a more conflicted relationship between violence towards animals and the "knowing" adult reader. In making readers overhear the conversation between stuffed animals mentioning that Old Bear can safely come down from the attic since "the children are older now and would look after him [Old Bear] properly," the Old Bear stories make a wink at "older" adult readers in the manner of the Pooh stories. However, if the Pooh stories'

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[17] Our suspicion is confirmed when the portrait of the author on the dust jacket shows her surrounded by old stuffed animals that look very much like the protagonists of the series.

signal constructs an adult reader who knows better than to really care for stuffed animals because of his/her knowledge that violence towards commodified animals is inevitable, the Old Bear stories call on the adult reader who still cares and thinks about used animals precisely because of his/her knowledge of the violence involved even in childhood play with stuffed animals. If the Pooh stories free the adult reader from the guilt incurred by the figure of used stuffed animals, the Old Bear stories are for and by adults who have not been freed from that guilt.

3.0 Bears, the Zoo, and the Wild

3.1 Finding Home for Bears in the Anthropocene

Chapter 1 and 2 look at the process of establishment of the stuffed animal fictions genre as an ideological apparatus in the early twentieth century. The genre, through supplying feel-good narratives of animal relief, helps the conscience of the society process the shock of the newly institutionalized violence of the system of animal commodification. The stuffed animal fiction shows animal bodies getting relieved from violence that is known to consume them in the real world; these fictions promise that violence will never be actualized and animals will always be safe, at least in the world they make. The stuffed animal fiction genre is also *pastoral* in so far as it constructs fictional pastoral home for animals: the stuffed animal fictions tell reassuring stories about animals that miraculously reach pastoral haven and make it home.

This chapter will look at the mid- to late-twentieth century works of stuffed animal fictions,[18] and how they turn uncertain about placing bears in the narrative of relief.[19] There is

[18] If we define the genre more precisely, the works read in in this chapter might not belong to the comforting stuffed animal fictions; they deal with flesh-and-blood bears, rather than stuffed toy bears. But I believe these works should be understood in the context of the developing genre of the comforting stuffed animal fiction. All three works invoke the tradition of the stuffed animal fictions, and, more or less subtly, define themselves in relation to Pooh stories. The same goes for the flesh-and-blood animal narratives of Chapter 4.

[19] This chapter does not make a claim that the stuffed animal fictions invent the animal relief narrative. There is a tradition of the animal relief narrative—going back to the late-eighteenth century animal advocacy narratives—that

uncomfortable awareness about how most animals do not reach pastoral haven, but ends up being displaced and exploited. This awareness manifests in the form of a pained interest at the fate of the "real" bears in the narratives discussed in this chapter[20] and in attempts to incorporate a flesh-and-blood bear into the feel-good narratives of pastoral home-coming. In the end, these fictions turn into an ironic reflection on the pastoral of stuffed animal fictions—in coming up with the same unconvincing conclusion that the zoo is as close as it gets to the pastoral home for the flesh-and-blood bears of our time. The zoo endings of these fictions give a glimpse at the true historical condition of animals that does not align with the comforting narrative of animal relief, although the fiction tries to paper over the gap.

Thus, this chapter is about bears at zoos. I read bears at zoos as representing the difficulty of finding place for animals in the time when nature is no longer a safe home for animals, and when there is no real outside to the overarching system of animal commodification. As such, I read bears at zoos as epitomizing historical displacement of animals in the time of industrial

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sets up a very different affective relationship between animals in distress, men, and the system: *The Black Beauty* is a good example of a work that employs the animal relief narrative for the purpose of questioning the system of animal exploitation. Jopi Nyman points out how *The Black Beauty* constructs "affect as political" so that "concern for animals" generates a way for "more general and humane way of animal treatment" (77). The stuffed animal fictions borrow from this tradition, and reinvent the animal relief narrative so that its political potential is radically redirected. I will go back to the issue of the relationship of the individual animal relief narratives and the system of exploitation in Chapter 4.

[20] The bears as species have become associated with the genre of stuffed animal fictions. The stuffed animal fictions feature inordinate amount of stuffed toy bears, and the stuffed toy bear is almost *the* stuffed toy animal. My take on the relationship of stuffed animal fictions and species is further discussed in Introduction.

capitalism in this chapter, but I do not intend to go into indictment of zoos as an especially vile place of commercial exploitation of animals. There are far worse places for bears than the big first-world zoos; that is the problem. As one of the staple animals of a "complete" zoo, the bears-placed-in-zoos long testified to our power and skills to capitalize on even those animals of the deepest wild.[21] In the age of global destruction of animal habitats, zoos purport to be an ark and a make-shift refuge for animals. Reformed zoological parks' claim that well-managed zoos often represent best possible home for animals in our age is not necessarily disingenuous; but the truthfulness of the claim itself tells of the scale and the extent of displacement of animals. Zoos can remain but insufficient home—and pseudo-pastoral place—for animals, as long as they remain bound to the system of animal commodification and its violence. With their size and behavior pattern that make them difficult to be protected elsewhere, bears in zoos all the more speak for the lack of habitable place for animals in the Anthropocene.[22]

I will first reread selected section of Pooh stories to show how bears at zoos are the hidden substratum as well as the unresolved problem of Pooh stories and their descendants, the comforting stuffed animal fictions. The animal relief narrative of the stuffed animal fictions is predicated on the imaginative substitution of the flesh-and-blood body of the bears in the zoo with a far more rescuable body of stuffed toy bears; this is the move that sets off Pooh stories. Pooh stories are a dream of rescuing displaced bears and finding pastoral haven for them, at the same time as being a form of giving up on the historical condition of flesh-and-blood bears,

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[21] The bear pit is "a common feature of early zoos" (Flack 59).

[22] Just as "protected bears . . . habituated to humans [that] are now a serious problem in many 'wild' areas of North America" do (Garrard 150).

leaving them behind at zoos. Then, this chapter will turn to works that bring the problematic and loaded being of "real" bears at zoos back into the comforting world in which animals are supposed to find their pastoral home: Lindsay Mattick's *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear* (2015), Sally Walker's *Winnie: The True Story of the Bear Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh* (2015), and Lynd Ward's *The Biggest Bear* (1952). All three works turn somewhat absurd, in attempting to tell the story of the bears that end up at zoos as if it is a comforting narrative of animal relief. The absurdity of these works reveals the comforting narrative of animal relief to be what it truly is: a feel-good dream of finding home for animals. These works thus re-broach the muted subject of displaced and exploited animals, and tasks the readers with the unresolved, morally-loaded question of finding place for animals in our historical present.

3.2 Hundred Acres Wood Stories and the Bear at the Zoo

In Hundred Acres Wood stories, we meet the bear at home in a pastoral forest apparently free from historical force of the industrial capitalism. It is not often remembered that the pastoral of Hundred Acres Wood stories is placed in a specific historical context of the bear-human relationship. That is, these stories originate in the London Zoo that is exhibiting the caged polar bears.[23]

[23] Pooh stories dispute the traditional idea of authentic encounter with real animals as happening in the ahistorical wilderness free of petty human contexts, when they imagine the original encounter with the animal as taking place in consumerist and manmade environment of the London Zoo.

> You can't be in London for long without going to the Zoo. . . . So when Christopher Robin goes to the Zoo, he goes to where the Polar Bears are, and he whispers something to the third keeper from the left, and doors are unlocked, and we wander through dark passages and up steep stairs, until at last we come to the special cage, and the cage is opened, and out trots something brown and furry, and with a happy cry of "Oh, Bear!" Christopher Robin rushes into its arms. ("Introduction" *Winnie-the-Pooh*)

The stories to follow are a response to the encounter with, not the wild bears but, the bears at the zoo: that is, the already captured, commodified, and displaced bears. The presence of the Polar Bears in London itself is a proof of the already established power of the system of animal commodification that can move bears around as commodities, as well as of the nearing-if-not-already-accomplished extinction of wilderness as a safe returnable home for bears; Pooh stories begin in "dark passages" of this system.

Considered in this context, there is an element of utopian longing to the pastoral fiction of Hundred Acres Wood stories that "includes within its celebration the consciousness of the very different present from which the restoration will be a release" (Williams 18). What sets off Hundred Acres Wood stories in "Introduction" is an impulse to sneak the displaced animal out of the cage of the system with a redeeming embrace, and a genuine desire to procure a good place for it. In these stories, good place for animals is to be found somewhere in our world in which animals came to inevitably coexist with men, rather than in the appealing but infeasible idea of untouched wilderness. As a dream of a better relationship between men and non-human materials[24] in cultivated nature, pastoral shows its potential as a medium for thinking through the

[24] That is, animals as things,

issue of place of animals in the Anthropocene in which nature cannot be automatically imagined a home for animals.

However, the pastoral of Hundred Acres Wood stories, in the end, functions as an escapist fiction despite its utopian edge; its animal haven is reached at the cost of leaving behind the flesh-and-blood bodies of the animals trapped in their given historical condition. "Introduction" to Pooh stories elides the problematic bodies of the flesh-and-blood bears that cannot really be taken out of the zoo, when it switches the Polar Bears to "something brown and furry" that can be carried home in the child's arms, and then to the stuffed toy bear that we meet at the beginning of Pooh stories proper. What rushes into Christopher Robin's arms is not the Polar Bears he wanted to release from their caged status. but the readers are supposed to not argue it and go along with the child who misrecognizes it as the "Bear," especially as they are reading a children's book. "Introduction" asks the readers to give up on the flesh-and-blood bears at zoos as unrescuable casualties of the already established and unalterable system of animal commodification: to forget what has been told thus far and follow Christopher Robin into the pastoral pleasure of Hundred Acres Wood stories together with another kind of a bear.

"Introduction" also brings into attention how Hundred Acres Wood pastoral is itself implicated in the process of historical commodification and displacement of bears. As a response to his dream of releasing the bears from their historical and literal cage, the child is offered a souvenir stuffed bear: a smaller, not-at-all dangerous, and less expensive version of that animal which can be unproblematically taken home. The very utopian urge to get the animal out of the system is being capitalized on in commercial reproduction of the flesh-and-blood bears in the form of souvenir toy bears. Plus, now we know too well how this pseudo-liberating scene of embrace between the child and the new bear—as well as the pastoral of Hundred Acres Wood

stories themselves—functions as an effective advertisement of new, more consumable bears. Christopher Robin's embrace of the bear, which is supposed to take the bear to the pastoral forest of Hundred Acres Wood stories, has taken it—and the readers of Hundred Acres Wood stories—into the whole new world of commodified bears.

3.3 Can We Find True Home for Winnie?

Finding Winnie and *Winnie* both engage in a project of (re)writing the historical bear of London Zoo—the bear that "real" Christopher Robin has allegedly left behind at the turn-of-the-twentieth century London Zoo[25]—into the heart-warming narrative of animal relief in the manner of Pooh stories and stuffed animal fictions. Both fail to deliver a fully convincing story of the animal that is both truthful and comforting: and it is this failure that brings into stark light the uncomfortable truth of the historical animal condition—the truth of what already had taken place in regard to Winnie the historical bear and the historical reality of zoos.[26] There are some things

[25] To be precise, two stories of Winnie leave the Polar Bears still forgotten and unaccounted for. But the polar bear will make its own comeback in another unconventional bear fiction that we will discuss in Chapter 4.

