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**Blue Poetics:
Theory and Praxis of Contemporary Radical Landscape Poetry**

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Abstract

This thesis provides a critical analysis of Harriet Tarlo's *Gathering Grounds* (2019), Mark Dickinson's *Tender Geometries* (2015), and Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's *Swims* (2018), as key blue poetics texts. Water takes hold of the lyric, proposing new modes of more-than-human situatedness; compartment otherwise grounded in borders and dichotomies is brought into critical relief through transcorporeal entanglements.

Blue poetics' recent emergence as distinct from ecological poetics is an important turn in literary studies wishing to engage with oceanic and freshwater discourses, along with the multispecies that depend on them. From an eco-elegiac and hydroelegiac standpoint, this thesis explores environmental problems outlined in the selected collections, coupled with the aesthetics of specific sites of experience, which reflect and refract elegiac modes. Ontological and epistemological theories articulated by new feminisms, new materialisms, and posthumanism, are mobilized to highlight strands of more-than-human engagements, as they arise from these authors' fieldwork and its aqueous counterpart, swimwork. Seeking ways in which these texts promote interdisciplinary dialogues to address global water crises, this thesis also considers how they shape our understanding of the more-than-human world. Textual criticism and literary analysis are used to reframe these enquiries within a blue humanities context, while providing supporting examples from the lyric as it is coupled with concepts that are accessible through these theoretical schools.

Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett promote a polyphonic poetics of water that can be parsed through interdisciplinary dialogues of environmental crises; this is achieved using found and upcycled text, and engagement with the sciences and its terminology. The multi-foundational model of knowledge they embody suggests that humans are organic information systems. This is inflected by an ethical comportment to environmental flows and bodies within the lyric's disclosure of the life-territory of specific places; here, radical landscape poetry is amplified by blue poetics, exploring vastly inaccessible, distant, and easily ignored aspects of territory, affordances for life. This combination of co-creative reflexivity and remodelled subjectivity within landscape poetry sensitised to flows and bodies of water, posits these texts at the forefront of an emergent blue poetics framework for contemporary literary studies.

List of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
List of Contents.....	4
List of Figures.....	7
Declaration	8
Introduction Unsettled Ground, Unsettled Waters	9
CHAPTER 1 <i>Gathering Grounds</i>	19
Introduction	19
Fieldwork.....	20
Found Text/Upcycled Text	25
Palimpsestic and Poetic.....	29
Organic Space/Organic Text.....	31
Oil, Wind, and Gas	34
Conclusion.....	36
CODA - <i>on edge</i>	37
CHAPTER 2 <i>Tender Geometries</i>	40
Introduction	40
Geometries and Geographies	41
Eco-elegiac Entanglements	45
The <i>Sea Pen</i> as Posthuman Metaphor	49
A Material Vegan Ecofeminist Reading	51
Nature without Nylon	55
Conclusion.....	58
CODA - <i>quadrat</i>	58
CHAPTER 3 <i>Swims</i>	63
Introduction	63
Swimwork - Walking, Wading, and Swimming.....	64
Lyric Life-territory.....	67
Songlines and Message Sticks	72
Songlines	72
Message Sticks.....	76
Posthuman Polymer Perception	78
Hydroelegy	81

Conclusion.....	84
CODA - extinction & invaders	85
Conclusion.....	90
Appendices	93
Appendix 1 - Harriet Tarlo Radical Landscape Poetry Interview Transcript	93
Appendix 2 Shore Survey	101
on edge.....	101
Caught in the surge	101
Concertino in C flat major.....	102
Crevice.....	103
Darwin’s Barnacle	104
Foreshore	105
Plenty	106
Salvage.....	107
Seacoal.....	108
Semibalanus balanoides	109
South of site	111
The Rossby Number.....	112
Tide-hunters	113
shore survey	114
Quadrat 1: Growth lines.....	114
Quadrat 2: St George’s Island	115
Quadrat 3: Offshore	116
Quadrat 4: Second Beach.....	117
Quadrat 5: Ron & Joy	118
Quadrat 6: Sentient substrate.....	119
Quadrat 7: Surge channel.....	120
Quadrat 8: Ballantine scale	121
Quadrat 9: The barnacle line	122
Quadrat 10: Bare rock.....	123
invaders.....	124
Mitten Crab	124
Pacific Oyster.....	125
Slipper Limpet	126
Wakame watch.....	127
Wireweed	128

Zebra Mussel.....	129
extinction	130
Arrival at Paducah.....	130
Artemia salina	132
Edwardsia ivelli	133
plants & birds.....	134
Dandelion distribution.....	134
Selfheal	135
Flightpath.....	136
Phenology in the interlude	137
Bibliography	140

List of Figures

Figure 1. Judith Tucker, behind:land (2015).....	21
Figure 2. Judith Tucker, behind: land (2015).....	23
Figure 3. Veronica Fibisan, Humberston Fitties (2016).....	23
Figure 4. Judith Tucker, behind: land (2015).....	24
Figure 6. Judith Tucker, Gathering Grounds (2019), p.108.....	30
Figure 7. Judith Tucker, Gathering Grounds (2019), pp.60-61.....	32
Figure 8. Veronica Fibisan, Shore survey (large-scale installation).....	60
Figure 9. Veronica Fibisan, Shore survey (large-scale installation - detail).....	61
Figure 10. Darwin's Barnacle – extract.....	88

Declaration

I, the author, confirm that this Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Introduction

Unsettled Ground, Unsettled Waters

This thesis explores three contemporary radical landscape poetry¹ collections which stand at the forefront of blue poetics. Environmental humanities concepts drawing from theories of new ecofeminism, new materialism, and posthumanism can be reimagined within the blue humanities' articulations of transcorporeality and hydrofeminism. Harriet Tarlo's *Gathering Grounds* (2019), Mark Dickinson's *Tender Geometries* (2015), and Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's *Swims* (2017) have been selected owing to the distinct qualities of the open-field poetics embodied therein. These writers respond to their environs by deviating from pure concrete representations on the page; embodying emotional pulses of meaning-making, intimate and immersive experiences mobilise metaphor, metonymy, symbolism, and synecdoche in intriguing ways. The grounds of knowledge within these texts contribute significantly to the blue humanities' framework by conceptualising the notion of shared waters; their lyrical modes offer an improved understanding of transcorporeal connections. Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett navigate the more-than-human entanglements of uncharted waters within the radical landscape tradition, whilst guaranteeing its relevance to contemporary environmental concerns.

The central argument to this thesis is twofold. Firstly, the blue humanities is an emerging extension of the environmental humanities solidified by Steve Mentz's² work, which departs from 'Shakespeare's poetics of salt and fresh water' (2019b, p.384). Looking at 're-establishing a humanistic connection' (Buchanan 2018) with the more-than-human world experienced through the medium of waters, Mentz sees this as a transcorporeal mesh holding it in perpetual ontological entanglement; what Elizabeth DeLoughrey terms as 'the oceanic turn' (2017, p.32). This discipline looks at filling a 'blue hole in environmental history' (Gillis 2013, p.2) by examining previous and current literary texts and theories. Secondly, Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett's poems ask the reader to consider their environs, not as the delineated and organised spaces they are familiar with, but as detailed and complex transcorporeal entities. Understanding waters as life-territories helps shape ethical discourses regarding modes of approaching environmental problems and crises, encouraging a shift towards more compassionate modes of living with other human and nonhuman species.

'Blue' is the remaining part of the light spectrum in water, yet also works as a reflective mode of filtering complex entanglements of human and water bodies. These can be understood from a blue humanities perspective alert to the concept of the hyperobject: comprehensive segments of micro-immersions within the texts model a renewed ecocritical vocabulary for creative practice.³ The exploration of individual, local, and specific waters—all part of the hydrological cycle as connected to

¹ The term was proposed by Harriet Tarlo in *The Ground Aslant: An Anthology of Radical Landscape Poetry* (2011a), and outlines 'a view or perspective of land, linguistically or philosophically shaping the specific or generic land with which it engages'.

² See Mentz (2009; 2020) and Mentz and Rojas (2017).

³ See Morton (2013).

the more-than-human bodily waters—allows for a deconstructive approach to understanding the functions of water both in the environment and on the page.

Radical landscape poetry stems from Tarlo’s assemblage of landscape poets who write in the Bunting tradition (2007, p.9), with particular emphasis on the musicality of texts and the local, in the North of the United Kingdom. A selection of their work was collated by Tarlo in *The Ground Aslant* anthology (Tarlo 2011a). The field has broadened in the past decade, bringing together writers who are actively seeking to outline intricate environmental issues, departing from the locality of the North of the United Kingdom. Kate Rigby calls for ‘alternative ways of speaking about, and responding to, the calamitous impacts of climate change’ (2015, p.13); here, the discourse of radical landscape poetry steps in to address not just climate change, but how this has led to a climate crisis.

Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett’s work focuses on narratives of water; critically, these narratives contribute to ‘the development of the blue or the marine or “blue” humanities [which] calls for enmeshment between cultural history (traditionally the domain of the humanities) and natural history (aligned with the sciences)’ (Bloomfield 2019, p.504). Therefore, this thesis draws from the interdisciplinarity interwoven in the fabric of the blue humanities, where we cannot speak of waters without the involvement of the natural sciences, social sciences, and other humanities disciplines. Acknowledging a renewed sense of the complexity of the *aqueous* inside and outside of our own bodies, as understood within this disciplinary framework, is an ethical hue discernible at the forefront of these conceptual lyric excursions.

*

The ocean was historically perceived to be an infinite food resource; the concept of overfishing did not emerge until the mid to late nineteenth century, when research advancements started to show depleted oceanic regions and missing species pockets. These mirrored a reduction in the amount of fish, and other sea life that is routinely caught in the fishing industry; as Elspeth Probyn notes, we are now ‘at risk of eating [the ocean] up’ (2016). The National Marine Fisheries Service was founded relatively late in 1971, despite the fact that in 1871, Spencer Fullerton Baird wrote to the American Congress ‘calling attention to the problem of depletion of food fishes of the seacoasts and lakes of the United States and offering suggestions for remedial measures’ (Guinan 1971). In the United Kingdom, The Marine Fisheries Agency founded in 2005 was dissolved and replaced by the Marine Management Organisation in 2010. By-catch, which includes any non-desirable creatures caught alongside targeted species also contributes to the depletion of the ocean⁴, as do other practices such as aquaculture, ghost fishing, and plastic pollution. Almost all these changes go unnoticed, as often human contact with the *underwater* part of aqueous environments is limited. The sciences that report on the numbers and state of the seas, often include visual aids to help readers conceptualise the figures presented. However, they fail to consider the nonhuman species discussed as being sentient and complex creatures with lifestyles, territories, families, preferred meals, and so on. The lyric steps in to fill the gap that the sciences cannot, placing the human within more-than-human entanglements, as equal actants and victims of the anthropogenic climate crisis. The United Kingdom’s maritime expansion in the sixteenth century was primarily wind-driven, and depended on ocean currents; as part of this natural nexus, the British ‘Aeolian empire’ has been most concentrated in the North Atlantic Ocean, through the trade routes established by Christopher Columbus (Bankoff 2017, pp.25-26). Despite this clustering, the pressing need for tapping into unknown waters led to the incorporation of ‘new territories like Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Tahiti into the Aeolian

⁴ See Read et al. (2005) and Wallace et al. (2010).

framework of empire' (Bankoff 2017, p.28). This expansion is reflected in the ways in which literary studies resonate within a blue/oceanic framework. Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett's collections see more-than-human engagements with waters as providing invaluable local experiences via fieldwork and swimwork, which allow for shared global blue problematics and interactions to emerge within their complex poetic discourse. Drawing on blue epistemologies and ontologies as its primary foci, this thesis gathers relevant theories and criticism both the United Kingdom and beyond, to address the current water crises as they appear in contemporary blue poetics.

Astrida Neimanis' notions of transcorporeality are outlined in *Bodies of water* (2016), which explores 'embodiment from the perspective of our bodies' wet constitution, as inseparable from pressing ecological questions' (2016, p.1), and their impact upon the more-than-human. Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett all draw from this theory, creating atmospheres of water dances within the lyric, whereby immersing their own bodies into puddles, lakes, streams, rivers, seas, and oceans they attune to their inner and outer flow, pulse, and rhythm. Transcorporeality is translated into the lyric, allowing the reader to plunge their own body into these waters, whilst considering the ones that lie within their life-territories, and more broadly, the global ocean.

Blue poetics' departure point from ecological poetics is a significant expansion of contemporary literary studies; it addresses oceanic and freshwater discourses, and the multispecies which depend on them, engaging with life-territories where environmental destruction is most dominant, but least visible. Within the blue humanities, this field has been growing alongside an increase in water crises and complexity surrounding global water management, encompassing literary responses to these issues. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Theory*, the blue humanities is a 'movement in literary and cultural studies that, drawing on critical practices and theoretical approaches from new historicism and new materialism, focuses on the presence of the ocean in cultural texts' (Buchanan 2018). They are 'characterized by disciplinary fluidity' (Bakker 2019), exploring destabilised anthropogenic perspectives which reconstruct human/ nonhuman binaries into a more-than-human collective, by turning their attention to the biological, ecological, and ethological features of aquatic animals and their life-territories. In the blue humanities, little critical research focuses on blue poetics as opposed to cli-fi, for example, however, a reading of blue poetics can make a positive contribution to this emerging field and help ground some of the emerging theories outlined in its main modes of praxis. By focusing on aquatic life-territories that are difficult to access, and not within the immediate reach of most people, blue poetics can help bring these to life in the readers' imaginarium and introduce them to places where environmental destruction happens on a broad scale. The versatility and immediacy of poetry allows it to enter the spaces of art galleries, community centres, libraries, and other key sites where its presence can make an immediate impact.

Blue poetics is growing in popularity amongst writers who are turning their attention to waters as a progression from more terrestrial-based projects. Their work is often printed by small publishing houses, and fails to make the mainstream; however, this undue lack of attention is slowly changing, with a new wave of writers and artists resorting to walking and swimming as practice-based approaches to their crafts. Taking to the outdoors foregrounds the message of all three poets, prompting direct engagement as necessary for understanding the more-than-human world within the context of a grounded reality whose complexity is outlined in the lyric.

The three main research questions identified and addressed by this thesis are:

1. What contribution do the three texts explored offer to the environmental and blue humanities?
2. How do the three texts shape our understanding of the more-than-human world?

3. How do the three texts promote an interdisciplinary dialogue to address the environmental changes of the more-than-human world?

Fieldwork and swimwork are part of the creative methodology adopted by Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett, despite their individual practices and innovative modes of exploration that are coupled with the lyric. Fieldwork has its roots in the early strolling practices of the flâneurs of nineteenth-century Europe, adopting the walk as an intentional act of examining one's surroundings, usually in urban environments, and addressing social aspects; whilst the history of poetry resulting from an oral and social tradition posits ancient lyricism as inherent to fieldwork, the deliberate act of walking and writing has been reinvigorated in recent decades as an unmediated experience allowing for the creation of literature grounded in life-territories; the more-than-human awareness resulting from this practice speaks to a blue poetics which helps map cartographies of water as transcorporeal outer and inner bodily flows. Within a radical landscape poetry framework, Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett create a lyric equivalent of what Iain Sinclair terms a 'poetic map' (Cooper and Roberts 2012, p.2); this territorialisation of specific sites into verse lies at the basis of these three writers' open-field poetics.

Within the early environmental humanities, the work of Aldo Leopold foregrounds contemporary methods of fieldwork which helped him conceptualise his land ethic⁵ 'through a lifetime of observation and experience, of perception and husbandry' (Callicott 1987). In the past two decades, fieldwork has become an intrinsic part of the process of walking and writing of contemporary radical landscape poets and ecopoets, as they transfer their direct observations and findings into the lyric. Swimwork is the aqueous variation of fieldwork, with a shared goal of integrating the immersive experience in the lyric. It takes the human body one step further through direct contact with bodies of fresh, brackish, or salt water. In this thesis, swimwork is primarily practiced by Burnett, as she plunges into selected bodies of water as part of the creative element of *Swims*; she terms this mode of fieldwork as an 'environmental action' (2017, p.7). Whilst grounding his thoughts on surf-theory, Mentz highlights the importance of a direct immersive experience, as 'it connects physical experience to ecotheoretical knowledge' (2019a, p.437). Furthermore, within the blue humanities, 'thinking from immersion helps us imagine and engage ecological instability' (Mentz 2019a, p.442); this is in turn explored on the page, where it acquires the ability to trigger changes in the reader's ontological and epistemological situatedness. Locations are not selected primarily for their aesthetics, but for particularities pertaining to the destructive anthropogenic power which grounds them as *sites of lyric and environmental interest*.

Neither of the three authors discussed in this thesis shies away from staying with the troubles⁶ encountered during fieldwork and swimwork. Their writing morphs according to the reality of what is being captured: whether it be coastal litter and oil tanks in Tarlo's work; aquaculture, nonhuman pestilence, and plastic pollution in Dickinson's work; and polluted waters in Burnett's work. Whilst their approach is different, in each case the reader is presented with the reality encountered, including plastics⁷, oil pipes⁸, and aquaculture farming practices⁹. Turning to global environmental literary criticism emphasises patterns in the ways in which anthropogenic destruction affects the planet, observed in the more-than-human surroundings, the air and soil, yet waters most particularly. The sublime of specific sites is surveyed in constant dialogue with the difficult reality encountered as a result of anthropogenic destruction and climate change. These texts showcase evidence of

⁵ See Leopold (1968).

⁶ See Haraway (2016).

⁷ See Tarlo (2019), Burnett (2017), and Dickinson (2015).

⁸ See Tarlo (2019).

⁹ See Dickinson (2015).

environmental harm, in stark contrast with the aesthetics observed. They echo David Abram's words: 'the landscape as I directly experience it is hardly a determinate object; it is an ambiguous realm that responds to my emotions and calls forth feelings from me in turn' (1997, p.33). This dialogic dance gives rise to the borderless open-field poetics mirroring the more-than-human engagement.

*

Within this study, the term 'human' refers to the entirety of humanity in equal measure; there are no dichotomies that have created rifts between various groups in the past.¹⁰ We understand Tarlo, Tucker, and Burnett to be representatives of the human during fieldwork and swimwork. The term 'anthropogenic' refers to actions undertaken by the human, primarily used in the context of *anthropogenic climate change*. The term 'nonhuman' refers to the nonhuman animal; extracting it from Deleuze's broader nonhuman category which includes fauna, flora, and anthropogenic and natural inanimate objects.¹¹ The term 'more-than-human' is outlined by Sarah Whatmore¹² as a 'focal alternative to the prevailing human/ nonhuman perspective in bio(life) and geo (earth)' (Bristow 2015, p.6). The more-than-human in this project includes anthropogenic and natural inanimate objects, but also the human and nonhuman. It is situated in relation to the posthuman body explored by Myra Seaman in 'becoming (more) than human' (2007, p.246). The poetry collections elected to best instantiate this thesis are written from an insider's perspective of *being with* the more-than-human; this is an acutely reflexive mode of self-consciousness that clarifies participation within a larger order, lending itself to addressing the immediacy of an interconnected world. Therefore, the *human body* of the writer during fieldwork and swimwork coupled with any other human bodies they might encounter, along with the nonhuman animals, and the flora, substrate, chemical compounds, and anthropogenic discards part of inanimate matter all make up the fabric of the more-than-human, harnessed within the lyric.

Drawing upon the fact that 'literature involves interrelationships, and ecological awareness enhances and expands our sense of interrelationships to encompass nonhuman as well as human contexts' (Love 2003, p.47), this thesis develops these interconnections, including these two categories within the more-than-human and its added inanimate elements. In dropping dichotomies, the steppingstones towards new modes of more-than-human engagement are reinforced both in creative and critical writing. Maurice Merleau-Ponty speaks of 'consciousness that would be hidden in a piece of flesh and blood' (2012, p.365), which functions within a more-than-human ontology and the dynamics of its interconnections. This mode of perception operates within environmental literary studies as a tool to 'supply environmentalists with a comprehensive ontological and phenomenological foundation for an environmental ethics' (Toadvine and Brown 2003, p.116). A more-than-human ethics of care is embedded within these discourses as part of the broader environmental care ethics. Here, the emphasis lies on Daniel Berthold-Bond's¹³ ethics of place, coupled with Neimanis' ethics of *unknowability* (2016, p.95), which focuses on all human and nonhuman bodies. Adeline Johns-Putra's heideggerian-derived notion of 'care as *sorge* [which] refers to the pre-ontological totality of these complex negotiations of being, being-in-the-world and being with others' (2013, p.132). More-than-human ethical strands emerge within the poetics of Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett, who speak of *victims* without species or gender dichotomies. The ultimate humiliation is perceived in Dickinson and Burnett's work most strongly via plastic micro-particles that penetrate more-than-human bodies,

¹⁰ See Holmsten (2005).

¹¹ See Deleuze and Guattari (1988).

¹² See Whatmore (2002).

¹³ See Berthold-Bond (2000).

irrespective of species delineations. In Tarlo's work, plastic enters the water and land, as anthropogenic discards disintegrate on the marshland, highlighting the lesser-known problem of plastic pollution of the soil.

*

The three collections explored in this thesis contain elegiac strands derived from fieldwork and swimwork. The eco-elegy, or ecological elegy departs from the traditional elegy, and is understood by Timothy Morton to 'mourn for something that has not completely passed' (2010a, p.1). The hopeful outlook of the eco-elegy as a tool which has the potential to positively alter an elegiac present for an improved non-elegiac future functions in these texts, through the lyric's capacity to promote cognitive and behavioural changes in readers, triggered by affect and a renewed emotional engagement with the environment (Morton 2010a, p.3). The elegiac mode embedded in these works is a 'feminine elegiac more concerned with attachment rather than separation and a consolatory turn deriving more from recuperation than from compensatory substitution' (Kennedy 2007, p.85). Turning to eco-elegy allows for environmental concerns to emerge at the forefront of poetic discourse with an undertone of elegiac tropes. Similar to pastoral elegy's ability to define the pastoral—as 'death is the ultimate form of the separations and losses that pervade pastoral poetry' (Alpers 2011), *hydroelegy* functions as a vital organ in blue poetics, where a contemporary discourse of waters cannot exclude the current key element of loss.

Departing from Stephen Regan's investigation of the changes of elegiac writing post-1945 as a result of shifting attitudes towards death and loss arising from the Second World War (2016, p.183), the acceleration of climate change within the last couple of decades¹⁴ resonates with new nature writing's concerns of 'environmental destruction and irreversible habitat loss' (Hubbard and Wilkinson 2019, p..253-254); thus, the boundaries between traditional elegy and eco-elegy are blurred. The act of mourning has been tailored to the urgent needs of writers' environs, unearthing the 'startling ecological instabilities' (Keller 2017, p.207) of contemporary life-territories. Furthermore, in Burnett's *Swims*, *hydroelegy* conceptualises waters as the medium of eco-elegiac mourning, through and for the body as part of a more-than-human transcorporeal mesh. The hydroelegy focuses on discourses of loss alternating between the life-sustaining properties of water, and the notion of water as a destructive force, either polluted¹⁵, dynamic¹⁶, or absent¹⁷. This mode of *viewing* the world in Burnett's collection happens through the prism of water. The ritualistic nature of the swim unfolds within the hydroelegiac discourse as process of healing; the local body in the environment reaching out to a global sphere. The Ouse River in Burnett's *Swims* becomes the Tigris (Burnett 2017, pp.30-31), as she metaphorically stretches her gaze across to the anthropogenic destruction of the city of Mosul in Iraq. The aquaculture farming sea pens in Dickinson's *Tender Geometries* mirror the horrific conditions endured by fishes in this industry across the world. The expansion of an immediate life-territory into the global allows 'in literary texts, attention to phenomena of local nature and their eco-ethical potential implicitly includes and metonymically extends to all forms of life on earth' (Zapf 2002, p.248). This palimpsestic topography is present in the lyric, mirroring the juxtaposition of the sublime of life-territories against anthropogenic destruction.

Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett work with different types of found text, including signage and documentary text (formal interviews and recorded speech) to extract voices from specific areas, and

¹⁴ See Kovarik (2020).

¹⁵ Toxic and polluted waters, oil-spills, acid rain etc.

¹⁶ Tsunamis, tidal waves, floods etc.

¹⁷ Drought, global water shortages etc.

directly capture their views of place and space by embedding them into the lyric. This enjambement provides a human counterbalance within a posthuman framework, helping to promote an equal view of the spaces that we inhabit and share. Relying on sets of letter combinations from a shared alphabet in a widely spoken language, all forms of verbal expression constitute acts of recycling, reusing, and repeating words. However, the unique lyric algorithms allow for a sense of freshness and renewal. The found text is not just recycled through the lyric, but also upcycled; repurposed for environmental aesthetics and destruction. In the work of the poets discussed in this thesis, the sublime, the metaphoric, and the elegiac sharpen language to become an activist tool of use to all readers.

The palimpsest as a cognitive construct emerges in Tarlo, Dickinson and Burnett's collections as lyric stratification of place, as derived from Thomas De Quincey's essay *The Palimpsest of the Human Brain* (1845). A palimpsest permits the latest and previous texts to be visible simultaneously, emphasising the temporality of the surface as concept explored over a significant duration of time. This ranges from repeated site visits over the course of several years for Tarlo, to individual swims in selected waters for Burnett, whilst Dickinson is immersed into the locality of his life-territory in Orkney, off the Scottish coast. The palimpsestic structure of the text mirrors the timelines of fieldwork or swimwork, the works of the three writers explored containing a strong temporal awareness. Furthermore, in Tarlo's case, datestamps clearly mark the site visits. A reading of her work using the palimpsest as a critical tool allows the reader to peel back the layers of her radical landscape poems one at a time; this contributes to the consideration of texts as pluri-dimensional entities, contrasting with page-bound manifestations.

The posthuman arises as a mode of resituating the human within the broader context of its surroundings; it challenges the degrees of proximity and distance that go beyond the laws of physics to ontological considerations, and their translations into the lyric. The posthuman spectrum within this study is centred, yet tendencies towards Donna Haraway's more feminist view of 'post-humanism'¹⁸ are included. Here, 'feminism' is taken as the new wave of ecofeminism that Carol J Adams¹⁹ and Greta Gaard²⁰ speak of. This also relies on the balanced view of all more-than-human victims, regardless of any dichotomies that have historically polluted the field. It also draws upon Rossi Braidotti's notion of a radical posthuman subjectivity, 'resting on the ethics of becoming' and expressing 'an embodied and embedded and hence partial form of accountability, based on a strong sense of collectivity, relationality and hence community building' (2013, p.49). Within Dickinson's work, the posthuman brings together the pronouns 'we' and 'they' in 'stubborn entanglement' (Iovino 2016, p.1). Using Serenella Iovino's definition of the posthuman as 'the ontological narrative of the human in its infinite paths of entangled becoming with its others' (2016, p.1), this shapes Dickinson's networks of connection highlighted at the end of *Tender Geometries*. In Burnett's *Swims*, the posthumanist approach challenges the immediate sense of oneself as an *I* (Clark 2011, p.65), where identity is fluid, local, and permeable to its surroundings.

Neimanis' theory of hydrofeminism is introduced within her considerations of transcorporeality, drawing upon feminist posthumanism (2016, p.30). This is relevant to this study, as it allows *water* to permeate the texts and the body, highlighting our more-than-human interconnectedness. In Burnett's *Swims* a hydrofeminist mode of engagement places ethics at the forefront of swimwork and transfers her experiences of life-territories into the lyric with a renewed sense of situatedness. Ecofeminism has laid its foundations on the dichotomy between the human and the nonhuman; however, 'the primary

¹⁸ Haraway rejects the term 'post-humanism' preferring to use 'companion species' (Haraway 2010).

¹⁹ See Adams (2006, 2010, 2015).

²⁰ See Gaard (2017).

reason why ecofeminism has been branded as “essentialist” is because nature itself has been understood as the ground of essentialism’ (Alaimo 2008, p.302). Within the field of ecofeminism, interdisciplinarity remains a key aspect that not only allows for the creation of links between theory and praxis. I side with the type of ecofeminism proposed by Gretel Ehrlich, who legitimises ‘other valuable kinds of engagement with the world, non-dualistic, sensuous and non-hierarchical’ (Clark 2011, p.113). Karen J. Warren also agrees with this idea by stating that ‘the logic of domination is explanatorily basic and ought to be rejected’ (2000, p.54); the focus falls upon the individuality of ecofeminism not opposed to any masculine or patriarchal values. Even though some critics argue that literary ecofeminism contains an ‘implicit superiority’ (Clark 2011, p.112), new ecofeminist theories propose different types of approaches that seek to better the lives of all oppressed human and nonhuman creatures.

New materialism in this study draws from Stacy Alaimo’s work²¹, where the human is placed within ‘material flows, exchanges, and interactions of substances, habitats, places, and environments’ (2011, p.281). As she expands this theory to the sea, Alaimo is ‘acknowledging how human bodies participate in global networks of harm’ (2014b, p.189). This essential link foregrounds the importance of ethics within more-than-human considerations, transcorporeal, posthuman, or otherwise. In Burnett and Dickinson’s work in particular, the emphasis lies on extracting posthuman ontological meanings from their aqueous immersions.

Transcorporeality plays a central role as the writers’ physical bodies become tools used to explore the environment. The term is introduced by Alaimo, who defines it as ‘a new materialist and posthumanist sense of the human as perpetually interconnected with the flows of substances and the agencies of environments’ (2014b, p.187). Drawing on her definition of transcorporeality, Timothy Clark outlines the fact that

human cultures are always entirely part of natural systems of energy exchange in the biosphere as subject as any other entity to the laws of physics and biology, even while, on the other hand, concepts of ‘nature’ have, simultaneously and confusingly, never been separate from human politics (2015, p.57)

Between human culture and nature culture²² as linked to human politics, literary studies intervene to bridge the gap and respond to environmental concerns which might otherwise challenge a lay audience; the potential for readers to trigger lobbying responses for better environmental management from local councils, lies within radical landscape poetry’s ability to counterbalance the fragility of life-territories.

All the terms used in this study are to some degree interlinked. Transcorporeality ‘is a posthumanist mode of new materialism and material feminism’ (Braidotti 2018, p.435). Considering this, the lyric in this study provides a transcorporeal view of being in the world. Anthropocentrism should be considered from the humblest of perspectives, whereby the writer fully immerses their body in the environment they are exploring, to assess and reassess their arising thoughts and emotions. It is a dynamic and beneficial relationship; the more-than-human world helps shape the understanding of place through a *conscious collective*. This destabilises Romanticism’s idealised notions of subjectivity which appears in pastoral discourses of environmental situatedness, including more-than-human inflections in the lyric *I*. Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notions of ecophenomenology speak to these

²¹ See Alaimo (2011, 2012, 2014).

²² See ‘naturecultures’ in Haraway (2003).

modes of perception. Here, a destabilised lyric *I* coincides with its openness to more-than-human voices, and not a centredness towards either the writer's voice or a singular animate or inanimate entity. In a transcorporeal context, the lyric *I* is dialogical, resulting from the transference of more-than-human interconnections, as they operate within physical and lyric life-territories.

