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ser vissa texter väl misstänksamt, men i stort visar hon i avhandlingen på ett mycket bra sätt hur en modernitetskritik, och kritik mot idén om ett mänskligt subjekt som dominerar och exploaterar naturen, på olika sätt kommer till uttryck i de verk som behandlas.

En brännpunkt i avhandlingen utgörs av det centrala men notoriskt svårhanterliga begreppet vildmarksromantik. Sjödahl Lindgren genomlyser förtjänstfullt hur termen använts i olika sammanhang, men går som jag uppfattar det inte helt till botten med det tvådelade begreppet som sådant. Vildmark (wilderness) har beskrivits som en av de återkommande troperna i berättelser om människans relation till naturen (Garrard 2023). De mest omedelbara associationerna handlar om orörda skogar, berg, floder, öknar och träsk. Det rör sig alltså om ganska tydliga, storslagna landskapsbilder som utmärks av en i alla fall synbar frånvaro av mänsklig aktivitet och inverkan. Inte minst den nordamerikanska litteraturen är rik på vildmarksskildringar och då med starkt fokus på det orörda landskapet som i olika grad sedan betvingas av människan, ofta i manligt, västerländskt kodade berättelser. När efterledet ”romantik” hakas på vildmarkslitteraturen i denna anglosaxiska kontext är det antingen knutet just till en problematisk vit manlighetsnorm eller, i nyare sammanhang, berättelser om att finna sig själv i naturen. Det sistnämnda fenomenet berörs av Sjödahl Lindgren på ett intressant sätt i samband med resonemang kopplat till Anthony Carrigans *Postcolonial Tourism* (2011). Tankar väcks dock om huruvida begreppet vildmarksromantik, bortsett från att det använts på ett som avhandlingen visar orättvist negativt sätt, egentligen är helt och hållet träffande i förhållande till avhandlingens material. Intrycket är att Sjödahl Lindgrens analyser främst tar fasta på romantik i bemärkelsen magiinslag, medan den tidigare kritiken av verken snarare fokuserat på romantik som nostalgi och falsk idealisering av en plats och tillvaro. Denna skillnad i tyngdpunkter vad gäller romantikaspektens laddning bidrar till en viss känsla av vaghet i framställningen. Detsamma gäller i någon mån frågan om vilken slags vildmark som avses. I många av de verk som avhandlingen behandlar fungerar den egentliga vildmarken främst som en fond. Det påpekas att ”Historien om Gunnel” är den text som mest av alla stämplat Molin som vildmarksromantiker, men samtidigt att novellen även har kallats ”fäbodromantik”. Kanske är det faktiskt mer av kulturlandskap, med betesmark och sätervallar, än vild-

mark som syns i denna och flera av de andra texter som avhandlingen studerar.

Avhandlingen igenom märks en viss ambivalens, bland annat i en vacklan mellan att tala om ”vildmarksromantik” och ”så kallad vildmarksromantik”. I slutdiskussionen argumenteras för poängerna med att anamma kategorin, ge den en ny innebörd och ”försöka uppvärdera litteratur som skriver om naturen [...] på ett icke-realistiskt sätt, och bjuder motstånd till en hierarkisk natursyn” (s. 226). Samtidigt anger Sjödahl Lindgren att hon inte är fullt övertygad om att vildmarksromantik är den bästa kategorin att använda, med det bagage den har, men att hon ändå velat ”pröva det som ett experiment”. Begreppets svårfångade status anas också i avhandlingens titel och framsida – bilden visar en dramatisk natur i form av en vilt forsande älv, men också pågående timmerflottning, alltså både det vilda och det industrialiserade landskapet. Denna dubbelhet syns däremot inte i titeln och på sätt och vis hade det varit mer rättvisande mot de analyser som görs om avhandlingens undertitel hade varit ”Om vildmarksromantik och civilisationskritik i norrländsk litteratur”.

Det kvarstår att begreppet skaver lite, men så kan det få vara – det inbjuder till att diskussionen går vidare. Det är sympatiskt och ärligt att ambivalensen och den prövande hållningen diskuteras och jag tycker att Sjödahl Lindgren i stort lyckas mycket väl med sitt experimentet, att belysa ”en civilisationskritisk linje hos norrländslitteraturen som helhet, där vildmarksromantik kan ses som en dimension, eller ett sätt att vid den tidpunkten skriva på, motvalls gentemot moderniteten och dess uttryck” (s. 226). Avhandlingen är ett imponerande, välskrivet och viktigt bidrag till forskningen om en tradition och en rad verk som både är litteraturhistoriskt och ekokritiskt högintressanta.