[26] Flack, in his case study of the Bristol Zoo, points out that zoos, as institutions that "render the animals visible, animate, and accessible in a multisensory way" (81), are *designed* to expose animals to various forms of explicit and less-explicit violence. "The Zoo was no place for an animal to hide" (71), and the design of the animal enclosures allowed for "deliberate and sometimes profound violence" towards animals (78). The cruelty towards the zoo animals is an embedded component of the zoo system, rather than a strangely recurring series of individual transgressions: "the [Bristol Zoo] Society's animals were spat at and teased, rubbish was regularly tossed into their cage, . . . and lit cigarettes applied to the noses of bears when they reached the top of their pole" (79). Ito also shows

that happen to this flesh-and-blood bear that just cannot be processed through the language of the animal relief narrative: things that show how much the animal is a mere a thing in the system of animal circulation and consumption. *Finding Winnie* and *Winnie* are about how all professed lovers/rescuers of Winnie—and, her spin-off product, Pooh—are animal-traffickers and consumers complicit in the system of animal commodification, and how there is no place for animals free from the exploitation of the system when the zoo is the best imaginable home for animals.

Winnie the historical bear goes through a series of displacements in the system of animal commodification, as she is purchased from a poacher at a Canadian train station by a passing soldier; taken across the Atlantic Ocean as a pet of the Canadian army headed to England; consigned to London Zoo as a popular attraction; later to be reproduced as "the world's most famous bear" in the form of Pooh—as the full title of *Finding Winnie* indicates. *Finding Winnie*, in advertising itself to be a prequal of Pooh stories at the same time as being a "true" history of this bear, takes on the task of persuading the readers that the story of a historical bear-commodity (Winnie, a spectacle and a mascot of the early twentieth-century London Zoo) is a comforting one in which the animal finds a pastoral home where it is more than a thing.

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how "the ideal images of the zoo often . . . were contradicted by the real situations under which the zoo was managed" in which animals are substitutable things (174).

Finding Winnie sets itself up for a far more difficult task than Pooh stories in making a serious claim regarding the truth value of its animal tale.[27] Pooh stories emphasize in advance that Hundred Acres Wood stories should not be read seriously as a truthful account of bears (whether biological or stuffed), but as a comforting fiction spun for the child who needs to remain safe from the uncomfortable reality of animals. That is, Hundred Acres Wood stories are offered with a disclaimer that these stories have no intention of making reference to the historical reality of commodified bears. First, in a motion that sets aside the problem of biological bears trapped in historical institutions, "Introduction" to Pooh stories swaps the polar bears in the zoo with a stuffed bear that does not even match the species of the original. The second disclaimer comes in the frame narrative of the first chapter in which Christopher Robin asks for a bear tale that is "sweet," but not necessarily truthful. *Finding Winnie* chooses a different path: it promises its tale will be a truthful rendition of the life of a historical bear of London Zoo, while, on the other hand, promising to tell this truthful tale in the mold of a comforting animal fiction for children in the tradition of Pooh stories. *Finding Winnie*'s promise, in effect, is that it will show how the life of a historical bear Winnie is a feel-good one in which the animal finds relief in real and pastoral home comparable to Hundred Acres Wood. (This grandiose promise, of course, turns out to be unfulfillable.)

The book jacket of *Finding Winnie* advertises the story of Winnie in terms of its faithfulness to historical truth, at the same time as appealing to the readers through deployment

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[27] *Finding Winnie,* in claiming the status of a non-fictional narrative, is engaging with the "the inherent tension surrounding truth-telling in children's fiction" (Pearson and Reynolds 70): that is, "the [difficult] question of how much reality children can be expected to bear, or . . . how much realism adult can bear to give them" (69).

of the narrative tropes of the stuffed animal fictions—in which an animal gets its relief via the friendship of an animal-loving human being.[28] The claim of historical accurateness disturbs and intermingles with the generic tropes of the animal relief narrative in this advertisement. The story of Winnie will be about "a real bear named Winnie" who has been taken to World War 1 by a Canadian soldier in the very specific year of 1914 ("In 1914 . . . he took the bear to war"), while simultaneously being "the true story of a remarkable friendship and an even more remarkable journey" that is destined to land the bear in the friendship of "a real boy named Christopher Robin." The back of the picture book is equipped with the "ALBUM" section filled with black-and-white picture of Winnie that give weight of historical record to what has been narrated; the back cover of the picture book shows the child in pajama holding the stuffed bear, aligning the picture book with the stuffed animal fictions and with Pooh stories in particular.

The short frame narrative also places the tale-to-be-told firmly in the tradition of stuffed animal fictions originating in Hundred Acres Wood stories. *And* it makes promise to reconcile their narrative conventions with the demand for a true bear story.

"Could you tell me a story?" asked Cole.

"It's awfully late." It was long past dark, and time to be asleep. "What kind of story?"

"You know. A true story. One about a Bear."

We cuddled up close.

"I'll do my best." I [the mother-narrator] said. (*Finding Winnie*)

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[28] Usually a child. Another difficult task that two stories of Winnie is confronted with is the task of arguing for the innocence of the adult in relation to the animal commodification system. Both end up stretching themselves a bit.

Like Hundred Acres Wood stories, the story of Winnie is a bedtime tale that is told for the child at the request of the child for a tale about "a Bear." It is made clear that the adult is giving in to the perceived need of the child in telling this tale, and telling it despite it being past bedtime. The dialogue further assures the readers that what follows will be a comforting tale of an animal in calling up the dialogue between "I" and Christopher Robin in the first chapter of Pooh stories. The dialogue's setting in the safe place of home generates a similar impression as to the nature of the story to be told: the place where Winnie's tale is to be told is the kind of place in which the child and the mother can be "cuddled up close." Visual depiction of the place also intimates that the tale to be told will be a version of Hundred Acres Wood stories; the mother and the child is already surrounded by not only the soft darkness of the nursery room, but a smiling teddy bear, a sleepy-looking ornament-owl, and a wallpaper depicting trees. All things call for a sweet tale, rather than a truthful one. The twist is that the child, unlike Christopher Robin, wants his bear tale to be "true" as well as sweet. In doing so, Cole makes a dual demand that cannot be reconciled in one tale, even though the mother-narrator "[does her] best" as promised.

The narrative of animal relief constantly comes into conflict with details of Winnie's life; and the narrator's tale of Winnie turns out to be a tale that shows how Winnie's life does *not* follow the comforting formula of animal relief despite the need of the child and the best efforts of the mother-narrator. Harry Colebourn, the first known owner of Winnie, does not take Winnie out of the cycle of animal commodification, but takes Winnie through it. He purchases Winnie from a poacher to make him an army pet, and then a zoo attraction. In the course, Harry takes the bear "from the fields of Canada to a convoy across the ocean to an army base in England" and then into the midst of London public, as the book jacket advertises. And the London Zoo where Winnie ends up is hardly a pastoral home for animals free from commercial exploitation.

To make up for this gap between the narrative of animal relief and the historical facts of Winnie's life, the tale of Winnie choses to argue that the animal relief is more of an issue of good intention than an issue of achieved effect. This internalization of the animal rescue narrative is, however, itself an indirect acknowledgement that the language of animal relief is insufficient to describe what actually happened to Winnie. *Finding Winnie* attempts to persuade the readers that the history of Winnie's transaction and use is, *at heart*, a narrative of animal rescue: that it is motivated by a sense of affectionate obligation to the animal, rather than self-interest on the part of the human actors. In the process of arguing for the innocent motivations that set Winnie's transactions apart from the usual commercial exploitation of animals, the work ironically brings into view the gap between what is intended to happen (the animal relief) and what happens (the use and disposal of the animal as a commodity). In other words, it shows how Winnie's story is, *in effect*, one of commercial exploitation and displacement of bears, regardless of how human actors believe themselves to be following the scenario of animal relief. Furthermore, it holds up to view how love for animals itself is incorporated in the system of animal exploitation, and how the purportedly genuine affection for animals is so often indistinguishable from the consumerist desire in this system.

From the scene of Harry's initial purchase of Winnie from a trapper at a Canadian train station, the narrator is careful to draw a line between the intentions of the trapper and the intentions of Harry in their dealing with the bear. In the moment of Harry's hesitation before his bear rescue/purchase, the narrator interjects to instruct readers on how to read the action that is about to take place.

> "That bear has lost its mother," he [Harry] thought, "and that man must be the trapper who got her."

"What do trappers do?" asked Cole.

"It's what trappers don't do. They don't raise bears."

"Raise them?"

"You know," I [the mother-narrator] said. "Love them."

The conversation between the narrator and the model-audience Cole frames Harry's purchase of Winnie as one motivated by love-and-care for the animal, thus separating it from the action of trappers that lacks this element. In order to make Winnie's story an animal relief narrative, it is essential that clear distinction be made between Harry's taking of Winnie from the trapper and the trapper's taking of the cub from her mother, the latter being an unquestionably violent act of displacement of the animal. Despite itself, the scene reveals how difficult it is to make a clear-cut distinction between the trapper and Harry in the system of animal commodification: the narrator has to step into underline the difference, and to prevent potential "misreadings" of Harry as another perpetrator of the system. And the narrator can make animal rescue and animal trafficking distinguishable only through reference to interiorities of the actors involved—which comes down to the impalpable, but crucial love. Trappers cannot be defined—or condemned—in terms of what they do to bears, since Harry's love will also result in some big-scale transactions and displacements of Winnie.

The narrator continues to couch and justify each of Harry's decisions concerning Winnie through description of Harry's inner conflicts. His initial decision to purchase Winnie is preceded by long thoughts, debates with self, "[pacings] back and forth" till the moment when "his heart [makes] up his mind." His purchase of the bear is presented as a product of deliberation in which genuine affection ("heart") wins over lesser considerations of self-interest. The tale of Winnie again resorts to stressing Harry's good intentions when Harry decides to

consign Winnie to the London Zoo, and not temporarily. The decision is a difficult one to account for, as it goes straight against the fundamental plot of the comforting stuffed animal fictions in which the animal is taken to pastoral home away from the dangers and vagaries of the market. It is just as if Harry is putting the bear body back on the market, once he is done using the bear as an emotional support animal in the camp. To patch up this gap between the animal relief narrative and Winnie's true story, *Finding Winnie* attempts to direct readers' attention away from the external and material consequences of Harry's decision to the loving intentions underlying it. We hear that "Harry thought for a long time" and that "His head argued one way and then the other. But his heart made up his mind" as he makes the decision. Readers get introduced to Harry's "thoughts" in abstract before being acquainted with what they are about at all. The impression generated is that Harry's decision concerning the bear will be one that is carefully thought out and, most importantly, dictated by love ("heart"). Cushioning Harry's action this way, the tale of Winnie offers an apology for what its animal rescuer might be 'seen' as doing: participating in the ordinary, heartless circulation of the bear as a commodity.

Harry's lines to Winnie in their parting scene again turn the readers' eyes to Harry's struggles over his decision—above what the decision does and will entail to the bear. The scene begins with a look at "a deep breath" that Harry takes before he starts explaining himself to Winnie—and readers—the difficult decision to leave the bear at the zoo. It concludes with Harry's request to the bear to remember his love and just that:

> "There is something you must always remember," Harry said. "It's the most important thing, really. Even if we're apart, I'll always love you."

This is a request to readers as much as it is a request to the bear. The narrative is asking readers not to inquire too much into the consequences and real-world implications of Harry's bear-love;

it is imploring them not to think too much on how the affection for animals functions in the exploitative system of commodification of animal bodies.