*

Plastic polymers cannot be excluded from the narrative of place that shapes the work the three writers explored in this thesis; section-wide attention on this topic is given to Dickinson and Burnett. In *Tender Geometries*, nylon as a component of fishing gear highlights the hydrolegiac aspects of plastics as they enter waterways, and human and nonhuman bodies alike. Dickinson regards this as the ultimate act of humiliation, where anthropogenic micro-particles succeed in penetrating the body. In this sense, seeing plastic as a hyperobject constitutes situating it in active entanglement with the more-than-human. The ethics of care that arises from this mutual threat is linked to affect, which is seen by Bristow as being 'biological, innate with the species' (Bristow 2015, p.124). Within this context, more-than-human networks of connection are reinforced as intimate bonds which can be accessed directly during fieldwork and swimwork. This is coupled with Daniel Berthold-Bond's ethics of place, where bioregionalism gives 'greater specificity to the "space" of nature, with which environmental ethics is concerned' (Berthold-Bond 2000, p.7). This notion is diverted towards a life-territory, 'a place which is defined by its life forms, its topography and its biota' (Berthold-Bond 2000, p.12), and not by anthropogenic delineations.

In Burnett's work, a *lyric life-territory* establishes interconnections that go beyond the historic, cultural, and political aspects of place, grounding it in the metaphorical complexity of observable phenomena. The writer's experiences in these instances of immersion are translated into the lyric and transmitted to the reader within the covers of the collection. The poem as a message-delivering tool is most evident in Burnett's work through the concepts of songlines and message-sticks. The writer symbolically pushes the message stick across the surface the water, allowing it to transcend the reader's imaginarium. The songline in Australian Aboriginal beliefs is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as being 'a route through the landscape which is believed to have been travelled during the Dreamtime (or Alcheringa) and which features a series of landmarks thought to relate to events that happened during this time', or 'a traditional song or story recording a journey made during the Dreamtime'. Burnett enters the physical and metaphorical waters that allow for 'dreaming stories which transmute the terrain of the as yet uninterpreted and hence undifferentiated world into terrains of meaning' (Mathews 2009, p.5). The *unknown other* is thus decoded, one stroke at a time. Burnett expands Deborah Bird-Rose's notion of *dreaming sites* 'located near fresh water' (Rose 1996, p.50) to the bodies of water themselves, regardless of salinity levels. The collated dreaming sites illustrate the idea of *hydro-Country*, seen as the circulatory system of the United Kingdom, equivalent to the Aboriginal notion of 'Country' (Rose 1996, p.7). This aqueous layer holds the more-than-human together as a transcorporeal entity.

In this thesis the three selected texts are explored in order to extract the essential theories and epistemological configurations that arise from the stated, suggested, implied, and metaphorical components. Critical strands respond to the reading of these collections, promoting an interdisciplinary dialogue to address the environmental changes of the more-than-human world. Through the use of scientific terminology, responsive to the issues and observations arising from fieldwork and swimwork, these texts challenge the reader with a metaphorical coupling of 'the complexities of technical language that serves as our primary window on climate change' (Ghosh 2017, p.9). Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett's works help mend what Ghosh terms 'a crisis of the

imagination' (2017, p.9). They make a valuable contribution to the environmental humanities outlining new modes of thinking through water. Blue radical landscape poetry mobilises an interdisciplinary dialogue with metaphor in its exploration of life-territories. The more-than-human allows the reader to think of opportunities of fluid and borderless engagement from an enmeshed perspective.

This thesis is structured into three chapters, each focusing on one collection, with subsections outlining key critical readings of these texts. The creative work collated under the title *shore survey*, submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree, mirrors that of the critical. Veronica Fibisan's poems result from fieldwork conducted on selected sites on the British shoreline. The self-reflective aspects of her creative work are discussed in the codas following each chapter, as they respond to common strands of Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett's poems. Written in the 3rd person singular, the codas echo the self-reflective critical work of Tarlo and Tucker²³. Appendix 2 contains a formal version of *shore survey*.

Possible limitations of the study are imposed by word length restrictions. This results in future avenues allowing a more detailed exploration of the new topics introduced, such as *hydroelegy* and the poem as *message stick*.

²³ See Tarlo and Tucker (2019).

CHAPTER 1

Gathering Grounds.

*I think it's
within us, what makes us want
to come to the sea. It's primal,
really primal.*
(H. Tarlo, *Gathering Grounds*, p.105)

Introduction

Harriet Tarlo and Judith Tucker have been walking and writing extensively since 2011; however, their resulting collaborative work (poetry and art) has received its due merits only recently. Joining an ever-growing movement particularly popularised by environmental writing, their transdisciplinary practice stands out by the fact that they are *walking women* (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.637)— hybridising art, geography, and ethnography into academically informed observation-based creative outputs, they are in dialogue with one another.

This chapter looks at Tarlo's *Gathering Grounds* collection and *behind: land* (2015) pamphlet. Most of the latter has been incorporated into the former, the text being expanded and fragmented. The complexity which lies at the heart of these poems is a direct result of Tarlo and Tucker's fieldwork, and an awareness of the dynamics between the components that make up the more-than-human. The Humberston-Tetney area where the fieldwork was conducted contains various sites of creative interest: The Humberston Fitties (now the Tingdene Humberston Fitties), the Fitties Beach, the RSPB Tetney Marshes, Tetney Lock, and the wider Humber estuary. The word 'fitties' means 'saltmarsh' (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.641); encompassing a series of idiosyncratic dwellings that emerged post World War II, after the area ceased to house army barracks. They are now one of the last remaining plotlands in the United Kingdom.

There are several aspects which can be explored whilst looking at *Gathering Grounds*. The most immediate one is related to Tarlo and Tucker's fieldwork, and its importance as a creative methodology. Radical landscape poetry, though part of *nature writing*, does not inherit its purported limitations: 'notably the reproduction of class, gender and ethnic hierarchies, the emphasis on nostalgia and loss, and the stress on individual responses rather than collective politics' (Oakley, Ward, and Christie 2018, p.1). Despite its earth-bound title, *Gathering Grounds* also collates the waters of the Humberston-Tetney area, both fresh (Tetney Loch and Louth Canal), brackish (the river Humber estuary), and salty (The North Sea). This essential aqueous incorporation posits *Gathering Grounds* as a key blue humanities text. *Waters* are regarded from the perspective of radical landscape poetry, not adjacent to, but part of the very fabric of place.

Tarlo has embraced the use of documentary text in *Gathering Grounds* since her earlier works, and upon a closer examination of the poems, several different types of found text emerge dwelling names, signage, labels, and packaging text. In radical landscape poetry, these types of texts acquire a new dimension, and are arguably being *upcycled* as part of the process of being *recycled* (Tarlo 2009b). In

terms of the text's ability to capture place, this is acquired through a plurality of site visits, each one creating a palimpsestic layering of the Humberston-Tetney area. The ways in which Tarlo uses the page (and other surfaces when the poems are part of exhibitions) implies displaying the text *organically*; this enables the formation of unique lyric clusters and offers a variety of reading patterns. The oil, wind, and gas energies cannot be ignored when walking in the Humberston-Tetney area: the oil and gas pipes traverse the landscape, the windmill-lined horizon interrupts the gaze, and out at sea, offshore windmills do the same. These tropes offer entry points into *Gathering Grounds*, and outline some of the ways in which radical landscape poetry works in relation to place, considering more-than-human interconnectedness.

Fieldwork

This section explores Tarlo's collaborative practice of walking and writing alongside artist Judith Tucker in the Humberston-Tetney area. The initial project and its creative output *behind: land* (2015), was a commission from the curator of the *Excavations and Estuaries* project (Ingham 2014), Linda Ingham, which has evolved into the *Gathering Grounds* collection. Tarlo is a *seasoned* walker, engaging with the more-than-human from a pluri-sensorial perspective. Writer and artist conducted regular site visits from the year 2011, up to the present. This allowed them to observe and record changes and particularities of the micro and macro landscapes, which are reflected in their visual and verbal outputs. These connections create a posthuman variation of the more-than-human, perceived both directly (first-hand experience) and indirectly (found text collected either via interviews, or gathered from signs, labels, and packaging).

Fieldwork is a process of discovery and observation as much as it is one of *losing* oneself in the environment. Each visit is complete with all the more-than-human elements which have altered into a new iteration of place. Tarlo includes her earliest creative work into the category of radical landscape poetry, stating that 'although some landscape poets may be eco-poets and some eco-poets may be landscape poets, the two are by no means interchangeable' (2009a, p.197). Driven by a wind of anthropogenic environmental concerns, more writers are turning towards radical landscape poetry with a focus on waters. Harriet Tarlo, Alice Oswald, Mark Dickinson, Thomas A. Clark, Sarah Hymas, Elizabeth-Jane Burnett, and others have episodically focused on water. This does not mean that all *blue poems* should exhaustively be part of the radical landscape poetry category. Through fieldwork, innovative elements in terms of language and form, and an underlying scope of portraying more-than-human relationships, radical landscape poetry is an expansion of eco-poetry, both innately ecofeminist in varying degrees. *The Ground Aslant* anthology (Tarlo 2011a) illustrates the difference between the ways in which contemporary writers approach the concept of the *radical*. Eco-poetry however, 'dwells and causes the reader to dwell, in Heidegger's sense of the word, more ethically and harmoniously in nature' (Tarlo 2009a, p.195). This draws closer to the pastoral mode of seeing nature, which distracts from immediate and grave environmental threats.

In the environmental humanities the query remains whether fieldwork forming part of a research project for the purpose of producing a creative output, is a reasonable justification for claiming travel expenses, and classing it as working hours. Whilst many academic departments might challenge this idea and reject Expenses Claims Forms, particularly those of ECRs and PGRs, in order to produce any form of radical landscape writing, fieldwork is a necessity. The notion that this is *work* is derived

from earlier writings such as Heaney's *Field Work* (1979), where the term embodies both working the land (from an agrarian perspective), and working in the land. This is explored up to the present by others, such as Thomas A. Clark's observations on the agrarian landscape of the Highlands and Islands in *Farm by the Shore* (2017); here, during the poet's *fieldwork* he observes other types of field work undertaken by a self-sustaining community.

Tarlo has been breaking ground alongside Tucker in terms of their walking and writing practices, challenging the 'trope of the male wanderer who boldly strides into the wilderness' (Hubbard and Wilkinson 2019, p.255). In the broader field of new nature writing, both Tarlo and other women such as Carol Donaldson, Alice Oswald, and Elspeth Owen are providing balance through the valuable literary and artistic contributions that their visions and practices are producing in the Humberston-Tetney area. Tarlo and Tucker are venturing into a masculinised landscape, *littered* with remnants of the Second World War: forts, pillboxes, farming vehicles, boats, oil pipes, and oil tanks. These war vestiges, industrial and agricultural objects add an extra dimension to the more-than-human, considering gendered representations of elements in the landscape²⁴. Despite their powerful presence, the area remains vulnerable to environmental threats:

out of pillbox three
leaning on lichen
warm grey on grey
watching undefended
England, marsh to bay (p.119)

Tarlo's viewpoint offered by 'pillbox three' is superimposed to the one of soldiers during World War Two; in this respect it bridges any gender dichotomy that may inhabit it. The use of 'undefended' suggests not a military threat, but a capitalist-driven shift, materialising through the form of a directly altered anthropogenic landscape, or that of anthropogenic climate change. The passage 'marsh to bay' is a panorama that captures the topography of the area, simultaneously incorporating its vulnerability to floods. Tucker's painting from *behind: land* (below) illustrates its openness and flatness:

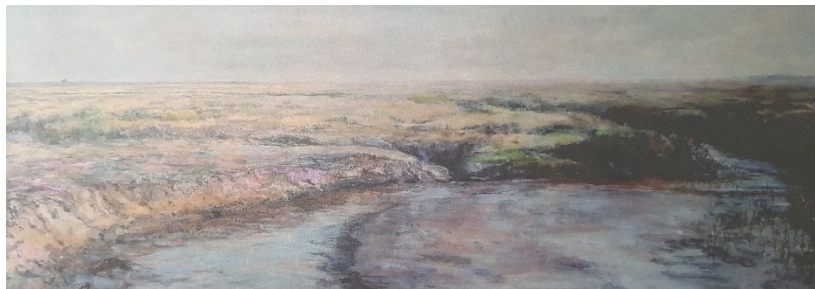


Figure 1. Judith Tucker, *behind: land* (2015)

According to Tarlo, Tucker 'attempts to create a vista where you could enter the painting in three possible ways', and later on becomes concerned with two possible ways (Tarlo 2015, pp.6-7). In the painting above, the viewer's entering can be achieved either by land or by water. The neutral 'grey on grey' chromatics captured in the lyric, acts as a filter in Tucker's painting; soft greens, pinks, browns, and blues are also picked up from the landscape. The *behind: land* paintings and poems are

²⁴ See Heddon and Turner (2012).

illustrating chromatic games in which the aesthetic is challenged in favour of a more *grounded* representation of the environment that writer and artist are exploring.

Despite the strong ‘work’ element present in Tarlo and Tucker’s practice, it is not one that falls into the category of *travel writing*. It may be useful to highlight the difference between writers who travel relatively long distances in their works, such as Robert MacFarlane in *The Wild Places* (2007) and Kathleen Jamie in *Findings* (2005). Compared to them, Tarlo and Tucker explore an area of only several square miles, from the right-hand side of the river Humber Estuary, south to Donna Nook, and going inland to Tetney. Miles are accrued through meshed repetition: by visiting and revisiting place at different times of the year and the day, artist and writer create criss-crossed paths, the palimpsestic sum of their *fieldtrips* looking much like the sheetweb woven by spiders in the Linyphiidae family. The methodical, yet unpredictable, construction of place can be envisaged as a compendium of different visits; each is the puzzle piece of a limitless panorama.

Tarlo and Tucker use concertina notebooks whilst exploring ‘the landscape to draw and write small snapshot pieces at the same time and in the same location’ (Ingham 2014, p.36). The link between poems and images is one of equality, as opposed to an ekphrastic one. They complement each other and are a ‘collaboration’ (Ingham 2014, p.37) which should contribute to our understanding of places. Moving between map and land reshapes the writer’s identity and challenges the sense of the *unknown other*. Despite cartographic accuracy, the writer’s knowledge of place as life-territory is limited; a physical experience is therefore required. This introduces a change in perspective: from the bird’s eye view of the map to the limited horizontal view in the environment.

It is almost a prerequisite that on the first day of exploration, Tarlo and Tucker ‘encountered the Humber as a mysterious place and misty [...] so that [they] could not see any “landmarks” at all’ (Ingham 2014, p.38). The mist returns in later visits and weaves its way into the creative work. Sometimes this happens undecidedly, as can be seen in the early poem ‘August: Dean Clough’, where at the beginning ‘mist / now lifts’, while later on ‘mist falls, lifts, thin rain through fern’ (Tarlo 2019, p.51). The recurring mist is just one of several visual barriers encountered during fieldwork. The body is habituated to walking, as this happens at times which do not involve fieldwork. However, despite the fact that both women are moving through the landscape and changing the angle from which they see it, there are still limitations to perception; some elements are heard but not seen, as in the passage ‘skylark song/ higher than we/ can see’ (p.67), or harder to capture visually:

early to hear skylarks
singing over Tetney
what we hear is there
but cannot see
have not yet seen (p.112)

The repetition of the verbs ‘hear’ and ‘see’ coupled with the dominating consonants ‘s’ and ‘h’ creates a glottal wind funnel; this contrasts during performance with the silence and stillness invoked in the poem. It places the skylarks into the realm of the *unknown other*, captured in the lyric only through intuition. There is also a sense of anticipation in the last line, stemming from the perspective of experienced and knowledgeable walkers. Whilst this does not represent a certainty, it highlights the fact that there are more-than-human patterns working in relation to the season and the weather; they are indicative of at least some of the elements that can be expected during a fieldwork session.

The concept that there is always an *unknown other* during fieldwork is therefore reinforced. This could remain unidentified, despite multiple attempts at discovery. The landscape keeps secrets which entice the writer and artist to another visit, in a perpetuating cycle of *unearthing*. The ‘fort appearing disappearing’ and the ‘anchors unseen or sensed’ (Tarlo 2019, p.124) show a playful facet of the landscape; one in which the unknown other is offering glimpses of itself, challenging the writer and artist to a game of hide-and-seek. Gerry Loose claims that ‘every walk is a step in the dark’ (Borthwick, Marland, and Stenning 2020, p.215), yet each step changes the frame; it brings the distance into focus and creates a gradual *reveal*. However, whilst the horizon presents ‘an open space to be conquered’ (Heddon and Turner 2012), this task is accomplishable through fieldwork.

At other times, the angles are explored, with particular emphasis on how things are placed in the landscape, and the order in which they are encountered. The ‘old red stena ferry on horizon line/ forts shifting distances’ (Tarlo 2019, p.74) become reference points for the writer’s movement through the area discovered. The Humberston Fitties site is one of the central reference points in the collection and pamphlet, captured in the passage: ‘once was, still might be/ saltmarsh/ low living, low-lying/ behind land/ dwellings’ (2019, p.83). Playing upon the preposition ‘behind’ in the title of the pamphlet *behind: land*, the site is often captured from the perspective of the dunes; this illustrates the backs of dwellings, as can be seen in this painting from the pamphlet, which also appears as a black and white artwork in the *Gathering Grounds* collection:



Figure 2. Judith Tucker, *behind: land* (2015)

Tarlo remarks on the same open perspective in the passage ‘low woodland [caesura] between chalets/ and dunes’ (2019, p.94). In a photograph taken by Fibisan in 2016, the speed with which the area is changing is made evident through the disappearance of the outdoor kitchen of chalet number 145, pictured in the left-hand side of the painting above (the red-roofed building). This has been replaced by a vibrant yellow shed:



Figure 3. Veronica Fibisan, *Humberston Fitties* (2016)

The *unknown other* is by no means seen as a negative, it is an imperative. If everything about nature were known, recorded, and monitored through complex processes as it occurs, the subjective persona of the writer in the field would be made redundant. Tarlo states that ‘not knowing where we were/

going was good' (2019, p.36). Her walking alongside Tucker is both therapeutic and challenging. The terrain, which is difficult to navigate, the broad temperature range, and the awareness of the tide, contribute in varying degrees to add adventure to the writer and artist's walk. The hybrid process of observation and *mark-making* and the energies exchanged within the more-than-human add depth to the dimensional aspects of fieldwork being *work*. The resulting poems are a *work-song* (Maxwell 2012, p.139); they sing the landscape in the same chorus as the more-than-human—a hymn to their betterment and preservation. The rhythm and musicality achieved through alliteration and word distribution on the page represent the emotive landscape translated through Tarlo and Tucker's work. In the passage 'branch ends/ burying into water/ soft needles/ slipping into water/ stone cornering/ down to water/ water ever-falling, finding/ water' (2019, p.13) the phonemes 'b', 's', 'w', and 'f' construct and allude to the sound of *waters*; in the following passage however, the 'land' element of the 'landscape' is considered transformatively:

flow
line
avenue

into flood

land *taken in*
to farm land
harvested

stone into wall
tree into timber (p.11)

The transformative anthropogenic process of the land reinforces the loss of its irregularities, the caesurae in the passage marking otherwise linear lines: the land becomes 'farm/ land', the stone is turned to 'wall', and the tree to 'timber'. The phoneme 'f' suggests the flow of water, whilst the lateral phoneme 'l' at the beginning of 'line' and 'land', interrupts the flow. The latter is '*taken in*' to make room for agriculture; the preposition 'in' becomes a trope in this passage through '*line*', '*into*', and '*in*'. This captures the industrial and agricultural desire to radically transform the landscape into a linear, controlled, and productive more-than-human element, arguably putting the field *to work* for anthropogenic benefit. Simultaneously, marshland is lost, the remaining strip of land between field and sea is gradually narrowing. This change in the landscape can also be seen in Tucker's painting, where instead of the marshland the gaze shifts towards the linear ploughed fields, windmill, and oil tanks:



Figure 4. Judith Tucker, *behind: land* (2015)

During fieldwork, Tarlo and Tucker face the terrain, the weather, the challenges of writing and producing art outdoors, coupled with their physical female presence in the landscape which could

place them in a more vulnerable position than that of men²⁵. All these adversities prompt writer and artist to work speedily during fieldwork, something that Tarlo remarks is worse for Tucker due to the longer length of time required to produce a visual output²⁶. They are *working* on writing and creating art in the field. The cultural and natural barriers that they overcome allow them to produce writing and art that provides a posthuman account of the Humberston-Tetney environment and is very much a *labour* of love.

Found Text/Upcycled Text

Tarlo is interested in the use of found text in poetry both as a practitioner and as a critic, labelling herself as ‘a re-user, a recycler of words’ (2009b, p.121). This creates ‘a philosophical or political engagement with the environment and/or ecology’ in order to get ‘a wider sense of what a found poetry ecopoetics might be’ (2009b, p.115). In light of this valuable contribution of found text in Tarlo’s creative work, it can be argued that not only is it being recycled, but it is being *upcycled*. The latter is a process involving the discarded, the neglected, the remembered, the peripheral, and the marshlands attaining new value in her poetic work.

In *Gathering Grounds* found text often appears, either fragmented or in its totality, providing the reader with a plurality of voices from the area to allow ‘other people’s places’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.5) to contribute to their rendering in the poems, broadening the spatio-temporal vista, and adding to the on-site exploration of writer and artist. They ‘animate’ (2019, p.5) not just the chalets, but also the landscape which has been the leisure-ground for people from a variety of backgrounds over the years, as can be seen in the ‘Fitties Voices 2016’ poem (2019, p.98), and ‘Louth Stories’ section (2019, p.163).

The types of found text featured in *Gathering Grounds* can be grouped into the following categories: dwelling names, signage, documentary text (interviews and postcard text), and labels and packaging text. The chalet names are meticulously collated by Tarlo. Initially displayed on the wall alongside Tucker’s artwork in exhibitions such as *Excavations & Estuaries* (2013), they are gathered under the title ‘Name Games’ (2019, p.86). Tarlo plays with them, moving them around like chess pieces, slotting them into four-line clusters of chiming sounds and logical spheres.

Of particular importance are the name clusters that reference local wildlife: foxes, moles, swallows, bees, and crabs represent everyday encounters with the locals; they are a testimony to the fact that the residents are concerned with the more-than-human world surrounding and residing in the Fitties. Others contain elements of the landscape which lie on their doorsteps, or can be encountered underfoot:

Shanty	The Dunes
Creek Cabin	Shabby Shack
The Pebbles	Summer Den
Cockleshell Cottage	Waving Marram
	(pp.88-89)

²⁵ See Heddon and Turner (2012).

²⁶ See Appendix 1, ‘Radical Landscape Poetry Interview’, p.94.

Whilst creek, pebbles, and cockleshells, are common elements that make up the fabric of the area, they are also *gathered grounds*, crucial components of a posthuman landscape. Part of the substrate on which Tarlo and Tucker conduct their fieldwork, they take the reader off the path, exploring angles, lines, creatures, and horizon. The more-than-human is taken into account in the naming process of the chalets. Referencing the sea, love, ownership, wildlife, modest or grand dwellings, leisure times, the names of the chalets are a testimony that despite the environmental and political threats faced by the Fitties, their owners²⁷ have preserved them as holiday homes. It is a positive spirit of endurance which keeps the community strong to this day. The last quatrain emphasizes the charm of the area, which grips visitors into settling; these names give the feel of permanence:

Anchordown
Prospect Place
Endeavour
Neverends (p.90)

‘Neverends’ suggests the flatness of the terrain, whereas ‘Endeavour’ can be used as a metaphor for the attempt of capturing the landscape, and the implicit challenges faced by the ecofeminist writer. From a lyric perspective in this passage, Tarlo gathers the Fitties names which contain a temporal element; ‘Anchordown’ suggests a sense of settlement, whilst ‘Prospect Place’ hints at the uncertainty surrounding the landscape. The alliteration of the latter creates a rhythmic pattern which mirrors the first line and contrasts with the following two lines. These contain the dominant phoneme ‘e’ which also links to the end of the second line, adding a chant-like quality to the passage. The word ‘end’ appears at the beginning of the third line, and at the end of the last line, the two words sharing a total of six phonemes which create an acoustic and temporal entanglement of upcycled text. This reinforces the flatness of the landscape, as well as the fact that the simultaneous transformative elements of the Humberston Fitties site, the surrounding area, and Tarlo and Tucker’s collaborative project are currently open-ended.

In the documentary poems, a repetitive desire for people to acquire their own chalet emerges, despite the site being closed during the months of January and February. It is not only the names of the Fitties that are upcycled, but also the materials sourced to build the physical chalets. Comprised of ‘used and re-used and swapped and bartered building materials’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.651), they are the vernacular result of decades of repairs, additions, and enhancements. Surprisingly, the choices that the owners made when naming their fitties do not reflect the area’s political and environmental vulnerability. However, the found text in the ‘Name Games’ (p.86) preserves a version of their names, which is likely to change under new ownership.

Literary upcycling of text is a feature of the documentary poem, that allows an individual voice to become part of a *collective consciousness*; this is aesthetically placed on the page as a lyric account belonging to a credible source. This category is primarily collated under the title ‘Fitties Voices 2016’ (p.98), a sequence of eighteen individual accounts which highlight the dual-vernacular aspect of speech and build. One of the voices in this poem recalls a different landscape:

Down on the beach, you notice it
daily, tides eroding constantly –
we’ve lost a lot of sand, the creek’s

²⁷ The Humberston Fitties initially attracted working-class people from Northern UK cities who found it convenient to travel there during their free time, then expanding into a mix of working class and middle-class ownership. See Tarlo and Tucker (2019) and Alan Dowling (2001).

come in a lot. Years ago it was
way out, the dunes were 8 or 10
foot deep. Yep, we've lost a lot (p.104)

The speed with which the landscape has changed only adds to its impermanence; the immediacy of this project as a lyric account of the Fitties and surrounding area as life-territories is undeniable. The poem 'Up North Sea Lane to Fitties' (p.83) provides the reader a geographical marker. It reminds of an extract from one of Tarlo's earlier collections, *nab* (2005), where the writer is going 'down Scar Hole Lane' (p.55). Such precise locators can be traced on a map, laying down the boundaries for the space that is explored. They act as reference points for further investigation, but also outline the fact that place is a participant. The last two voices in the series refer to the local wildlife in dialect:

There's badgers come here, there's
birds in the roof – we leave them
there – they were here before us (p.106)

There is a sense of joint ownership, of shared space, and an awareness of the nonhuman pre-existing the presence of man. Tarlo plays with the words 'here' and 'there', coupled with more-than-human situatedness occurring on the Fitties site; this can also be seen in the following passage:

So peaceful
here, the wildlife's all here
frogs and foxes and birds (p.106)

The repetition of the word 'here' in same line reinforces the immediacy of the nonhuman, whilst 'all' outlines the diversity of the creatures that can be encountered. There is no clear divide between human and more-than-human. This *mélange* can also be seen in other poems which are not part of the 'Fitties Voices 2016' cluster, such as:

human paths, counter-paths
crossing the lines of
avenue/dune/beach/estuary (p.84)

In the same vein as the found text of dwelling names, the documentary poem speaks of upcycling directly, whilst giving the reader a taste of the local dialect:

All this stuff's here's
what people are throwing away
flowers and everything. [...]
They call me the
scavenger, and they're right. (p.105)

The use of the word 'scavenger' stands out as a metaphor for the creative writing process adopted by Tarlo; the writer can be seen as a *scavenger of words*, a collector, an upcycler. The speech of the Fitties' inhabitants as they share their stories contains modest, everyday language; however, these two characteristics facilitate its upcycling into poetic text, as it enhances the flow. The result is an aesthetically pleasing experience to the ear and the eye. This reminds of Patrick Barkham's account that 'most local people saw the beach as a dumping ground, Wilderness was a wasteland. This is written into the coast via names such as Ash Can Gully in Penwith, Cornwall, where people once

threw the detritus from their fires. As the coal tailings dumped on the Durham coast as recently as the 1980s demonstrated, this attitude took decades to eradicate' (2015, p.189). The documentary poems also contribute to filling in the gaps of the time-negative, including an impossible-to-achieve historic time-negative. This bracket represents all of the time that Tarlo and Tucker did not spend conducting fieldwork. The poems thus help construct the character of the area and its changes, which can be used to highlight environmental and social concerns. The lowering of the level of the dunes, the loss of sand, the altered course of the creek, and the fast erosion of the land are all warning signs for impending ecocatastrophes. Assigning large local areas to agriculture has caused the linearity of ploughed fields to come in close proximity to the shoreline, leading to the loss of nonhuman nesting and hunting grounds. This consideration of radical landscape poetry is of importance to the environmental humanities, as it brings to the page the problematics of life-territories as encountered during fieldwork.

Signs are another type of found text included in *Gathering Grounds*: ranging from being informative to providing warnings, they help orientate the human in the landscape. Easily identifiable in the poems, this type of found text usually appears as it is encountered (uppercase or lowercase, bold or italicised etc). Inserted where it is seen during the walk, it is often interrupting Tarlo's micro/macro narrative. The human can also encounter signs designed to limit their movements, to control the itinerary, to make one stick to the public footpath. Signs such as '**DEEP INSHORE CREEK**' are reinforced by found documentary text: 'you can get to bits where/ all of a sudden/ you can't get back' (p.63). They remind the reader that there are physical limitations to where the writer and artist can walk in the landscape; imposed by topography or anthropogenic barriers such as gates, fences, and hedges. These can also feature warning signs meant to deter human trespass: 'PRIVATE: KEEP OUT' (p.16) outlines the fact that found text 'can often feel oppressive and overwhelming' (Tarlo 2009b, p.121), and difficult to transfer into the lyric. Other signs are paradoxical. The words '*Welcome [caesura] Keep Away*' (2019, p.92) are used to illustrate a settlement that is socially undecided about accepting or rejecting new plotlanders or visitors.

Literary upcycling rebuilds found text into new structures which receive metaphorical value. In 'Fallen Fittie' (p.93) the beginning and the end of the poem can be used to epitomise the vulnerability of the site:

Behind council signs [...]
in miniature china
boy and barrow stood still
on a slim shelf watching.

The exact content of the 'council signs' is unknown; there is also uncertainty surrounding the structure that will replace the fallen fittie. The 'boy and barrow' become metaphors for transformative capitalist forces on the plotlands. Radical landscape poetry's ability to uproot such encounters helps construct a lyric life-territory which bring together the material and the metaphoric in deconstructed dialogue. The adjectives 'miniature' and 'slim', remind the reader of the micro scale on which Tarlo operates in conjunction with the macro-landscape; both scales are subjected to the same degree of anthropogenic destruction.