Åsa Nilsson Skåve

Maria Trejling, *Creaturely Metaphors in D. H. Lawrence, H. D., and Virginia Woolf*. Stockholm University. Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University. Stockholm 2025.

The task of the reviewer involves a particular kind of response—a gesture that is at once evaluative and ethical. In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida reflects at length on the question of what it means to “respond”, as opposed to merely to react,

and how this question of response (and responsibility) intersects in a crucial sense with the question of the animal. To respond is to enter into relation: to acknowledge the call of the other without presuming to know in advance what that call demands. A review is such an encounter with alterity, but one which, as the prefix *re-* already implies, necessarily involves a repetition, a redoubling, and a return—a second reading that promises, and is haunted by, the first. The Latin root *spondeō*, I promise, still resonates in the act of responding, and hence a review is an act of faith as much as of judgement.

When I sat down to read Maria Trejling's dissertation, *Creaturely Metaphors in D. H. Lawrence, H. D., and Virginia Woolf*, I was struck by this sense of doubled responsibility. I was of course aware that I would have the task of reviewing and of responding to it, and so my reading was already haunted by this future responsibility toward the text. But beyond that, and reciprocally, Trejling's study also takes as one of its points of departure a call I myself issued a decade ago in an article on zoopoetics for a rehabilitation of metaphor within literary animal studies. To read her response to that call was therefore to find myself already implicated in its argument—to read while being read, to respond while being responded to. The experience was one of uncanny familiarity: I was haunted not only by the spectre of metaphor that Trejling so vividly conjures but by the echo of my own earlier thinking, or perhaps I should say a certain affinity of thought about the question of the animal and its relation to the question of language, and of figurative language in particular. Trejling's dissertation, however, is far more than a mere echo: it is a work that rearticulates the question of metaphor—and of responsible reading—in response to the literary texts it studies, and in the process stages nothing short of an intervention into (literary) animal studies.

As a field, literary animal studies has in part defined itself in opposition to traditional modes of reading animals in literature and art, whereby animals have typically been treated as symbols for something other than themselves. As a result, animal signifiers tend to be "interpreted out" of the text and replaced with what is taken to be the true, transcendental signified, which almost invariably refers to some aspect of the human condition. In defiance of this tradition, animal studies has instead tended to follow the opposite impulse, namely to insist on the unique, unsubstitutable specificity of *this animal, right here, in this text*,

etc.—in short on reading literary animals "literally". This emphasis on the *literality* of animals has led to a pervasive distrust of figurative readings and of metaphor in particular—which, as Trejling argues, has in turn led to a failure or a reluctance to engage with the *literarity* of literary animals and the texts they inhabit (2).

This, as she compellingly demonstrates, has a lot to do with the uncanny persistence within animal studies of the "substitution" theory of metaphor, which, as the name suggests, sees metaphor as a kind of stand-in or placeholder, where the "vehicle" of the metaphor, to use I. A. Richards's terminology, serves only to get us to the intended meaning about the "tenor", and has no real significance in itself or impact on the meaning. This is a conception of metaphor that has long been abandoned by literary scholarship in favour of the more dynamic "interaction" theory, and only survives in animal studies because of the field's earnest commitment to doing justice to animals in their alterity and letting them *be themselves*. Yet, as Trejling quite brilliantly demonstrates, with help from Derrida and Ricœur, the anxiety surrounding metaphor, the idea that animals disappear or forfeit their "essence" when they are made to mean something other than themselves, actually serves to perpetuate logocentrism. By presupposing that animals exist outside language—indeed *as* the outside of language—and that they thus cannot, or perhaps should not, signify anything but themselves and their own animality, animal studies is at risk of undermining its own project (37). This, too, is one of the ways animal studies is "haunted" by metaphor—or rather by the spectre of a conception of metaphor long since declared dead.