And, as the narrative focuses on justifying human actions on—and uses of—Winnie through reference to human thoughts and "heart," Winnie becomes overshadowed by the figure of Harry in both words and images. In other words, it becomes more and more apparent that the work is *about* and *for* people who wish to imagine Winnie into pastoral home—including the mother-narrator of the framed story of Winnie, Harry, Milnes, and, of course, the assumed readers—rather than about finding Winnie or finding home for Winnie. *Finding Winnie* is interested in affirming the truth of human love for Winnie and thus easing human conscience concerning the animal, but not so much in ascertaining if Winnie found true relief in the manmade world. Winnie's response towards human dealings with her—that may or may not match the expectations of the animal-lovers—is kept out of focus and inaccessible. Unlike most stuffed animal fictions we looked at, *Finding Winnie* does not give much space, narrative or pictorial, to the animal, so that sometimes it becomes literally difficult to locate Winnie in the picture book. In the scene of the first encounter between Harry and Winnie, we only get one passing glimpse of Winnie as compared to full two pages of Harry's pacing and thinking. In this important moment in which the bear's fate is decided, *Finding Winnie* zooms in on the troubled face of the man, but not on the bear.

Harry takes Winnie to London Zoo. *Finding Winnie*'s own uncertainties as to the nature of the story of Winnie up to this point, the "*end of Harry and Winnie's story*," is expressed through the child's question, as the picture book briefly returns to the frame narrative: Cole asks, "*is that the end?*" The narrator provides two additional narratives to supplement the lack of the sense of completion in her animal relief narrative. Two epilogues can both be called a mock

animal pastoral in that both give the feel of comforting closure, but neither shows Winnie at pastoral home nor shows her returning to one. Both conclude with a celebration of a return to pastoral home, but neither takes Winnie into it. Both stories function as mute testimonies to the collective historical failure of finding home for Winnie outside the system of animal commodification: the failure that a fiction cannot make up for.

Finding Winnie's first epilogue begins with showing how the London Zoo is not a pastoral home for Winnie. While Harry introduces London Zoo as a "home" where Winnie would be cared for, *Finding Winnie*'s illustrations of the zoo are unexpectantly historically accurate, and show it to be more of a bleak place of animal exploitation. The zoo is a bare place where children can sometimes come to touch and ride caged animals—in a tradition that comes down to touch zones in more contemporary zoos.[29] When we meet Winnie again, she is alone in a corner of what is not much of an improvement from the nineteenth-century bear pits.[30] Her

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[29] The interspecies touch allowed in zoos is never innocent of the asymmetrical power relationship in which it is embedded in. Ann Colley argues that "when the public fingered the zoo animals, they were involved in a reciprocal process," but her own account of the touched bears in cages tells a different story. It is pretty clear that what is being perpetrated is a one-sided, difficult-to-romanticize violence, when exhausted, caged grizzlies get "subject to the crew's attempts to caress and shake hands with them" and traveler's attempts to "finger and grasp the creatures' fur" (126).

[30] The bear pits have long been objects of concern and anxiety when it comes to construction of good zoos. On the one hand, they were considered inhumane since the end of the nineteenth century, and there were widespread movements towards more naturalistic bear displays as "humane animal management" (Hanson 145). On the other hand, the movement towards reform was gradual, and, for example, "the Bear Pit [of the Bristol Zoo] . . . had remained almost entirely unchanged for over 145 years, before its conversion into a different kind of a housing in 1971" (Flack 83).

enclosure is hardly even pseudo-pastoral, being a bare ground surrounded by brick walls, and decorated sparsely with rocks and plants.

Christopher Robin is introduced as if he will fill up the role of a true friend and an animal rescuer for Winnie, despite their friendship being occasioned by the animal entertainment system mediated by this institution: the narrative voice tells us that "they [Winnie and Christopher Robin] became true friends." However, it turns out that Christopher Robin's love does not take Winnie out of the animal-market, but deeper into the market—where she will be circulated and used in a way that is totally indifferent to her life.

> Christopher Robin would visit Winnie at the zoo, and then he would take his stuffed animal on all sorts of adventures in the wood behind his home.
>
> His father, Alan Alexander Milne, wrote books all about them.

Harry's Winnie became Winnie the Pooh—and there has never been a more beloved bear.

The narrative voice produces a feel of heart-warming closure, but at a closer look, what is being celebrated is anything but Winnie's deliverance from the system of animal commodification. What is being celebrated is the finalization of the process of commodification and displacement of the bear in Winnie's "becoming" of Winnie-the-Pooh, the ultimate commercial animal. The bear Christopher Robin takes to "all sorts of adventures" in a pastoral home-forest is not Winnie but her namesake stuffed bear; the tale of their adventures will take Winnie's stuffed clones not into the pastoral forest, but to unthought-of corners of the world as an animal-thing to be "beloved" and used, while Winnie is left to her fate as an animal attraction at the zoo. Love of Winnie turns out to be a form of commercial exploitation of the bear, at the same time as being a form of indifference towards the fate of the beloved bear.

The second epilogue is about Harry's successful return to his safe pastoral home. He returns to his war-free home in Winnipeg, where he grows a family "tree" that surprisingly culminates in the narrator and her son Cole (a literal family tree is shown). The sense of heart-warming closure produced in these pages disguises the fact that this is a narrative of animal relief that does not bring the animal home. Harry returns to the train station—where he found Winnie—without Winnie, and his family tree includes human characters of the frame narrative instead of Winnie. Harry's return home is marked by the conspicuous absence of Winnie, at least for those readers who remember that this was meant to be a story about a bear. The fact that Winnie did not come home to Winnipeg is truly ironic since she served as a symbol of home in the Canadian army base in England: the bear has been named after the soldiers' shared home Winnipeg "so [they'll] never be far from home."

Winnie, through its images that bring the readers close to what Winnie goes through, calls attention to how insufficient the language of the animal relief narrative is in accounting for the process of use and circulation of animals. The textual narrative of *Winnie* follows the same pattern as that of *Finding Winnie* in attempting to render the account of consumption of Winnie comfortable through referenced to human love involved—that is, through the internalized animal rescue narrative. The emphasis of words of *Winnie* is on how Harry's actions are motivated by genuine love and care for the bear. It is the images that tell a different story—through affectively charged depictions of the vulnerable bear body that do not quite fit in with the self-satisfied tone of the text. The images work against the language of the internalized animal relief narrative, bringing into attention what the narrative of human love of Winnie leaves unaccounted for: the used body of the bear that does not quite get rescued despite all the professed love. The images

question if Winnie has found true home, refusing to go along with the comforting claim that the bear has found relief through the hands of Harry and at London Zoo.

Like *Finding Winnie, Winnie* engages itself in the difficult task of telling the story of Winnie the historical bear—enmeshed in the system of animal commodification—in the form of the narrative of animal relief. It promises to be a comforting fiction of animal relief with the image on its front page that depicts the cub safely held in the arms of the soldier, which clearly alludes to the image of a child holding a stuffed bear, often so essential to the comforting stuffed animal fictions, as well as its back page that advertises the picture book to be "the remarkable tale of a real bear—and the soldier who cared for her." At the same time, *Winnie* claims to be "the True Story of The Bear who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh," and flanks its bear tale with pages of black-and-white pictures supposed to back up its historical truthfulness.

Like *Finding Winnie, Winnie* resorts to the language of love to make the account of circulation and use of Winnie fit into the animal relief narrative. The focus of the text is on how Harry's intentions are good: he is there to rescue the bear, care for the bear, and ultimately to find home for her. Harry "had to save her [Winnie]" from a poacher (*Winnie*), as the poacher is the one who "can't care for a bear," while Harry "could care for a bear." His initial decision to leave Winnie at the London Zoo is based on his belief that the zoo is a good, safe institution that can serve as home for bears: he believes that "zookeepers know *exactly* how to care for a bear." His decision to leave Winnie permanently there is based on the belief that this zoo, in the meanwhile, became "the home she [Winnie] knew best."

However, the illustrations resist the internalized animal rescue narrative's attempt to prevaricate the questionable consequences of human love, when it turns attention to the displaced,

vulnerable body of the bear that is caught up—and lost—in the system that is alien to her.[31] In the scene of Harry's/readers' initial encounter with the bear, we see Winnie's body placed at the vanishing point of the two-pages wide view of the train station, so small and so out of place. On her way to the London Zoo, Winnie stares back at the readers with unreadable expression as she is moved in a car in the arms of Harry, as if asking what is moving her—love or the system of commodification. Upon Harry's decision to permanently consign Winnie to the zoo, we are shown their final embrace; Winnie's back is turned to the readers, leaving it unsettlingly unreadable what this decision of love might mean or entail to the bear.

Like *Finding Winnie*, *Winnie* complements for the lack of satisfying closure inherent to this zoo-ending with an account of successful commodification of Winnie as Pooh; it tells how Winnie became imaginatively reproduced in Christopher Robin's teddy bear, and how the imagined plays of Christopher Robin and this bear "grew into a book" that we all know of (27). However, *Winnie* does *not* fully substitute the story of Winnie with the story of successful commodification of Winnie-the-Pooh. It comes back to what happened to original Winnie at the zoo (both in words and images), after her commercial reproduction in the form of Pooh.

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[31] What happens in *Winnie* between the words and pictures is a version of what Perry Nodelman names "a [more] subtle sort of irony" in which "the tone of the words in a picture book does not seem to match the situation the pictures show us" (*Words about Pictures* n.p.). There is a tonal mismatch between the words and pictures, and the effect is that the textual narrative is made to sound as if it is an insufficient attempt to make sense of Winnie's situation (depicted in the pictures). *Winnie* makes full use of the pictures' power to "seduce us [readers] into stopping to look" (Sipe 101), so that it interrupts the flow of the textual narrative and put into doubt its meaning-making.

In the final pages, the narrative voice betrays uncertainties as to the status of the animal in the system of animal commodification. Even while making repeated assertion on how the bear has been safely cared for at the zoo:

> After that, the *real* Winnie became even more famous. Although more people came to see her, Winnie's everyday life remained normal. The zookeepers treated her kindly, friendly visitors scratched her back, and gentle children spoon-fed her milk. For Winnie, *this* was the best way to care for a bear.

Winnie remains a bear-at-the-zoo regardless of all the love she attracts in the form of Pooh and as a zoo attraction. And even though the text insists that the zoo turned out to be a good place for Winnie and that this is the best possible outcome for the bear, the zoo is not exactly confirmed or celebrated as the safe pastoral home for the animal. Rescuing the bear is a task-to-be-accomplished rather than an accomplished project, as it depends on the continuing kind treatment of the institution and the gentle good-will of the consumers—neither of which is guaranteed.

The page on the other hand gives the view of Winnie's body in the hands of men, as she is slumped on the ground and caressed by children. This final glimpse of Winnie shows her to be a vulnerable living being. It does not give a sense of comforting closure to the problem of commodified and displaced animals, but points to the question of finding place for animals that is still left unsettlingly open. The image is reproduced in the back cover of the book with the question "who could care for a bear?"; the question rings with increased significance, since the narrative of "the soldier who cared for her" has proven unsuccessful in giving a conclusive answer to this question. The same question will resurface in *The Biggest Bear* in which the protagonist-child gets locked in a struggle with the literal and moral baggage of an enormous animal body that he does not know where to take to.

3.4 The Horror of the Bear-Made-Lovable

The Biggest Bear, as a meta animal rescue narrative, depicts a botched project to enact the animal rescue narrative in an American village bordering the woods in the time of ongoing colonization and decimation of the wild animal life. The protagonist-child's innocent dream of finding home for the real historical bear is shown to be a painfully absurd and doomed project, as the cub grows into a literal and moral baggage that Johnny does not know what to do with, nor where to take to. The bear is too enormous to be loved in a way imagined in the comforting stuffed animal fictions (that is, like a Pooh), but neither does it have natural habitat to go back to. The protagonist child resorts to consigning the bear to the zoo and imagining it to be a pastoral home for the animal, except that this zoo does not look like a hard-found pastoral home at all. The zoo-ending brings us back to the problem of the unrescued bears of the zoo that Pooh stories left unresolved: that is, to the unaccomplished project of finding home for animals in the Anthropocene.