Perhaps the most environmentally provocative type of found text in Tarlo's *Gathering Grounds* is that which appears on discarded labels and packaging, amassed by water and wind. In the heart of the poem '9 November 2017' (p. 122) there is a large accumulation of this type of found text, interposed between discarded objects. 'HARROGATE' and 'Lincoln' reference Northern locations in The

United Kingdom, but also become a metaphor for the magnetic pull which has drawn people to the area from these places both historically, and at present. Other found text such as 'TODAYS MILK WHOLE MILK' reference not only a consumerist market, but also its dependence on single-use plastic. This paints a still life of discarded elements, symbolic of most global coastal areas. The 'crab bodies' and 'seaweed stems' serve as a reminder that if current behavioural trends regarding littering and purchase of single-use plastics do not change, this scene will slowly expand across the entirety of the biosphere.

Relying on extracts of found text, Tarlo's creative works have benefited from this intertextuality since *Poems 1990-2003* (2004) and *nab* (2005). She states that the 'sources are not random' (2009b, p.121), and that the process which governs this harvest of words is complex. The found text used is social text, having 'as source signs from extra-textual empirical reality, transformed into perceived events mediated as symbols of patriarchy in society' (Díaz-Diocaretz 1985, p.76). These texts simultaneously belong in multiple worlds: the ephemeral physical presence in the landscape, the long-lasting presence on the page (with an even longer-lasting presence in a digital sphere), and the cognitive realm of its readers.

Tarlo remarks on Rachel Blau du Plessis' practice of *détournement* as a "'turning back" of public language against itself' (2009b, p.123) by upcycling found text in order to ground the lyric in the landscape, and the landscape in the lyric. This is 'a process that should "inform" as well as satirize or emotionally affect' (Tarlo 2011b, pp.17-18). Insertions of all four types of found text in Tarlo's poems accomplish this through local people's voices, dwellings names, signage, and the text found on idiosyncratic collections of detritus. Through these inclusions, the reader is not desensitised to the environment, but is encouraged to confront it. Tarlo considers desensitisation to be one of the most harmful effects that climate change bombardment can have (2009b, p.124). Strongly linked to the practice of *détournement*, Tarlo's creative work contributes to the *(re)sensitisation* of the reader to the environment, attuning them to the wavelengths of empirical entanglement and its implications for better understanding the value of the area, and the issues that it is facing.

Palimpsestic and Poetic

In *Gathering Grounds*, the systematic process of visiting and revisiting the Humberston-Tetney area at different times, in all seasons and weather has allowed Tarlo to construct poems where a stratification of layers adds up to form a lyric whole. The palimpsest is a complex cognitive construct, introduced in Thomas De Quincey's essay *The Palimpsest of the Human Brain* (1845); it builds on the pre-established knowledge of the palimpsest as a physical object, such as parchment, which has been reused after the previous text has been erased in varying degrees. George Szirtes' notion that a palimpsest extends the local (Szirtes 2017) envisages new strata added to an existing mesh with each fieldwork session. A palimpsest allows current and previous texts to be seen, whilst on the same surface. The faded-to-current textual continuum mirrors the timeline of the *walks*, most of the poems featuring datestamp titles in addition to the sections including time-ranges. In this instance, the palimpsest can become a critical tool which can help conceptualise texts as pluri-dimensional entities rather flattened page-bound manifestations.

As a series, the *Gathering Grounds* poems are palimpsestic unravelments, collating individual *walks* into one lyric sequence of place. Local or *locale* can be extended to promote global narratives of

more-than-human relationships. The text does not necessarily stem from material shapes in the environment, but from a deeper posthuman understanding of positions and perspectives:

attention to landscape permits the construct ('land-scape') to be viewed from the bottom-up: a position that is sensitive to minute formations: insects, nests, footholds, cloud formations, cracks in the infrastructure; sensitive to unstable and mixed emotions alongside chinks in language speaking out from hidden crevices and the margins. (Bristow 2015, p.23)

The particular attention to stratification is most evident in the use of the prepositions *under* and *over* to create a lyric topography of the Humberston-Tetney area. Whilst commonly occurring in *Gathering Grounds*, these two prepositions help reinforce the life-territories explored as pre-existing more-than-human scaffolds: 'land and water light/ under foot' (Tarlo 2019, p.15) suggests an awareness for what writer and artist might have trampled; however, the gaze drifts below ground level into the pools and channels where 'under old bracken's/ broken gold, frozen reeds' (p.24) are stilled. In a contrasting set of experiences, the reader is prompted to the presence of 'bodies over-shadows' (p.74), where towering 'windmills over ghost/ field pattern scars' (p.15) remind of scale, and the 'water-path/ crossing aslant/ over stones' (p.34) suggests a fluid freedom.

There is also a cognitive stratification of discovery alluding to the anthropo-perspective which *labels* the world: 'green clefts – ledges up-land/ flow ing over/ our finding [caesura] our names for/ grasses, rushes' (p.30). Coupled with this is a sense of resistance, particularly towards potentially life-threatening carbon-embracing behaviours, which are exemplified in the question: 'do the black hearts of speeding cars/ beat faster, driving over?' (p.48). Furthermore, the black *ink* of oil is pumped 'under and over the land' (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.647) in a palimpsestic more-than-human embrace. In Tarlo's blue radical landscape poetics the oil contrasts with the otherwise varied colour palette. The process of mark-making on the page whilst in the field darkens and disturbs its whiteness, populating it with visual or verbal meaning extracted from the very place where the oil is fast-travelling through the pipe. The oil tanks in Tucker's painting renounce their green tone for graphite ones, as can be seen in the image below:

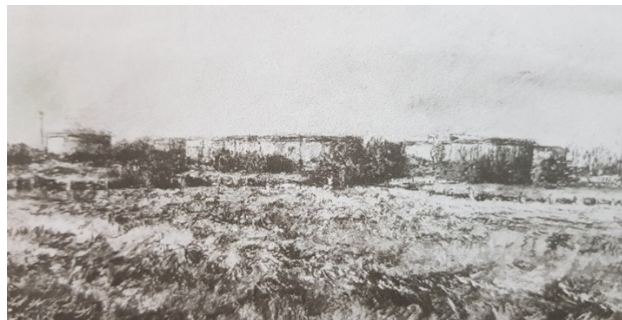


Figure 5. Judith Tucker, *Gathering Grounds* (2019), p.108.

An interesting addition to the use of *under* and *over* is the preposition *through*. This brings together the aforementioned layering into a life-territory which can be accessed transversally. Particularly strong instances include gas being piped through hills' hearts (Tarlo 2019, p.10), and 'shell salt-mud paths / between pools / through purplegreen marsh' (p.67); these suggest two very different types of journeys: a petromodernity one, and another more primeval one of trekking between pools. This exploration requires taking into account the history and culture of a place, and being finely attuned to such elements, as can be seen in 'tracing/ walls-through-bracken' (p.11). The natureculture aspect of

this palimpsestic approach is present throughout, in the same way in which posthumanist discourses cannot, and should not, separate the human from the environment.

Organic Space/Organic Text

Tarlo's coastal radical landscape poetry considers 'the page as space' (Bloomfield 2013, p.121), and alludes to Olson's open-field poetics, which 'claim a relation between the concrete space of the page and particular geographies' (2013, p.122). Tarlo's approach is ecomimetic, her presence in the landscape rendering it as an environmental construct. Her texts have a distinct Niedeckerian objectivist approach. However, the reduced number of words on the page acts as a counter-deficit through the value of individual words that are included; flora, fauna, and anthropo elements are all carefully placed on the page. Robert Macfarlane states that 'language-deficit leads to attention-deficit' (2010, p.115 quoted in Smith 2013, p.6), yet in Tarlo's poems language-deficit leads to attention-benefit; the reader's eyes are drawn in the direction of the complex framework of the environment, on a micro and macro scale. Text is undressed to its bare minimum, allowing the reader to form an instant connection to place:

sun penumbra mist

high path through sky
between
field-side, marsh-side
moles up-earthing
shell-laced soil from
under (p.111)

In the sixteen words above, Tarlo *paints* the landscape; she includes the weather, elements of topography, nonhuman life, and even a particularity of the soil. Whilst her description is by no means exhaustive, this passage allows the reader to situate themselves comfortably in the coastal landscape of the North-East coast.

Morton states that 'the poem is organic: it does what it says, and it says what it does. In its formulaic, algorithmic quality, it erases distinctions between life and non-life' (2010b, p.12). In *Gathering Grounds*, the poems work in, and with the landscape, lifting boundaries of situatedness between it and the lyric. Edgelands, margins, and peripheries encompass the *unknown other* that extends to micro and macro scales unveiled by the radical landscape writer. Tarlo states that 'words are arranged across the page organically' (Tarlo and Tucker 2019); however, not from the outer or inner body of the writer, but the points of contact between human and more-than-human. This fusion starts with a *mark* on the page, whether it be image or text.

There is a flow of energy channelled in the field to the writer's hand, and onto the page, fuelling the text. According to Tarlo and Tucker, 'this is a process-led form of working simultaneously in place, language and page space, exploring the connections between each element' (2017, p.56). Due to the speed with which they work, there is an element of the subconscious involved when mark-making, condensed into an image where a 'rook lands in an/ instant of black' (p.64). This can lead to clusters

of text being placed in surprising ways. To fully comprehend the reasoning behind the exact positioning of each word on the page would therefore be impossible; certain passages can be unravelled in terms of layout, such as the land-lines ones, where instant connections can be made regarding the mark-making process, the words included in the line, and their positioning as they correlate to elements in the field:

green line of trees no sign land behind
 swallows close space between
 still white clouds

 all out in cloud-sand
 (p.66)

In this passage, the depth of field is hard to establish, the text functioning horizontally and vertically. The prepositions ‘behind’ and ‘between’ are placed in their own cluster, distorting the perspective, whilst ‘still’ distorts the dynamics. Certainty is provided by ‘all out in cloud-sand’, which establishes distance between the human and more-than-human but does not hint at the space between the other elements contained in the passage. Tarlo adopts Tucker’s ‘destabilising techniques’, resulting in the ‘reverse of the sublime’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2017, p.61). This allows for an authenticity of elements on the page which would otherwise create a warped reality of the environment. The ‘sand’ is present in Tucker’s two-page image at the beginning of this section, despite the shift in perspective; in *Gathering Grounds* the image is captioned by the enlaced poem ‘shadowgroynedipshadow [...] into dune shade’ (pp. 60-61), which suggests the patterning of the beach and the depth of field:

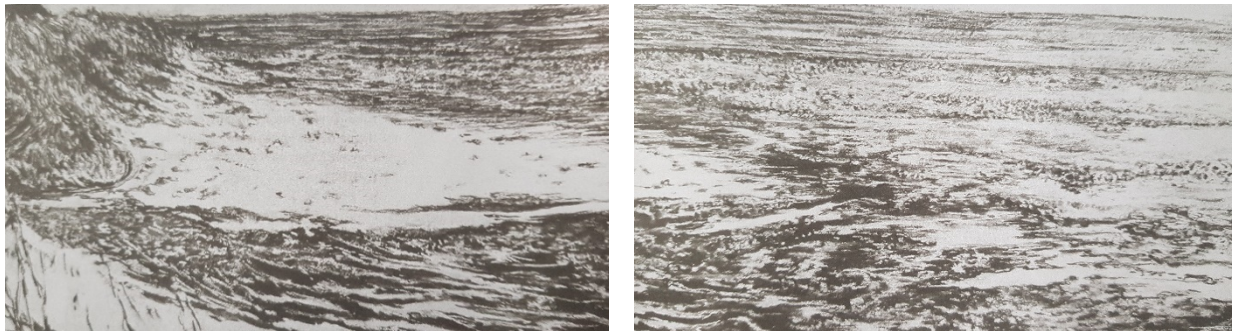


Figure 6. Judith Tucker, *Gathering Grounds* (2019), pp.60-61.

In *Gathering Grounds*, the text dwells on the page, whilst the page temporarily inhabits the field. By bringing the white page into the environment, it becomes part of the more-than-human i.e., a fly lands on the page, raindrops fall on it, or it becomes covered in salt-spray. The text *walks* from the initial draft in the field to other drafts, to digital drafts, to walls, and to the digital and printed page. Tarlo’s work fluctuates from the form in *Gathering Grounds* several times depending on whether it appears on the wall, on the page or on a PowerPoint slide (Tarlo 2015). It responds to the site in which it is placed, as with every new site the boundaries change. The page is a dormant organic construct until the text is read; a wall, window, or floor used for displaying text is similar, but with different boundaries. The white space has the potential to push the words into different clusters and shapes whilst redrafting, as it is through ‘changing the spaces between the words [...] what makes them poetry’ (Tarlo 2015). Residual energies from fieldwork play an important part in reshaping text, as ‘space lies at the back of all marks and [...] silence lies at the back of all sound’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2017, p.62). This allows for breathing space in performance, a Niedeckerian openness of the page.

Tarlo and Tucker decide their ‘moves in the field rather than beforehand’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2017, p.56). This allows for instant text mapping on the page, ‘partly to do with the embodiment of the landscape, but [it is] also to do with the rhythm of walking and breathing’ (Tarlo 2015). This anticipates the performative breath of the text on the page and creates additional pauses through line breaks and word clusters. Writer and artist ‘are interested in how poetry can be considered in terms of lines and sounds through space and the process of drawing may incorporate imagining lines of sight from an implied horizon on the eye’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2017, p.62). In the poem ‘22 March 2013’ there is an organic placement of words where the horizon is presented as a whole. The area in-between is deconstructed into smaller formulations enmeshed onto the page, from which stepped text ultimately unravels to the meeting of land and water:

under east wind

straight raised place made through

drained land

house tree pylon tank tree house windmill horizon
(p.113)

On the page, the reader is presented with verbal more-than-human elements encountered by Tarlo as they appear on the horizon. Worth noting are the additions ‘pylon’ and ‘windmill’ to the previous version in *behind: land* (2015):

house tree tank tree house horizon

The alliteration in the previous two passages shows musicality at work; the landscape is seen and sung, whilst the dominant monosyllabic words punctuate their real-world counterparts with sharp precision. The ‘pylon’ and ‘windmill’ in the initial passage act as alliterative intruders, fragmenting the landscape, and disrupting the flow of the text. These words capture how the landscape has been altered in four years and are suggestive of the speed of anthropogenic change. During a later fieldwork session, the additions were incorporated in order to *update* the landscape in the poem. Most of the text in *behind: land* has been reworked into *Gathering Grounds*, in varying degrees of modification. The importance of the connections that are established between writer and environment is highlighted by Oppermann, who states that:

Exploring how ecocritical readings of specific literary texts where the reality of women’s bodies – as well as the lived experience of all gendered bodies in the natural world – are inscribed deepens our understanding of how literature interacts with life itself (2013, p.32)

It can also be argued that this works vice-versa in how life itself, and each fieldwork session interacts with the organic construction of text in terms of meaning and placement. Tarlo is aware of the more-than-human elements of wind and topography, and static or dynamic creatures and objects; within her blue poetics, she is also observant of water ebbing and flowing, creating channels and pools in the environment, as well as on the page.

Oil, Wind, and Gas

Lesser known in the genre of poetry, the problematics of the oil industry arises frequently in the cli-fi novel, though writers such as Gary Snyder²⁸ and Jonathan Skinner²⁹ have focused on this topic in poetry. In *Gathering Grounds*, the oil pipe makes regular appearances alongside windmills, oil tanks, gas pipes, and other elements of the energy industry, encountered during fieldwork. Though they are part of the more-than-human sphere, they also belong to the ‘reverse of the sublime’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2017). Tarlo and Tucker are aware of the energy politics of the area, and how it can ultimately radically reshape the landscape. In the same way that they are ‘confronted by the evidence of energy’ (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.647), so is the reader. These instances interrupt the text as they are direct anthropo manifestations which negatively harm life-territories in one way or another.

The oil pipe is part of the topography, snaking its way either over or under the ground, and being enmeshed in the more-than-human; it prompts a cultural entanglement which is too complex to be radically severed. This happens in the opening poem of the ‘Humberston to Tetney Lock’ section:

larks, wind	insistent calling
oil pipe loop over	at path’s turn in
geese flights go	out to the mouth
	(p.109)

The use of the word ‘mouth’ at the end of this poem suggests the urgency to voice concerns regarding energy politics and environmental implications; it also facilitates an openness to the sea, and to potential dystopian imaginariums. The ‘oil pipe’ is surrounded by birds; ‘larks’ and ‘geese’ represent the nonhuman whose life-territory contains it. Displayed in two columns, within its individual clusters, the poem offers two potential scenarios: one that contains the *enmeshed* oil pipe, and another which presents a hopeful vision of change; the ‘path’s turn’ is a physical turning point in the landscape, but also a cognitive shift. The ‘insistent calling’ belongs to nonhuman birds and the more-than-human ‘wind’; it is also the writer’s *calling* to explore this particular area of Humberston-Tetney, its aesthetics and problematics.

Stephanie LeMenager concludes her interview with the ‘question of what it means to live beyond fossil fuel attachment’ (Ramuglia 2018, p.163); envisaging such a world is at present part of poetic imaginaries. The physicality of the oil pipe also allows the landscape beyond it to be captured, inviting the reader to inquiry, the land presumed to be untampered:

beyond oil pipe, beyond outfall	
turn out into marsh tangle	Sand Haile Flats stretching beyond
	set out for elder horizon, haven
	making a quest in landscape
	(p.119)

In addition to the vastness beyond the oil pipe, the elder horizon, seemingly impervious to change, morphs into a ‘no-elder horizon’ (p.126); this happens in the last poem of the ‘Humberston to Tetney Lock’ section, as a result of human intervention in the landscape. The area where the elder tree stood

²⁸ See *The Back Country* (Snyder 1967) and *Smokey the Bear Sutra* (Snyder 1969).

²⁹ See *The Enpipe Line* (The Enpipe Line contributors 2012).

is littered with other severed plants and stubs; however, a ‘yellow oil can’ (p.126) stands out amongst the rocks and other detritus, symbolic of oil as a colonising swarm in the local area, and beyond.

Crude oil moves through the pipe alongside Tarlo and Tucker. It connects the sea to land, oil tanks, refinery, and ultimately to us. Its organic *inkiness* ties writer and reader to the page; its materiality is altered and stained as writer and artist are mark-making. Encompassing a plurality of posthumanist conceptualisations ‘oil is material, mystical, historical, geological, and agential’ (Barrett and Worden 2014, p.xvii). It is part of the structure that allows petromodernity to continue despite technological advancements that would inhibit it, such as harnessing renewable energies. LeMenager refers to the aesthetics of petromodernity (2012), which in *Gathering Grounds* is highlighted in the passage ‘echoing/ traffic up on Holme Moss/ over the tops, invisible cars/ sound unseen’ (p.43). In this sense its enduring presence is an extraction of historical emotion that has led to the desensitisation of the multifield implications of the stubbornness of relying on fossil fuels. The oil tanks stand out in the field—contrasting capitalist blood bags, camouflaged as harmless receptacles:

under still windmill
oil tanks float paler
green in hedge-dark (p.115)

Their seeming inertia and weightlessness is also reinforced in the poem ‘7-8 March 2013’:

[...] oil tanks float out
over-land
quiet in mist quieter (p.112)

The oil tank is either coming close to the writer or lingers in the landscape, as it appears in the poem ‘5 July 2013’:

still windmill	house	tree	oil tank	house	steeple	oak	midden
acres of low crops			paint green				sense of settlement
							(p.116)

In green camouflage between a tree and a house, the oil tank attempts to elude the writer’s gaze; however, the ‘sense of settlement’ it implies is tenuous. There is also the potential that in an optimistic future the oil tanks will acquire the same historic value as the pillboxes in the area. The buried gas pipe travels alongside the oil pipe in a similar way, from the gas platforms in The North Sea; it is part of the unseen (but not unknown) other. In the poem “‘Isle of Skye”, A635’, the movement of water as it collects into the reservoir is impervious to this anthro-flow:

even as gas is piped
through these hills’ hearts
from Northern seas
to us (p.10)

The found text ‘GAS PIPELINE’ (p.53) in a later poem is a rare occurrence that allows this mysterious subterranean serpent to be placed in the environment. The partially redeeming windmills that are part of the renewable energy industry line the horizon in *Gathering Grounds*. At the beginning of the ‘Humberston to Tetney Lock’ section they are inert; white dormant giants, reinforced by the documentary text ‘I have not ever seen/ one move’ (p.111). Towards the end of the section, the

windmills come to life, ‘whirring like quiet aircraft over/ tractor engine turning over/ starlings whisking wings’ (p.122). The area is sandwiched between them; when the writer turns towards water they ‘group and re-group in all permutations [caesura] 112141’ (p.124). Even the ‘faint far windmills [are] turning’ (p.124); the landscape hums under these white flocks. The windmills represent sustainable energy sources which contrast with the oil processing facilities and the oil pipe; yet, due to their unaesthetic appearance, their presence causes conflicting views, despite their environmental benefits compared to the oil and gas industries. The energy politics of the area is captured by Tarlo in its varying manifestations, representing a much-needed stepping stone for women’s poetics to be more upfront about a commonly male-dominated industry whose effects concern every living being on the planet.

Conclusion

Gathering Grounds collates site-specific poems into lyric sequences spanning across several seasons and years. It is the result of hundreds of hours of collaborative fieldwork between Harriet Tarlo and artist Judith Tucker in the Humberston-Tetney area, offering the environmental humanities a sublime account of this site through the open-field poetics of radical landscape poetry. The poems in this collection are in constant resonance with the fresh and salt waters that surround and envelop the writer and artist in the life-territories explored; they function within a blue poetics framework of more-than-human situatedness, locating the lyric in relation to waters, both live-giving and destructive.

Its departure point is the concertina notebooks that Tarlo and Tucker use in the field whilst working alongside each other. Since then, the texts and images have *travelled* to walls, floors, windows, onto the digital and printed page, being reshaped and reworked along the way. As radical landscape poems, the pieces in *Gathering Grounds* showcase an alternative mode of practice-based writing, one that outlines the links of more-than-human interconnectedness. The reader’s understanding of this world is shaped through a posthuman variation which offers a new and palimpsestic iteration of place. This is layered from the ground up, to the horizontal and upper limits of the gaze, highlighting the fragility of the Humberston-Tetney site. It posits the more-than-human as a unified sphere against the same environmental threats of flooding and socio-political unrest, due to the authorities’ management of the site and its surroundings.

The problematics of the area is outlined in *Gathering Grounds* through the voices in the documentary text resulting from interviews, to the found text on packaging; the reader is made aware of pollution and issues of social dynamics, particularly with the authorities. Industrial development is a threat to the area, as the oil, wind, and gas industries choke the more-than-human life-territories, both on land and at sea. As they suggestively appear in Tarlo’s poems, these issues promote an interdisciplinary dialogue to address the environmental changes of the more-than-human world.

Renewed modes of reading and writing contemporary life-territories within the context of anthropogenic environmental threats and destruction highlight the fact that *radicalisation* starts with tailoring one’s experiences and responses through direct engagement in the field. The poetic text becomes a fluid membrane, shifting between surfaces and displays, but nascent during fieldwork. It is a part of the more-than-human which *walks* with the writer, capturing the raw essence of specific temporal and spatial immersions. *Gathering Grounds* is a creative cartography (Braidotti 2019, p.7) that destabilises the lyric *I* into a mutually responsible and responsive narrative which provides an

amalgam on the area's condition and threats; what Bristow refers to as an 'ego-free poem' (2015, p.76) where the deromanticised writer's voice is shared on a more-than-human spectrum. The reader is left with the hopeful thought that despite the collection ending, the journey itself does not. In Bunting's words, there will always be 'fields we do not know' (1971, p.41) which merit our attention.

CODA - on edge

To go barefoot, foetal and penitential.
(Seamus Heaney, *Field Work*, p.14)

This coda explores Veronica Fibisan's *on edge*³⁰ section of her collected work titled *shore survey*. Here, her poems stem from fieldwork conducted between the years 2013-2015, primarily on the North-East coast of the United Kingdom, in the area between Cleethorpes and Tetney; Scarborough, Flamborough Head, and many more North-East sites were visited. Fieldwork was also conducted in North Wales, on Holy Island and the Menai Strait. Early in her research, Fibisan was interested in Tarlo and Tucker's fieldwork practices in the Humberston-Tetney area. After an insightful interview with Tarlo³¹, Fibisan was determined to travel to the sites that writer and artist explored, shadowing some of their sessions, and participating in workshops and exhibitions. She acknowledged the 'necessity of rethinking the relation of walking to relationships' (Heddon and Turner 2012). Triggered by her witnessing sessions, Fibisan started being concerned with issues of scale in her own creative work. Pauses during the walks happened frequently; Tarlo and Tucker were not looking in the distance, but a few feet ahead. Fibisan then realised that 'it is through the micro that we understand the macro' (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.638). This is something that she has applied extensively to her work from that point onwards.

As Fibisan became familiarised with the poems and art produced by Tarlo and Tucker, her notions as to what poetry could look like, what it could say, and what could be done with it were expanded. It was at the ASLE-UKI Conference in 2015 at the University of Cambridge that Fibisan first saw Tarlo and Tucker's work; it was displayed on walls and windows, alongside each other on a level playing field. At the same event, Fibisan received a copy of *behind: land, poems and paintings* (2015), the concertina pamphlet containing some of the early work of Tarlo and Tucker in the Humberston-Tetney area; as mentioned previously, most of it has been reworked into *Gathering Grounds*. At the time, Fibisan was working heavily with caesurae, a legacy of her previous studies. Her earliest cluster, *on edge* features this technique; however, the words have started travelling across the page with a newly acquired freedom. Of notable importance was the performative element of the texts directly influenced by layout, not just by the author, but by the readers as well. The *organic* placement of text inherited from Tarlo starts to be seen in the poems; however, the use of justified text is still an important feature used in conjunction with open-field poetics, which picks up fixed linear elements in the landscape and places them on the page. The poem 'Tide-hunters' uses organic text, coupled with caesurae and justification to create a metaphorical map of the area explored during a particular fieldwork session, from Fitties Beach south to Tetney Marshes.

³⁰ See 'on edge' section, Appendix 2, p.102.

³¹ See Harriet Tarlo Interview, Appendix 1, p.94.

For joint fieldwork sessions with Tarlo and Tucker, Fibisan had to assess and reassess not just her proximity to the more-than-human, but also to writer and artist. She queried where shadowing could become disruptive, defeating its original purpose. A balanced approach allowed Fibisan to gain unprecedented insight into their practice; knowledge which she still applies to her current creative work is derived from those initial shadowing instances. By travelling to the area between Cleethorpes and Tetney, Fibisan was able to bring her own set of experiences which allowed her to produce creative work that investigates the relationship between human, nonhuman, and more-than-human in this liminal place. This anthropogenic entanglement with the estuarine environment is addressed in her poem 'Foreshore' where a 'sharp silhouette [caesura] pierces place/ washed up [caesura] fragmented bricks/ building blocks/ entangled [caesura] environment'. There is also an implicit connection to place from a *natureculture* perspective; the brick fragments on the beach act as a constant reminder of the troubled past of the area during the Second World War, but also link to industrial elements such as the mining industry.

The appeal of the Humberston Fitties as a vestige of a counter-cultural development was something that could not be ignored by either Tarlo, Tucker, or Fibisan. The site location challenges the boundaries between life-territories, as can be seen in this passage from the poem 'South of site': 'pedestrian access/ for birds/ past fitties'. Here, human dehierarchisation is also present: 'rooftops settle/ sunk behind dune/ slightly above sea level'; however, this low perspective also outlines the fact that the area is vulnerable to flooding. An additional legacy from Tarlo's technique is the inclusion of found text in the poems, but perhaps in less obvious ways visually; sometimes it appears in-between square brackets, but otherwise it is integrated seamlessly in the poem. Another important feature that was initially applied subconsciously and later became a conscious choice, was the drop of the lyric *I*. The monopoly it held was restrictive, and not something that would benefit radical landscape poetry. Similar to Tarlo, Fibisan wanted to 'avoid a usurpation of other people's places into a singular poetic voice' (Tarlo and Tucker 2019, p.640). The lyric *I* does not appear in subsequent pieces either, however, it is occasionally replaced by the first-person plural *we*, a quasi-human collective which makes all individuals responsible for the environmental crisis in varying degrees. It highlights the fact that no one is ever too distant in place or position to make a positive contribution to combating it. Fibisan also considers her work to belong into 'one of the most dynamic and innovative places to look for examples of language which dares to imagine the "other than human"' (Tarlo 2007, p.19) which is radical landscape poetry. These explorations are furthered in Fibisan's later pieces, containing poems resulting from fieldwork on the South coast of the United Kingdom.

Fieldwork in other parts of the North-East coast such as Scarborough and Flamborough Head have outlined its topographic diversity, from rocky shores to chalk cliffs, and beaches where coal washes up with the tide, each site having its own individuality and ecosystem which cannot be discovered in any other way than through fieldwork. Poems such as 'Crevice', 'Semibalanus balanoides', and 'The Rossby Number' speak of coastal entanglements, but also of loss, and from that perspective they can be considered to possess an elegiac quality. The line 'when we were children' suggests not only a remembrance of youth, but also the incipient stages when it comes to knowing our environment, whilst 'retrace baby steps in sheathed bay' hints at the process of visiting and revisiting place during fieldwork. It highlights that in order to accomplish a palimpsestic layering of place, memory from previous site visits needs to be activated. The poem 'Seacoal' is structured into two parallel parts, 'Velvet Crabs' and 'Crab Claw' and draws attention to the connections between the coal industry and its demise on the North-East coastline, and the dark-coloured 'Velvet crab', both as predator and *prey* (as it is foraged and consumed by humans). The birds' consumption of the crab is 'natural', this image moves seamlessly into the crab 'convulsing in pan', a different perhaps less deserving fate. It also

suggests a connection between the creature and its habitat, ‘coal-lines chelipeds’ being reminiscent of the coal industry in the area. The way in which the anthropo-figure in Killip’s image carries the coal is contorted into a crustacean-like creature whose ‘claws clutch pickings’. The poem is partly ekphrastic and also draws upon Chris Killip’s ‘*Cookie*’ in *the Snow* (Killip 1984) photograph in addition to fieldwork conducted.

‘Concertino in C flat Major’ provides an alternative way of looking at tides, imagining them as acoustic entities, this orchestral quality being brought forward through other elements of the coastal landscape such as wind turbines. From the first line, it draws attention to the idea of coastal materiality, the word ‘bone’ acting as connection point between the skeletal structures of human and nonhuman, and the possibility for exoskeletal remains of creatures with acoustic properties such as shells, to reshape the ways in which we listen to the environments that we explore. The first half of the poem, titled ‘Flow’ is a near-silent song about receding water, allowing the writer to walk lower down on the shore, and expanding their range. The second half, however, inundates the reader with the impending symphony of the sea, and how human and more-than-human react to this occurrence whilst the exposure time has pushed them to their very limits. The uncovering process of shore from the first half is reversed into what Tarlo calls a ‘making pools/ unmaking land’ process (Tarlo 2019, p.50). The final word ‘ourselves’, realigns the self from a posthumanist perspective, suggesting a situatedness in relation to the more-than-human sphere from which we cannot be separated.