Thus, where animal studies has tended to be wary of figurative language, fearing that it renders the animal absent, Trejling turns this suspicion on its head: If many literary animals are figurative, she asks, what might we learn by reading their metaphoricality as a form of spectral presence rather than absence or erasure? Her dissertation thus examines the interplay between animality, metaphoricity, and literarity, arguing that the often peripheral creatures inhabiting the pages of modern fiction invite alterity into the text precisely through their double nature—as both animal and metaphor. This approach allows Trejling to shift the question of animal representation from one of accuracy or justice to one of relation and responsiveness. Metaphor's play with referentiality, she argues, can open a re-

lation to “actual animals”, in the “real” world, a relation that is constitutive of literature itself. Literarity, in her formulation, is a verbal hospitality toward the other: an openness to what cannot be predetermined or domesticated by meaning. This hospitality is not a metaphor for ethics but an ethical practice in language—an unguarded readiness to receive the other in its difference. Her readings show that metaphors, when attended to with care, can offer such hospitality, rather than denying it.

In the introductory chapter, she reconstructs the history of metaphor theory as it relates to animal studies, focus in particular on the field’s aforementioned adherence to the substitutional fallacy, and the metaphysical conception of language (and animality) that underlies it. In contrast, Trejling develops a far more sophisticated conception of metaphor, not as a figure of substitution but rather as what she calls a “spectral” mode of figurativity. She grounds this definition in Paul Ricœur’s hermeneutic conception of metaphor as a figure that involves the “critical incision” of a (literal) “is not” into the “ontological vehemence” of the (metaphorical) “is” (6). That is to say, by seeing what *is* in terms of what *is not*, metaphor has the power to reimagine reality. As such, metaphor is a fundamentally literary trope, and indeed a trope of literarity itself. Moreover, by simultaneously stating what something *is* and *is not*, metaphor holds open a space for alterity within identity—the other within the self. This, in Trejling’s analysis—and despite the quite vehement disagreements between the two thinkers on precisely this point—is what aligns Ricœur’s theory/conception of metaphor with Derrida’s discussion of spectrality in relation to figures such as hauntology and hospitality, key Derridean terms for thinking through the self’s relation to and responsibility toward the other.

What emerges from this first, theoretical, chapter is a revitalised conception of metaphor that resonates powerfully with the question of the animal, what it means to invite the nonhuman into human discourse, and the kinds of creativity (but also responsibility) that entails. If metaphor pushes against the boundaries of what is merely “the case”, and—in what is a fundamentally literary gesture—inviting alterity in, then it makes sense that it would be *as* metaphors that animals enter human discourse. More to the point, this grants a certain primacy or agency to the nonhuman in the constitution of the literary. Literature, in short, can be regarded as the result, or the record, of an ongo-

ing negotiation with the nonhuman world, a constant probing of the limits of the nameable and the knowable.

Trejling’s “spectral” conception of metaphor in its relation to animality is brilliantly illustrated on the very first page of her dissertation, which opens with a small, enigmatic moment from the end of the first chapter of Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* (1915): the protagonist Rachel Vinrace’s sudden, unexplained exclamation, “Poor little goats!”—a reference to animals that never otherwise appear in the published text. As Trejling explains, these goats are spectral remnants from an earlier draft of the novel, where they figured in the colonial enterprises of Rachel’s father, which, as he reminds her, provide the material basis for her career as a pianist: “If it weren’t for the goats there’d be no music, my dear; music depends upon goats.” Detecting in this assertion an oblique reference to the “goat-song” buried in the etymology of tragedy (τραγωδία), Trejling takes this exchange as a foreshadowing of Rachel’s tragic fate. In their spectral presence, the goats thus become “a prophetic figure of the unhappy ending and a metaliterary metaphor of the novel’s disturbance of readerly expectations.” They mark the intrusion of figuration into the texture of the text: a fleeting animal presence that is at once literal and literary, material and spectral. In this first reading, Trejling articulates the constellation of concerns that will guide her entire study. The “poor little goats” epitomise what she calls “peripheral animal metaphors”: marginal, often overlooked figures that haunt literary texts from the edges, troubling distinctions between presence and absence, the living and the dead, the literal and the figurative. A metaphor, she observes, “is spectral too, conflating being and non-being, at once stating that something is and that it is not” (1).