The Biggest Bear deals with the absurd plan of the protagonist-child to take care of the real bear in the manner of Pooh, but it reads more as a horror tale rather than as a laughable tale of an innocent misrecognition, as attested by the traumatized reviewers of Goodreads. Anna writes it is "the most depressing Caldecott winner I've come across so far . . . I would never recommend this for a child," and Samantha protests that "I was so upset by this book's ending. The bear grows large and becomes a nuisance so the only the solution is to shoot him? When shooting him is just too hard to do you trick him into a trap and send him off to the zoo? No way! Not a good story here" (Goodreads). I propose to understand the horror of *The Biggest Bear* as coming from the terrible weight of unfulfilled moral obligation towards animal-things. This

weight is represented in the bigness of the bear body which is *the* problem of this work. *The Biggest Bear* is a horror tale, but it is not a horror tale of a feral bear or of an undomesticable bear that we believe to have been domesticated[32]: Johnny's bear does not turn violent or carnivorous, after all. Johnny's bear is horrible in returning to Johnny's arms (and to Johnny's home that cannot be his home) again and again, asserting himself to be a responsibility of Johnny. Johnny's struggle and ultimate failure to find home for his bear is the collective failure of Anglo-American culture to find home for all these animal bodies in our hands. There is no comforting closure available for the relationship of Johnny and the bear, and *The Biggest Bear* leaves readers haunted with the unresolved problem of commodified and displaced animals.

The child protagonist Johnny, when he lovingly embraces the cub in the woods and takes him home to be cared for, decides to write the bear and himself into the animal relief narrative in the manner of the stuffed animal fictions. When Johnny finds a small cub on his way to bear hunt

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[32] In this, *The Biggest Bear* is differentiated from animal horror stories that proliferate in the latter half of the twentieth century—especially through the medium of cinema—in which "the animal seeks to challenge the predominance of the human through physical, sometimes consumptive, violence" and "the dangerous and transgressive animal . . . elicits suspense and fear" (Gregersdotter, et al. 5). Though these narratives might seem to challenge the human-animal hierarchy, I believe they ultimately help maintain the comforting fiction of self-reconstituting and undestroyed/undestroyable nature: the fiction of uber-powerful nature is dangerous in that it voids the question of taking responsibility for the damages done to animals/nature by human civilization. Jennifer Schell points out that "animal revenge movies are grounded on romantic misperceptions of the natural world and its modes of operation" (62) in which animals are mysteriously powerful, agential, and ever-wild. Stacy Alaimo also notes the animal horror films' function as a comforting fiction of wish-fulfillment, when she mentions that "perhaps monstrous natures are born from an identificatory desire to see nature not as pathetically damaged but as vigorously alive" (293).

and recognizes it to be "a bear alright" (*The Biggest Bear* 16), he is recognizing the cub to be a "Bear" in the sense of the stuffed animal fictions, echoing Christopher Robin's cry of "oh, Bear" in "Introduction" to Pooh stories. The next pages show Johnny feeding the cub with his rifle forgotten (19). Johnny almost turns into the innocent child of the proper stuffed animal fictions, when he carries the cub home affectionately cuddled in his arms (21). His grandfather plays along with the pastoral of animal relief when he declares, "humph, I suppose you know what a bear likes to eat" (22), accepting the bear into the relationship of caregiving and taking (the bear's preferences are taken into consideration) at the same time as an object of child's childlike concern ("humph").

The Biggest Bear gives enough warning signals to make readers doubt whether the tale of Johnny and the bear could end well and whether Johnny's village is the kind of pastoral place that the bear can make home. The village bordering the woods is not a pastoral place innocent of historical violence to animals; it is a place embroiled in the historical, bloody process of colonization of the North American wild animal life. *The Biggest Bear* places Johnny and the bear's story in the social and historical milieu that has "a bearskin nailed up to dry" on every barn (4):

> Every fall for three years Mr. McLean had come in with a bear.
>
> And one evening Mr. Pennell had just stepped out to the edge of his nearest field and shot three in a row as they came heading for the tall timber. (6-8)

The picture book litters these words with the images of a bearskin hung up on the wall and a dead bear body held up as a trophy (5, 7). Hunting defines human relationship to bears in this village; the bear hunt is an act of territory marking in which men defend themselves or theirs against the intruding animals, as well as an act of capitalizing on captured animal bodies. It

produces the bear skins that function as social capital, Johnny's family's relatively peaceful history with the bears a source of "humiliation" for Johnny that sets the narrative into action. In fact, Johnny's grandfather had a notoriously peaceful encounter with a bear, and Johnny's barn is the only barn that does not have a bearskin hung up on the wall (10). *The Biggest Bear* also shows the child to be a person already implicated in—and not at all innocent of—the existing violent relationship with animals. The first sight of Johnny that the book gives is one with a rifle in his hand (1), and he enters the woods with it to prove himself capable of shooting the "biggest" bear of all (12-13), until he stumbles into what looks like a different kind of bear.

This disturbing account of how the bear-to-be-loved is acquired hints at the not so innocuous historical origin of loved animals (both biological and stuffed). It is the already accomplished conquest of animals that gives Jonny his Pooh, as the cub is likely a leftover from successful previous hunting(s) that made the forest a place safe for the child/people. Ritvo explains how "young animals of the most prized big game species" were often unofficial acquisitions from big game hunting, and notes that many of those acquisitions became incorporated into the human world as pets in the nineteenth-century British colonies (246-47). It is the violent conquest and consequent capitalization of animals that turns the cub into Johnny's bear, and turns animals into various kind of commodities that we might love and/or consume.

The next few pages are about how the bear makes home at Johnny's village, but there are already some worrying signals as to whether the bear has indeed arrived at its pastoral home. The bear's adventures in Johnny's place are described in the comforting language of stuffed animal fictions in which the repeated pattern imparts a sense of safe predictability. We hear that:

The bear liked the milk that was meant for the calves.

He liked the mash meant for the chickens.

He liked the apples in the orchard.

He liked pancakes on Sunday morning.

And most especially he liked the maple sugar Johnny brought him from the store. (*The Biggest Bear* 24-32)

The narrative voice makes it sound as if the bear engages himself in harmless, trivial adventures in search for food, as Pooh sometimes does with his craving for honey. However, what sounds almost laughable in words does not look so harmless when we see it happen. *The Biggest Bear*, with its drawing style that is decidedly unlike Pooh stories, generates a sense of uneasiness on whether this animal body can be integrated into the genre of the comforting stuffed animal fictions. *The Biggest Bear* draws the cub with a pronounced muzzle, long limbs, and a lean body, setting its bear apart from the bears of the twentieth-century stuffed animal fictions, whose design reflects the trend towards the production of teddy bears with rounder heads, shorter limbs, and plumper bodies.[33] Johnny's bear looks alien to—that is, too flesh-and-blood for—the familiar pastoral world of the stuffed animal fictions, when he sticks his head in a milk pale to the confusion of calves, and jumps in for a mash bowl to the consternation of chickens (25, 27).

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[33] Maniera tracks the process of transformation of the teddy bears: "the classic teddy bear's head became rounder and larger in proportion to the rest of his body, his muzzle became less pronounced and its fur was often cut short, his body became fatter and more youthful looking, and his limbs were less exaggerated in length and shape" (120). Lawrence also recounts how "older bears generally tend to have more pronounced noses, longer limbs, and more realistic proportions, as compared to later editions which often have larger heads, flatter faces, and shorter, thicker limbs." (149). I discuss the nature of this transformation and what this transformation means to animals in Introduction.

The cub that Johnny attempts to take out of history of violence ultimately grows too big and "real" to be kept out of eyes of the system of capitalization on animals. The villagers intervene and demand that the bear be disposed of, when the bear's innocuous adventures start to cause real property damages (46): the animal is supposed to be profitable or consumable in this village, not the other way around. We are given a view of the mess that the growing bear body leaves behind, but not the bear himself, as the bear "[spends] a night in his [Mr. McCaroll's] cornfield" (36), "[has] a wonderful time with the bacon and hams in the Pennell's smokehouse" (38), "[empties] all the sap buckets when the McLeans were tapping their maple trees in the spring" (40), and "[gets] in the McLean's shed and [drinks] up most of their maple syrup" (42). When he reemerges into view, it is as a full-grown, roaring body that dominates the page (43), which makes it undeniable that he can no longer be kept safe in the arms of the child of the stuffed animal fictions.

What should one do with this body? How should one take care of this body? Where does this body belong to? Johnny's idea is to return the bear to his original home in the woods, but *The Biggest Bear* questions if nature can be summoned as a solution to the problem of commodified animals, when it does not let Johnny return the bear to the wild. Johnny and his father resort to the idea of nature as a natural and unchanging/unchanged home for animals, when they decide that "the bear would have to go back to the woods" (48):

> Johnny explained to the bear that the time had come for him to go and live in the woods like other bears. He gave the bear a last hug, and started the long way home. (52)

If *The Biggest Bear* concluded its narrative at this point with the bear returning to its natural habitat (and Johnny returning to his human home), it would have made a slightly sad but nonetheless satisfactory closure to Johnny and the bear's story—not the kind of closure expected

in the comforting stuffed animal fictions, but the kind of closure popular in the ecologically-conscious wild animal stories of the latter part of the twentieth century.[34] Refusing to grant Johnny and readers the comfort of assuming that the animal has found true home somewhere in the woods, *The Biggest Bear* suggests that the nature as a stable home for animals might be just another comforting fiction of our age. We have already seen how the woods of *The Biggest Bear* is not exactly an Edenic home for bears—the village has penetrated into the woods, producing nailed bearskins and motherless cubs. Johnny and his father's invocation of the woods at this juncture reminds the readers of how, even with the already visible decimation of the wildlife, the late nineteenth-century hunters comfortably imagined: "not that the animals had all been killed but that they had withdrawn to some wilder less accessible place" (Ritvo 282). However, it was already becoming more and more obvious that the life-in-wilderness is no longer an option—let alone a solution—for animals. The idea of authentic nature came to be associated with "wildlife" in the twentieth-century America and helped call for the protection of both (Isenberg 48), but the wilderness ideal came to obstruct the formation of "responsible environmentalism" (Cronon 17) in "a planet in which the human and the natural can no longer be distinguished" (18). The ethics of dealing with wild animals now has to be discussed with reference to the fact that "many other species experience limitations to their movement forced on them by shrinking habitats and the disappearance of essential resources" (Maple, et al. 225).

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[34] Ralph Lutts, in his discussion of development of the "realistic wild animal story," points out how the mid- to late-twentieth stories come to about "the human heroes fight to save the life and freedom of a wild animal, often of an endangered species" (14). These stories often conclude with the wild animal returning to its freedom-in-nature, as well exemplified in the popular animal film *Free Willy* (1993).