Despite the broad spectrum of delving into *radical* coastal writing, this first cluster of poems illustrates a humbling nearness to the nonhuman, and is the departure point for much more elaborate investigations into the relationship between the human and the nonhuman as observed during fieldwork on the United Kingdom shoreline.

CHAPTER 2

Tender Geometries

I leave this at your ear for when you wake,
A creature in its abstract cage asleep.
(W. S. Graham, *New Collected Poems*, p.166)

Introduction

Mark Dickinson refers to his work as *networks of connection*; the lyric pieces contained in *Tender Geometries* (2015) spread across land and sea on the Orkney coast, falling into the category of radical landscape poetry. The five sections of the collection each focus on a different topic, yet they communicate with each other through extended metaphors and tropes. Dickinson tackles environmental problems which arise from a rift between human and more-than-human spheres through comprehensive interdisciplinary knowledge and use of terminology. The lyric is atmospheric and haunting, not shying from the dead and dying eco-elegiac entanglements, linking the more-than-human through shared pain and space. Dickinson's focus on the diseased and dead sheep from the beginning of *Tender Geometries* suggests a link to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in 2001, which affects cloven animals, as well as having long-lasting psychological effects on the human (Mort et al. 2008). For the first time, computer models were used to manage the outbreak, resulting in the cull of more than 6.5 million animals, based on geographical proximity rather than the empirically-derived control policies previously used (Kao, Haydon, and Kitching 2004, p.675).

Geometries and geographies play an important part in limiting and opening the human gaze, and body. Initially spread between anthropogenic linearity and other-than-human irregularity, the lyric merges into a borderless and permeable entanglement. Focusing on transcorporeality allows Dickinson to link the human and more-than-human through waters that are engaged in constant dynamics between and amongst the three. The sea pen is used as a posthuman metaphor to open discussions around the ethics of the aquaculture industry and how it affects its surroundings. A possible reading of *Tender Geometries* allows for a new ecofeminist epistemology which surfaces through embedded critiques of the dairy, agriculture, and aquaculture industries. Coupled with strong ethical considerations, Dickinson opens himself as an ally of material vegan ecofeminists, aligning himself with Karen Barad's posthumanist view of feminist ecocriticism. This 'provides a solid foundation for feminist discussions of the body that transcends the dualism of discourse as matter, as well as biological sex and gender as categories of cultural analysis' (Oppermann 2013, p.25). The writer is situated in a 'world still immersed in all forms of oppression' (Idem); the nonhuman is one of the victims of a destabilised world.

Plastic threads its way through Dickinson's networks of connection, alongside the bacteria meant to consume it, collectively known as *nylonase*. Functioning as a hyperobject, plastic is simultaneously out there, and in the human and nonhuman bodies that it travels through, creating another avenue for interconnections. It is currently impossible to imagine nature without nylon, and Dickinson draws upon this as the crucial feature of human Anthropocene dwelling. The complexity and entangled themes of *Tender Geometries* remind the reader that their known and bordered bodies are part of the world that they inhabit; this happens through shared waters, spaces, and even plastic microparticles.

There can be no separation of the human from the more-than-human. The issues that Dickinson considers are meant to trigger new modes of thinking of and dwelling in the world; they also prompt a renewed awareness of how human choices and bodies impact upon one another, and other human and nonhuman bodies. This is shaping an era which might be embedded in geological strata as the one where human, nonhuman and more-than-human spheres started *falling apart*.

Geometries and Geographies

Dickinson's collection introduces the term 'geometries', coupled with the adjective 'tender' as an affective element which does not serve to soften the blow when it comes to writing radical landscape poetry, but to hint at the fragility of the more-than-human sphere in which writer and reader are enmeshed. The departure point for this genre is the environment; this is why in *Tender Geometries* an important role is played by geographies, rooted in the physical landscape, yet with affective, psychological, and ethical considerations.³² A landscape poem is situated in 'its generative environment' (Cooperman 2001, p.184), whilst the radical landscape poem expands that idea without the risk of 'negating or merely ignoring the material character of places and landscapes' (Neal and Cooper 2013); here, the descriptor 'radical' comes into effect.

Darting between land, sea, and the littoral, Dickinson takes the task of 'writing language back into the land' (Abram 1997, p.273) as a key feature of his blue poetics. His experiences and observations fuel the text on the page; as they are coupled with his accurate interdisciplinary terminology, they offer the reader a glimpse into the *actual* landscape, with new tools to understand it. 'Geometries' in Dickinson's work is a collective attention to shapes, both human, and more-than-human. The straight anthropogenic line is lifted from the landscape, and worked with, both conceptually, and on the page. The writer bends, cuts, and tangles it, discovering its versatility in belonging to human, and more-than-human bodies, as it becomes an experimental posthuman geometer. The use of the word also taps into the poetics of the landscape as a *geo-metric* manifestation of spatial and lyric relations. The noun *geo* refers to a narrow, steep-sided cleft formed by the erosion of coastal cliffs; the term originates in Orkney and Shetland from the Old Norse *gjá*, and is an invasion of land by water. This is also reflected in the transcorporeal mode of thinking where the body is eroded in order to reveal its many waters:

Among sea- links
Hung from a backbone (p.56)

Dickinson's writing offers 'alternative spatial structures' (Smith 2017, p.18); it encourages readers down a 'bridge [caesura] between relations [caesura] of the habitable [caesura] visible// & measurable number of the world' (p.14). Concurrently, it acknowledges the limitations of the human; the presence of an *unknown other* accompanies the writer, sometimes surfacing in the text, as the writer is 'scanning the source of what floats on by the sea [caesura] trailing// behind its mystery for invisible structures' (p.14). Dickinson hints at the fact that the mass of most oceanic flotsam is greater under the water, the surface amount often being deceptive. Regardless of its nature, the reader is reminded through this passage that there is a larger part of the environmental problem which remains unseen.

³² See *An archipelagic literature: re-framing 'The New Nature Writing'* (Smith 2013, pp. 8-12).

The s-repetitions and the ‘sea’ and ‘mystery’ rhyme seem soothing in the way they disseminate the phonemes of ‘sea’, yet the structures are ‘petrified as the fearful course/ [...] the currents of sound’ (p.14). The breath plays an important part in how the scene is captured; the lack of caesurae accelerates the performance, with a slight pause in the line break. The words ‘petrified’ and ‘fearful’ highlight the genuine attitude that Dickinson has towards this mysterious ocean pollutant, what he calls ‘un calculable horror/ settling within the geometrics of/ disseminated images’ (p.14). The geometrics work to *crop* the bigger picture when it comes to ocean pollution; they create straight edges which contrast with the tangle of trash. Providing the viewer with a framed version of the event means that the wider scene is often omitted, whilst the justified format of the poem, when it occurs, works as an opposite to the image, drawing the reader’s attention to the missing links, the happenings beyond the *frame*. The diver/cosmonaut work in this instance as an aid to that mode of viewing, by *piercing* the geometry of the surface of the water, and that of the troposphere.

From the debut stanza of *Tender Geometries*, there is a strong sense of human emplacement;³³ Dickinson relies on temporal, geographical, and ethical markers to illustrate a multifaceted relationship with the more-than-human:

Open between the strings of language rivulets of the gift horizon where
we are not written to the letter between this state & that openness the
vague estuaries leafing through remembrance strands of a living (p.13)

The meta-poetic element contained at the beginning of this passage highlights the materiality of the text, but also its interconnecting properties: the ability to travel from the landscape onto the page and into the reader’s imaginarium, potentially becoming an activist tool. ‘Open between’ and ‘that openness’ suggest transcorporeality and permeability, as well as the landscape’s geographic connections; ‘rivulets’ and ‘vague estuaries’ recall bodies of water; the end word ‘living’, suggests not life, but *alive*, which is the requirement and gift of water that flows through more-than-human bodies.

Dickinson’s ‘gift horizon’ links to Peter Larkin’s poetics of scarcity in which ‘the world thus stretches toward a horizon of unconditional gift in its inability to be fully, healthily received, poetically embracing a radical attempt to prise open its sheer existence in the emerging relations of less-than, to be released by a reoriented ethics of attention’ (Kalinowski 2020, p.11). The latter looks at the more-than-human from the posthuman perspective of ethically concerned observation; it proposes an alternative way of looking at the environment. This is reinforced by Ann Fisher-Wirth’s statement that ‘another world is possible, and the poem tells us about this world’ (2008, p.269). Larkin’s gift theory draws upon the Derridean poetics of the gift as a provocation,³⁴ ‘to bring about the arrival of that which is where it is, in its “present”’ (Champetier 2001, p.17). This immediacy employed in the approach to the landscape as a destructive commodity allows Dickinson to further foreground his ethics of situatedness and strengthens the thread of his networks of connection.

The types of cartographies that *Tender Geometries* proposes are part of the landscape as well as the lyric. Mapping transcends the more-than-human bodies encountered, creating a transcorporeal collective of place. Dickinson places himself ‘among the three fold worlds’ (p.20), a new materialist palimpsestic situatedness, within human, nonhuman, and more-than-human spheres. The capsized triptych can also be seen as the air, land, and sea which allow for ‘many directions’ (p.20). Dickinson’s emplacement is a departure point for renewed new materialist posthuman discourses that

³³ See *Poetry & Geography: space and place in post-war poetry* (Neal and Cooper 2013).

³⁴ Derrida’s thoughts on the gift draws on Heidegger’s work on the same topic. See Heidegger (1990).

seek to better the human relationship with nonhuman and more-than-human spheres. Drawing on Edmund Husserl's work, David Abram discusses the layers of the life-world as a palimpsestual concept where beneath the cultural life-world there is 'a vast and continually overlooked dimension of experience' which 'sustains all our diverse and discontinuous world-views' (Abram 1997, p.42). These come together in Dickinson's lyric networks of connection, proposing simultaneous modes of epistemological entanglement with the nonhuman and more-than-human. The non-linearity of his mode of fieldwork enables the discourses of land and water to provide alternative ways of looking at and being in the world.

The geometry of the landscape plays an important part in how Dickinson calibrates his perspectives; shapes help open or limit his gaze and emphasize the *unknown other* that lies beyond or beneath them. Geographic features are considered in terms of their geometry: 'closer to the left the bay curves finite geometries infinitude' (p.73). There is freedom in Dickinson's gaze, but also the imposed limitation of the human body walking or swimming in the landscape as 'an/ ancient / dyke / with boundaries that can't be seen' (p.17).³⁵ The nonhuman is not confined to the same space, transcending water and air in projected posthuman entanglements, and breaking anthropogenic geometries. The horizon becomes the outer-most point of observation:

upon the ground staging breath staging expiration before a small haloed
 sunset flattening horizon in a long reach toward the con-vox form of a
 cloud in the brilliant curve of colour shaping radius (p.15)

Long-sightedness is seen as an anthropogenic limitation, and vision is corrected by the 'con-vox form of a/ cloud'; looking in the distance becomes the trigger to look nearby along the 'radius' in-between. The reader is awakened from their Anthropocene hypermetropia, the failure to perceive one's own environmental locality ethically and critically, with a renewed sense of *environs-situatedness*. Mutually irritated, writer and landscape 'con-vox', sharing the grief, as combatants fighting on the same side of the environmental crisis war. The emphasis on human *groundedness* reinforces Dickinson's previous perspective, whilst the staged rhythm of the breath encompasses not just the placement of the lyric on the page, but also the *regularities* that the writer expects from the landscape that he is accustomed to. Breath changes with actions undertaken in the field, impacting on the page through caesurae and line-breaks, shape-shifting the text. The sunset fits within that category, along with the tides, yet there is a cloud that challenges the linearity, the curve it introduces being reinforced by the alliterative consonant 'c'.

The aesthetics of geometry seems to dominate anthropogenic elements, such as the quadrant, the sea pen, the pylon, the dyke etc. whilst the borderless geography and nonhuman creatures escape these moulds and ruin the pattern. However, this works antithetically starting with the human body, which is porous, open to the landscape, exchanging breath and particles. Dickinson refers to the 'coherent scheme of a visible body' which 'becomes sensually draped/ within the curves' (p.13). There is another *unknown other* in the landscape, the inner human body, whose particularities can be measured and tested, but not experienced directly. This awareness highlights the 'I and the N of the dwelling' (p. 16), and sees the human body as inhabiting a shared space with human and nonhuman others. Anthropogenic elements also break the pattern as 'the catalogue of jettisons where sorrowful lines of nylon/ tangle' (p.31) become collapsed geometries.

³⁵ Short caesurae appear as they do in Dickinson's *Tender Geometries*.

In his fieldwork, Dickinson does not fail to ‘notice and respond to the subtle logos of the land’ (Abram 1997, p.268), entangling his human body and gaze ecomimetically in order to extract meaning from the multitude of simultaneous happenings that surround him:

Approaching an inclement of sky
Held within a curve of grain
& the quadrant of wire (p.30)

The interconnectedness of the ‘inclement of sky’ with the land suggests a geographic entanglement, whilst the gerund ‘approaching’ brings writer and reader nearer to the landscape. The dark patch of clouds links to the dark flock of diseased sheep, seen previously as ‘a few bad// apples’ (pp.19-20). The presence of the quadrat is important as it highlights the fact that Dickinson is also a surveyor. The interdisciplinary aspects of conducting fieldwork signified by the presence of the ‘quadrat of wire’ as the survey tool, come together under the dual-purpose of the walk. Initially exploring this in *Littoral* (2007), Dickinson has a strong awareness of the benthos, through the structured zonation of the pamphlet, the content and vocabulary used.

In *Tender Geometries*, the benthos constitutes an interesting and challenging geographic feature, whilst it can only be accessed by the diver/cosmonaut as opposed to *Littoral*, where low tide allowed for detailed benthic observations. The duality of the anthropogenic sea pen aquaculture cage and the sea pen cold water coral allow for the submerged geometries and geographies to come together; the roundedness of the sea pen structures, as they form floating farms, foul the benthos beneath them where sea pen cold water coral live³⁶. The latter are marine cnidarians and colonial creatures; their octometrous symmetry challenges anthropogenic geometries, and contrasts with the three-fold symmetry of land, water, and air. The area occupied by the aquaculture farms and beneath them becomes a geographic sacrifice zone,³⁷ where chemicals and toxins pollute the water. Dickinson is aware of this, summarising the scene with ‘the same/ word *hurt* recursive’ (p.72). The pain in this passage is transcorporeal, human and nonhuman *hurt* together at the sight environmental of destruction.

The benthic downward gaze is maintained as a posthuman habit, the immediacy of the text guides the reader’s eyes down at the land, occasionally looking up at the sky, or in the distance. Glancing underfoot, the writer taps into geology. The burial of the sheep at the beginning of the collection contrasts with the agrarian cultivation of seeds in the last section, both of them transformative. The decaying bodies symbolically enrich the soil which is then sowed. Through digging and filling the grave, Dickinson unpeels a layer in the soil, and simultaneously brings himself closer to sea level. The ‘sleeping ground’ (p.19) which is being excavated and filled allows him to undergo a process of ontological recalibration, becoming a geological metaphor.³⁸ The grave is left open in a perpetual, symbolic and ethical stance. Through excavation and an engagement with the soil aside from the domain of agriculture, Dickinson is accessing ‘buried knowledge’ (Charlton 2008, cited in Zapf 2002, p.165), which then works antithetically to reveal a deeper understanding of human and nonhuman connections as the mass grave is being filled with the bodies of sheep.

The critique of aquaculture and agriculture is accompanied by this phenomenological exploration of the geological and geo-locational, generating a point of view that is ‘hazardous, exposed, engulfed,

³⁶ See ‘The Sea Pen as Posthuman Metaphor’ section, p.50.

³⁷ See *Anthropocene Poetics* (Farrier 2019, pp.51-86).

³⁸ See *The Value of Ecocriticism* (Clark 2019, pp.45-47).

encompassed and immersed' (Smith 2017, p.175). The geometries and entanglements that Dickinson identifies within the geographies that surround him act as posthuman connection points between human, nonhuman, and more-than-human spheres, and foreground the potential of littoral space 'as a nature-culture continuum as well as a realistically depicted human working environment' (Kluwick and Richter 2015, p.17). The geometries are *tender* and material, the predominant left-indented text highlights this unidirectional pull. Dickinson's collection encompasses 'a movement of cultural renewal with the planet in mind' (Smith 2017, p.202), proposing a reconsideration of more-than-human entanglements accessible through the lyric.

Eco-elegiac Entanglements

Dickinson's lyricism in *Tender Geometries* speaks not only of posthuman situatedness within the landscape/ seascape, but also a proximity to the environmental problems that he is facing, which are ongoing at the time of his enmeshment. He does not look at the landscape from a pastoral perspective, as such an approach would impede him from drawing on the harsh reality of dwelling at the edge of a deteriorating environment and looking out at a contaminated sea. Dickinson's observations allow for a raw, yet complex view of how human behaviours are shaping his environs more specifically, and other environments, more broadly. Ranging from critiques of animal agriculture and aquaculture, to the harmful effects of plastic pollution, *Tender Geometries* can be read as an eco-elegy and to an extent, as a hydroelegy.³⁹ The caveat rests on the fact that in radical landscape poetry the 'text does not kill the lost one symbolically' (Morton 2010a, p.6), but examines actual more-than-human death. Within the context of extinction, Richard Mabey questions our ability to draw 'a convincing ethical line' and a 'practical line' (1993, p.13) between sets of different species; the lyric line of radical landscape poetry steps in to provide an alternative mode of viewing which departs from traditional elegy, querying more-than-human loss as interconnected to, and affecting more-than-human victims.

According to Morton, 'elegy's formal topics and tropes are environmental' (2010a, p.2), which would therefore apply to most forms of eco-writing. However, eco-elegy 'asks [us] to mourn for something that has not completely passed, that perhaps has not even passed yet' (2010a, p.1). At the heart of ecological elegy there is hope; the dystopian represents the present, not a future which can be consolidated. Morton goes on to say that 'in ecological thinking, the fear is that we will go on living, while the environment disappears around us' (2010a, p.3). Ultimately, responding to this *glocal* 'radical loss' (2010a, p.3) does not come out of imaginaries in radical landscape poetry, but a direct engagement between the writer and the area where they are conducting fieldwork. The term 'elegy' is used by Dickinson directly in the *Sea Pens Pastoral Net* section:

I have an elegy in my
pocket spoilt by rain; its stain imparts everything, like amphetamine, a
damp gram of outstanding hyper, pink, unwieldy cosmos in manifolds
infinite. (p.75)

The unreadable text in the writer's pocket becomes a metaphor for the elegy's central mechanism of loss; only its stain has any capacity to impart everything, the latter representing the human,

³⁹ See Chapter 3, 'Hydroelegy' section, p.81.

nonhuman, and more-than-human entanglements, comprehensible as particulars ‘in manifolds infinitude’. The fact that the elegy is ‘spoilt by rain’ suggests a new materialist reconsideration of water, and how it works both to sustain and *drown* life. The capacity of aqueous harm challenges water’s otherwise life-sustaining capacity—the *aqueous embrace* in Dickinson’s ‘Diagonal Root’ (p.92) which allows crops to grow. However, the elegy’s diluted text works antithetically, not diminishing its capacity to spread through water, despite its legibility being compromised. As Dickinson turns his elegiac explorations in the direction of water, he delves into the realm of *hydroelegy*, a departure from eco-elegy explored in detail in Burnett’s *Swims*, in the third chapter of this thesis (p.64).

Earlier in ‘Sea Pens Pastoral Net’ there are ‘inks open to attract and hold water molecules’, this being ‘love through adsorption or absorption’ (p.73); whether or not the water and ink mix, there is a point of contact between the two. The soaked elegy in the writer’s pocket suggests a sense of *watery* entanglements which encapsulate the lyric, the ‘amphetamine’ metaphor shared between the pink-coloured pill and the potentially diluted red ink of the elegy. In this posthuman new materialist reading of the text, the red ink can be seen as the blood of the human and nonhuman in their environmentally related demise. In this passage, the morpheme ‘in’ becomes a trope for the human inability to separate itself from water, humans literally being bodies of water⁴⁰. Neimanis states that ‘being in water is a situated knowledge’ (2016, p.139); the words ‘in’, ‘rain’, ‘stain’, ‘everything’, ‘amphetamine’, ‘outstanding’, and ‘pink’ culminating in ‘infinitude’, which also contains a reversal of the grapheme, are placing both human and nonhuman in a position of connective aqueous perpetuity.

There are two dominant bird tropes in *Tender Geometries*, the raven, and the cormorant; both are large black-plumaged birds, the latter aquatic, the former terrestrial. Dickinson encounters them in varying degrees of proximity, his perspective shifting from land to water. Both the raven and the cormorant are a common feature in heraldry and can also be regarded from an eco-elegiac perspective and are often encountered in a heraldic pose. The etymology of the word ‘cormorant’, from the Latin *corvus marinus*, meaning sea raven, positions the bird in dichotomy with the raven. Dickinson refers to the cormorant as a ‘maritime ocean crow’ (p.74), hinting at the heraldic lack of distinction between raven and crow. This use is a flattened, simplified, and complete adoption of the nonhuman for human purposes; at a non-institutional level it reinforces a hierarchised society whose elites don vestigial symbols in order to illustrate current wealth and status. Their physical presence in the field and above the water fuels Dickinson’s text with mysticism. Individual consideration needs to be given to the two birds as eco-elegiac manifestations in *Tender Geometries*.

The raven appears primarily at the beginning of the collection and is seen as a ‘dark// emblem’ which ‘personifies’ a ‘totemic / god’ (p.13). It is referred to in capital letters and addressed directly just like Edgar Allan Poe’s raven (2016, p.3), who adopts a similar godly stance upon the bust of Pallas.⁴¹ Later on, the writer reinforces the raven’s significance: ‘Raven / you / are the god among// the rabble / of pebbles’ and ‘Raven / you are mythic like paper-// weight’ (p. 15). The raven is near to the cormorant’s territory, but also near Dickinson; its symbolism allows for inscriptions, and its hollow bones bear ‘weight’ in flesh and water. Being present at the burial of the sheep and scavenging on their bodies, the raven becomes the ultimate embodied lament, writing ‘*shame*’ (p.19), yet keeps on eating because survival is more important. Moving ‘from the work of mourning to the work of sheer suffering’ (Morton 2010a, p.4), the writer realises that speaking won’t suffice anymore; the text

⁴⁰ See *Bodies of Water* (Neimanis 2016).

⁴¹ Short caesurae appear as they do in Dickinson’s *Tender Geometries*.

turns into an eco-elegiac *song*, which the ‘Raven / high above the pylon’ (p.16) is asked to ‘return [...] to the/ under/ / world’ (p.17). From the Raven’s perspective, everything that lies underneath the pylon is part of the under-world, including the human. Despite this, there is a sense of mutual understanding, the song that is normally learned by birds from other birds, is in this case attempted from the human to the nonhuman; the raven’s body is recarved in stone set ‘against the body of the moon’ (p.19). The bird’s celestial silhouetted dance is mirrored on the page, where ‘the white sand remembers where the black// Raven’ who ‘cleaves to opportunity / until the dark becomes / an opportunity’ (p.18) that camouflages it against a dark backdrop.

On top of the ‘interwoven structure’ and ‘set against’ the ‘forklift truck’ (p.19), the raven is Sphinxian; situated at the crossroads of nonhuman entangled remains, it prevents the burial of the nonhuman dead, which would in effect conceal them, erasing their existence under a mound. This disposal of the inaeesthetic presence of decaying matter leads to a disconnection between the human and their association with environmental destruction, reducing the scale of the problem to social media posts and occasional news headlines that are either too far away physically or cognitively to allow a general degree of relatedness. In radical landscape poetry as well as the eco-elegy, the dead need to be seen. This relates to the concept of ‘melancholia’, as Morton puts it, which is ‘letting the dead stick in our throat’; it is seen as a more ethically refined process ‘than mourning (allowing them to be digested)’, and therefore forgotten (Morton 2010a, p.17). The raven’s implied riddle of environmental destruction has only one answer: man—who embodies the capacity of both destruction and salvation. However, the riddle remains partially answered; whilst Dickinson adopts the latter stance, *man* is otherwise unidentifiable, *hiding* behind the collective crew,⁴² the concealed cosmonaut,⁴³ and in *Littoral* (2007) behind autotomised body parts⁴⁴. This suggests a *communal* blame, in which every individual is responsible in part for the environmental crisis. The figure of the raven activates a set of meanings based on its behaviour as a coastal scavenging bird, whose diet can include carrion and human waste, including the young chicks of cormorants in cliff nests. The totemic meaning of the raven signals eco-elegiac entanglements, as well as the materiality of the nonhuman body as encountered in the landscape.

The cormorant appears in the *ii Flavobacterium* (p.60) and *Sea Pens Pastoral Net* (p.67) sections in contact with the diver/cosmonaut, and the area is acknowledged as ‘the cormorants strand’ (p.62). In a heraldic stance the ‘cormorant maintains a spread-wing posture on a stony sill amongst/ the primacy of the commonplace’ (p.72). Antithetically, the nonhuman is placed against the regular backdrop where it belongs, drawing the writer and the reader’s attention. There is the issue of proximity to the cormorant, ‘controlling the distance, means/ the cosmonaut’s complicit of the sea, while the cormorant preserves perspectives on a perch of heraldic’ (p.72). Equally, there is the human and nonhuman reversal of land and water; the bird stands its ground, whilst the diver is in the water. Boundaries are challenged, the human has trespassed into the cormorant’s territory. However, ‘the cormorant clings determinate, its wings held out to dry like a totem/ to the sun’ (p.74) whilst the diver is submerged, limbs presumably hidden. In a similar way to the raven, the cormorant is ‘entirely confounding: uniquely understanding’ (p.75), the human and nonhuman interconnectedness is mirrored by that of land and sea. The diver/cosmonaut and cormorant can delve into the submerged world in ‘dualistic breaths’ (p.73), sharing the same water. Near the end of the section, the sea is acknowledged as the ‘sublimate [...] where the cormorant dips’ (p.76). Dickinson concludes this section by stating that ‘we’ve shared enough of that to dream another life’ (p.77), the lyric’s

⁴² See *The Tangles* section (Dickinson 2015, p.29).

⁴³ See *Sea Pens Pastoral Net* section (Dickinson 2015, p.67).

⁴⁴ See *Littoral* (Dickinson 2007, p. 17).

underlying activist potential being brought forth. The eco-elegy here functions as a meta-imaginary of alternative landscapes, a shift in human thinking and behaviour lying at the root of this change. The cormorant as an aquatic bird has been trained to help fishermen in certain parts of the world, including Japan and China; this is a cruel practice that involves placing a snare around their throats to prevent them from swallowing larger fish. Dickinson's cormorant 'watches the crew' (p.75), yet in its wing-drying pose it reminds of the sacrificial sign of the cross. The writer's eyes are *nailed* to it as a symbol of universal nonhuman sacrifice.

The cormorant and raven are brought together as birds that 'invoke/ the partial// along the prescience/ of tides' (p.125). Dickinson focuses on the selected avian species encountered as a sample image of nonhuman entanglements, one that allows a posthuman perspective through suggested critiques that bring forth the issue of ethics. The tidal regularities that the writer is accustomed to seem to be out of sync with anthropogenic nonhuman loss and environmental disaster. Dickinson re-establishes the 'habitual point of view' (Morton 2010a, p.6) of the human as being able to discern the micro amongst the macro of sea and land. There is an immediacy in the text, 'the dark rich plankton of the/ individual' (p.76) suggesting a posthuman fragmented view, which contrasts with the molecular hydrogen-bonding process that produces inorganic nylon 6, 6 (p.53).⁴⁵ This ecomimetic immediacy (Morton 2007, p.151) brings the reader one step closer to the environment that Dickinson is exploring, the latter becoming part of the eco-elegiac entanglement and complicit to it. The two birds 'inspire an extended reflection on the place of humans in the nonhuman world' (Moran 2014, p.53).

The raven perched upon the remains of sheep, the cormorant watching as the diver/cosmonaut submerges into the aquaculture sea pen infested waters, and nylon spreading across land and sea all challenge the expected aesthetics of *Tender Geometries*. Through these glimpses of anti-aesthetics the 'verse literally humiliates us, bringing us closer to the earth, and to the Poet' (Morton 2010a, p.14). Dickinson acknowledges that 'there are words [he] cannot use', calling them 'humiliations' (p.19); since his interdisciplinary grasp of terminology is pristine, the words that he is referring to here can be seen to represent an aesthetically warped environment; Orkney is renowned for its beauty which hinders the reader from acknowledging the problems that this apparently unspoilt environment is facing. The writer also sees nylon-dependence as a 'process of humiliation' (p.51); this embedded critique echoes through *Tender Geometries* with the same prevalence of polymeric material in the real world. The Flavobacterium sp. K172,⁴⁶ otherwise known as nylon-eating bacteria, is seen in its individuality: 'the humiliation of each/ bacterium suspends the motivation of our care' (p.51). Dickinson does not critique the bacteria for what it can do. The humiliation reverberates in the human; primarily, for creating its menu, and secondly, for using the bacteria as a way of desensitising from the *nylonase* problem, despite polymer degradation in the natural environment being a great challenge (Sudhakar et al. 2007, p.144). The use of this concept encourages the reader to reconsider their more-than-human situatedness, and relates to Michelle Neimann's notion of humility; this is 'not only a humble attitude toward the unpredictable changes we face, but also the willingness to slow down and act, improvisationally, in the scales available to us' (Niemann 2017, p.255).

Dickinson's eco-elegiac entanglements enable him to paint a true picture of the environment that he is exploring, coupled with the mysticism of the *unknown other*, by way of which the reader is allowed a glimpse into land and sea. From the radical landscape poetry in *Tender Geometries* emerges a problematic environment, where the human and nonhuman witness change: agriculture and aquaculture are coupled with plastic pollution, and diseases of domesticated species such as sheep.

⁴⁵ See 'Marine bacteria mediated degradation of nylon 66 and 6' (Sudhakar et al. 2007).

⁴⁶ See Sudhakar et al (2007, p.145).

The writer does not mourn an abstract loss, but real deaths, shadowed by the two heraldic figures of the raven and the cormorant. He is grounded in the grave that is being filled, whilst aware of the future implications of farming and plastic production, ‘doubtful of any and all hypotheses by which the event of loss or the crisis behind the poem could be readily resolved’ (Spargo 2010, p.3). Instead, Dickinson relies on facts, conveyed through the lyric, hoping to trigger the reader to the immediacy of these issues. At the end, there is hope; through nylon-eating bacteria, a shift in thinking and behaviours, and addressing the critiques to agriculture and aquaculture marking a change in the real landscape. Dickinson’s loss is a *hyperloss*, one ‘you cannot gather for’; yet he encourages the reader to ‘make it shine despite’ (p.43), focusing on what there is as well as what is lost. It relies on the eco-elegy’s atemporal capacity to *hurt* for past, present, and future; in turn, these entanglements build narratives of recovery and reconciliation.