This opening gesture sets the tone for the dissertation’s subsequent analyses of D. H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*, H. D.’s *Asphodel*, and Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*. In keeping with her interest in the margins of discourse, Trejling notes that she deliberately avoided writing about the most conspicuous animals in the modernist canon, for instance Woolf’s *Flush* or Lawrence’s *St Mawr*, about whom much has been written already. Instead, she focuses on peripheral and inconspicuous creatures, ones the reader might not even notice while reading: domesticated animals such as cows, sheep, and horses (though I suspect that even the most inattentive reader would notice the horses in the cli-

mactic scene of *The Rainbow*...); insects such as bees, butterflies, moths, and (memorably) bed bugs; as well as an array of birds, especially swallows, that dart and swoop in and out of the narrative. Through careful close readings of the novels across three long chapters, the peripherality and inconspicuousness of these animal figures emerges as both a critical and poetological principle: the periphery, as she notes with reference to Derrida, is “that which carries the border producing a limit”, and hence paying careful attention to what is going on at the periphery can provide an opening to trouble to the logic of the margin and its relation to the centre and to centrism of any kind, including of course anthropocentrism (14).

Each of the three case studies further elucidates a particular facet of metaphor. In the Lawrence chapter, for example, Trejling draws precise and productive distinctions between metaphor on the one hand and other rhetorical figures such as symbol, simile, and allegory on the other—terms which are often used quasi-synonymously in animal studies to refer to the “symbolic service” that animals are required to perform within human discourse, but which in fact presuppose very different relationality between the literal and the figurative, or the self and the other. Thus, as Trejling explains with admirable clarity, symbols are “inherently conservative”, in that their intelligibility *as* symbols depends on the existence of a relatively stable frame of reference established by tradition. Whereas in the case of allegory, the two levels of interpretation, the literal and the figurative, must, at least in principle, be kept separate. Metaphor, by contrast, disturbs the neat separation between what “is” and what “is not”, and in this way is much more generative and open-ended. This tension—between affirmation and negation, presence and absence—creates the possibility of “seeing-as”, a mode of perception that is neither purely cognitive nor purely imaginative.

Each of the three analysis chapters is governed by a “methodological metaphor” expressed in the form of a gerund: *touching*, for D.H. Lawrence; *writing* for H.D., and *singing*, for Virginia Woolf. In each case, the metaphoricality of the verb hinges on an encounter with an animal other, which calls into question the assumed centrality of the human. All three authors are preoccupied with the inherent limitations of language when it comes to giving expression to an experience beyond words, and Trejling shows how they each try (successfully or not) to push against those boundaries by staging

an encounter with animality, which, in one way or another, makes language *other*, and in the process has the potential to undermine human authority over the text, including, importantly, the authority of the reader.

Across these chapters, Trejling’s analyses are precise and persuasive. She writes with a rare attentiveness to texture, rhythm, and nuance. Her close readings illuminate how modernist prose, at its most experimental, already anticipates posthumanist concerns with relationality and responsibility. The methodological metaphors—touching, writing, singing—become in her hands not just analytic tools but performative gestures, modeling the responsiveness her argument demands. “I must always take responsibility for my readings” (58), Trejling writes, referring both to her attentive method of close textual analysis and to the confident and self-assured style of her writing. Her readings are acts of attention in Derrida’s sense: responses that resist mastery, that linger with uncertainty, that acknowledge the limits of knowledge, without hiding behind the unknowability of the other.

If I have one point of criticism, it is that while the notion of metaphor receives sustained and illuminating attention, Trejling has surprisingly little to say, at least explicitly, about the *other* term in the dissertation’s title, namely the “creaturely”. This is a term which has its own quite specific and by now well-established history of theorisations within animal studies, and which, moreover, is currently experiencing something of a renaissance, as evidenced by the recent publication of titles such as Dominic O’Key’s *Creaturely Forms in Contemporary Literature* (2022) or Elisha Cohn’s *Milieu*, subtitled “A Creaturely Theory of the Contemporary Novel” (2025). Readers hoping to find in Trejling’s study an elaborate engagement with these more literary theories of the creaturely will come away disappointed. There is no mention of Eric Santner, whose *On Creaturely Life* (2006) was largely responsible for introducing the term into the discourse (albeit in a rather anthropocentric sense), while Anat Pick, another influential theorist of the “creaturely”, is mentioned only briefly in an endnote, and only to say that Pick’s definition of *creature* as “a living body—material temporal, and vulnerable” is irrelevant except insofar as “it pertains to *creativity* rather than to being created” (209 n.8). For Trejling, the emphasis clearly falls on the *creative* dimension of language—on metaphor’s gen-