With the bear refusing to return to his supposed home in the woods, Johnny and the bear's story turns into a horror tale of being haunted by the biggest bear. But this inexorcisable bear is horrible not in being dangerous to men, but in demanding to be cared for: in not letting Johnny and readers forget the unaccomplished task of taking care of and finding good place for animals. The bear comes back again and again, clinging to Johnny's home and affection, no matter how many times Johnny tries to return him—further and further away—into the wild. The bear haunts Johnny and his family, demanding food and love: he innocently sticks his huge head out of the wall and the pig sty (*The Biggest Bear* 55, 59), and is found happily nested among hens (63). Visually, Johnny's bear is terrible in its absurd vulnerability that highlights itself as Johnny's responsibility, whether Johnny wants it or not. In the scene of the villager declaring that the bear is "a trial and tribulation of the whole valley" (46), the bear sits innocently and defenselessly by Johnny's side, holding the empty milk pale and showing exposed soles, even though his rather threatening claws stick out of them (47). In the scene of his initial goodbye with Johnny, he is cuddled up against Johnny, unarguably attached to and dependent on Johnny, despite his overwhelming size and threatening muzzle (52).

Stuck with the literal and moral burden of the bear body, Johnny and father consider the "only one thing [left] to do" (64). The animal rescue narrative turns into an unlaughable farce, as Johnny chases his bear—that has accidentally run off—to kill it. When the agents of the zoo offer to take the bear out of Johnny's hands and to "a fine place to live," it is as if this is another chance at following the comforting plot of animal relief: the bear will find home at the good zoo, will have "all he wants to eat," and the child will be able to "come and see him [the bear] whenever [Johnnyt wants] to" (82). Johnny buys this narrative—or, choses to be trapped in the system the zoo agents represent—and consents to handing over the bear to the agents, promising

"I'll always bring him maple sugar" (84). However, the images belie the comforting tone of the words of the completed animal relief narrative, *showing* how Johnny ultimately could not find home for the bear, and has returned it to the system of animal commodification. The images show how much Johnny *wants* to imagine that he has found a good place for the bear, despite the zoo being at best a pseudo-home and a makeshift haven for animals.[35]

The scene of the imagined reunion of Johnny and the bear at the zoo leaves the readers with the haunting image of a huge bear trapped in the cage of the moving zoo (84), instead of letting them live with the comforting words of the zoo people who promise that the bear has found its home at the zoo. The animal has for sure avoided being killed, but the zoo does not look like such a "fine place to live," and definitely not like a pastoral home at all. I read *The Biggest Bear*'s disturbing depiction of the zoo as pointing to the lack of place for animals in the age of industrial capitalism, rather than being an indictment of zoos in special. In showing the zoo in its most bare and oldest form (which had already raised concerns and has been under

[35] In this, Johnny is not alone, but is following in the footsteps of those who wished to imagine the zoo to be a place for animals in absence of other options since the turn of the twentieth century. Elizabeth Hanson recounts how the elephants rescued from the circus in the early twentieth-century Boston were sent to the zoo: it was considered that "lacking other alternatives, keeping animals in a zoo was preferable" (180). We hear that many pet owners of the same period tried to donate their pets to zoos in the hopes that "the zoos represented a humane solution, a grassy place where their pets would be taken care of and serve the public," when they themselves could no longer care for the animals (56).

criticism by the late nineteenth century)[36] *The Biggest Bear* emphasizes how the animal is still trapped in the system despite attempts to imagine him out of it: the bear is narrowly caged, surrounded by onlookers, and being fed by one of them, supposedly Johnny. The bear's problematic bigness is acceptable in this place and only in this place, because itis an asset to be capitalized on: the zoo agents "delighted" in the size of Johnny's bear (80), and, accordingly, the signpost of his cage advertises him as "the biggest bear" (85). At this point, Johnny's affection for the bear is practically indistinguishable from the interest of other animal-consumers at the bear as a spectacle and a curiosity, as he visits the bear at his pleasure, now freed of his bear-trouble. However, *The Biggest Bear* now makes Johnny's trouble readers', by making the readers see what Johnny cannot or would not see: the commodified and displaced state of the bear at the zoo.

[36] The turn-of-the-twentieth-century zoo designers were conscious about zoo visitors feeling "pity rather than admiration" for zoo animals (Hanson 139-40); and the new zoos tried to differentiate themselves "from menageries and traveling animal shows" through supposedly more scientifically-informed and humane display of animals (3).

4.0 Saving a Pig, Saving a Polar Bear

Chapter 1 and 2 discuss the problematic ways in which the classic stuffed animal fictions resolve the disconcerting problem of violence embedded in the system of animal exploitation. This is a two-step process: first, there are soothing accounts of animals that get rescued from threats of violence and delivered to pastoral haven; then, these accounts of individual animal rescue are offered (to consumers/readers) as if it is a solution to the problems of the system. That is, the classic stuffed animal fictions celebrate the account of a few lucky toy animals' happy relief in such a way that it *feels* like an end to the plight of all the innumerable unrescued animals, both stuffed and biological.[37] The consolation of stories of the rescued-and-safe stuffed toy animals consists in this fabricated sense of having reached a resolution when nothing has changed concerning animals; animals are still being relentlessly produced and circulated in the system.

This chapter looks at relatively recent works of the stuffed animal fictions that reverse engineer the genre of the stuffed animal fiction so that the animal relief narrative becomes a medium for bringing to table the problem of the many, unrepresented, and un-rescued animals. These works challenge the structure of comfort that sustains the classic stuffed animal fictions—through showing how individual animal relief does *not* change the system of animal production and consumption. Foregrounding the protagonist-animal's rescue as an unlikely, semi-

[37] I talk about how the stuffed animal fictions paper over the violent process of use and consumption of "real" stuffed toy animals in Chapter 2. I explain why I consider some animal fictions featuring flesh-and-blood animals—such as *The Charlotte's Web* and *The Bear*—in the context of the genre of stuffed animal fiction in Chapter 3.

miraculous, and one-time event, these works underscore how the pastoral home-coming cannot but remain in the realm of the wishful—and the fictional—for most real animals in the time of the industrialized animal production. The animals of Chapter 4 get delivered to their pastoral home, but only through the inexplicable intervention of the supernatural: that is, the unmistakably contrived *deus-ex-machina* of the fiction. The flesh-and-blood-bear of Raymond Briggs's *The Bear* (1992) arrives in the arms of the affectionate child only as an enigmatic ghost, and the pig of E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) is saved through the miracles authored by Charlotte the spider.

When framed thus, the animal pastoral of these works turns into something more and less than a consoling fiction of wish fulfillment; it turns into a vision of un-exploitive living together with animals that is unlikely in the real world and for most real animals. The miracle-pastoral of both *Charlotte's Web* and *The Bear* offers itself as a time for—and with—animals that would not have been possible if not for the medium of fiction: as a virtual experience of potentialities of human-animal relationship that is yet to be realized in our time. *Charlotte's Web* lets readers spend good time with a pig. It provides readers with the rare experience of becoming acquainted with a happy pig during his precarious yet felicitous stay in a pastoral small farm—in the time when most pigs are relentlessly processed in the system of factory farming. *The Bear* lets the readers into a pastoral dream-time in which a man gets to know, take care of, and make up for the bear who lived and died at a zoo.

Chapter 1 also discusses how the stuffed animal fiction as a genre helps frame the serious concern over the predicament of animals as a childish concern. The stuffed animal fictions subtly infantilize the animal problem, when they produce the figure of the child who cares too much for animals as 1) the protagonist of the fiction and 2) the projected reader of the fiction. The

forgetful indifference towards the animal suffering becomes surreptitiously sanctioned as the knowing adult position, while the figure of the animal loving child is adored as both innocent and ignorant in this genre. Both *Charlotte's Web* and *The Bear* take issue with the infantilization and trivialization of the animal problem through the genre of the stuffed animal fiction, frustrating the readerly expectations regarding the role of the innocent animal-loving child. *Charlotte's Web* shows how Fern's rescue of Wilbur turns out to be a childhood fling that does not really take the animal out of the exploitative system of consumption but takes the animal through it. *The Bear*, through the figure of the child who is concerned for the ghost animal because of her knowledge of its existence, questions what constitutes proper knowledge when it comes to the animals of our time.

4.1 Has a Pig Been Saved?

White famously stated that his goal in writing *Charlotte's Web* has been to save a pig: Agosta tells us that "the immediate instigation for the work, according to White's letter of 10 April 1953, was his musings concerning 'a way to save a pig's life'" (66). The plot line of *Charlotte's Web* shows how difficult White found this job to be. *Charlotte's Web* is both a thought experiment on how a flesh-and-blood pig in a real twentieth-century farm might be rescued from the system and a testament to how difficult it is to wriggle even one small pig out of its designated place in the system of animal production and consumption. In this, *Charlotte's Web* turns out to be as much about the all-encompassing system of animal consumption from which there is no real/realistic escape for pigs, as it is about the happy rescue of an animal.

Charlotte's Web, despite being an account of the happy rescue of a pig, points to the difficulty of imagining a human-animal relationship undictated by capitalist exploitation, rather than offering consolation for the problem of animals in the system. The comfort of the narrative of animal rescue is delimited when it is made possible only through the character of Charlotte who is inhuman as well as fictional at heart.[38] The inconsequential petering out of the Fern plot demonstrates that it requires more than human love to give home to a livestock animal of our age: a loving child comes along to save the animal, briefly enjoys having the animal as a pet, and then forgets about it. Thus, *Charlotte's Web* is about what only someone like Charlotte can accomplish in the world defined by the system of animal commodification; but it is also about what even Charlotte cannot accomplish in such world-system; Charlotte is a *deus-ex-machina* character who still must operate according to the rules of the realistic world of *Charlotte's Web*.[39] Thus, even though Wilbur escapes his fate as a meat-animal through Charlotte's help, and finds, arguably, the best possible home for a pig in Zuckerman's barn as an animal celebrity, it does not indicate that he finds a way out of the animal industry. What Charlotte has to do to secure a place for life for Wilbur is to install him as an object of consumption that is more precious and less expendable than meat. Freeing him from the animal industry is out of the question. Ratalle understands *Charlotte's Web* as "removing Wilbur from what Derrida calls the

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[38] Charlotte is designed to be an inhuman character. Agosta mentions how "White . . . adamantly declined to have Charlotte given anything even remotely suggesting a humanized face" (66). Griffith also astutely points out how "in the center of this consoling fantasy [of Charlotte's Web] is Charlotte. Yet she is also a fantastic character from fairyland" ("A Lonely Fantasy of Love" 115).

[39] *Charlotte's Web* portrays a realistic world that reflects the animal condition in our world faithfully; the fact that animals talk does not make a fiction automatically unrealistic in regard to the animal condition.

'carnophallogocentric' paradigm of Western meat consumption" by "granting him a unique subjectivity" (328), but I read Charlotte's Web as a more serious reflection on the paradigm of animal consumption and its inescapable power. On the surface, Wilbur gets removed from the meat consumption system, but the manner and circumstances of Wilbur's removal from the meat consumption system indicates that there might be no possible way to rescue animals from this system.

Charlotte's plan takes the real world of animal industry into consideration in that it is premised on the knowledge of the intransigent, all-encompassing, and ultimately inescapable system of animal consumption in which Wilbur's body is fully caught up. Charlotte's plan is not to fight or break the system—how would such a feat be possible for but one spider?—but to trick the system to secure Wilbur a better place for life in it. When Wilbur hears that he is going to be killed for consumption, it is difficult to imagine a way out of the fix. Wilbur's previous misadventures show how much Wilbur is inextricably bound to the system in which he is a meat. Fern's liking of Wilbur briefly takes him out of the system of meat production, but does not take him out of the overarching system of animal consumption: he is briefly consumed as the child's pet, and then is promptly returned to his original place as a meat animal when the price of his maintenance grows to be greater than his use-value as a pet. His impulsive run for the woods where "they'll never-never-never catch [him]" at Zuckerman's farm ends in shambles in the "Escape" chapter (*Charlotte's Web* 18), and demonstrates that he is already a fully domesticated animal that has no place outside in the wilderness, if there really is an outside for animals in the post-twentieth century earth. When Wilbur succumbs to the temptation of a food barrel and lets himself led back into the barn (23), Wilbur shows himself to be a member of the long-domesticated species of livestock that also got seamlessly incorporated into the newly developed

technology of factory farming.[40] And as long as he is so, his fate is sealed. Wilbur does not seem to have a place to go except for Zuckerman's barn where his *raison-d'etre* is to be slaughtered and consumed.