The Sea Pen as Posthuman Metaphor

Using David Farrier’s theory on the poetics of sacrifice zones (2019, p.51) as a departure point for lyric engagement with monumental areas which otherwise ‘exist beyond the horizon of perception’ (2019, p.52), micro sacrifice zones are an important element of radical landscape poetry, as they defy his notions of distancing. They exist where the writer walks or swims, proximity playing a central role in human engagement. The sea pen in *Tender Geometries* functions as a posthuman metaphor which taps into different modes of interaction with the world. Dickinson embeds critique of the open-pen sea cage aquaculture industry by considering it in relation to the water and benthos surrounding it, the latter containing the sea pen cnidarian colony upon which the metaphor is built. The nonhuman layering suggests that the anthropogenic aquaculture sea pen is placed above the cnidarian sea pen, fish waste and chemicals falling onto the colony and fouling the water. It is a well-known fact that in the aquaculture industry, the sea pens pollute the surrounding waters, and can cause even greater risks in the case of escapism of farmed fish. The living conditions of such creatures have been widely contested; crowded pens, disease and essentially being eaten alive by sea lice often means that they live short, painful, and unnatural lives, akin to other animals in the farming industry (Cottee and Petersan 2009).

The sea pen is a type of wide-ranging cold water coral that resembles a quill pen through its ‘conspicuous polyp leaves’ (Williams 2011, p.2). Like other types of corals, it is a gathering of individual creatures, each with its own purpose, functioning as a *conscious collective*. This is in part mirrored by the fish in the aquaculture pen as they are forced into compact shoals and wait for food to come their way. Dickinson extends Neimanis’ new ‘feminist theories of embodiment into distinctly posthuman waters’ (2016, p.9) through the figure of the diver/cosmonaut. The plural *waters* suggest transcorporeality through the water that is being gulped, siphoned, and soaked by the bodies of fish, and sea pens, as well as the diver/cosmonaut. By submerging the human body into the body of water that these creatures inhabit, Dickinson dehierarchises it, as he is the one who cannot survive naturally in the aqueous environment. Conversely, neither fish nor sea pen can live outside the water, thus creating the need for the posthuman perspective of the diver/cosmonaut to descend into the watery depths. In one of the epigraphs of the *Sea Pens Pastoral Net* section ‘the Ocean became a symbol of reconciling opposites’ (Kinsella 2007 in Dickinson 2015, p.69), where the diver/cosmonaut encounters the mysterious *unknown other* world which can only be accessed temporarily, pending on environmental factors such as the weather. The diver/cosmonaut is distinct from the crew, which is

boat-bound; the equipment allows them to transcend into the realm of a deep-dive that would otherwise be inaccessible. The human becomes depersonified in their underwater armour, the experience of diving is likened to that of descending onto another planet. Paradoxically, there is more knowledge and data on other planets than there is on the global ocean (Saildrone 2018). *Tender Geometries* outlines these ‘fledgling movements to extend environmental concern to the bottom of the sea’ (Alaimo 2019, p.405).

Dickinson writes that ‘the ocean is also a function of language’ (p.71). His corporeal immersion deepens into the lyric water from which words naming his encounters are lifted and placed onto the page. The *Sea Pens Pastoral Net* section is subtitled by ‘[I rent the ocean]’, which further destabilises the hierarchy of the human; it also hints at the irony of capitalist situatedness, the last beneficiary of such an arrangement being the ocean itself. Dickinson emphasises the nonhuman suffering in aquaculture, ‘where pens of pain dealt plates of cloven subsidies / far from any sense’ (p.76), through the perspective of *posthumanist posthumanism*.⁴⁷ The carnal image on the plate of the body become-product-become-food raises the issue of ethics against economic benefit, the word ‘sense’ evokes both the irrationality of the situation, and the desensitisation that occurs when the origin of food ceases to be linked to the nonhuman. Through ‘penning the wild/ to narrow slits/ that quietly gasps’ (p.76), Dickinson embeds the metaphor of lyric confinement and refinement on the page. Along with the torturous confinement of the nonhuman, voicelessness and breathlessness prohibit speech, and life, respectively. The sea pens are seen as ‘permanent pastures’ (p.77), suggesting the endurance of the industry as well as the ironic fragility of colony of cnidarians on the sea floor.

The sea pen functions as a dual *tender geometry*; the fragility of the shoal of fish in the cylindrical cage is mirrored by that of the symmetry of the cnidarians. It is a water-based metaphor which can be linked to terrestrial animal enclosures. This then becomes a tool for posthumanist discourses and new materialist perspectives on modes of engaging with the nonhuman. The colony illustrates ‘matter’s connecting threads – the porous materiality made visceral by the enactments of human-nonhuman natures and bodies’ (Oppermann 2016a, p.279). The diver/cosmonaut is always outside of the sea pen, observing its inner workings from the perspective of freedom, considering it against the tethered benthic cnidarians:

Brilliant pulses of light// a quill of feather penning the deep swollen.
with water; within these colonial animals, the polyp is the individual.
Attempting to eat ethically can be confusing in any food sector today;
o-pen-pen; decisions at every turn (p.71)

Highlighting the ability of most cnidarian sea pens to bioluminesce (Williams 2011, p.4), the ‘brilliant pulses of light’ also refer to the light bouncing off the bodies of iridescent fish as they swim in the cage in a compact formation. From a transcorporeal perspective, Dickinson is ‘penning the deep swollen/ with water’, suggesting the writing of water with water. Its transparency is a lyric legible within the confinements of a material embodied perception. The verb ‘penning’ merges the process of writing with the restrictions of language, narrowed to carefully selected words on the page. Ethics is introduced directly as a problematic issue ‘in any food sector’; the playful-sounding ‘o-pen-pen’ critiques a farming method which is anything but open. This references the placement of the sea pens in open water, not the freedom of the individual. It gives rise to discussions related to ethical practices in the farming industry, as well as the treatment of the nonhuman as an insentient product. Furthermore, from an ethical standpoint, Dickinson’s use of ‘attempting’ and ‘decisions’, highlight

⁴⁷ See *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment* (2017, p.121).

the difficulty of ethical choices, as vegan products such as palm oil are causing enormous environmental destruction through vast industrial plantations that replace natural habitats.

There is a distancing in the writer's voice, hinting at the use of found text, which is used subtly through the collection. The phrase 'colonial animals' refers to the cnidarian's structure comprised of many individual polyps supported by a central axial rod, 'a brachial/ armature from the deep'. Dickinson regards the colony as a 'proto-forest' (p.74), constantly syphoning water instead of air. The suggestive permanence brings forth the impermanence of the cnidarian colony in light of environmental destruction. The sea pen polyps exist within 'their ongoing iteratively intra-active reconfiguring' (Barad 2012, p.77). The human is made aware that they are also part of the same more-than-human mesh.

Fish waste mixes with 'marine snow', which 'scarcely distributes through the spatial or the/ temporal beneath the euphotic depth where aphotic lingers on dearth' (p.71), settling in layers of toxicity. Similar to Larkin's poetics on the industrial forest, Dickinson's work recognises 'the existence of a networked world of interlaced organic and inorganic infrastructure' (Farrier 2019, p.60). The aquaculture farm is composed of multiple sea pens, functioning as a submerged industrial forest, a nonhuman tree canopy. The dead fish at the bottom of the sea pen mirror the bodies of the 'dead and swelling' (p.17) sheep at the beginning of *Tender Geometries*; the aquaculture sea pen becomes a tomb from which the remains of the fish are transferred to the benthos as they decay. Dickinson queries its pluri-nature by linking it both to the sea pen and the benthos beneath it: 'is this the excavated tomb or/ earth mound or tumulus' (p.17). The earth mound is also suggestive of the sea pen colony as a morphostructure, benthos and land being linked together through nonhuman presence.

In *Tender Geometries* the sea pen represents both cnidarian collective of polyps and cage containing farmed fish. Through its encapsulating forms, it becomes an extended metaphor for the lyric process, the act of penning or writing the sea and land in radical landscape poetry. Caught in the tangle of bodies, the cnidarian sea pen is an organised collective of individuals at anthropogenically induced risk. It bioluminesces because it is disturbed, yet human appreciation increases with aesthetics. Resting on the mound/tumulus of a decaying world, the sea pen illustrates poetry's potential to promote pro-environmental behaviours. It collates the essence of environmental problems encountered into lyric lines which in the reader's imaginarium raise the issue of what Dickinson calls 'the culpable and the responsible' (p.17). Combining aesthetics and inaesthetics into a posthuman discourse of ethical situatedness within the environment, the sea pen is perhaps the most *tender geometry* in Dickinson's work.

A Material Vegan Ecofeminist Reading

Tender Geometries proposes multifaceted ways of looking at and engaging with the nonhuman and more-than-human worlds, the identity of the human as an *entangled* participant within these spheres comes to light through radical landscape poetry. Dickinson's preoccupation with the nonhuman, in the landscape and on the page, builds upon a dehierarchised mode of observation specific to posthumanism, which coupled with an ethical stance allows *Tender Geometries* to be read from the perspective of material vegan ecofeminism, with which he becomes allied. Drawing on Gaard's theory on the subject as a mode of improving some of ecofeminism's earlier critiques, predominantly

essentialism (2017), Dickinson’s radical landscape poetry can be read from a posthumanist perspective that responds to and resonates with these issues through the lyric. This is linked to Gaard’s statement that ‘valuing emotion as well as reason, and activist praxis as well as theory, will require posthumanism to recuperate vegan feminist and ecofeminist theorizing that both precedes and companions the posthumanist project’ (2017, p.126). Drawing on *Tender Geometries*’ juxtaposed setting of land and water the material vegan ecofeminist discourse is an extended metaphor whose departure point takes place at the beginning of the collection:

Never fully reconciled this human
 that natural centripetal faith breaking apart the earth for a
 fresh field of the sky linked by day (p.13)

Through the emphasised dichotomy human-natural Dickinson opens the chiasmic problem of connectivity. Reconciliation lies at the background of the collection through the extended metaphors and deictic shifts that are introduced. ‘Centripetal faith’ suggests an embedded critique of human hierarchy and a need for rethinking the position of the human with regards to nonhuman and more-than-human relationships which are anthropogenically dominated. The earth being broken apart for agricultural perspectives highlights the human’s transformative power in the landscape as well contrasting with the gravedigging scene later in this section: symbolically soil becomes enriched through organic matter to enrich the human.

The Anthropocene stands at the background of this destabilised relationship with the nonhuman and more-than-human. Light plays an important part in *Tender Geometries*, as is required by plants to grow, and enlarges the quality of, and observable distance. This contrasts with the aquatic environment in the collection, where light penetrates to a certain depth, but the benthos where the cnidarian sea pen colony lives is aphotic (p.71); bioluminescence functioning as mode of lighting, which can be seen to symbolise hope in human, nonhuman, and more-than-human *reconciliation*, a bettered way of being in the world. Drawing attention to Böhme’s theory on our connection with the nonhuman, Rigby states that:

In becoming more respectful of our earth others and of the network of interrelationships that facilitate our collective flourishing, we also secure a practical advantage: rather than burdening ourselves with the impossible task of global environmental management, the ethos of alliance could enable us to create largely self-regulating ecological (i.e. socio-natural) complexes (*ökologische Gefügen*), which would be conducive to human well-being while simultaneously respecting the interactive autopoiesis of other-than-human nature. (Rigby 2011, p.141)

Dickinson’s networks of connection bring forth renewed ways of the autopoiesis of other-than-human nature, which in the context of my research refers to nonhuman and more-than-human nature combined. Drawing on David Abram’s new environmental ethic, these radical landscape texts encourage ‘a renewed attentiveness to this perceptual dimension that underlines all our logics, through a rejuvenation of our carnal, sensorial empathy with the living land that sustains us’ (Abram 1997, p.69). Through embedded critique of human behaviours, the poems in *Tender Geometries* are suggestive of corrective practices. Dickinson draws upon the sentiency of nonhuman creatures that is otherwise ignored:

*I’ve heard of a being
 Gathered from rocks*

*Boiled with heart and lungs
(The water salted)*

*And brought to a house
In secret*

*Its limited extent
Hung upon a wall*

*In wind and rain;
Until I remembered (p.58)*

Dickinson suggests the anonymous nonhuman ‘being’ as iconic for any foraged creature that succumbs to the boiling pot. The internal organs are an important posthuman connection that other beings possess, and they also imply sentience. The house and the wall highlight the linear geometries of human habitation, the act of *hanging* is the ultimate failure; the nonhuman body becomes a commodity, ethics symbolically hung on the same nail. The ‘limited extent’ of the nonhuman can be seen as a human desensitisation which leads to a restricted view disregarding ethical and empirical complexities. Dickinson uses the phrase ‘climates of change’ (p.70) to reflect not on the issue of climate change (which has fallen out of fashion in favour of *climate disaster* and *ecocatastrophes*) but the change that starts with the human, the necessary realignment within the world which does not neglect the struggles that other humans are facing, but considers all human and nonhuman struggles from a dehierarchised perspective which opens new avenues for thinking around human and nonhuman entanglements.

Dickinson adopts the sort of posthuman feminist phenomenology employed by Neimanis, where ‘developing imaginaries that might allow us to relate differently’ (2016, p.15). The figure of the cosmonaut descending into the water is ‘torn from the field’ and ‘transgresses error’ (p.72), groundedness being seen as a limitation which is overcome through submersion, altering known and felt forces such as gravity. This reinforces Clark’s idea of ‘the disjunction between day-to-day perception (land-based, limited in scale) and broader decisive realities that are as out of sight as the ocean depths’ (2019, p.117) needing transcending in order to better human and other-than-human relationships. In this respect the ocean cannot be ignored. The presence of the water as intimate inner/outer substance instead of a distant panoramic and inaccessible place is highlighted a common ground, and whilst not everyone can become the diver/cosmonaut, accessing an alternative mode of thinking around waters can help shape a collective posthuman perspective which would promote real world change outside the lyric.

Dickinson sees the ocean as a ‘body of disruptive waters’ (p.18), which do not adhere to the *tender geometries* that the human eye is so accustomed to, but are unpredictable, untameable, and for the main part represent an *unknown other* which can only be discovered in small increments over the course of a long timeframe. He distinguishes between ‘the earth of sky and the earth of ground’ (p.18); the former can be seen to represent the surfaces of water onto which the sky is reflected, also reinforcing the diver/cosmonaut metaphor that he uses through the collection. There is an interconnectedness of the two which spans through metaphor to represent a landscape neither liquid nor solid, but in perpetual transformation, water wetting and drying of the land, whilst land is uncovered and *recovered* by the ebb and flow of tides. In Dickinson’s poem ‘[Thresholds]’, ‘every

blade of grass/ is a singular wave// where the sea caresses/ insight’ (p.109), the border is blurred and fluid. This can be translated into the human, nonhuman, and more-than-human transcorporeality as linked through water.

Waters can thus be seen as a hyperobject (Mentz 2013). However, acknowledging its features in that respect should not prevent or inhibit further discourses about waters, but provide entry points into the materiality of water as an inner/ outer bodily substance, along with all its ecological and cultural complexities. The function of water in *Tender Geometries*’ networks of connection is as a transcorporeal agent which brings human and other-than-human spheres closer, ‘un surfacing the solid’ (p.18). Dickinson’s considerations of water reinforce the fact that ‘we all contain water in about the same ratio as Earth does, and salt water in the ratio that the oceans do’ (Morton 2013). This is further expanded into the notion of salt as a natural preservative:

Where salt crumbs meat
 A cow
 a-sang the t-
 Error; align elegiac
 Who pierces the septum or clips the weaning ring (p.51)

This crucial passage in *Tender Geometries* illustrates an important critique not just of the meat industry but also the dairy industry. Dickinson explores the elegiac aspects of a calf who will either be raised for slaughter, or to tread into its mother’s footsteps as a sexual slave, forcefully impregnated until the body can withstand it no longer, then sent to slaughter. The verb ‘sang’ encompasses the pain of the severed bond, and the failed attempts of the calf to latch on. Denying it its mother’s milk in a violent way, as most weaning rings being designed with spikes that irritate the teat, cause it to be pushed away. This reinforces the rupture with which the reader becomes entangled. The ‘terror’ and ‘error’ of the practice of nonhuman mother and child separation for the human benefit represented by the dairy industry raises issues of vegan ecofeminism and highlight a flawed mode of thinking; the ample caesurae function to further elongate the human-imposed rift. As a material vegan ecofeminist, Dickinson is not impartial to the human disembodiment he proposes by ‘who’, which suggests the desensitisation of affective bonds encountered in nonhuman creatures, and reinforces the indifference felt when there is profit to be made from nonhuman slavery. The milk that is denied the calf is a nutritious *salty* water that emphasises the vegan feminism and ecofeminism proposed by Gaard (2017).

There is an intimacy in Dickinson’s watery entanglements which ‘involves closeness with beings who may or may not be sentient’ (Morton 2010a, p.7), assuming that sentiency is the possession of a central nervous system, which would include pain receptors. The sea pens birds, fish, and mammals in *Tender Geometries* either possess a central nervous system or a nerve net (in the case of the sea pen), therefore displaying sentiency. There is an obvious critique of carnist and vegetarian anthropo-behaviours, the weaning ring is a symbol for severing the innate connection of the human with the nonhuman and more-than-human spheres. Additionally, the intimacy that both human and nonhuman bodies share with plastic is not to be seen in the meat consumed by humans, especially in the bodies of fish. Carol J Adams’ concept of the ‘absent referent’ (1991, p.136) is made visible in *Tender Geometries*’ networks of connection through the aquaculture and agriculture industries which are entangled as equally elegiac and harmful, through material feminist epistemologies that link ‘human corporeality with nonhuman life processes’ (Oppermann 2013, p.27). There is an aspect of pedagogy in Dickinson’s use of interdisciplinary terminology which forces the reader to look up terms as *flavobacterium* and *nylonase*, which can open new avenues of investigation outside the lyric, spanning

across posthuman, material, and vegan ecofeminist discourses. ‘Weaning ring’ (p.51) might not be a term that many are familiar with, yet a quick online search reveals its hidden cruelty.

Reading Dickinson as a material vegan ecofeminist reveals the reasoning behind the embedded carnist and vegetarian critiques in the text, and the ethical trope which weaves its way through it. The *problematic* landscape that the writer is confronted by works as a case study for other coastal landscapes around the world, where similar situations may be encountered. Dickinson’s ‘pens of luxury’ (p.77) are a symbol of capitalist confinement for both aquatic and terrestrial animals. The ecofeminist stance in this section does not mean to exclude the struggle of human women, and any other disadvantaged groups who are battling unfair system, prejudice, and inequality. However, it seeks to include the pain of the voiceless nonhumans whose identity has been erased in a destabilised system. *Tender Geometries* is a compendium of human error and attempts to fix various problems such as the plastic *tide*, rearing and murdering animals on an industrial scale for profit, and destroying the land upon which these practices happen. Dickinson explores these issues through careful and subtle use of terminology and metaphor to illustrate that the relationship between human and other-than-human spheres can be bettered, should ethics, compassion, and a renewed sense of dwelling in the world be employed.

Nature without Nylon

In *Tender Geometries* there is a *guerrilla war* between human and nylon. From a new materialist posthumanist perspective Dickinson’s networks of connection are entangled in nylon: ‘lively organisms, inorganic matter, and Titanic forces blend and clash to expose human frailties, arrogance, and negative capabilities’ (Oppermann 2016a, p.279). Humans and nonhumans face the same threat, as bordered bodies who cannot stop microplastics from entering them; this Anthropocene trope is part of the real and lyric worlds. The focus on plastic in these radical landscape poems promotes an interdisciplinary dialogue to address the environmental changes of the more-than-human world. Gathered in two sections, *Nylonase* (p.45) and *Sea Pens Pastoral Net* (p.65), nylon suggests an intimacy with human and nonhuman bodies which might not be immediately visible. By using the term *nylon*, Dickinson refers to a group of synthetic polymers which have been melt processed into fibres, filaments, bristles or sheets (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2009). Other writers such as Evelyn Reilly have also focused on plastic; her collection *Styrofoam* (2009) looks at expanded polystyrene foam (EPS), which is another form of plastic. This problem spreads across sea and land; however, it is easy to forget about plastic once it enters the sea, until it washes up on beaches or congregates into floating monoliths such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

The writer stays with the troubles,⁴⁸ introducing the reader to the problematics of plastics through a material definition: ‘The property of plastic / to accurately appropriate the physical/ “potential”’ (p.49). There is an embedded critique within Dickinson’s lines; the ‘potential’ highlights plastic’s capacity to be molded into virtually any shape, and the negative consequences brought about by creating ever more plastic. The writer begins the next untitled poem in this section by introducing the reader to ‘linear polyamide’, obtained through a melt-spinning process which produces a ‘star branch

⁴⁸ See *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Haraway 2016).

chain' (p.51) of molecules.⁴⁹ Whilst the terminology used might not be within every reader's grasp, Dickinson draws attention to the importance of naming. The text can be used as a starting point for a different relationship with plastic; one which can trigger interesting epistemologies of disentanglement allowing the plastic component of the climate crisis to be tackled collectively, and not by small, dispersed groups at a global level.

The task of removing every single piece of plastic from water and land seems impossible, as plastics usually break down into microscopic pieces, entering the trophic chain in hyper-entanglements; through them they reach the human bodies who consume the creatures containing them. Sadly, not even those on a plant-based diet can escape plastic predation; it enters the body via the air, water and products consumed (Zhang et al. 2020). Ursula Heise refers to posthumanist strains of thought as 'philosophical and political skepticism toward the integrity and centrality of the human subject in both its individual and collective dimensions' (Heise, Christensen, and Niemann 2017, p.4). The critique that the term has received in recent years seems to fit within this framework, not simply by centring the 'anthropo', but by placing all humans in the same category, whilst true power rests with a global capitalist minority who hides behind the curtain. The Anthropocene according to McKenzie Wark has brought with it a 'belatedly cultural discovery that we all live in a biosphere and in a state of advanced metabolic rift' (2015). The need to revert this rift is reinforced by Dickinson's dual considerations of organic and plastic entanglements: the aquaculture sea-pen is placed above the benthic cold water sea pen coral (p.71), 'a harrowing / wren/ irks the fieldfare/ along a twine of mass', and 'where the wild/ curbs/ encountering/ pins / & nylon/ without promise' (p.54). In *Tender Geometries* both the tangle represented by the assemblage of plastic debris, and the *entanglement* as process become tropes for more-than-human interconnectedness through organic and inorganic matter. The plastic that we carry in our bodies could have been carried by other human or nonhuman bodies throughout the trophic chain.⁵⁰ Dickinson deconstructs the nylon fabrication method in the *i. (Sp. K172)* section:

In the process of humiliation we are fabricating a nylon soul so that all the doors are closed adhering to the guidelines. The amorphous regions contribute elasticity and the crystalline regions contribute strength and rigidity. What does this region contribute? (p.51)

The 'nylon soul' in this passage represents the de-humanisation that is at risk through producing plastic on a vast scale; the artificiality of such a construct borders on kitsch and the grotesque. There is also a suggestion of impermeability, which from a new materialist perspective is dangerous, and hinders the transcorporeality of crucial more-than-human interconnections. The 'amorphous' and 'crystalline' regions are treacherous, as they refer to the inorganic regions of plastic, not as a body, but as a product. The end question encapsulates more-than-human potentiality. A bodily region might prompt focus towards the heart and mind—the feeling and thinking dualism, which combined might lead to pro-environmental behaviours. A biosphere suggests a different type of contribution, where environmental qualities are outweighed by capitalist-oriented modes of economic contribution; more-often-than-not these lead to the destruction of ecosystems. Closed doors represent a lack of opportunities to reverse the changes that are happening due to plastic pollution, whilst 'adhering to the guidelines' emphasises that they are man-made ones, applying linearity and structure to a borderless, diverse, and dynamic world. The 'process of humiliation' of plastic production is an important element especially when it comes to the human. Dickinson is subtly using found text to satirise the ideology that is wrapped in the guidelines. What has been created is taking over the planet and can no longer be controlled; the guidelines that are desired no longer apply to waste-plastic. The ultimate

⁴⁹ See 'Preparation and characterization of star-shaped nylon 6 with high flowability' (Fu et al. 2011).

⁵⁰ See 'Preliminary study on bisphenol A levels and possible exposure history of mother and exclusively breastfed infant pairs' (Sayici et al. 2019).

humiliation is represented by plastic penetrating the human body. Through this act, the human body is violated, proving that the strict bodily borders which are taken for granted, are in fact permeable and transcendable. Neimanis refers to bodies of water, proposing ‘a different kind of “hydrological cycle”’ (2016, p.6) that ties us to other more-than-human bodies. Concurrently, *bodies of plastic* offers a similar set of interconnections, as plastic travels through these bodies via their aqueous routes. Dickinson further critiques this abundance in the *i. (Sp. K172)* section:

6, 6, accumulation
of the unwanted tan-
gles of structures; fabri-
cating forceful ballis-
tics. How many metres,
(spelt meter) did we make? (p.53)

The short lines reinforced by the forced line-breaks, are an attempt at destabilising the otherwise pervasive linearity of the nylon thread. Preceding this passage are two stanzas in which Dickinson focuses purely on the hydrogen bonding process that produces nylon 6, 6, most common in the textile and plastic industries. Another anthropo-critique is contained in the passage ‘Let this hydrogen think/ about problems’ (p.53). Additionally, questioning what nylon 6, 6 does, he replies: ‘materials of/ slow decaying war’ (p.53). It is this war against plastic that is being brought forth as an immediate and serious threat. Each stanza on this page starts with ‘6, 6’; chant-like, these two seemingly harmless numbers are surrounding us at present. Plastic is everywhere, part of the lyric dimension of *Tender Geometries*, and in the material composition of the book itself. The ‘6, 6, accumulation’ referring to nylon 6, 6, is ‘unwanted’, yet it is simultaneously being ‘fabricated’; the end question queries quantity, or in the case of spin-molded nylon, *length*. The extra explicative ‘meter’ is a reinforced disguise, whilst the question borders on the rhetorical; an honest answer in any scenario is *too much*. The second person plural address and use of found text in the last line represents an anthropo-collective, the writer being complicit in the process. Dickinson also suggests that the meter of the lyric is distinct from the measurement of length.

On a global scale, it is impossible to comprehend or visualise the *hyperplastic* that is out there. Due to it breaking down into small particles such as nurdles (<5mm), and even smaller micro and nano plastics, it is everywhere. From this perspective, plastic can be seen as a hyperobject (Morton 2013). Most aquaculture sea-pen nets are made of nylon, with discarded fishing equipment representing 42% of all ocean litter (Kirk 2020). Nylon as a micro-plastic is an *unknown other*, present in the body of water as well as human and nonhuman bodies; it links all these bodies to what Morton calls the ‘infinite garbage heap’ (2010a, p.8). This is not just a vast oceanic trash vortex, but a new materialist plastic entanglement which fouls the more-than-human bodies. ‘Any given piece of waste plastic is itself a shadow place, drifting in the currents of a vast, oceanic sacrifice zone’ (Farrier 2019, p.11); in this case, the sacrifice zones transcend these bodies through the plastic they contain. Dickinson’s text draws the line between this much needed dichotomy of plastic and organic, reminding the reader that there is an urgent need for a radical rethinking of our *plastic ways*. The entanglements that the reader might exclude themselves from are inevitable, as plastic is present in their own bodies.

Conclusion

Tender Geometries' radical landscape poems are networks of connection, offering a unique lyric voice to the environmental humanities, which captures the landscape and seascape of the Orkney coast encountered during fieldwork. Speaking to a posthuman transcorporeal mode of engagement, this work is centred within a blue poetics' framework dominated by the diver/cosmonaut metaphor. Liquid and solid are merged in a hybrid which mirrors more-than-human entanglements. The 'shimmering/ waver/ of the soil// glimmering// transparent/ in covers/ of dulse' (p.113), reminds the reader of borderlines and the transmutability of water; the human body finds itself in constant liquid dynamics.

Plastic plays an important part in unifying human and more-than-human spheres. Plastic-eating bacteria collectively known as nylonase is used to promote a way forward despite the global plastic problem getting out of hand. Dickinson's eco-elegiac entanglements shape the reader's understanding of the more-than-human, highlighting the mutual effects of anthropogenic environmental destruction from a posthuman perspective of ethically concerned observation, which is translated into the lyric. *Tender Geometries* contains embedded critiques to the farming and aquaculture industries, with particular attention to the impact of the latter on the sea pen cold water coral. The common threat posed by plastic polymers in the water and soil promotes an interdisciplinary dialogue, emphasising the need to address the environmental changes of the more-than-human world. There is shared hurt, and a renewed sense of ethics arises from these experiences. In the lyric, tender geometries are recalibrated 'in the circular corridors of the wild / swallowing all the light of/ the world / as a hole in the dark / feeding' (p.18). Dickinson's blue poetics reinforces Neimanis' need 'to think *with* water, and even *learn* from water' (2016, p.28), destabilising the fixed bodily borders that the human is accustomed to. This is placed in the water through the figure of the diver/cosmonaut, who immerses into the *unknown other*, and brings its mysteries onto the page. Whoever embarks on Dickinson's excursion will emerge with a sense of personal entanglement in the world and an appreciation of water; this is felt at the very least through the materiality of the physical object *Tender Geometries*, the making of which would have been impossible without water.

CODA - quadrat

Fibisan's *Quadrat* series comprises ten poems which result from fieldwork undertaken on the Cornish coast in the United Kingdom from 2016-2019, notably around Looe Beach, Hannafore Point, Second Beach, St. George's Island (also called Looe Island), and the Looe Estuary. The series is moulded onto the structure of an intertidal shore survey, comprising one tidal height as derived from the citizen science project *Capturing our Coast* (Marine Conservation Society). It is structured in ten 50x50 cm quadrats. The quadrat frame has been scaled down on the page to half the size, for ease of print.

During a quadrat survey the precise location is recorded via Global Positioning System as a requirement on the recording sheet. Despite some of the quadrat poem titles being place names, they do not try to capture one square metre of the shoreline, but a much greater expanse of the landscape, and what it means to be immersing oneself in it for a particular amount of time. Dickinson's *Littoral* (2005) and *Tender Geometries* play an important part in shaping Fibisan's coastal thinking and

contribute, alongside Tarlo's work, to more innovative and conceptual explorations of the lyric. Drawing on open-field poetics, concrete poetry, and interdisciplinary survey methods, Fibisan's poems align themselves with material vegan ecofeminist beliefs. They contain embedded critiques to carnist and vegetarian practices, whilst adhering to feminist posthumanism's 'deeply ethical orientation' (Neimanis 2016, p.15).