erative and transformative potential—rather than on creatureliness as a condition of vulnerability, exposure, and finitude. And yet, as her own analyses repeatedly show, these dimensions are deeply intertwined. Her metaphors are not only inventive; they are fragile, permeable, open to damage and to misreading. Hence, one might have wished for a fuller articulation of how Trejling’s “creaturely metaphors” relate to the ethics and politics of embodied life, and to the question of responsibility that runs through her reading.

This is connected to another central tension in the dissertation: the decision to focus on literary as opposed to “actual” animals. Trejling herself is entirely explicit about this choice: as she writes in the introduction, “[t]he present study is more concerned with metaphor than meat, with significations rather than slaughterhouses, with literary theory rather than leather” (19). Fair enough, but still one senses that the emphasis on the textual sometimes leads her to retreat from the very border zones that her analyses otherwise so powerfully evoke—the porous interface between word and world. At various points in the dissertation, Trejling appeals to more empirical branches of knowledge, be it cognitive neuroscience (47) or ethology and entomology. In her reading of *The Waves*, for instance, she draws on ethological observations of bees and swallows to illuminate Woolf’s figural imagination, suggesting a reciprocity between animal behaviour and literary form: an awareness that the “facts” of animal life influence or even co-author their cultural and metaphorical meanings. This is an important question, and one that might have been developed further into a broader reflection on the relationship between literary and “actual” animals—on how animality inhabits and shapes human discourse, and how, conversely, our figurations of animal life shape the conditions of living beings beyond the page.

None of this seriously undermines the achievement of “Creaturely Metaphors” as a study of metaphor’s spectrality and of literature’s capacity for ethical responsiveness. Still, it seems fair to say that the dissertation attends more fully to the second term in its title than to the first. In so doing, it forgoes an opportunity to explore how the vulnerability and materiality of creaturely life might further complicate the relation between figuration and ethics that lies at its centre. To trace that connection more explicitly would not diminish the subtlety of Trejling’s readings; it would deepen them,

allowing the “creaturely” to appear not only as a condition of language but as a shared mode of being in the world.

Ultimately, *Creaturely Metaphors* offers a powerful rethinking of what it means to read figuratively in the wake of the animal turn. It restores to metaphor its ethical and imaginative force, showing that figuration need not entail substitution or erasure but can constitute a space of encounter. *Creaturely Metaphors* thus leaves its readers with a renewed sense of what it might mean to respond to literature, and to animals, responsibly. In the end, this is a dissertation that is as much about literature and literariness as it is about the figure of the reader, and how we, as readers, can and should engage with literary texts, how we can read more responsibly, with greater attentiveness and vulnerability towards the haunting strangeness of language, which is to say its *literarity*—or maybe rather, though perhaps it amounts to the same thing, its *animality*.

Kári Driscoll

Camilla Wallin Lämsä, *Yearning Hours: Desire, Darcymania, and Readerly Attachments in the Digital Jane Austen Fandom*. Linköpings universitet. Linköping 2025.

Yearning Hours: Desire, Darcymania, and Readerly Attachments in the Digital Jane Austen Fandom is study of fan-created texts from an online community of Jane Austen fans. It is also a study of character through shared, spreadable forms that make it possible for readers to create multimodal texts that respond to the character and to one another, from a wide range of perspectives. A major contribution of this work is to complicate the scholarly understanding of fan reading practices and fan affect to emphasize the range of identificatory positions they might take. As a study of fans, *Yearning Hours* is careful not to reduce fans to enthusiastic attachment—it argues they “feel” but also “memes,” a shorthand for irony, self-consciousness, and humor. Moreover, these multimodal creators do not only work in well-known fan genres like fanfiction, fanvids, and fanart, but minor “spreadable modalities” like memes. Camilla Wallin Lämsä establishes that these forms are essential to understanding the interpretive and social modes of fandom.

The Jane Austen Fandom is one with an out-sized place in literary criticism and fan studies; it