What Charlotte proposes to do at this seeming dead-end is not to magically find a place for Wilbur outside the confines of the system of animal commodification; *Charlotte's Web*'s world is a realistic capitalist world that contains no magic that de-commodifies animals or returns animals to the nature un-infiltrated by men. What Charlotte offers is a far more banal miracle of the shiny language of commercialism that advertises Wilbur as a rare, curious thing to be looked at. Charlotte does not mean to pluck Wilbur out of the system of animal consumption, but is looking to find a better, more bearable place for him *inside* it—through utilization of the very work-language of the capitalism. Griffith rightly points out how "the animal's discussion of words for the web makes explicit that they are the language of advertisement," but reads it as "White's genial satire" (*A Pig's Salvation* 47). I believe it indicates something more sinister about the world that these animals live in, when "Charlotte proposes to leave people in their misconception that animals are mere things, and to save Wilbur by convincing them that he is a wonderful thing, a thing worth saving" (48). In a meeting that she calls in the barn, Charlotte explains how her plan for saving Wilbur is a plan of advertising Wilbur.

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[40] Pigs as species have become fully subject to "a straightforward and utilitarian view of the animal consistent with René Descartes's conception of the animal as an unfeeling beast-machine for the human to put to use as seen fit," as exemplified in the comment of "Sanders Spencer, founder of the British Pig Association, [who] characterized the pig as 'a machine for the conversion of farm produce into meat'" (Ratelle 328).

> The message I wrote in my web, praising Wilbur has been received. The Zuckermans have fallen for it, and so has everyone else. Zuckerman thinks Wilbur is an unusual pig, and therefore he won't want to kill and eat him. I dare say my trick will work and Wilbur's life can be saved. . . . Now I called this meeting in order to get suggestions. I need new ideas for the web. People are already getting sick of reading the words 'Some Pig!' If anybody can think of another message, or remark, I'll be glad to weave it into the web. Any suggestions for a new slogan? (*Charlotte's Web* 87)

Charlotte outright refers to her writings on the web as "slogans." The "message" she means to send out to the people/world—through hanging these slogans over Wilbur's head—is that Wilbur is to be consumed, but as a spectacle, not as meat. Charlotte's "trick" for saving Wilbur is to advertise Wilbur as an "unusual" kind of animal that you keep and look at, rather than the kind of animal that you "kill and eat." She knows that a pig must be ultra-special to escape its fate as a livestock, since different species are assigned different uses in this system, and the pig is rarely considered a spectacle or an entertainment. As Tiffin sums it up, "one of the ways in which we deal with our contradictory and conflicted attitudes to animals is by confining them within categories—pets (inedible); 'farm' animals (edible); 'wild' animals (edible or inedible depending on their species)—or on our 'placement' of them in national parks" (257). Accordingly, Charlotte's slogans evolve to advertise Wilbur as more and more of a special thing: "SOME PIG," "TERRIFIC," "RADIANT."

The scene of discussion that follows shows how difficult it is to untie a pig from its use and appeal as meat in the realm of language: Charlotte needs to be extra careful in picking the words for her advertisement. The phrases that the barn animals come up with keep dragging Wilbur back to his original function as a livestock. Thus, Charlotte has to astutely reject the

slogan “Pig Supreme” because “it sounds like a rich dessert” (*Charlotte’s Web* 88), and point out that “Crunchy” is unacceptable because “we must advertise Wilbur’s noble qualities not his tastiness” (98). The line between a tasty pig and a valuable pig suddenly turns perilously thin, even after Wilbur is half-established as a local spectacle, when the Zuckermans decide to bath Wilbur in buttermilk to be presented at the fair: “the buttermilk [trickles] down his sides,” and Wilber feels it to be “delicious” (121).

Charlotte’s Web concludes with the successful execution of Charlotte’s plan. We hear that “Mr. Zuckerman took fine care of Wilbur all the rest of his days” after he turns into a famous pig and a de-facto tourist object (183). But *Charlotte’s Web*’s ending does not tell readers that the animal has been rescued and that they may rest relieved. Rather, its account of Charlotte’s success points to the all-consuming system of animal appropriation that remains unchanged despite one pig’s miraculous recue; I argue that this is the source of deep, lingering sadness that *Charlotte’s Web* leaves behind.

The fact that Charlotte’s plan works out is difficult to celebrate, as, when you think about it, it confirms Charlotte’s dark understanding of the world that Wilbur belongs to: Charlotte has been correct in assuming that an animal cannot escape the status of a thing in this world, and that the best Wilbur can hope for is to be a thing that is not as expendable as meat. A pig has been saved and has not been saved, as Wilbur’s rescue is predicated on the continued presence of the all-subsuming system of animal commodification. Wilbur may be saved from his fate as meat, but never from his status as a commodity; Wilbur remains a thing and is to live out rest of his life caged in a small barn, performing as a tourist object, bearing with the loneliness of the confinement and the stress from the performance. This is the most that the two-fold miracle of *Charlotte’s Web*—the miracle of Charlotte’s unfathomable love (the one that remains

unexplained and unseen) and the miracle of Charlotte's device (the one that literally publicizes Wilbur as a miracle pig)—can accomplish in this world. Still, such miracle is more than most pigs in the age of industrialized meat production can hope for.[41] The meaning of Wilbur's small-farm pastoral in the age of factory farming will be further discussed in the next section. *Charlotte's Web* also denies the structure of consolation in which the love of an innocent child expiates for the sins of the system through the successful rescue of the animal in question, when the spider's love saves Wilbur, instead of Fern's. *Charlotte's Web*, through its depiction of Fern as a foil of Charlotte, shows how all human love of animals is enmeshed in the system of exploitative animal consumption. *Charlotte's Web*'s critical deconstruction of the affectionate child trope will be discussed further when I go back to the effacement of the Fern plot in *Charlotte's Web*.

Wilbur never becomes a protagonist in the traditional sense, because he remains a thing; he remains, throughout the narrative and to the end, a vulnerable body that is at the mercy of the

[41] The direct comparison between two works of fiction would require a lot more space and historical contextualization, but one thing that *Charlotte's Web* shares with *The Black Beauty* is a miraculous ending in which the animal finds a way to its pastoral home: the ending that somehow brings back to table the discomforting realities of the historical animal condition. In the last chapter of *The Black Beauty*, "My Last Home," the horse-narrator finds his way out of the animal commodification system that is about to consume him off—through sheer luck. The final view we get of his life is idyllic: "My ladies have promised that I shall never be sold, and so I have nothing to fear; and here my story ends. My troubles are all over, and I am at home; and often before I am quite awake, I fancy I am still in the orchard at Birtwick, standing with my old friends under the apple-trees" (*The Black Beauty* n.p.). But the horse's pastoral home is strangely haunted with ghosts of horses that have been and are being sold and dreams of "old friends" who could not find a way back home, just as Zuckerman's pastoral farm is haunted with figures of less-lucky, unrescued pigs of the factory farming system.

forces that he does not understand. Wilbur changes status and is moved around: first as a pet that belongs to Fern, then as another meat animal at Zuckerman farm, and finally as a celebrity pig of Charlotte's making. But Wilbur continues to be a passive thing in that he neither learns to move himself, nor does he come to a better understanding of the forces that trade in him. When I teach *Charlotte's Web* in undergraduate ecocriticism courses, I often meet with frustration—on the part of students—at Wilbur's failure to grow up and his inability to take control of his fate; it felt as if they were sensing his disturbing thingness, despite attributing it wrongly to his personal failing as a character. Wilbur's passivity is not a sign of his failing as a character but what his circumstances make him: that is, the quality of his thingness. After all, what can meat animals grow up to be but a thing to be eaten?

4.2 Growing out of Animals

There remains the problem of the animal-loving child Fern, and how she forgets Wilbur and is in turn forgotten by the final scenes of the pastoral of *Charlotte's Web*. Fern would have been the protagonist and the animal-rescuer, if *Charlotte's Web* were a more conventional narrative of animal relief. One of the things that characterizes *Charlotte's Web* is its unromantic portrayal of the affectionate child figure—and her affection towards animals—in relation to the violence of the system of commodification. In its search for the means to save a pig, *Charlotte's Web* finds all human relationship with animals—including the child's "innocent" love—to be embroiled in the system of animal production and consumption. Fern's love turns out to be a false lead that does not take Wilbur anywhere but to the dead end of the most literal and visceral

form of animal consumption. Through its deconstruction of the comforting plot in which the child's love saves the animal, *Charlotte's Web* shows human love towards animals—which is at once romanticized as innocent and trivialized as childlike[42]—can be one of the forms of animal consumption in the system, rather than a form of resistance. All human-animal relationship is so deeply embroiled in the existing system of animal consumption that it is impossible to imagine a form of love between man and animal that lies outside the system. Such love has to come through a figure that is decidedly inhuman. Fern is a foil of Charlotte, the true rescuer of Wilbur; Charlotte accomplishes what Fern promised to do, when Charlotte's love deceives the intransigent system of animal commodification for Wilbur.

Even though *Charlotte's Web* opens as if it is going to be about the innocent child's love saving the animal from the system, it turns out not to be so: it is rather about how such love fails to save the animal from the system. The cover illustration (unchanged since its first publication in 1952) makes the reader imagine Fern—with her concern for animals—saving Wilbur from the violence of animal consumption, as it depicts at its center the figure of Fern holding Wilbur in a protective, loving position. We might not notice the smaller and more hidden Charlotte if not for the gaze of Wilbur, in keeping with her role as the unexpected rescuer of Wilbur whose unseen work tricks the system of animal production and consumption. We get the same false impression concerning the role of Fern, when she stands in the way of slaughter of the pig and speaks for its

[42] As Kincaid so accurately describes, the innocent child/childlike innocence is "both marginal and central to our lives: easily disposed of, abused, neglected, abandoned; and yet idealized, treasured, adored" (17). On how the stuffed animal fictions construct the concern towards animal as a children's thing, look at Chapter 1's discussion of Pooh stories. For a brief review of historically changing configurations of animals, innocence, and children in Anglo-American culture, look at Introduction.

sake in the language that resembles that of the animal rights movement; protesting that pigs should be treated with fairness accorded to men, Fern reminds her father that the slaughter of a pig is "a matter of life and death" (2). Fern takes Wilbur out of his "box" and his imminent fate as meat with her recognition and embrace of the animal; she recognizes the animal as more than a thing with her "oh," and embraces it as such, when she "[lifts] the pig out [of the box], and [holds] it against her cheek" (4). Resemblance of this scene to the iconic scene in the "Introduction" to *Winnie the Pooh*—in which Christopher Robin greets the bear out of its cage with an exclamation of "oh, bear" and a subsequent embrace—places Fern's rescue of Wilbur in the tradition of the stuffed animal fiction and its ambiguous animal politics. The embrace of Christopher Robin also has been tinged with a utopian urge to save the animal from the system, at the same time as with the consumeristic desire to possess the animal as a lovable thing, as discussed in Chapter 3. For a time, Wilbur seems well installed in the safe pastoral haven of the affectionate child's home, and the two seems safely ensconced in the plot of the comforting fictions of animal relief. We hear that they spend almost pastoral time together in and near Mr. Arable's small rural farm: Wilbur enjoys himself in the mud, while Fern wades in the brook (*Charlotte's Web* 10-11), and "every day was a happy day, and every night was peaceful" (12).