There are two opposing atmospheres captured in the series: the eco-elegiac and hydroelegiac stance of an environment which is *hurting*, and the playfulness of the discovery of the *unknown other* represented by more-than-human elements. Suffering is mirrored and shared in 'Quadrat 5: Ron & Joy'; this entanglement is brought forth through the image of the *shore girl*, who 'reaches to concluding/ catastrophe' in 'depleted water'; she is shadowed by the memorial bench which is used as a geographic marker in the landscape. In 'Quadrat 10: Bare rock' the 'absence of fauna' is documented, and the alarm is raised 'when there is nothing left to count'. The text gradually misbehaves, much like the more-than-human encountered during fieldwork, the quadrat is unable to contain either the lyric or the superimposed grid. The text in the series is displayed organically, drawing upon similar practices employed by Tarlo and Dickinson. Emphasis is placed upon sound and rhythm, and ways of reading the lines, which work arbitrarily. This allows the reader to discover the poem in a similar way to conducting a quadrat count; randomness in performance shapes a new iteration with each reading. During the editing process Fibisan felt that moving text was a process similar to moving pieces on a chessboard, the start of the game being the transferal of the draft onto the grid on the page.

Drawing on Neimanis's notion of *hydrofeminism*, the *Quadrat* poems perceive watery embodiment to connect the human to the other-than-human spheres. This 'reveals that in order to connect bodies, water must travel across only partially permeable membranes' (2012app. 90-91). The land and sea merge in the same way as Dickinson's *Tender Geometries*, the intertidal 'substrate/ [is] doused/ in shoals of/ shattered water' ('Quadrat 10: Bare rock'). Adhering to Tarlo's exclusion of the lyric I, the *Quadrat* series relies on an encompassing posthuman 'we', which is occasionally adopted by Dickinson. This draws on Neimanis' notion of bodies of water living 'in common'; this commonality needs 'to extend beyond the human, into a more expansive sense of "we"' (2016, p.16). In 'Quadrat 8: Ballantine Scale', 'we find our way/ through species/ as indicators'; there is a sense of mutual discovery, coupled with a sense of situatedness. The material vegan ecofeminist perspective is reinforced through embedded critique using the second person plural as a collective in 'Quadrat 2: St George's Island': 'we harvest the same beds/ illusion of abundance/ *productive environments*' draws attention to non-vegan human foraging practices. These deplete sources of food for natural predators, already under significant amounts of environmental stress. Fibisan's use of this pronoun challenges what Neimanis terms the 'myth of the "we" within a nonetheless mutually implicating ontology' (2016, p.19).

The tangibility of the inter-tidal nonhuman sphere is confronted by the encounter of molluscs, cnidarians, and crustaceans whose bodies and lives are only accessible through interdisciplinary knowledge, and an awareness of inter-tidal exploration techniques. Fibisan recognises that 'scientific schematizations can overtake the body-as-lived, in all of its fluctuating and interpermeating complexities' (Neimanis 2016, p.60). The quadrat poems urge the reader to look horizontally and vertically; the micro and macro modes of viewing and the shift in posthuman perspective illustrate the dynamics of a constantly changing environment. Similar to Dickinson's use of the figure of the diver/cosmonaut, sometimes the gaze is mediated; this happens in the 'Quadrat 3: Offshore' poem, where the benthos is observed through the glass-bottom boat. The boat becomes a metaphor for viewing the *alien* world below, where 'panes of glass/ reinforce distance/ divide otherness'. This

reinforces the *unknown other* which can only be experienced through intentional modes of discovery, where the gaze and/or the body is immersed into the water and becomes *entangled* with the more-than-human.

At the end of *Littoral*, Dickinson undergoes a ritualistic rebirth from the sea, echoing the work of Peter Larkin: ‘Encountering a coat of mail upon the rocks I dreamt of lais, & sang a song peppered with salt chapped lips,/ I croaked then drowned and raised again a Lazarus to tides’ (Dickinson 2010). The human is not only fully exposed to the elements and the sea but drowns and is reborn through a process of immersion:

‘By being in the world, through an intimacy of a thorough immersion, poetry can radically re-engage with otherness and begin to propagate alternative ways of seeing and occupying place, or at the very least, remind us of the intimacy and otherness of our surroundings. Not by relocating the human body as the central process, but as a part of a process of being within and with the world’ (Dickinson 2010)

Dickinson’s poem ends with an ontological restructuring of the human and more-than-human within the environment that they both share. This also happens in ‘Quadrat 1: Growth Lines’, where the passage ‘blue blooded casts/ intertidal scatterings/ pairs coming together’ illustrates the more-than-human entanglement, elevating the latter rather than dehierarchising the former; this ‘combines a cognitive with an effective and ethical dimension’ (Zapf 2002, p.160). The intertidal landscape aids this practice by drawing the writer’s attention to the ground as a privileged benthic place which is only accessible by foot for a few hours at a time.

The palimpsestic elements of the *Quadrat* poems were illustrated in practice during the *Trespass Exhibition* at the Sheffield Institute of Arts, as part of a large-scale installation of five quadrats displayed along a tape measure, which was elevated to replicate an intertidal topography (See Figure 8). The rationale of the installation regarded the inter-tidal practice of fieldwork as a form of trespass. The quadrats were palimpsestically grouped together as image-poem-quadrat, where the quadrat trespasses on the shoreline during shore surveys, the text trespasses and draws on both the image and the frame (See Figure 9).



Figure 7. Veronica Fibisan, *Shore survey* (large-scale installation).

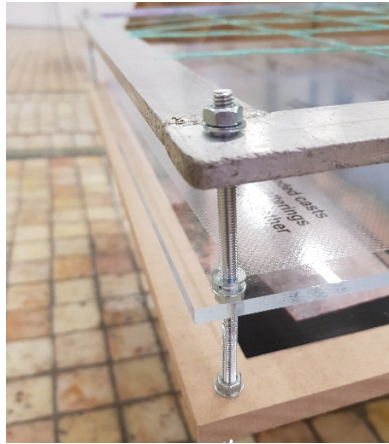


Figure 8. Veronica Fibisan, *Shore survey* (large-scale installation - detail)

Plastic plays an important part in the *Quadrat* series, paralleling Dickinson's nylon entanglements, and Tarlo's discarded objects narrative. Fibisan's posthuman perspective brings together the more-than-human interconnectedness, not just through shared water, but also through shared plastic; travelling through bodies, plastic pollutes them. Similar to Dickinson, she sees this as one of the most powerful modes of humiliation and self-humiliation, drawing on plastic's ability to camouflage, 'entering the food chain' (Quadrat 7: Surge channel). The nonhuman also resembles it at times, a 'great shoal of sprat' is confused for 'silver plastic shards/ in the water' (Quadrat 5: Ron & Joy). The process works in reverse in the eyes of nonhuman creatures, where a plastic bag 'transmutes/ to jellyfish' (Quadrat 6: Sentient substrate).

The tenth quadrat stands out from the series as a white-on-black negative. Titled 'Bare rock', it focuses on a shore survey's recording sheet of filling in the area that does not contain either flora or fauna, and it is an important part to monitor. Bare rock plays an important part in monitoring grazers and other species; at appropriate shore heights, also the distribution of barnacles. From an elegiac perspective, the poem highlights the loss of intertidal species and the importance to 'raise the alarm/ when there is/ nothing/ left / to/ count' (Quadrat 10: Bare rock). It draws upon the absence, and not the presence, of intertidal flora and fauna; the terrain is being subjected to trampling, and 'teased/ to dilapidation'. The 'sole level' reinforces the posthuman perspective by drawing the reader's gaze downwards and suggesting an affective mode of viewing coupled with a cognitive change of more-than-human situatedness.

Fibisan's *Quadrat* series is an experimental more-than-human entanglement on the Cornish coast, in Looe Bay. Using the structure of an inter-tidal shore survey, the ten poems are displayed in scaled-down quadrat frames of 25cm. Stemming from fieldwork comprising shore surveys, and intertidal exploration, they alternate between micro and macro modes of viewing, the gaze shifting vertically and horizontally. Drawing on Dickinson and Tarlo's creative work, Fibisan's radical landscape poems present a posthuman viewpoint which draws upon the ethics and aesthetics of nonhuman creatures, containing embedded critiques to the meat industry, and the angling industry. Plastic is a trope in the series, and various modes engagement with it are highlighted, as well as the humiliation experienced when it enters both bodies. The *Quadrat* series is an immersive exploration of space and place on the

Cornish coast, and opens new modes of thinking in the reader's imaginarium. It invites them to conduct shore surveys of their own and become citizen scientists.

CHAPTER 3

Swims

Then, at first light, the delicate descent begins
to a bed we only imagine, the floor
we never see, all heaving crevices
and knuckled weed.
(R. Padel, *The Mara Crossing*, p.85)

Introduction

Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's debut collection *Swims* (2017) contains a series of twelve poems written as a result of the writer's wild swimming across the United Kingdom. It comprises separate swim sessions with an interlude titled 'Poems for my Father' (p.49). The waters that she immerses herself into include lakes, rivers, seas, and public pools, spread across a wide variety of locations. *Swims* emerges alongside other collections of immersive writing such as Rita Wong's *undercurrent* (2015), and Ágnes Lehóczky's *Swimming Pool* (2017). It stems from the growth in popularity of both wild and outdoor swimming, but the structure is more closely linked to Roger Deakin's *Waterlog: A Swimmer's Journey Through Britain* (1999). People are taking to water; most of them are drawn to the thrill of the experience, and the desire to exercise. However, wild swimming entails accessing natural bodies of water as encountered in the landscape, providing an alternative understanding of place.

Burnett's swimwork is local yet enmeshed in the global body of water, in constant dialogue with the hydrodynamic forces that shift volumes of liquid on and through the Earth's surface. She translates the inner and outer *blue synergies* onto the page and into the lyric, being acutely aware of her surroundings; linking her thoughts and experiences to wider hydrofeminist concerns, she creates networks of connection similar to those of Mark Dickinson's *Tender Geometries* (2015). Outlining the borderless transcorporeal body from the 'Preface' poem, Burnett challenges the reader with the lines 'To not end where you thought you did/ not with skin but water' (p.15). Her awareness of more-than-human entanglements plays an important role in translating the swim; the palimpsestic nature of the poem works across the landscape and through the water in the complex discourse of the immersed body. Burnett departs from pure posthumanist considerations towards a new ecofeminist mode of thinking, due to its limitations with regards to gender and other intra-human inequities, and a scholarship that does not require activism (Gaard 2017, p.119). Through *swimwork* rather than fieldwork, Burnett navigates the wild waters of the British mainland and the English Channel.⁵¹

Burnett's experimental work stems from the experience of the wild swim, which is translated onto the page. Once her body enters the *uncharted* waters, decisions and alterations must be made as the swim unfolds. Direct factors such as the depth, temperature, safety, and turbulence of the water, as well as

⁵¹ 'Wild waters' refers to bodies of fresh and salt water as encountered in the landscape, i.e., lakes, rivers, and seas.

the weather, and anthropogenic structures are of conceptual concern to the lyric here. This type of life-territory speaks of temporary aqueous immersion in order to observe and discover part of the *unknown other*. A reading of Burnett's poems as songlines and message sticks draws upon some of the issues that Alice Oswald focuses on in her collection *Dart* (2010), facilitating a connection to the land and water from which the human is a part of. Within this context, the radical landscape genre's openness and versatility emerges as the meditative quality of swimwork weaves the water into songline; when the writer inscribes and sends a message stick across the surface of the lyric, the environmental concerns of this genre are grounded in the lyric; the inscriptions travel beyond the singularity of the message stick, to the writer's swimming costume, and ultimately to the page. Burnett considers 'our bodies' wet constitution as inseparable from these pressing ecological questions' (Neimanis 2016, p.4), which affect waters more than they do any other type of environment. Hydrofeminism plays an important part in Burnett's posthuman discourse, as it draws upon elements of new ecofeminism to establish renewed more-than-human links. Polymers are a transcorporeal factor in Burnett's discussions, raising important questions about the notions of borders and bodily boundaries. Hydroelegy, which draws on eco-elegy, is most intense in the *Interlude* titled 'Poems for my Father'. It spreads across the collection as mode of processing the changes observed during swimwork, and experiences of Burnett's own body as it is being immersed into the twelve bodies of water explored. The hydroelegiac mode operates at the forefront of blue poetics as imperative to the loss of *clean* inner and outer bodily waters, as well as the destruction of aqueous life-territories or blue extinction; more so, the threats posed by dynamic waters (i.e., floods and tsunamis), as well as absent waters (i.e., droughts and inaccessible water due to infrastructure) are also explored here. The hydroelegiac reminds of the fact that species loss and harm go beyond the sublime of the poems, to destabilised ecosystems, and irreparable damage. *Swims* plunges the reader into the waters that they already unknowingly possess.

Swimwork - Walking, Wading, and Swimming

The act of swimming connects the human body to its more-than-human surroundings in a way that walking does not. Through cutaneous contact with the water during swimwork, Burnett experiences her environs from the dehierarchised position of the swimmer. She lowers herself into the body of water and experiences a shift in perspective, the palimpsestic opening being defined as:

To be at once
in the body
and under
and over it (p.13)

The layering water-body-water reconfigures Burnett's situatedness in relation to her surroundings, and allows her to embrace the wateriness of her own body by relinquishing her groundedness: 'already fallen/ already wet/ already missing/ from the earth' (p.14). The latter part of the passage can be linked to Dickinson's diver/cosmonaut metaphor, which sees the human body of the diver in the water as pertaining to the outer-world of cosmic space; through the joint extremities of benthos and exosphere, he observes 'the glint of the cosmonaut's sheen, the clods of cloud thickens, viscous' (Dickinson 2015, p.77). Similar to Oswald in both *Dart* (2010) and *A Sleepwalk on the Severn* (2009), during swimwork Burnett allows herself to 'record images and sounds encountered by the body moving in space; we

picture the mind processing multiple depths of field and instamatic surfaces rather than a rich, layered, historical palimpsest' (Bristow 2014/2015, p.11). For Burnett, the process of immersion works on both a physical and a cognitive level, reinforcing the meditative quality of the swim, where 'experience precedes, though perhaps does not fully supersede, intellectual analysis' (Mentz 2019a, p.434). The body of the swimmer reacts to physical cues which are processed against broader cultural and ecological thoughts.

Vanessa Daws uses the term *psychoswimography* to explore place through the act of swimming (2014): an aquatic take on psychogeography, which can be used to describe Burnett's swims coupled with the potency of radical landscape poetry. However, there is the added element of exploration when searching for a place to access a body of water. This happens in 'The Dart' poem, where Burnett is 'tracking for a point of entry' (p.63). Drawing on Neimanis' theory, swimming can be seen as a transcorporeal collaboration of the posthumanist kind (2012b, p.216). Burnett's aim is the creative output: the human and nonhuman actants that use the water as a life-territory or temporarily inhabit it are lending their selves to the poem; this raises awareness of water, and more broadly the environment, benefiting all parties involved in the collaboration. In his lecture titled *A Poem is a Walk*, A. R. Ammons considers the connections between walking and poetry, drawing on the fact that both are 'unreproducible' (1968, p.17); this also applies to swimming—each swim-session being a contained experience, from which the lyric swims emerge. Another connection that Ammons makes between walking and poetry, is the notion that it

occurs only in the body of the walker or in the body of the words. It can't be extracted and contemplated. It is nonreproducible and nonlogical. It can't be translated into another body. There is only one way to know it and that is to enter into it (1968, p.18)

As with fieldwork, during swimwork there is always an *unknown other* which cannot be discovered as is part of the more-than-human. The difference resides in the fact that whilst swimming, the *unknown other* is submerged, and could pose danger—as it may scratch, cut, or entangle the swimmer. In 'The Barle', Burnett finds herself with her 'legs against rock, knee-knocked' (p.23); the vulnerability of the exposed human body contrasts with the unseen substrate's resilience, signalling 'simultaneous resistance to and entanglement within macro structures' (Heddon and Turner 2012, p.236). The stages of the swim play an important part in the process of swimwork, the body being subjected to changes in temperature and perception; reduced gravity is coupled with the sensation of heaviness when exiting the water, where 'the body is called back into building into posture into slump' (p.64). There is a temporary disconnect with the body of water which allows the inner corporeal water to be discovered as it is drawn to the Earth.

Walking to the place of immersion is an important process which allows the swimmer to observe the body of water from an outsider's perspective. Burnett takes it in as a part of the landscape and allows it to grow with proximity until the edge of the water is reached, like an otherworldly threshold. This happens in her second swim, where 'the Barle creases land between stitches/ the earth has gathered into hills' (p.23). The river is seen to shape the posthuman landscape by pushing the earth up, rather than sinking into it, evoking a pseudo-tidal force which acts antithetically upon the land. A psychoswimographic poem's departure point starts here; this may or may not be included on the page.

In the poem 'Hampstead Heath', the first section starts with 'Go for a swim in the rain'; whilst the second section brings the reader one step closer to the water 'Rain stops a minute before entering the pond' (p.41). The materiality of the rain as meteorological phenomenon is coupled with

the transcorporeal element that binds the human body to the body of water before the swim has taken place; this works as posthuman prologue to the environmental act of Burnett's swim. Entering the water and wading is the overture to the swim—the feet are still in contact with the substrate, the water's increasing level captures the body as it ventures towards an appropriate swimming depth. The mud, concrete, gravel, or sand remind Burnett that water rests on the ground; the absorption of water and soil is mirrored in skin as it absorbs water. Sometimes finding depth can be difficult; this happens in 'The Dart' poem, where 'the satisfaction of finding a spot deep enough to swim in needs its own word' (p.63). Burnett proposes 'kelling', which she describes as 'signalling a joy at depth, like snorkelling without the snork' (p.63). This word is derived from the Old Norse 'kerling', also meaning 'woman', with some additional derogatory uses; these are washed away by the water to re-establish the position of women within a new ecofeminist framework.

Each swim is an openness of body to the more-than-human *conscious collective*—both aqueous and terrestrial, which reacts to its presence. Others swim towards, past, or away from it; fishes and amphibians dart sensing turbulence; birds in the reeds or overhead fly towards shelter. Ultimately, it is the human body in the water which is shelterless and vulnerable: 'the body crackles with distortion/ static of river heaves' (p.31). Some of Heddon and Turner's (2012) reflections on the vulnerability of walking women can also be applied to women who swim, both before and after they emerge from the water. Whilst submerged, the female body is concealed, adding a layer of protection compared to the walking female body. This also aligns with new ecofeminist modes of thinking which set aside the hierarchised gender discourse in favour of a more equal view of all oppressed human and nonhuman categories, and 'the ways in which an aqueous perspective torques our understanding of embodiment' (Neimanis 2016, p.31). The writer's body in the water is hidden, which becomes a prerequisite for embodiment.

Early Christian rites of baptism were recommended to be performed in 'running or "living" water' (Zimmermann 2020, p.86). Richard Kentish collates the health benefits of cold or sea bathing in *An essay on sea-bathing, and the internal use of sea-water* (1787), building upon this increasing bathing tradition, which was facilitated by expanding rail networks; this allowed a wider variety of people to access the seashore, along with other bodies of water outside of urban environments. Whilst connecting the enjoyment of an intentional activity to a posthuman transcorporeal swim, the act of observation plays a pivotal role in connecting Burnett to her more-than-human surroundings. Looking through, across, and out of the water allows her to recalibrate her vision of a world where water is always part of the picture. Calculations and considerations about modes of engagement with the world are made through this prismatic lens. 'Each moment of verse is itself a point of view, a being-in-point of view' (Cooperman 2001, p.186), also seen as 'a new way of moving on the earth' (p.33). Swimming on the page entails the dynamics of the lyric to be coupled with the open-field poetics that results from swimwork. In the same way in which for Burnett 'a walk is not a walk without a river' (p.63), a water is not a water without a swim, which acts as an imperative to psychoswimography.

As Burnett's body emerges from the water, it carries with it part of the water that it swam in; trapped in skin and crevices, transcorporeality is extended beyond the act of swimming; as sebum pushes the water-clogged skin back into place the process alters, yet continues—the swimmer's body being in contact with inner and outer waters beyond the swim-session:

Though we leave that body
there is no emergence.
There is no other body.

Silverlimbed

I rise (p.38)

Burnett reinforces the fact that despite leaving the water, the inner bodily water is something that she cannot relinquish. This trapped water plays an important part in how ‘we bring the poem forth from our bodies’ (Cooperman 2001, p.187). The epilogue of water’s materiality on the skin causes Burnett to become ‘silverlimbed’, hinting at a posthuman transcorporeality, coupled with the human/fish metamorphosis. This is revisited later in the poem where the writer is ‘laid out like a fish on a desk; wild in the eye and the hair and the skin’ (p.40). The fish simile is dissected in the creative work, the swimming body constantly reassessing its more-than-humanness. The poem in its foetal form is already there, waiting for the materiality of paper. Neimanis states that ‘our watery relations within (or more accurately *as*) a more-than-human hydrocommons thus presents a challenge to anthropocentrism, and the privileging of the human as the sole or primary site of embodiment’ (2016, p.4). For Burnett, this narrow-minded situatedness is avoided, the human body being seen amongst, and a part of the more-than-human hydrocommons with which she collaborates. Neimanis notes that this process is ‘a doing in-common more than a being-in-common’ (2012b, p.216). The act of swimming is the binding agent, the environmental act from which all the creative work stems.

Swimming requires the ability to swim—something that is innate to most mammals, including humans, and afterwards often forgotten. Burnett’s father, to whom the collection is dedicated, is the one who taught her to swim. The process is not learnt, but re-learnt; the body knows the mechanics, yet buoyancy can only be acquired if the swimmer learns to trust the water’s capacity to sustain, ‘against all odds to be buoyant’ (p.15). The difference between sinking and diving resides in that control. Crucial to this is the breath, also required in the creative work; regulated not as much by punctuation but by line length, caesurae, and stanza structure, the reader is encouraged to swim through the text, in joint breath and joint motion with it. Large caesurae, such as the one in the poem ‘Grasmere’, occurring between ‘still playing’ (p.38) and ‘[return]/ Man pulls fish’ (p.39) suggest a temporal emergence from the water, the long pause in the breath distinguishing between the acts of walking and swimming.

Through the three main stages of swimwork, Burnett explores the intermittent waters of her swimming environmental acts as a continuum, which highlights the watery entanglement with the more-than-human world. Her psychoswimography is rooted in the benthos. The shifted perspective of the human body collaborates with the more-than-human to produce radical landscape poems in which the words ‘water’ and ‘body’ are fluid, permeable, and posthuman. These twelve swims offer the reader a new mode of looking at and engaging with waters.

Lyric Life-territory

Burnett’s swimwork is a posthuman transcorporeal exploration of selected waters of the United Kingdom. As part of this discourse the writer’s entanglement in the more-than-human plays a key role in establishing inter-connections that go beyond historical, cultural, and political agendas, to viewing these localities as part of a *lyric life-territory*. Taking bioregionalism as its departure point, which is ‘the study of forms of life (“bios”) within a region (“regia”), within a “home” place, a locality’ (Berthold-Bond 2000, p.10), the concept of life-territory is ‘a place defined by its life forms, its

topography and its biota' (Berthold-Bond 2000, p.12), and not by anthropogenic delineations. Bioregionalism by definition

reinforces the idea in the new environmental ethics literature of moving the boundary lines of moral standing; it also suggests that the actual political boundaries which have defined the idea of a "region" within modern states are artificial and need to be resituated according to more natural configurations of place; and it is a call to political action (Berthold-Bond 2000, pp.10-11)

Whilst key terms associated with bioregionalism include 'dwelling' and 'living-in-place' (Lynch and Glotfelty 2012, p.5), life-territory takes the situatedness of the known and *unknown other* into the more-than-human discourse, and can be situated within radical landscape poetry, as both attempt to reconfigure pre-established notions of environments based on anthropocentric viewpoints. Roma Chakraborty's 'principle of metaphysical holism asserts that the biosphere does not consist of discrete entities but rather internally related individuals that make up an ontologically unbroken whole' (2015, p.125) is reinforced in *Swims* as the writer's body is included within this transcorporeal mesh. Burnett's writing generally stems from the life-territory of waters experienced in proximity during swimwork, which offers modes of support through the *swims* seen as environmental acts.

In the 'Preface' poem, the writer speaks of swimming in an unnamed river, foregrounding the swims that are to follow. An important mention is the '*electrified chicken wire to keep the salmon in*' (p.16); the italics hint at found text, cuing prolepsis into a pragmatic cautionary mood. By embedding such readiness in the opening of the collection, Burnett establishes her position as part of the new ecofeminism movement whose 'connections expose our own role in oppressive structures – as consumers of suffering, as contributors to climate change, as sponsors of global food scarcity' (Gaard 2017, p.126). This reminds the reader that they are within the realm of radical landscape poetry, creating a sharp contrast with the aesthetics of pastoral writing. From the start of *Swims*, the writer sides with Jessica Weir's statement that 'we need to push the current re-examination of water management further, and move the focus to our life-sustaining connections with rivers; this is what [she is] calling 'connectivity thinking' (Weir 2008, p.2). Burnett takes Dickinson's networks of connection and applies Weir's idea of connectivity thinking by experiencing the more-than-human life-territory through swimwork both on a physical and cognitive level.

A lyric life-territory brings the landscape and the page in dialogue with local and global discourses. *Swims* explores capitalism and other political issues, but also areas of contact with water, departing from the psychoswimography embedded in the swimwork to broader environmental issues, and as part of that, narratives of loss.⁵² It allows the writer to situate themselves within the areas they explore as a temporary inhabitant, who witnesses a moment in time and translates it onto the page through psychological and emotive filters. The resulting work speaks of local waters which are in constant communication with the movement of global waters. In 'The Ouse IV' Burnett is swimming into the elegiac waters of the Tigris and discovers how

looking back we see the frailty through
the years the pages
press Mosul
in the river banks
and look and look and not to look
away (pp.30-31)

⁵² See 'Hydroeology' section, Chapter 3, p.80.

The gerund ‘looking’ returns at the end of the passage in the Present Simple tense thrice, reminding the reader of the importance of the gaze in environmental action, and how turning away from these troubles is not something we can afford to do in pressing times. As the Ouse morphs into the Tigris, the city of ‘Mosul’ is pressed into the riverbanks, alluding to carpeted moss; a conglomeration of rubble is seen as a departure point for hope and change. As the city regrows, it regreens. Water plays an important part in that process, but it is also a catalyst for change. The temporal frailty applies to the human and the more-than-human, who become victims of the same destructive forces. The second person plural address in the first line is a cognitive collective of those who have seen, currently see, and will see through reading the text. Burnett follows these happenings with a reporter’s voice, questioning its capacity to ‘do more/ than report’ and her own capacity to ‘do more/ than read’ (p.31). The act of reading here comprises both taking in words on the page and on the screen; it also prompts reading the water in the landscape as a transcorporeal, three-dimensional, and glocal entity, where Burnett can ‘read into the river raw with teeth/ read with teeth’ (p.31). Seeing ‘reading’ as ‘eating’ stands for taking in the reality of environmental and political upheavals in order to take action.

Burnett offers a balanced view of urban and wild waters, both flowing and still: from her home-water of The Teign river in Devon and the distant Lake Grasmere in Cumbria, to the urban waters of Hampstead Heath and King’s Cross Pond in London. In addition to chemical differences and varying levels of pollution, these individual swim-points are unique life-territories connected through the lyric, and the writer’s physical presence during swimwork. The nonhuman that inhabits the urban and wild waters in which Burnett swims also differs, and these encounters play an important role in grounding each swim into the more-than-human body of water. In ‘Hampstead Heath’, the writer quotes Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (2012), questioning her ability to whisper at birds, seeing ‘the skull [as] birdcage’, and ‘waking with water/ in mouth’ (p.42), hinting at a transcorporeal awakening,

a story
a history
of open-throated thrushes
trickle out a cast of Hardy characters.
tongue is coated in England (p.42)

The situatedness of speech and swim plays an important part in establishing Burnett’s way of relating to the more-than-human. Locality is a means of accessing the landscape one swim at a time, yet it is also constricting. While in the water, the writer’s dynamics shift, and the thrushes can only be accessed from the dehierarchised perspective of the swimmer; history serves to facilitate an engagement from which change can already be derived. The ‘open-throated thrushes’ beckon Burnett to speak of urgent water-related environmental issues resulting from anthropogenic destruction, narrowed down to the figure of the ‘one woman’ (p.43), exposed and immersed in her more-than-human surroundings.

In the ‘III The Ouse’ poem, the presence of the horses in Burnett’s swim becomes part of ‘determining the velocity of a current’, which ‘involves a horse, a floating object or drifter and a timing device’ (p.26). As the writer allows the river’s current to carry her down, she mirrors a more-than-human engagement with water. This also happens in the ‘IV The Ouse’ poem, where Burnett experiences how it feels ‘to drift like wood/ in water/ with such soft rooting’ (p.33). This mode of ‘rivering’ (p.15) hints at the elegiac undertone of the Ouse river as the site of Virginia Woolf’s

drowning, and allows the writer to inhabit the same waters whilst reflecting on the capacity of water to sustain life, but also to take it.

Neimanis utilises Virginia Woolf's statement that 'there are tides in the body' to illustrate the notion of transcorporeality as 'we ebb and flow across time and space—body, to body, to body, to body' (Neimanis 2016, p.87). Woolf's awareness of the aqueous body echoes in 'IV The Ouse', where water is in constant motion against the fixed terrestrial elements that the velocity of the current is tested against. Burnett includes a referenced definition of how currents are measured at the beginning of the poem, which involves three key things: 'an observer, a floating object or drifter, and a timing device' (p.25). The observers in this case are 'the horses', first 'purring', then 'stirring' (p.25), whose 'flanks rise from the pit/ of the word the gut of the word' (p.26) as visceral transcorporeal nonhuman entities. They engage with the swimmer through the perceptive embeddedness of her drifting body. The 'flanks' of the horses which are 'darker than earth' (p.26) border the river in grounded gaze; nonhuman bodies are mixed with topography from the limited perspective of the swimmer. The timing device is contained by the poem: the rhythm and layout dictate the breath as it accelerates towards the end.

As the readers' eyes drift across the text abiding by the instruction of the poem to be 'performed at increasing speed' (p.25), they sense their own hastened breath which mirrors that of the river. Along with the current, it suggests the acceleration of global climate change which can be seen in the world's waters and is felt by Burnett during her swims. The static stance of letting oneself drift in light of the climate crisis can only lead to the same elegiac undertone that the river already carries. The energy to shift the human body out of that current must be summoned, and this can be gained through the poem's capacity as an environmental act. At the end of 'III The Ouse', Burnett progresses the previous mode of determining the velocity of a current to 'the simplest method of determining the velocity of a word', which 'involves a horse, a girl and a poem' (p.27). Rivering is lifted from the landscape and onto the page in a transcorporeal process of watermarking. The 'floating object or drifter' from before morphs into a 'girl', closing the human, nonhuman, more-than-human circle.

'The English Channel' poem delivers some meaning from three learnings; the first is corporeality of the body in life-territories. The human and more-than-human⁵³ are posthumanised in an experimental approach of trying to assign the participants a different identity during swimwork. This allows them to draw on possible emotions experienced under said identity, and 'record memories' (p.57) of their more-than-human metamorphoses. The latter ranges from birds to fish, but also fishing gear and a plastic bottle cap.⁵⁴ The dedication of the poem includes an 'unnamed pelican' (p.57) who 'wasn't happy, or a/ piece of litter' (p.59), with the added description that

They were unfussed but not willing/ able to surrender completely.
The liked watching others be brave. (p.59)

Following the pattern of the poem, the human persona who is the unnamed unhappy pelican or the piece of litter highlights the more-than-human transcorporeality, which in this case is built upon the connection of litter, possibly plastic litter commonly found in avian bodies. According to a British and Australian study, the global bird population ingestion rate of plastic in 2014 was predicted at 90.4%, with an expected rise to 99.8% by the year 2050 (Wilcox, Van Sebille, and Hardesty 2015, p.11900).

⁵³ I note here that Burnett uses the term 'nonhuman' to refer to both animate and inanimate animals and objects, whereas I would use nonhuman to refer to nonhuman animals and include the latter in the more-than-human category if associated with the inanimate/ anthropogenic/ artificial things.

⁵⁴ See 'Posthuman Polymer Perception' section for the last two, Chapter 2, p.78.

The pelican is unable or unwilling to surrender itself to the water, lacking the ability to be brave. Its passive stance suggests the amount of courage it takes to conceptualise inhabiting the bodies of nonhuman animals and inanimate objects. This places the reader in the position of both the weapons (litter, plastic, discarded fishing gear) and the victims (nonhuman and human alike), allowing for a recalibration of their situatedness within the environments they inhabit.

Arthur Ransome's children's classic *Swallows and Amazons* (Ransome 2012) is observed as the epitaph to this poem, leading to its second learning related to behaviour and ontological restrictions to behaviours. It is a poem where the swallows group are bathing before breakfast, and where Titty, a young girl, desires to imitate the hunting methods of the cormorants she had observed the previous day. She is disappointed by the fact that nonhuman creatureliness cannot be copied by the human body. Underwater, the fish are outswimming her; she considers resorting to angling equipment to catch the fish that her body is otherwise unable to. In this passage, Burnett embeds a critique to the fishing industry, in which the human places themselves in the life-territory of fishes, with the sole purpose of killing them. From a post-humanist perspective, this raises the issue of by-catch in the industry, as all the adopted identities in the poem embody this, depending on the types of species a vessel is aiming for.

The group swim in 'The English Channel' poem is structured into separate human-led stanzas, each with its own more-than-human counterpart. The opening metamorphosis has Edmund being a cormorant, and similar to Titty, experiencing difficulty in bodily movements; flying is 'crooked', and 'becoming wrong' (p.58). A couple of stanzas below, Jo, another one of the characters in the poem, is also a cormorant in avian reprise. On this occasion, the fishing attempt fails, just like it does for Titty, and Jo/the cormorant is 'shamed, crawled onto/ land' (p.58). This 'posthuman hybridity' (2016a) that Oppermann alludes to is seen as Burnett brings the human body into the life-territory of these creatures. The only determined nonhuman transition occurs to Sam, who is initially a whale shark, then a horseshoe crab:

Tough! His circulatory system was suddenly something different.
He didn't know what kind of blood he had now (p.58)

The two metamorphoses are scaled down to represent the anthropogenic value of the animal, where a 19 tonne whale shark is not seen as profitable as a small horseshoe crab whose blue blood is harvested inhumanely through direct cardiac puncture (Armstrong and Conrad 2008, p.4). This is used to create *Limulus amoebocyte lysate* (LAL), which costs \$60,000 per gallon, and has been used to test vaccines and drugs for decades (Arnold 2020). Burnett illustrates the instability experienced by a posthuman perspective which must take in all of the issues of a *conscious collective* to which the human would be impervious to. By changing the circulatory system of the largest nonmammalian vertebrate into the blue-blooded arthropod and turning the colour of blood from human red—to nonhuman red—to nonhuman blue, the writer challenges pre-established notions of the human as somehow distinct from the more-than-human sphere.

The third learning is Burnett's transcorporeality; through the stages of the blood's chromatics, culminating in blue, the human acquires blue bloodedness. This is not seen as a hierarchical mode of relating to the more-than-human, but as a transcorporeal immersion in shared waters. Through temporarily inhabiting the life-territory of another creature, the swimming group find themselves 'at the most primordial level of the sensuous, bodily experience' (Abram 1997, p.81). Burnett notes that the records in 'The English Channel' poem 'are in the nonhumans' own words' (p.57), which suggests

the fact that ‘the phenomenological horizon of the poem is thus hopefully inhibitory, a landscape in which we might ride out to our fullest self’ (Cooperman 2001, p.187).

The lyric life-territory contained in *Swims* provides an alternative way of looking at and engaging with the more-than-human. Burnett’s swimwork collates local immersion points into one sequence of place across the United Kingdom’s collected waters, which speak to and of other global waters, in fluid discourse across the page. Through transcorporeality and a new ecofeminist mode of thinking which considers materiality and ethics as key factors in the environmental debate, Burnett offers the reader an opportunity to morph into the body of the swimmer. Similarly, they are invited to come into contact with the more-than-human elements encountered during swimwork, in order to emerge changed, cleansed, and refreshed, with a self-awareness of their own bodily waters; this is an intrinsic part of the more-than-human, from which so many consider themselves to be separate. Burnett’s situatedness is physical, whilst the reader’s is psychological, meditative, and transformative: a lyric life-territory to be calibrated by individual readers as they plunge into these swims.

Songlines and Message Sticks

Despite employing different methods in their poetic craft and fieldwork, parallels between Oswald’s collection *Dart* (2010) and Burnett’s poem ‘The Dart’ (p.63) (which can be extended to *Swims*) arise, as both texts acquire the quality of songline, a term that Oswald assigns to her book. Explored at different times by the two authors, the river Dart is embedded into the lyric as a transcorporeal meditation of posthuman interactions, which extends to blue poetics where there is an element of fieldwork involved in the process. The poem as message stick emerges in Burnett’s work as mode of communication with the reader, and posthuman element in swimwork. The material stick is sent across the water containing a transcorporeal message, the expected response being environmental action. Both collections awaken ‘a profound eco consciousness within the reader’ (Reimann 2018, p.1), derived from the focus on more-than-human entanglements taking place within blue life-territories as essential for grounding contemporary radical landscape poetry as it becomes an established field within the environmental humanities.

Songlines

‘The Dart’ poem is Burnett’s return to her dwelling place in Devon, completing the cycle of her swims, yet leaving the water with an invitation to the reader: ‘it is all yours, this open possibility’ (p.64). This can be seen as open-water—a transcorporeal flux that links the human to the more-than-human and establishes the texts as songlines, where ‘swimming is continuous, only the rivers are intermittent’ (p.65). Burnett’s *Swims* are songlines that facilitate a connection to the land in a similar way to Oswald’s *Dart* collection. The latter ‘stands out as a recent text in which a less anthropocentric sense of reality is projected by formal techniques that refuse the domination of the text by one linear narrative or point of view’ (Clark 2019, p.67). Burnett destabilises the Romantic concept of subjective *lyric I* in her swims, by using the body as a posthuman tool of discovery and observation. The waters that she swims in share some of their secrets, and the identity of the writer becomes a fluid concept,

similar to Oswald's 'binary of ego and alter ego' (Bristow 2005, p.11). The ritualistic power of the swim is explored as an epiphany of situatedness, where

we could call these experiences of our aqueous becoming a *more-than-human* embodiment. They interrupt a comfortable human sense of a bodily self, while also amplifying our very own vulnerabilities – in this sense, human *all the more*. In opening us to the droughts, seepages, and inundations that are also animal and elemental, we are reminded that our humanness is always more than the bounds of our skin' (Neimanis 2016, p.50)

The lyric *I* coupled with the human body is immersed in the environment until the voice itself starts travelling across the water and bounces off the more-than-human elements it encounters like an echo landing on the page; these are soundings within Oswald's 'poetic census of life-in-place' (Bristow 2014/2015, p.6). Furthermore, Burnett's poems are songlines written from within the dreaming track of the water:

what the body buries the water returns, what the water buries the
body returns
in slow sift of memory; keep through the pages of the street,
the lake, the body (p.64)

In perpetual emerging the texts leap out of the water like salmon on their way to spawning grounds. The body of the swimmer is creating patterns, never truly linear, but following the flow, bends, depth, and shape of the body of water. Burnett's exchange between body and water under the 'slow sift of memory' draws upon the cognitive ability to invoke the past, present, and future of both water and body in the reader's imaginarium. Whilst drawing on the previous two temporal dimensions, the future remains something bleak if no immediate action is taken: the poems' quality as environmental acts relies on the reader's realisation that it is time for change. The 'street', 'lake', and 'body' are lyric life-territories that Burnett relates to—unnamed watermarks where identity is reshaped and reshapes them according to the inner mode of viewing and relating to the more-than-human world. In both Oswald's *Dart* and Burnett's *Swims* the spatio-temporal dimensions are constantly shifting in a similar fashion to the rivers themselves. Despite reaching the sea, a definite conclusion is lacking; they are constantly replenishing, emerging, and becoming—part of the cycle that incorporates the human and nonhuman body.

Performing the waters is something that both Burnett and Oswald do: the difference being Burnett's immersion as crucial mode of swimwork, and Oswald's fieldwork along and across the river. The performance begins in the field, and is translated onto the page from which it continues its song with each reading of the text. The river as a poem is 'a force to be surveyed, measured, and even recreated through turnings of verse that are regulated and released by tools such as line breaks, dashes, commas, and periods' (Lynch and Glotfelty 2012, p.87):

I place my palms to your bark and pulse
pulse through the matter and up I up begin to sense
distance differently
impossibly far is here galaxies here and to be that tall and
distant yet
consistently you all the way up from navel to stars up I up
like a soft soaring

rooted (p.33)

The songline in this passage is an extension of the river into the cosmos; the lyric I is connected to, and through ‘matter’, recalibrating its sense of ‘distance’. Here, an identity ‘rooted’ in water allows the addressee to be ‘consistently’ itself. Burnett’s change of perspective can be seen as an ontological reorientation which stems from the desire to escape the body’s boundaries, swimming ‘up’ being relative to the cosmos, where earthly directions and gravity’s grip no longer hold and direct the body’s movements according to physical forces—the body now moves according to the flow of dreamtime, the imaginary map of the situated lyric self within the water. In relation to focusing on the nonhuman, Neimanis poses the question of what might we lose in decentring the human, what other centres - of action, of responsibility, of gravity (2016, p.21). Whilst immersed, the gravitational shift resulting in weightlessness brings Burnett’s body closer to fishes, reminding her of her own *wateriness*. Furthermore, the layout of this passage reminds the reader of ripples of water, stretching and breaking towards distant places. ‘The Dart’ makes it particularly difficult for the poet to find an appropriate point of entering the water, and a spot deep enough to swim in; there is a sense of resistance here against global anthropogenic environmental destruction. The reader perceives an interconnectedness with water that goes beyond the liquid: in *Dart*, the ‘river’s vertebrae’ along with the ‘Mew Stone, the last bone of the Dart’ (Oswald 2010, p.45) are lifting the river to the level of the human sphere. Its anthropomorphism culminates in the last stanza of the poem with Proteus, ‘the shepherd of the seals’ (Oswald 2010, p.48) when the river is placed higher than the human on a god rank.

Burnett also raises the concept of embodiment; the water is acknowledged as a force in which the body can return to *being-in-place*. The tidal flux of the Ouse in the following passage is felt not as a force upon which the body rests, but as one of which the body is a part of:

and so to swim is to bring
the body back from wherever it has been in time

so to swim
is to be in time not on it (p.34)

The preposition ‘in’ as opposed to ‘on’ suggests a transcorporeal connection to the water that surpasses physical limitations. Burnett guides the reader back to the incipient poem in *Swims*, which gives the lyric definition of the verb ‘to swim’. It also incorporates additional elements that she has learned during her swimwork; the temporal dimension plays a key role in establishing the lyric life-territory of the swim. This allows the poem to permeate the dreamtime, accessing hidden knowledge through swimwork, and translate it into what Bristow refers to as a ‘linguistically domesticated sense of place’ (2015, p.85). The body is *brought back* through the act of swimming ‘from wherever it has been’, and resituated, travelling to the present and future in constant dynamics. Within this process there is an integrated act of recollection:

everything remembering what it is
becoming is remembering
sinking in the silt is the sand
of the shell of the bone singing
in the reeds in the rushes
hordes of heartbeats not my own (p.16)

The songline quality of *Swims* allows the reader to navigate the waters that Burnett immerses herself in through the lyric dimension which extends into the actual landscape. The openness to the lyric dreamtime allows a mode of ‘becoming’ which also results from the experience of place. The palimpsestic layers of the Earth’s stratigraphy sink in the silt; ‘shell’ and ‘bone’ highlight a more-than-human situatedness with an elegiac quality. This is considered against ‘hordes of hearts’ which do not belong to the speaker; it echoes in Oswald’s ‘River’ poem, in which we see ‘the earth’s eye/ looking through the earth’s bones’ (Oswald 2007, p.41). From Burnett’s line of sight in the water she embodies this eye; her immersed perspective reveals to her the benthic substrate onto which all that perishes lands on. The riverbanks, or water’s edges allow a similar way of observing this stratigraphy, if not obscured by reeds or anthropogenic structures. Rowan Middleton draws attention to

Oswald’s use of bricolage as an overarching structure brings together numerous different aspects of the river, yet the fragmented nature of her poem means that it also contains elements of disconnection. This enables the ‘local/global’ debate to be seen in the context of a discussion regarding the relationship between self and world (2015, p.158)

In Burnett’s collection there is a similar more-than-human *bricolage*; fragmentation occurs due to the physical and temporal distance between the bodies of water where swimwork is conducted, yet through transcorporeality and as part of the hydrosphere these waters cannot truly be separated. In *Dart* there is ‘a less anthropocentric sense of reality [...] projected by formal techniques that refuse the domination of the text by one linear narrative or point of view’ (Clark 2019, p.67). This plurality of voices also happens in Burnett’s poem ‘The English Channel’ (p.57); however, in this instance she notes that the words belong to the more-than-human, dropping the lyric I. Throughout *Swims* however, this happens in a deceptive destabilised form, echoing how ‘despite itself, *Dart*’s many-voiced “I”, shades into singularity, whether we call that “I”, diegetically the River *Dart*, or, extradiegetically, Alice Oswald’ (Zapf 2002, p.220). Burnett’s voice is shared with the more-than-human in a similar way. However, it is not restricted to a singular body of water but extends to the to all the waters in which she *swimworks*. She gives the reader several instances of the nature of the lyric I in ‘The Ouse’:

I, the rhythm of river
part-nature, part-poem, part-kin

I, the collaboration
part nature — parts nature
collapses

the shoulders, falls back onto milk
I, Cleopatra
with sun’s areola flush across throat

I, the event
individual forges collective afloat (pp.29-30)

The lyric *I* is the ‘rhythm of the river’, which also links to the form of the poems. The width, layout, and justification of the poems differ due to the bodies of water in which they were conceived. At times, they step deeper into the form of the meandering river and go beyond its concrete representations to the very heart and rhythm of water. On the page, the swims emerge from a ‘double

sense of movement – physical and emotional’ (Bristow 2015, p.90). As Burnett’s practice explores the materiality of the body coupled with specific emotions pertaining to elegy and hydroelegy examined later in this chapter, the lyric unfolds through the modality of metaphor and documentary text. The first instance of the *I* is ‘part-poem’, embraced by the posthuman ‘part-nature’ and ‘part-kin’, which shows the more-than-human in proportion to the human. The second *I* is ‘the collaboration’ in which the ‘part nature’ has dropped its hyphen, suggesting the dynamics of the verb, as waterways cut through the landscape, and swimmer cuts through the water. Immediately followed by ‘parts nature’, this alludes to a corrective stance in resituating the verb to the singular *I*, which can be expanded to *he*, *she*, or *it*, acting as a distributive method of potential ownership which diverges from the narrowed first-person singular to individual actants or readers, who form a *conscious collective*. The third *I* is ‘Cleopatra’, drawing towards Oswald’s notion of the god-river, reinforced by the strong symbolism of the ‘sun areola, which coupled with ‘milk’ contain mothering references.

There is also a new ecofeminist tonality here: the woman’s body, exposed and immersed, is seen as a heroic act, akin to that of the walking woman (Heddon and Turner 2012). The exposed ‘throat’ is a symbol of poetic expression, but also a point of vulnerability, whose narrowness mirrors that of the river. The fourth *I* is ‘the event’, which could refer to the swim itself, but arguably goes beyond its physicality, as suggested by the following line where the ‘individual forges [are] collective afloat’—‘forges’ here is seemingly more verb than noun, which positions the individual as element of the broader more-than-human ‘collective’; ‘afloat’ also extends beyond the materiality of the buoyant body on the water to the temporal dimension of the dreamtime. Combined, these instances of the destabilised lyric remind the reader that there is always an *other* beyond the lyric *I*, whose spatio-temporal dimension and identity vary according to the instance in the poem where it occurs. Here, at this specific temporal moment of self-conscious awakening, Burnett becomes a swimming version of Abram’s notion of the shaman, ‘the ability to readily slip out of the perceptual boundaries that demarcate his or her particular culture—boundaries reinforced by social customs, taboos, and most importantly, the common speech or language—in order to make contact with, and learn from, the other powers in the land’ (Abram 1997, p.9). The pain, revelation, and triumph contained in the passage ‘I pulled away/ for the first time unaided into wildness’ (p.64) highlights a different mode of swimwork. It brings forth the power required to abandon the settledness of solid ground in favour of the water’s weightlessness and unpredictability. This is a different mode of the posthuman transcorporeal body re-learning to swim, not physically, but psychologically and metaphorically.

Message Sticks

The connections between Burnett’s *Swims* and Oswald’s *Dart* go beyond the realm of the songline in Australian aboriginal belief to that of the message stick, which was documented as early as the 1890s (Buckland 1897).⁵⁵ Message sticks are inscribed pieces of wood used to convey information between tribes, and work in conjunction with an oral message. In the ‘Hampstead Heath’ poem, Burnett sets out with a set of rules for her swim, all of them dismantled by the weather, the presence of other people, memory, and the substrate of the water. Not finding any stones at the bottom of the pond to write the names of the Fukushima residents ‘seeking compensation from Tepco’ (p.41), she resorts to using something that nature does put in her path:

⁵⁵ Albeit in a strong derogatory fashion which outlines the supremacy of the white man.

5. I try again to think about the name as I write it on a twig but a man is talking to me—“Who would have thought the sun would come out?” I write the name on one side, the man’s words on the other. I push the twig into the water (p.42)

Burnett’s inscription on the stick of the nameless ‘one woman’ (p.41) and the man’s words are a dichotomy seeking reconciliation: going beyond gendered narratives advocated by new ecofeminism by Alaimo (2008, 2014a), Adams (2006, 2010), and Gaard (2017). Amplifying the power of the Aboriginal message-stick to acquire an environmental layer, it departs from the pure conveyance of a message to the realm of artistic expression; transferred to the lyric, it becomes a metaphoric holding vessel for Burnett’s swimwork experiences and observations. The potential victims identified in ecofeminist theory merge into the singular voice of ‘one woman’ who replaces ‘stones’, ‘rain’, and ‘names’, and who is sent off onto the water together with hopeful found text of improved meteorological conditions.⁵⁶ The message stick and its inscription has no particular addressee; however, it has the potential to make its way into the path of a swimmer, who may or may not read the message itself. Within a posthuman perspective, Burnett’s message stick contains the archetypal message that urges human resituatedness with regards to the more-than-human; the message stick is carried by the water, and travels on water, acquiring divinatory properties; this hints at Celtic wisdom staves, or Ogham sticks. In a similar way to Oswald, Burnett also tries to capture the ‘unselfconscious voices’ (Bristow 2005, p.6) of the other swimmers that share the body of water and react to their environs.

The writer launches her body into and onto the water in a similar way to the message stick. In ‘The Ouse’ poem (p.29) this has the added element of words written on her swimsuit—‘hopes and fears on environmental change’ (p.29). It is based on a brief that she sent to collaborators in advance, asking them to ‘write [their] own hopes and fears on [her] swimsuit, [...] writing the water [their] collective thoughts’ (p.29). Ending her message with the statement ‘I may sink with the weight of them or rise with their purpose’ (p.29) reinforces Burnett’s initial concept of seeing the swims as environmental acts. The poem’s text is displayed centred, coupled with the swimsuit writings alongside it: the left-hand side is labelled ‘suit-text before water’, whilst the right-hand one is ‘suit-text after water’. The reader can see which of the words remain on the swimsuit after the swim, and how the text has changed. The first text-grouping is ‘GAZA/ May you not be a war/ zone’, which becomes ‘May you not be a war/ zone’ (p.29); in relinquishing toponymy, the message of localised human conflict gains global resonance. From a posthuman perspective, the latter urges the human to adopt a more ethical perspective when it comes to the more-than-human, as the former is the main driver of anthropogenic climate change.

The message ‘Does my carbon/ footprint look big in this?’ (p.30) disappears altogether as it raises awareness of the invisibility of carbon footprints. The ‘butterflies’ (p.32) also vanish, hinting at the dramatic reduction of insect populations in recent decades, which has affected the balance of ecosystems (Simmons et al. 2019). The persistent ‘jellyfish’ (p.34) appear on the right-hand side, as translucent pulsating aqueous beings, preyed upon by sea turtles, who often confuse them for plastic bags, leading to their demise.

Burnett concludes ‘The Ouse’ with ‘beating/ little wild words [that] thump in the mouth’ (p.35); whilst the estuarine imagery suggestive of waves coming inland on a tidal flux, the posthuman mouth can be seen as having the ability to voice these environmental concerns, the words are lodged in our

⁵⁶ See ‘Hydroeology’ section, Chapter 3, p.80.

throats, ready to be spoken. In 'The Ouse', text is washed away by the water; vanished text from the swimsuit connects the elegy to the species of specific places, as part of the Earth's great anthropogenic changes. Linked to Kate Wright's concept of *becoming-with*, elegy also operates through interconnectedness, 'challenging delusions of separation—the erroneous belief that it is somehow possible to exempt ourselves from Earth's ecological community' (2014, p.278). Water in this sense works antipalimpsestically, taking some of the words, cleansing the white swimsuit, and erasing the marks; the missing text becomes one with elegiac discourses of environmental loss.

This collection's poetics of open water is one where the text is submerged on the page in transcorporeal correspondence with the reader. The words on the swimsuit and the message stick work in the same way, the difference being their actual presence in the water. In *Swims* each poem is a flow, forming a unified structure that integrates the human within the more-than-human; it allows an openness to transcorporeality, which permeates bodies and environment to highlight their interconnections. Similar to Oswald, this 'extended self is disclosed by a particular openness of being' (Bristow 2005, p.7). *Swims* is a 'repertoire of Dreaming stories – myths – that serve as primordial templates for concepts and hence for thought/intelligibility' (Mathews 2009, p.5) coupled with the immediate encounters and observations of the swimmer's body in the water. Despite their precise toponymy, Burnett's poems outline the fact that 'particular places give rise to discrete experiences' (Bristow 2015, p.10), suggesting that her swim points are essential in opening up discussions about environmental issues on a global scale and the complex problematics of water. This stretches above and beyond physical geographical boundaries into the cultural ecology of more-than-human agencies. During swimwork, and mirroring the bodies of water, Burnett undergoes a transformation—she learns, observes, grows, and is altered by all the substances that make their way into the waters and the various ecosystems they house. On the last page of *Dart*, Oswald's 'name disappears and the sea slides in to/ replace it' (2010, p.48). Similarly, Burnett's identity changes; as the lyric *I* is destabilised, cleansed, watered, travelled, her identity can be summarised into 'one woman', 'nameless' and 'quoted' (p.41). It is an ethereal experience that helps establish the territory of radical landscape poetry.

Posthuman Polymer Perception

Swims is not free of plastics, similar to most animate and inanimate things on the planet. Aside from the polymer which has gone into the physicality of the book itself, a common *ingredient* in bookmaking, the waters that Burnett swims in are teeming with microplastics and other pollutants. These lower the water quality and increase the pressure on the nonhuman. According to a recent survey, all of England's waterways have failed chemical standards tests, and only 14% are of good ecological standard, as an increasing amount of 'sewage discharges and agricultural and industrial chemicals' enters the water system (Laville 2020). In the untitled opening poem to the collection, Burnett gives the lyric definitions of the verb 'to swim'. The process of immersion is seen 'to pierce film lid between air and water' (p.13) repeatedly, in each swim. Aside from the metaphorical value of the film lid, the presence of polymer in the water is very much real, and can penetrate the human and nonhuman body, in a similar way to Dickinson's *Tender Geometries* (2015). This is seen as the ultimate act of humiliation: the force that the human has unleashed is engaged in a destructive cycle against its creator. J. Scott Bryson identifies 'an imperative towards humility in relationships with both human and nonhuman nature' (2002, p.6) as an attribute of ecopoetry; as part of a radical

landscape poetry framework, humility is intrinsic to the posthuman mode of more-than-human engagement.

The conceptualised space of the water as challenging bodily and cultural boundaries, whilst permeating the very resistance to change that it attempts to overcome, are at the forefront of the immersion process during swimwork. Larger pieces of plastic can be seen with the naked eye, though smaller micro-plastics in the water go undetected; this is one of the nuances that Burnett picks up from her swimwork in the following passage from ‘IV The Ouse’:

Blue is rarely just blue yes
River rarely just river yes Body rarely just body yes (p.32)

We accept the solidity of plastic in the same way in which we consider our own bodies to be bordered and clearly delineated from the more-than-human, assuming that clean-looking water is safe to swim in. Yet even bottled drinking water is contaminated by antimony leakages in varying degrees, and whilst most of the levels stay within safety guidelines, as do those of the waters in which we are told it is safe to swim in, the likelihood is that toxic particles penetrate the body through water ingestion (Chapa-Martínez et al. 2016). This poem challenges the pre-established identities and borders that we assign to almost everything in the more-than-world. Whilst chromatics can be deceptive, the colour of a body of water is dictated and influenced by a variety of factors including chemical structure, type of sediment, and turbidity. The blue often applied to the ‘film lid’ (p.13) reflects the sky, whilst below the surface of the water, the spectrum broadens and shifts in impossible definition.

The river perceived during swimwork is also deceptive: Burnett experiences it one segment at a time, acknowledging her inability to grasp it in its entirety—from the spring to the mouth—as it flows into another river, or the sea. The river and the human body are always connected to global waters. A posthuman perspective can help highlight these more-than-human interconnections, through ‘mapping a collated human experience of this space’ (Bristow 2015, p.10). Neimanis notes that an ‘aqueous transcorporeality therefore demands of us a new ethics—a new way of being responsible and responsive to our others. [...] This is an ethics of *unknowability*’ (2016, p.95). Burnett unites the two previous statements in her poem with an overarching third one: the destabilised ‘body’ which is ‘rarely just body’, suggests this *unknowability* which demands an ethics meant to protect all bodies from any threats that they might face; plastic is at the top of that list. In ‘The English Channel’, Florence ‘was being a plastic bottle cap’:

She was abusive, whistling, deaf, vessel. She was cared but not cared
for. She loathed her own resilience (p.58)

This passage outlines the limitations of the *ethics of care* towards the nonhuman and our own bodies, which is an alarm for the recalibration of these notions as they become coupled with environmental action. A plastic bottle cap is a common type of pollutant, often found in the stomach contents of dead birds (Basto et al. 2019, p.19); this can be seen as an act of aggression performed whilst the object is still in one piece. However, as with all types of plastics, the bottle cap, once discarded—if it avoids the path of the incinerator or some rare recycling scheme—it will most likely end up in the sea. Its state as bottle cap is only transitory, despite its ‘resilience’ it is already disintegrating into smaller particles as it gets tumbled in the waters of the English Channel. By allowing the bottle cap to inherit the gender of the person who has morphed into it, Burnett facilitates imaginaries of posthuman situatedness. She speaks of a lyric life-territory in which pre-established notions of boundaries are

permeated by the toxicity of small and invisible particles. In the same swim, Fran ‘was being a fishing net’:

Omnivorous, ghostly. The corners of her identity felt fragile, see-through, poked with light. She spread just sufficiently. There also came an urge to rescue, to catch, to grasp, to return. Ultimately, limpid (p.58)

Most contemporary fishing gear—including nets—is made of plastic, and this constitutes a large proportion of ocean litter. ‘Omnivorous’, and ‘ghostly’—ghost nets, as they are known—drift freely in the ocean, entangling everything in their path. Despite increased media attention to the plight of creatures that are trapped in ghost nets, the global consumption of fish per capita is increasing (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2012, p.28). The ‘fragile’ identity works antithetically to highlight the disintegration of the fishing net, as well as the fragility of all that it ensnares; ‘see-through’ and ‘poked with light’, the fishing net is ‘ultimately limpid’, suggesting that the problem is staring us in the face. Linked to this is the ‘urge to rescue, to catch, to grasp, to return’, all valiant pursuits, which through the netted words of the poem might spur others to engage in such acts and promoting pro-environmental behaviours.

Mandy Bloomfield speaks of Stephen Collis’ *The History of Plastic* (2010, p.72), outlining how ‘via the metaphor and the method of the chain, the poem yokes together radically different spatial scales—from molecular structures to the anthropomorphic scales of plastic objects and turtle bodies to the global scales of world ocean currents’ (Bloomfield 2019, p.507). In *Swims*

however quick the split between worlds opens up
however fast plates move beneath water breaks below planet
heaves above (p.64)

The performative element of the body becomes a catalyst for exposure to pollutants, mirroring the constant exposure of the nonhuman who dwells in the bodies of water that Burnett explores. The toxic elements that we put into the water, or facilitate there, ultimately end up in human and nonhuman bodies, polluting them. Plastic microparticles penetrate and humiliate all bodies, whether or not animal consumption is part of dietary choices. There, they travel via its waterways often breaking up in even smaller particles along the way. The process of oceanic plastic pollution is mirrored in each human and nonhuman body, yet only the former has the capacity to alter the current state of things. Transcorporeality links us to the more-than-human, through the aqueous nature of bodies, what Bloomfield calls ‘eco-ception’, traversing ‘varying scales of space, time, and bodily being’ (2019, p.509). A posthuman polymer perception therefore invites new modes of including the human into the plastic discourse that we have created, and raises ethical issues surrounding appropriate forms of action that will help stop or curve the *hyperplastic* that is currently entering the global ocean (approximately one truckload of plastic in the time it took to type this phrase).⁵⁷

⁵⁷ See <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/15882/every-minute-of-every-day-the-equivalent-of-one-truckload-of-plastic-enters-the-sea/>.