However, the promise of a pastoral home for Wilbur is betrayed, when it is decided (by whom?) that he should be sold to another farm as a meat animal. Mr. Arable's words put an official end to the comforting fiction of animal relief by Fern: he not only decrees Wilbur's return to his original place as a livestock, but, in doing so, exposes how Fern's affection towards Wilbur did not take him out of the system of animal production and consumption in the first place.

> When he [Wilbur] was five years old, Mr. Arable said he was not big enough to sell, and would have to be sold. . . . Wilbur's appetite has increased; he was beginning to eat scraps of food in addition to milk. Mr. Arable was not willing to provide for him any longer. He had already sold Wilbur's ten brothers and sisters . . . "You have had your fun raising a baby pig, but Wilbur is not a baby any longer and he has got to be sold." (12)

It has not been an animal-rescue. Wilbur has never been rescued, at least not from the system of animal production and consumption, but was given a temporary retrieve from his lot as a livestock, because Fern wanted him for a different use. What looked like a rescue of Wilbur has been a mere adult indulging of the child/childish need—in which Mr. Arable allowed Fern to set Wilbur aside for a personal use as a pet for her "fun." Wilbur has been inside the calculation of the animal-consuming system all along just like his "ten brothers and sisters," and he has to be recirculated for other uses when the expense of his maintenance comes to outweigh his use value as a pet. The fact that Wilbur can be shuttled back and forth with ease between an object of child/childlike love and an object of literal consumption shows that the affectionate concern towards animals has been incorporated into the system of thingification of animals. If Charlotte grants Wilbur a life through the pretense of selling him as a miracle pig, Fern, in effect, consumes Wilbur as a pet on the pretext of innocent, disinterested love.

Wilbur's fate also gives a glimpse of the precarious state of loved animals as consumables in the system of animal consumption. Pets are not simply the lucky ones among animals, because their status as a cared-for being is dependent on human need which, in turn, is considered childlike and thus non-essential; even when they are being loved and cared, it is not according to their innate moral claim as a living being. The affection towards these animals is maintained and celebrated only in so much as the adult is willing to indulge in—their own or

children's—childlike need to be good to animals. Kreilkamp brings into view the precarious status of dogs as things *and* fellow beings in Victorian England in his article "Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal." Mangum also points out how "the devaluing of most animal life" goes together with "the heightened attachment to pets . . . in nineteenth-century human-animal relations" (18): the attempts to exalt a few species to the status of pets is predicated on the cultural awareness that "the abjection of animals as [is] a condition of co-existing with humans" (18). Ritvo shows how animal advocacy movements of Victorian age were often caught up in the ongoing—and unresolvable—cultural dispute on which animals are worthy of being exempted from more explicit forms of abjection in human hands (141, 164).

Charlotte's Web, with its nonchalant portrayal of how Fern grows out of her over-attachment to animals and forgets Wilbur, also exposes how the concern over animals—and the unresolved problem of commodified animals—is set aside as a childhood thing in the commonsensical world. Fern's change—that borders on betraying Wilbur—is neither explained, remarked upon, nor questioned in the narrative: it is, after all, what is implicitly considered the natural course of events when it comes to animals and children. Children's love for animals is supposed to be adorable but short-lived, and to expire upon the child acquiring more mature view upon things, though the latter part of the cultural equation is rarely verbalized in discourses about the child. One scene in which it is put on table is the time when Mrs. Arable consults Dr. Dorian over Fern's overattachment to animals. The irony is that at this point in the narrative Fern is already well on the way following the culturally prescribed course of growing up. Fern initially protests her father's plan to sell Wilbur, but settles at the right to visit Wilbur occasionally at her uncle Zuckerman's farm as he fattens up for slaughter. After this, the narrative shifts from Fern's perspective to Wilbur's, and Fern only makes occasional appearance (which grows fewer and

fewer) in the life and adventures of Wilbur. She is not there when Wilbur "[wishes] Fern were there to take him in her arms and comfort him" (*Charlotte's Web* 22) and does not often reward Wilbur's waiting. She does not feature at all in Charlotte's grand plan of saving Wilbur, even though she supposedly possesses supernatural ability to communicate with animals. Her ability is not put to any use. At the fair, Fern shows less interest than her brother—who has been introduced as a child callous towards and often violent to animals—to the fate of Wilbur; she completely neglects Wilbur for more age-appropriate interests in keeping with Dr. Dorian's predictions. Kinghorn reads Fern as turning away from animals in favor of "a crassly materialistic world" represented by the fair, Henry Fussy, and the Ferris wheel (8), while considering *Charlotte's Web* to be "in part a lament for Fern's lost childhood" (6). My take is that *Charlotte's Web*, through its depiction of Fern's growing up, criticizes the complicity of the comforting figure of the animal-loving child with the materialistic, uncaring system of animal consumption, rather than mourning for the lost charms of childhood. *The Bear* also takes issue with the infantilization and trivialization of the animal problem through the genre of the comforting animal fiction for children, yet it approaches the issue from a very different angle.

4.3 Time for Animals

Still, *Charlotte's Web* is differentiated from the dark animal fictions that we discussed in Chapter 3 in that it continued to be a pastoral, despite its confrontation with the unpastoral reality of the system in which animals are mere things. What characterizes *Charlotte's Web* is the fact that it gives an unforgettable taste of a pastoral vision of good life of/with animals. This vision is

more poignant because the narrative presents it as something that flickers on the realm of possibility, rather than an achieved bliss. Even while the plot demonstrates the near-total subjection of animal bodies to the system of animal production and consumption, *Charlotte's Web* takes time for Wilber to stay and savor life in the barn, putting the plot on hold. Most of the narrative space is spent, not in moving forward the plot with efficiency and speed, but, rather lazily, in depicting Wilbur's almost-pastoral sojourn in Zuckerman's small farm. Agosta seconds White's own characterization of *Charlotte's Web* as "essentially 'a hymn to the barn'" (68), pointing out how "the entire work is a pastoral celebration of the joys and beauties of the rural life" (64). Also calling *Charlotte's Web* a hymn, Kinghorn notes how "the early parts of the hymn catalog, in glorious fashion, the sights and sounds and smells of the barn, Wilbur's new home" (5). Griffith joins in calling Zuckerman's farm a "White's idlyllic banyard." ("A Lonely Fantasy of Love" 117). Representing the pig's life thus, *Charlotte's Web* presents readers with the virtual experience of an extended stay with a pig: a pig who is not yet a meat.

Even after being displaced against his wishes to Zuckerman's farm as a future livestock, and although he is ultimately caught up in the system that will process him as meat, there is still time for Wilbur to be more than a thing in this farm. In these interims of peace when Wilbur forgets he is a livestock confined to the barn and doomed to slaughter, *Charlotte's Web* brings readers close to Wilbur's body and its potential for life. I quote in length:

> From eight to nine, Wilbur planned to take a nap outdoors in the sun.
>
> From nine to eleven he planned to dig a hole, or trench, and possibly find something good to eat buried in the dirt.
>
> From eleven to twelve he planned to stand still and watch flies on the boards, watch bees in the clover, and watch swallows in the air.

> Twelve o'clock—lunchtime. Middlings, warm water, apple pairings, meat gravy, carrot scrapings, meat scraps, stale hominy, and the wrapper off a package of cheese. Lunch would be over at one. . . . From three to four, he planned to stand perfectly still and think of what it was like to be alive, and to wait for Fern. (*Charlotte's Web* 26)

Wilbur's farm life is described in length with rich, sensual details, bringing readers so very close to Wilbur's body as it eats, smells, sleeps, stands still, digs in the earth, and takes pleasure. In allowing Wilbur's body this time for life, *Charlotte's Web* gives a sense of Wilbur's potential as more than a thing-to-be-consumed: a sense of what could have been for a pig if not for his involuntary involvement in the system of animal production and consumption. Zuckerman's farm is, of course, not a proper pastoral home for animals, but it gives a glimpse of what it would be like for an animal to have a space for good life, and what it would be like to be with animals in such a place.

The appreciation of Wilbur's rich potential for life in *Charlotte's Web* is poignant, because it is always given in conjunction with the knowledge that such potential is not to be fully actualized in his—and our—world. *Charlotte's Web* undercuts the moments of immersive pleasure in the farm with reminders of the impending slaughter of the pig.[43] The description of Wilbur's pleasures during "long hours lying on his side, half asleep, dreaming pleasant dreams" (48) is followed by the "bad news" of an upcoming slaughter (49). It is when he "loved life and

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[43] This is what sets aside the pastoral of *Charlotte's Web* from the commercial pastoralism of the meat industry—in which "a bucolic (and comforting) allusion" to "the classic farm of our childhood imagination" often packages the meat, screening our imagination from the sight of "a Cartesian dystopia in which they [so-called farm animals] are represented as mere automata" (Tiffin 251).

loved to be a part of the world on a summer evening" that Wilbur suddenly remembers the scheduled death, trembling (62). And Wilbur's potential for life is precisely what makes him exploitable and available for consumption: his "long hours" and "summer evening[s]" in the Zuckerman farm fattens him up for future use as meat, at the same time as making him feel so undeniably alive.

And what does it mean to be together with a pig in the semi-pastoral space of a small farm in the time when most pigs are being processed in the intensive animal farming system? Full meaning of the pastoral of *Charlotte's Web* can be only appreciated in the context of the historical reality of livestock animals in the age of the industrial capitalism.[44] It is the slow-paced and not-so-efficient system of the small family farm that allows Wilbur—and readers—the virtual experience of a good animal life; and, ultimately, the same system is what allows him a shot at continued life, albeit as a thing, through a chance meeting with Charlotte. But *Charlotte's Web* is more than a nostalgic fantasy that romanticizes the now-outdated mode of animal production and consumption; it is an attempt to bring what is kept from eyes of the most animal consumers—the flesh-and-blood pigs as well as their pruned potential for better life—into the realm of the experienceable. *Charlotte's Web* explores what is categorically denied to most pigs in our age through its pastoral fiction of Wilbur's life. In his moments of pastoral peace that is

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[44] Sandoe et al. explain how the 1930s saw the improvement of tools "to make animal production ever more efficient" (314), and how these have been used as a "means to change the animal at will" (313) and their whole condition of life. Mason and Finelli also give an account of how most livestock animals came to be "mass-produced in factory-like systems" (158) —in the process of "the industrialization of animal production" (163) —with dire consequences to their living conditions. Their exposé of "the reality of modern farmed production" opens with an account of how it is "starkly different from these scenes [comforting pastoral images of peaceful farms]" (158).

allowed by his lucky placement in the small farm, Wilbur is not representative of factory-farmed pigs of the 1970s North America, but is representative of what such pigs have been deprived of.

4.4 Time with the Ghost

The Bear confronts the unresolved problem of the commodified, displaced, and exploited animals in the figure of the flesh-and-blood bear that could not and cannot be included in the comforting narrative of animal relief—as does the stories discussed in Chapter 3. Like the animal fictions of Chapter 3, *The Bear* dramatizes the failure of an attempt to bring the flesh-and-blood bear into the feel-good narrative of animal relief. However, this project groups *The Bear* with *Charlotte's Web* rather than with the two stories of Winnie or *The Biggest Bear*, because *The Bear* is as interested in remembering the unexhausted potential of good life with animals as it is in remembering the violence that took place. Tilly's attempt to provide home for the already-dead bear is shown to be a doomed and belated attempt to redress the unstopped violence of the system, but it is not depicted as unmeaningful in being absurd. It enables a short surreal time with the bear outside the system of exploitation: a glimpse at what could have been and what could still be with the animals.

The Bear, like the two stories of Winnie, starts off as an attempt to address the unresolved problem of unrescued animals embodied in the figure of the "real" Pooh. Only this time, the bear that is brought back to (half-)life through the medium of fiction is one of the unnamed polar bears that Pooh stories leave behind to live and die at the zoo in the "Introduction" to Pooh stories. The sequence in which the ghostly white bear is introduced in *The Bear* invokes and

backtracks the sequence of the "Introduction" of Pooh stories in which the stuffed toy bear gets embraced and taken home in place of the polar bear with the child's cry of "oh, Bear."[45] In the first pages of *The Bear,* Tilly lets the mysterious white bear into her bed in place of her Teddy, embracing the white bear[46] with the greetings of "oh, hello./ Its' a bear" (n.p.): Teddy drops off the bed as the bear moves in. In this, *The Bear* transforms the supposedly safe space of the stuffed animal fiction into a place of encounter with the ghost of a displaced and consumed animal. We are reminded of the promise of the genre to *not* call to mind the troubling problems of the real animals (that might end up disturbing sleep), when the picture book opens with the mother's promise to the child that the stuffed toy animal will "guard [her] and keep [her] safe all night." The generic expectations thus called out get promptly betrayed, when Teddy lets the ghost bear into Tilly's bedroom, and what looked like a work of comforting stuffed animal fiction turns into a not-so-comforting ghost animal story. Teddy welcomes the intrusion of this

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[45] To be precise, there are three bears in "Introduction" to Pooh stories: the unnamed polar bear of the London Zoo, Winnie the Canadian bear who is present as the unmentioned model of Winnie-the-Pooh, "something brown and furry" that is recognized and embraced as the "Bear" by Christopher Robin. The third bear is likely the stuffed toy bear that is to be named Winnie-the-Pooh. For a more detailed exposition of "Introduction" to Pooh stories, look at my reading in Chapter 3.

[46] The out-of-place presence of a polar bear in midst of civilization is itself a testimony to the all-encompassing power of the system of animal commodification that can do with animals as it wills. In the public dispute surrounding the diseased Bristol Zoo polar bear Misha, the polar bear also served as a "disturbing specter" that reminds of "the depleted state of the wild worlds of the North" and the status of "the creatures . . . increasingly unable to live independently in their own 'homes'" (Flack 174). Misha—whom people futilely petitioned to be returned to "some kind of idyllic freedom in the Arctic" (172)—might be one of the models of the nameless white ghost in *The Bear*.

ghost with smile and open arms, before dropping out of Tilly's bed and out of the narrative. Also, while the two stories of Winnie, discussed in Chapter 3, attempt to write off the violence of animal commodification exemplified in the life of Winnie, *The Bear*, a narrative of another "original" Pooh, rules out the possibility of ever forgetting the violence of what happened, by taking the form of a ghost-animal story. The ghostness of the bear serves as a constant reminder of the unerasable violence towards animals that precedes and backgrounds this dreamlike pastoral. *The Bear* is thus another work that belongs to the stuffed animal pastoral that touches on the horror genre—it is, after all, about being haunted with the ghostlike figure of the flesh-and-blood bear that cannot be embraced into the comforting narrative of animal relief. However, *The Bear* does not turn full horror like *The Biggest Bear* in holding on to the infinitesimal possibility of future reconfiguration of the human-animal relationship—through Tilly who does not give up on the ghost animal.

The ghost bear's pastoral time together with Tilly is predicated on the already committed and ongoing violence of the system of animal exploitation, but it gestures towards how it might, despite all "realistic" odds, be different. This little hope is embodied in the figure of Tilly who sees and cares for the ghost. She sees the ghostly white being, recognizes it as "the bear" in need of a home, and beckons it in: "Come to bed./ Come on, get in." With this act of seeing, Tilly is seeing the violence of the animal-consuming system: the violence that causes animals to be lost in strange places and the violence that is too normalized that it often goes unseen. Then, *The Bear* shows Tilly engaged in the work of creating a human-animal relationship in which man makes room for the animal as a living being in the world that they share. Getting to know the bear as a fellow being with bodily needs of his own, instead of as a spectacle or a consumable, does not come easy; it entails "a lot of work" as Tilly admits after she spends considerable pages

of time struggling to give bath to the enormous bear body. She continues to work, somewhat clumsily but sincerely, to make a place for the bear at her home: giving food and rest to the bear, and cleaning up his messes. Tilly learns how to be with the bear despite his overwhelming size—that does not fit easily into human house—and wordlessness, and comes to like it. The sequence of the bear-washing culminates in a scene of Tilly sitting couched in the bear's laps, confessing how she "want[s] [him] to stay with [her] for ever and ever." The picture book invites readers to share in this intimate, potential-filled time through means of the illustrations, rather than words, filling its pages with visions of the animal body living its life to the full, as it yawns, stretches out, gorges down food, and plays with water.

At the same time as bringing the potential of animal life so close to both Tilly and readers, *The Bear*'s pastoral points to the unreachability of animals as fellow beings in the prevailing system of animal commodification. It is, after all, a post-mortem animal pastoral. When Tilly tries to describe to her mother the presence of the bear as a living being and a close friend, she unwittingly reveals the bear as a ghost brought to her side only through the mediation of fiction of a ghost—or, a ghost-fiction.

> He's so big and quiet, Mummy. He's the silentest thing I've ever known. He's like a great big white ghost. . . . I can't even hear him breathing except when he cuddles me. Then I can hear his heart beating, too. His heart goes ever so slow—it goes BOOM… ages ages ages BOOM… ages ages ages BOO. Like that.

Tilly knows her bear to be a "ghost" that does not even breathe, even though the bear feels so close so that it is almost as if she can hear him breathe. The bear is a silent "thing"; and "ages" of animal exploitation and the whole world of commodified animals stand between them, even though Tilly—and *The Bear*—imagines hearing the heartbeat of the bear through the walls. Tilly

is the only one who can see the animal, and the adults in the house remain oblivious to the bear's presence to the end. It is not a coincidence that the figure of the knowledge-holding child is staged in opposition to the figures of unaware adults in this story, as I will further explore in the next section.

4.5 Knowing All about Bears

Chapter 1 looks at how the stuffed animal fictions forge a cultural association between the childlikeness and the serious problematization of violence towards animals. It is through this association that the unquestioning conformism towards the status quo of the industrial capitalism is set up as a form of mature knowing of how things "really" are—and should be—with animals. Pooh stories have set up a tradition of deriving comfort from making light of the child's serious concern over Pooh. The adult reader is not supposed to take the father-narrator's comforting reassurance—that all is well with Pooh—at face value, but is to be comforted in being reaffirmed in the implicit adult agreement that it is inevitable for animals to get hurt. All is well since the violence is inevitable.

The Bear, through the figure of the child who is concerned for the ghost animal because of her knowledge of its existence, calls into question the cultural construction of the significance of becoming knowledgeable in the stuffed animal fictions. *The Bear* suggests that the adult's complaisant realism might be a form of willful blindness to true violence of the system of animal production and consumption, when it depicts a tension between the child who sees the ghost-animal-in-need and the adults who remain blissfully blind to it. Tilly is the only one who cares

for—and can care for—the displaced and exploited animal, since she is literally the only one who can see its ghost. Her parents remain comfortably unconcerned, attributing all the fuss of Tilly—and all the mess that the bear makes—to the "wonderful world of a child's imagination." *The Bear* shows the adults' commonsensical unconcern to be grounded not on their superior knowledge of animals, but on their willful and ignorant unseeing of the hurt animal that is right there with them. Its illustrations show the bear to be there, lending weight to the potentially disturbing testimony of the child over the more comforting and "sensible" account of the adults.

The Bear once again contests the knowing adult position on animals implicitly constructed in the tradition of the stuffed animal fictions, as it takes Tilly's grief seriously, and calls for the readers to do so as well. *The Bear*'s pastoral dream comes to an abrupt end when the bear disappears out of the window as the ghost that he is. Tilly wakes up to find her inconsolable sadness that the bear is gone and that the good life together with the bear has been an elusive dream more than anything. Unlike in the classic stuffed animal fictions following the pattern of Pooh stories, the father's words—that all is well with animals—fails to console the child. The problem of displaced and consumed animals is not so easily closed off.

> The bear! He's gone!
>
> Never mind, Tilly, sweetheart. Don't cry, darling. Bear can't live in houses with people, can they, Teddy? That sort of thing only happens in story books. Look Tilly, Teddy's nodding. And he knows all about bears, don't you, Teddy?
>
> Yes, Teddy knows *everything*.

The father is speaking in the language of the narrator-father of Pooh stories when he attempts to assure the child that nothing is wrong with animals, and there is nothing to be sad about. As the father says, "Bears can't live in houses with people." It has been that way. He knows better about

animals than Tilly. Tilly refuses to be comforted. She claims that she is overwhelmed with grief, not because she knows less about animals, but because she knows more about them ("everything"); she is the one who "knows all about bears."[47] Tilly cannot stop from crying *because* the bears are not allowed to live together with people in the world-that-is-home, but are left to wander, exhausted and lost, in the alien system of commodification. Things should not be that way. She would rather stay with the sadness of the unprocessed and unprocessable problem of displaced and commodified animals: the sadness that blows through the window that the ghost bear left open.

The Bear, at the same time, is an attempt to conjure up a very different community of knowing readers from Pooh stories. It does not concoct a group of adult readers who smile over the overconcerned child's shoulder, but a group of people who is able to share in the unsettling knowledge of the true historical animal condition. Tilly, when she meaningfully comments that "Teddy knows everything," is not talking to her father; she is speaking to the readers who must

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[47] The innocent child of the stuffed toy fictions is a version of the twentieth-century innocent child whose innocence is lack in its essence (Kincaid 15). Tilly is not the typical animal-loving child of the stuffed animal fictions whose innocence is, in the end, adorably foolish; but a child who—in her innocence—has access to true knowledge of animals that is unavailable to adults. Can we say that *The Bear* brings back the figure of the original romantic child to contend the stuffed animal fiction genre's trivialization of the animal problem and the child knowledge? Tilly certainly resembles a romantic child who is "thought to have keener perceptions of beauty and of truth than adults" and considered the "the embodiment of a force of innate goodness" (Cunningham 55): her innocent love of the bear is/produces a form of meaningful knowledge on animals, and this knowledge turns out to be uncommonsensical but difficult to dismiss.

have seen everything through the medium of the picture book,[48] and must know better about animals and their sad ghosts. The final flip of page is a dream of the ghost polar bear reaching his home in the ice-covered Arctic, sometime and somehow. We can only hope that it will remain when he reaches it, and remain a home for him.

[48] Chapter 3 discussed how images tell a different story from that of the comforting narrative voice in *Winnie*, pointing to the discomforting historical truth of what happened to animals. *The Bear* goes a step further in de-privileging the comforting adult narrative voice of the stuffed animal fictions, as it is wholly constituted of dialogues and illustrations. The father's words do not hold the authority of the narrator and is contextualized as one of the unsuccessful human attempts at making sense of what has taken place in regard to animals. On the other hand, the images acquire the force of Benjaminian images that "embody experience-able historical truth" (Ross 105) that is yet unarticulated in adult-words. It is the accumulated power of these images that stand behind Tilly's refusal to be consoled.

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