Hydroelegy

The twelve poems in *Swims* are interrupted by an interlude titled ‘Poems for My Father’; comprised of three poems, it divides the collection into two halves—two different sets of swims. Burnett explains in her author’s note that her father’s health ‘deteriorated during the writing of the poem’; coupled with the opening dedication to her father, this implies an incipient *hydroelegiac* subtext. The attempt to ‘counterbalance the grief and despair of apocalyptic awareness through deliberate cultivation of pleasures grounded in immediate physical experience and perception’ (Keller 2017, pp.98-99) and transfer these into the lyric posits the sublime of untampered more-than-human life-territories at the forefront of the rationale for combatting environmental destruction. The interlude pieces partly feature ‘swimming in the Aegean Sea’ (p.7). This is the only instance in *Swims* where swimwork is conducted elsewhere other than in the United Kingdom, despite other global waters weaving their way into the lyric. The elegy contains environmental tropes which would class it as eco-elegy, without the distinguishing term. However, it is useful to separate the two in terms of the nuances that are highlighted, and the intentionality of the user. More so, eco-elegy can be separated from *hydroelegy*, the latter encompassing the same environmental tropes, but drawing on waters as foci and causality of *destructive waters*, either polluted, dynamic, or absent. Burnett’s swimwork unfolds though the lens of hydroelegy; the complex problematics of water takes centre-stage in the collection, including water in the human body.

In the first *Interlude* poem, the writer swims off the Greek Island of ‘Aegina’ and sees ‘a man/ cradle a body in the sea’; the image is superimposed on the image ‘The man passes. I stay’ (p.49). The sense of Burnett’s loss of her father is marked through the water of the Aegean Sea where the swim is taking place; whilst addressing him directly, she wants to:

lay it at your feet, let it wash through
the ward and swirl around your bed
until you thawed (p.49)

Water here is seen as the substance of rebirth and healing, but also the space of hydroelegy. The urbanised environment of the hospital ward could not be further from the waters of the Aegean; loss brings the two together through destabilised space and water’s capacity to act as elegiac facilitator. In the previous passage it is waters from elsewhere that warm the body, ‘thawed’ working as an anti-elegiac process. ‘The tendency of elegy to locate mourning in landscape, and of landscape poetry to be elegiac, may have something to do with the experience of absence in landscape’ (Costello 2010, p.334), which in the case of this poem is reflected through an unusually abstract and depleted water.

The second *Interlude* poem, ‘The Voice’ is the most celestial of the three; this is facilitated by Burnett swimming out into open water, reaching ‘a quiet overlap of seas’ where ‘few boats/ pass, [...] too far to help if I should tire’ (p.50). The palimpsestic water suggests a transcorporeal overlay which reaches beyond the bordered body in the body of water, as *pseudo vessel* where the shoreline’s border is no longer something that Burnett can access. Here, she is exposed to water and sky, similar to Dickinson’s diver/cosmonaut, as swimmer, contemplating her own vulnerability and exposure:

There I think I glimpse you, covered in fluid,
break out the stars in a bright astral birth,
showering confetti ever downward,
into dust all through the moving earth (p.50)

The figure of the father in the sea emphasises its hydroelegiac qualities of the cyclical process of death and rebirth. This unstable image is reinforced by the uncertainty of the pronominal voice 'I think I glimpse you'; this exemplifies the lack of the sovereign fieldwork self that swimwork amplifies to the point of breakdown, insecurity, and the limits of sense experience. By using the word 'fluid' instead of water, Burnett maintains the theme of birth and rebirth, also drawing on the metaphor of water as bodily substance; during swimwork she is not just 'covered in fluid', but the inner fluids circulate alongside the movement of water around the body.

The fluidity of the text is maintained through carefully placed assonance and alliteration; 'break', 'bright', and 'birth', are coupled with 'covered' and 'confetti', and also 'downward', 'dust', and 'fluid'. These plosives are placed throughout the passage as elegiac undertones—the stopping of airflow and breath. 'Dust' is a powerful elegiac symbol which can only exist through the absence of water. The 'moving earth' image contrasts with 'dust' as two distinct material entities; the former suggests the dynamics of the world yet is in keeping with traditional elegy's discourse of loss and burial. Followed by the passage 'Is it land or sea beneath/ my stretched body falling' (p.50), there is a lowering into 'land or sea' which hints at immersion but also contains a strong elegiac meaning. The poem ends with the line 'the moon calling' (p.50), a hydroelegiac referent, which through the power of tides suggests 'lack of closure and consolation in the work of mourning' (Costello 2010, p.2). This is mirrored by the poetics of open-water, swimming being seen by Burnett as 'continuous' (p.65).

The third *Interlude* poem 'Wallflowers' couples flora with water in an attempt at prolonging life. The birth and rebirth alluded to in the previous poem are taken to 'baptism' (p.51), where Burnett places water at the forefront of the body in transcorporeal flux:

If water is baptism let it rain
rivers down your armies of taut veins
storming the heart (p.51)

The healing power of water is reiterated through the ritualistic flow of bodily waters; the imagery of rivers of 'rain' through 'veins' not only contains the same morpheme but extract the dominant vowel 'i' in the poem. Burnett later reconfigures this idea in the passage 'a river is not a river without him' (p.64), towards the end of the collection. In the following poem, 'Llyn Gwynant', the symbolism of the wallflowers is elaborated by the writer who uses 'wallflowers (once known as *heart's ease*)' (p.53) to suggest their medicinal healing powers, as well a psychological healing—aiding in the process of mourning. As rivers are 'storming the heart', the writer goes beyond the transcorporeal body to an affective connection with water, one which is essential to the renewed mode of aqueous considerations.

Swimwork in this poem also happens through memory: 'you used to sell wallflowers' is triggered by the scent of pears; the chromatics of the flowers, 'yellows,/ oranges' (p.51) coupled with a diurnal shift towards evening encompass a moment nearing the end. The action of trying to save the 'tired/ ones' by putting them in 'buckets' resonates in the last line of the poem, 'A girl, without a bucket to save you' (p.51). Water is gathered in the Aegean Sea and the bucket, both containers with delineated boundaries. Within hydroelegy's difficult discourse, they extend the Heideggerian notion of the jug, where 'the emptiness, the void, is what does the vessel's holding. The empty space, this nothing of the jug, is what the jug is as the holding vessel' (Heidegger 1971, p.169). In an attempt to define the loss, which is different for individual people, Burnett is aware of the *void* as metaphysical, but also spiritual. The carefully placed lines 'You must feel my heart. It's vampiric/ how I serve it up to you'

(p.51) are part of the arrangement of the poem as visceral element, served to a collective *you*; this breaks the singular instance of loss into a global discourse, enveloping the reader. Here, the poem is a still life.

The elegiac interlude ‘Poems for my Father’ echoes throughout the collection and is accompanied by other types of loss—all linked to water, grounding hydroelegy. This is reinforced from the ‘Preface’ poem, where ‘in the day in the river in the moss in the rushes we’ll come and part’ (p.16). The temporary meeting place of the river becomes a symbol for posthumanist modes of encounter—also hydroelegiac. In the opening swim, ‘The Teign’, the reader is made aware of its polluted waters from the ‘disused barytes mine at Bridford’, which ‘killed large numbers of fish’ (p.19) in 1962 as quoted from the River Teign Fisheries Survey. The *guidelines* for this swim are focused on dissolving and inserting the problems identified in the Survey back into the poem, after thinking about them in the water. The cyclical nature of the swim session creates an interdisciplinary palimpsestic layering of the river as ecological habitat and polluted waters—hydroelegiac through their toxicity. A part of the Fisheries Survey is used in the poem as found text; passages are interrupted by Burnett in bold font, with poignant ethical and elegiac undertones. The word ‘guilt’ stands out as a strong posthuman element, together with the lines ‘I should do more/ [...] I should do less’ (p.21); these emphasise the uncertainty regarding actions that can be, and should be taken. The Japanese city of ‘Fukushima’ is introduced in this poem and is reiterated in the following poem, ‘The Barle’:

as in Fukushima, where fishermen

record radioactive caesium in fish,
three years after the earthquake,

three years on from the tsunami:
I can no more take this out

of the poem as out of water (p.24)

Burnett’s inability to remove the ‘radioactive caesium’ from the water leads to her not being able to remove it from the poem either. The caesium becomes embedded in the text, polluting it. This highlights the importance of including harsh factual elements in the creative work, despite their elegiac tonality. Whilst swimming in the Barle, Burnett is aware that the pollution level in the water is high; this leads to the expansion of the Fukushima disaster. In ‘Hampstead Heath’, this is expanded even further; found text comprising reports from the disaster, summarises all of the victims into ‘one woman’ (p.41), despite ‘Some 7,000 people’ seeking compensation. The identity and amount of the victims is symbolically washed away under a capitalist system, despite reports from those affected outlining long-term physical and psychological damage.

The last extract of found text in this poem, ‘one woman said, “I’m scared”’ (p.43), summarises the fear of all the different types of human victims in light of ecocatastrophe. Burnett’s strong ethical and transcorporeal perspective throughout the collection expands the notion of ‘victim’ to all human and nonhuman creatures who are ‘submerged in the matter/ of all of us mattering’ (p.30). The mourning and healing process is carried to the following poem ‘Llyn Idwal’, where the reader is told that ‘Nothing dies here’; the light ‘lifts the pieces of/ the body that can’t lift themselves’ (p.55). Hydroelegiac water then permeates the poem in the ending passage ‘the mind,/ the memory and the rain that falls soundless/ through our veins’ (p.55). Burnett uses the rain as trigger for memories, the water acting as material binding agent. Within the context of hydroelegy, pollutants and toxins

narrowed down to micro and nano levels position the more-than-human water as itself a victim. As it circulates around and within bodies *wounded water* becomes the binding agent of transcorporeal discourses of environmental destruction. Belonging to this framework, blue poetics is an imperative in contemporary environmental humanities.

Extinction is also part of the discourse of hydroeology. However, Burnett chooses to reverse the process in the poem 'Porthmeor' by recording the sounds of the 'species that human intervention has helped/ bring back from the brink of extinction', and playing 'the recording into the/ sea' (p.61). Whilst only one of the species she lists in her poem is aquatic, the 'Gray Whale', the posthuman perspective behind the rationale is emphasised later in the poem through the question 'How can I soothe such harm/ except with the sounds of other species' (p.62). The scale of anthropogenic extinction far outweighs the number of rehabilitated species, the ethics between continued destruction and hope are not for a dystopian future; they envisage a world where we can 'glimpse a better way that we could be/ living' (p.62), as posthuman entanglements within a complex environmental framework.

Burnett's use of hydroeology in the radical landscape poems of *Swims* highlights the severe environmental threat that the waters she immerses herself into are under; this is expanded to global species, aquatic or otherwise, which are in the same situation. From the perspective of the posthuman body in the water, Burnett incorporates all *victims*, including human ones within her hydroelegiac discourse. This links to Morton's two modes of eco-elegy, where in 'the first mode, there is nothing left for elegy at all. In the second, there is no end to the work of mourning. More strangely still, each mode may appear simultaneously in any given text' (2010a, p.1). In *Swims*, Burnett hovers between these two, aware of the fact that the waters she swims in are polluted in varying degrees, as they penetrate her body during swimwork. The bittersweet ending of the poem 'The Barle', summarises the hydroelegiac melancholy through transcorporeality:

Though we leave the water,
there is no emergence (p.24)

The phrase 'no emergence' hints at Haraway's notion of 'staying with the trouble' (2016). The physical body of water can be exited, however, the inner human waters cannot. Understanding both is the key to unlocking the renewed mode of thinking that is required to be able to speak of a world in which the human and more-than-human are living together, entangled through the watery threads that course through bodies and landscapes.

Conclusion

Burnett's *Swims* help us navigate the treacherous waters of our bodies—their entry and exit points—whilst engaging with local and global outer-body waters, in a renewed sense of more-than-human situatedness. Through swimwork, the reader is allowed a glimpse into the twelve bodies of water that she explores, with the aim of renewing their modes engagement with waters. Swimwork is transcorporeal, connecting the body to its environs; the *unknown other* discovered in part during this process suggests a more-than-human *conscious collective*, both aqueous and terrestrial. Burnett's interconnections surpass historical, cultural, and political agendas to viewing these localities as part of a lyric life-territory.

Swims expands Oswald's concepts of songlines and message sticks in *Dart* (2010), guiding the reader through the waters that are explored through swimwork. The message stick is passed from writer to reader via the lyric to highlight the issues that water confronts itself with, which also permeate human bodies, often causing unseen harm. Hydrofeminism as a mode of ethical immersion is linked to posthumanism and transcorporeality, emphasising the need to take ethics into account when speaking of *victims* as a more-than-human collective, without species or gender delineations. The borderless body holds the key to unlocking and proposing new modes of engagement with the more-than-human. The awareness of plastic polymers as part of the fabric of waters, along with the observation of anthropogenic modifications of aqueous environments containing an embedded critique to the aquaculture industry, invites considerations of how other disciplines might be able to help readers understand the topic of environmental destruction.

The radical landscape poems in *Swims* offer to the environmental humanities a new mode of looking at and engaging with waters through a more-than-human awareness; Burnett's swimwork is an environmental act operating within the framework of blue poetics through a hydroelegiac lens. Blue extinction is embedded as a hidden and widespread event. Alongside these elements, water is also seen as the substance of birth, rebirth, and healing. Burnett's swimming is meditative as much as it is transcorporeal; the materiality of the water against her own body opens considerations of the waters of other bodies. However, there is hope contained within the hydroelegiac discourse, and it travels across the text to the reader with the possibility of becoming converted into an environmental action. Awareness of water as both victim and catalyst for change creates opportunities for new modes of more-than-human engagement, where transcorporeal interconnections hold the world together. The 'smell of earth and sadness at getting further from the river' (p.63) that Burnett feels after each swim session is partly illusory; the distance from inner bodily waters and more-than-human ones is diminished through *Swims*.

CODA - extinction & invaders

extinction

Extinction, and its effect on the United Kingdom shoreline's intertidal species was of interest to Fibisan from her first year of doctoral study. The *extinction*⁵⁸ section is preceded by an earlier poem 'Semibalanus balanoides', which looks at the localised extinction of cold-water barnacles on the Cornish Coast, as the species is pushed further north due to an increase in seawater temperatures. Whilst hydroelegiac discourse is embedded in Fibisan's poems, it is through a commission for the *Extinction Elegies* project⁵⁹ that this mode of thinking, coupled with a strong posthumanist stance, started the *extinction* series. It focuses on selected species that are either extinct or presumed to be extinct due to no recent findings. Through this project, Fibisan was able to engage with others who are writing about loss of species, and their approaches to this difficult topic. Since each person focused on a different species, the variety opened fruitful discussions about elegiac writing, which Fibisan then adapted to her research more specifically. The species that she focused on was the Yellow Blossom

⁵⁸ See 'extinction' section, Appendix 2, p.103.

⁵⁹ See <https://redroomcompany.org/projects/extinction-elegies/>.

Pearly Mussel (*Epioblasma florentina florentina*)⁶⁰, which has become extinct due to habitat loss in the Mississippi river in the United States.

The resulting poem, ‘Arrival at Paducah’ traces the journey of this Mussel as it heads towards extinction going against the current up to Paducah, one of its furthestmost ranges. Whilst the poem presents a posthuman perspective on extinction, similar to Burnett’s work, it also includes the human element in the text as accompanying the mussel on its journey. From the first stanza, the reader is faced with ‘the shrinking shoal’, leaving no guess as to the lowering numbers of this species. The second stanza lists the causes of its demise: ‘stream perturbations/ siltation erosion pollution/ man/ smothered by Zebra mussels’. The word ‘man’ appears after a caesura to unify them into the anthropogenic, to which they can all be traced. Transcorporeality establishes the connections that human and more-than-human already share; ‘knitting entangled paths with our feet’ implies immersion and a renewed mode of viewing these creatures. The layout of the poem mirrors the clusters of species as they would ordinarily be distributed on the river bed.

Despite the topic of the poem being extinction, fieldwork plays an important part in the process. Fieldnotes from river explorations—including Looe River, The Menai Strait, and Cornish and Welsh fieldnotes of mussel beds, were revisited to try to establish a connection to the YBP Mussel that went beyond the scientific towards the personal. Hydroeology was embedded into the broader discourses of loss that Fibisan was drawing on, both from a more-than-human perspective established through the loss of other species, and from the entirety of her close family (excluding her mother and godfather) having passed away. The reduction of the YBP Mussel population and its demise within the hydrolegiac context of the poem are linked to Neimanis’ notion of transcorporeality where ‘if we consider our world’s water-related ecological crises, inextricably linked to our other human projects of dam building, [and] factory fishing [...] the urgency of acknowledging how human projects affect other bodies of water in the world becomes clear’ (2016, p.63). In the passage ‘tributary dam tourniquets the river/ florentina recoils/ reduced to rare specimens’, the reader is confronted by the anthropogenic strangulation of the river, and how it affects the species living in it, focusing on the YBP Mussel. The last stanza features only the mantle of the creature, which ‘flaps/ in the current’; this embodies a void—a space that should not be vacant, and reminds the reader that ‘the planetary hydrocommons is not outside of us, but quite literally channelling and cycling through us’ (Neimanis 2016, p.64).

The poem ‘*Artemia salina*’ speaks of the extinction of this Brine shrimp species in the wild in the United Kingdom, once the salt pans that used to house the high salinity loving crustacean were destroyed. The shrimp used to be favoured as it kept the brine clean. The layout of the poem suggests the rectangularity of the salt pan shape, the edges of it being used to gather the salt into mounds. The middle of the poem is hollow, apart from a few contorted letters which suggestively spell ‘falter’; it picks up the word from the body of the poem, where it stands within ‘inverted swimmers *falter*’, suggesting the Brine shrimp’s mode of swimming and their demise. The letters are layered, making it possible to distinguish them whilst appreciating their contortion; ‘swallow what’s left of letters’ suggests a consumerist attitude towards a sentient being, which once gone can only be distinguished through the suggestive remains of bodies in the centre of the poem. The ‘myr myr’ motif plays upon the phonetics of the two words coupled together, sounding /’ mɜ:(r)mə(r)/, which is also the abbreviation for ‘million years’. This suggests the temporal aspects that dominate the poem, and the fact that the Brine shrimp is a species that has stayed virtually unchanged, a living fossil. From a

⁶⁰ Due to its long name, from this point onwards the species is referred to as the ‘YBP Mussel’.

posthuman perspective, the poem looks at more-than-human bodies as vessels of water, where the former is closer to a species like the Brine shrimp than they may think.

The *extinction* poems are hydroelegies focusing on loss of aquatic species, which happens at the hands of the human. The key to stopping this from happening is a change in how we perceive water to flow or exist out there, distant from our bordered bodies; expecting extinction in aqueous environments to not affect the human is something that we cannot ignore. Polluted, dynamic, or absent water affects the human as much as, or more than, the nonhuman. The three types of water listed claim human lives as well as nonhuman ones. Ways of transcorporeal entanglement can help open up conversations about our connections to water as life-territory, 'but understanding this relationship seems also to be a question of distinguishing between kinds of knowledge – knowledge that commodizes and colonizes, knowledge that generates necessary anger and action, knowledge that heals' (Neimanis 2016, p.146). The paralleled anger and healing in the *Extinct* poems, speaks of both the problem and the possible solutions to a bettered relationship with more-than-human waters. 'The future is always an open question, and our bodies must be understood as flowing beyond the bounds of what is knowable' (Neimanis 2012a, pp.94-95), and that unknowability demands from us a radical change.

invaders

The *invaders*⁶¹ section was developed alongside *extinction*, as both engaged with the issue of life-territory within an anthropogenic context. The poems initially draw on the Marine Conservation Society's 'Marine Invaders' series of shore surveys; they depart from their species list to include ones that live in brackish or estuarine waters, such as the Zebra Mussel and the Mitten Crab. The ethics surrounding the management of invasive species is unclear, and the consensus seems to be active removal by authorities, subsequent disposal, and encouraging foraging of invasive species, without a cap on numbers. This result is primarily anthropogenically driven, occurring due to transport networks, the fishing industry, the climate crisis, tourism, colonialism, and even deliberate introductions. The management of such creatures ignores the fact that they are species finding themselves out of their native habitat (whether that be the keel of a boat, a fishing net, or a shipment of freshly caught seafood flown across the world). The creatures themselves does not have the ability to self-identify as invasive; they often thrive in the areas they invade due to the living conditions encountered; these are often coupled with a large amount of food and fewer predators. Biological invasions are 'often overlooked in marine conservation plans' (Giakoumi et al. 2016, p.1220), which is why there is a large time gap between the arrival of a species and action undertaken to remove it. During fieldwork, Fibisan encountered many invasive species which are listed in the Marine Conservation Society's *Alien Species Guide*,⁶² including certain barnacles, crustaceans such as the Chinese Mitten Crab, seaweeds such as Wireweed and Wakame, and Molluscs such as the Slipper Limpet and the Pacific Oyster. These species were recorded but otherwise left unharmed.

'Darwin's Barnacle' replicates the shore survey method employed for the counting of barnacle species as part of the Marine Conservation Society's 'Big Barnacle Count', where 5cm quadrats are used to survey barnacle species populations and density. The 5cm quadrats were kept on the page to illustrate

⁶¹ See 'invaders' section, Appendix 2, p.124.

⁶² See https://www.mcsuk.org/media/explore/Aliens_Species_Guide.pdf.

the small scale of the survey; text additions outside of the quadrats included the presence of other common barnacle species competing for space. The life cycle of the invasive Darwin's barnacle is included to illustrate the fact that it is similar to other barnacle species, just not in the place where they are native:

marine-fouling

cyprids
scout a spot
comb the stone
or hull or pier
leave freckle footprints
through temporary adhesion

Figure 9. Darwin's Barnacle – extract

Setting aside ‘marine-fouling’ from the cyprids who ‘scout a spot’ as per their behaviour, the negative ‘fouling’ only applies to anthropogenic structures, which the barnacles deem fit for habitation. They are unable to distinguish between types of surfaces; in competition for space, they temporarily and then permanently adhere to surfaces such as boats or piers. The high density of invasive species is often remarked upon, whilst the presence of native creatures on such structures is disregarded. The ethics surrounding the management of invasive species raises the question of culling the population of an affected area, or selecting individuals within that group; the latter is a painstaking process which authorities are unable to fund, as invasive species already involve high costs: ‘the total annual cost of INNS⁶³ to the British economy is estimated at approximately £1.7 billion’ (Williams et al. 2010, p.4).

The ‘Slipper limpets’ poem mirrors the shape of a Slipper limpet stack, where ‘bodies’ and ‘families’ lie within the posthuman realm of the more-than-human. The blocks of text are linked and displayed as individuals within the stack, with the larger older ones at the bottom, and the youngest on top. Within the discourse of new ecofeminism the issue of gender is disregarded through sequential hermaphroditism, suggested at the base of the poem, where Slipper limpets ‘grow/ in embraces/ males/ stacked on females/ turning/ female question gender boundaries’. This creates a dual layer of temporal and physical boundaries that are breached, opening discussions about dwelling and identity, which go beyond the Slipper limpet into anthropogenic realms. The stack is seen as transcorporeal metaphor, where ‘bodies’ refers to ‘the body as *material* text, in which cultural practices, political and economic decisions, and natural processes are deeply intertwined’ (Oppermann 2016b, p.416) with the more-than-human.

This is continued in the ‘Zebra mussel’ poem, where Fibisan divides the text into two columns titled ‘native’ and ‘invader’, to present a mirrored view of the species as it is found in its homeland, the Danube Delta, and elsewhere, in this case the British estuary, where it is a non-native species. The poem suggests human migration through transcorporeality, and the stigma and struggles that migrants are often faced with, as victims of problematic economic, social, and political systems. The Danube Delta is located in eastern Romania, Fibisan’s native country, the connection exploring the stigma surrounding eastern European migrants in particular, and how they can harbour feelings akin to having the status ‘invader’, regardless of the circumstances. The last line of the poem ‘culled/ home’ illustrates the practice of eradicating invasive species against the questionable ‘home’ which is

⁶³ Invasive non-native species.

defined and redefined through evolutionary history. The paronymic suggestion of ‘called’ suggests the issue of naming and dwelling, and how these borders are as blurred as the transcorporeal body, which is why ethics should play a key role in discussion regarding the terms ‘native’ and ‘invader/ migrant’ when it comes to all human and nonhuman species within particular contexts.

According to Oppermann, ‘bodies tell stories: stories of social choices and political decisions, of natural dynamics and cultural practices, and of environmental risks and health issues’ (2016b, p.416). However, it should be emphasised that all human and nonhuman bodies tell stories, including those that may be labelled as ‘invasive’, ‘toxic’, or ‘parasitic’. The poem ‘Mitten Crab’ represents a section of intertidal burrows, focusing on the survey method of burrow casting, which can controversially trap some specimens at the end of tunnels (Chan, Resh, and Rudnick 2005, p.796). The story of the Mitten Crab as it is being surveyed contrasts with its otherwise dynamic and complex life cycle which is outlined in the poem. The posthuman ‘body’ illustrates the surveyor and the surveyed ‘caught in the intertidal portion/ of streams’, which expands to broader human and nonhuman categories. The concept of life between the tide marks suggests the limits of the posthuman body and its more-than-human situatedness.

The species in the *invaders* cluster are portrayed as sentient nonhuman creatures, with the superimposed anthropogenic stigma of their status as non-native. From a transcorporeal perspective the human is entangled with them in the same way as it is with all other human and nonhuman species. Labelling non-native species as ‘alien’ or ‘dirty’ (Ecology Environment & Conservation 2013) ostracises them from the category nonhuman, and posits eradication methods which are neither ethical nor beneficial for the adjacent species living in *invaded* environments. These poems place the transcorporeal mode of thinking at the forefront of any social, political, or economic debates regarding the management of these invasive species. Through hydro-metaphors, new materialist modes of viewing and the sublime, they explore the wateriness of our own bodies as well as the nonhuman creatures which dwell within waters, whether they belong there or not.

The *plants & birds*⁶⁴ section is not explored in the codas, as it parallels the general project, and is not linked to the topic of this thesis. However, the methodology of the poems is similar; they can provide the reader with an additional insight into Fibisan’s creative work, and how this is applied beyond the realm of the *blue*.

⁶⁴ See ‘plants & birds’ section, Appendix 2, p.134.

Conclusion

This thesis explores the contributions that the three collections make to the environmental humanities. Despite individual responses to the sites they explore, the selected works of Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett have common strands of situating the human within an intrinsic more-than-human sphere. Their lyric helps shape our understanding of this sphere as it functions in constant dynamics and entanglements, by making its focus point the water that lies at the basis of more-than-human interconnectedness. The texts of the three poets discussed promote an interdisciplinary dialogue that addresses environmental changes using scientific terminology, and experimental modes of writing relying on fieldwork and swimwork practices. The topics they address propose ontological and epistemological reconfigurations of more-than-human relationships. The selected collections offer an invaluable contribution to the environmental and blue humanities, allowing the reader to engage with more-than-human life-territories through radical landscape poetry. Within a blue poetics framework these collections offer a renewed mode of looking at and thinking with waters.

Tarlo's *Gathering Grounds* is a compendium of lyric fieldwork sessions, conducted over the course of several years, and allows for palimpsestual immersion into the landscape of the Humberston-Tetney area in the United Kingdom. These radical landscape poems have travelled, and travel to walls, floors, windows, onto the digital and printed page, being reshaped along the way, and in the best company of Tucker's artwork. The poetry and art's activism brings renewed attention to an otherwise overlooked area on the British shoreline, pointing the reader and viewer in the direction of a high-risk landscape/seascape. More-than-human connections outline the intrinsic links to place, proposing a different type of engagement: one that is permeable, fluid, and transcorporeal. As walking women, Tarlo and Tucker take the reader on a journey of ecophenomenological *radicalisation*, starting with a shift in perception regarding their environs, and capturing the essence of the immediacy of fieldwork. The open-field poetics are also a feature of Dickinson and Burnett's collections as they engage in similar discourses with different modes of environmental exploration and translation.

Dickinson's *Tender Geometries* is a gathering of lyric entanglements, triggering discussions around the ethics and difficulties of more-than-human interconnectedness. The networks of connection that are created use posthumanism, new materialism, ecofeminism, and transcorporeality as departure points for metaphoric considerations of place. Water is the medium of more-than-human transcorporeality, yet as it contains plastic it plays a key role in humiliating the body, by penetrating it. The plastic-eating bacteria collectively known as nylonase are used as hopeful metaphor for the hyperplastic problem, despite Dickinson's suggestions that this solution alone cannot work without broader human action at a global level. The more-than-human is bound by eco-elegiac entanglements. Shared pain and grief give rise to a renewed sense of ethics and a common desire to divert a dystopian future. The tender geometries of the collection are permeable and transcendable borders immersing the human body in the *unknown other* and allowing for a part of its discovery. The figure of the diver/cosmonaut represents the everyday man in transcorporeal modality. The reader is invited to replace this figure by accessing their own environs, as stimulated by a lyric entanglement.

Burnett's *Swims* guide the more-than-human navigation of inner and outer waters, departing from the immediacy of the immersive moments of the swims to the global discourses of water narratives. This posthuman situatedness is transcorporeal, harnessing the materiality of water to open new areas of

how this can permeate through the lyric out into the reader's imaginarium, and from there into the world, through their actions. The lyric life-territory of the poem depicts the life-territory of the swimmer, as they experience each session from a renewed perspective of posthuman watery entanglements. Burnett's works are environmental acts derived from the process of immersion during swimwork, to its translation into the lyric, which speaks of inner and outer waters under threat, and in need of attention. This journey is where hope lies within *Swims*. The poems as songlines and message sticks are passed to the reader on the surface of transcorporeal water. The immersive ethics of transcorporeality speaks of victims as a more-than-human collective, without species or gender delineations. Also picking up on Tarlo and Dickinson's threads of polymers in the water, *Swims* outlines their pervasive nature and the damage that they cause which often go unseen. Most evident in the 'Interlude' poems, hydroeology flows through the collection, reminding the reader of polluted, dynamic, or absent waters. Extinction occurring under the cover of water is embedded as a hidden and extensive event, coupled with a contrasting vision of water as the substance of birth and healing. The meditative aspects of the swim challenge the materiality of water against the transcorporeal body, creating opportunities for new modes of more-than-human engagement. Alongside Tarlo and Dickinson's collections, *Swims*' proposed watery entanglements urge the reader to dive into the rivers, lakes, and seas that environ them, and take action to prevent or slow down their further destruction.

The three collections explored offer new modes of thinking about and with water as part of the transcorporeal human body. Their radical landscape poetry addresses pressing environmental issues from the direct and immersive experiences of fieldwork and swimwork. The three poets' environs resonate in a global network of connections and dialogues with known and *unknown others*. The texts explored are of value to contemporary environmental literature, as they help shape epistemological discourses of human situatedness within a more-than-human world. Tarlo's *Gathering Grounds*, Dickinson's *Tender Geometries*, and Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's *Swims* make significant contributions to the corpus of contemporary radical landscape poetry and are literary activist tools that can trigger changes in readers' attitudes and behaviour towards the humanities and the environment. The textual worlds of these three poets are testament to the current eco-crisis, where the eco-elegiac and hydroelegiac are signalling present-urgency and the potential for a bettered future through a renewed relationship with the more-than-human, whose entanglements restore the ethics of care that has been marginalised in contemporary environmental discourses. The materiality of the physical collections' plastic content creates a network of connections between the bodies of the writers, the bodies of land and water where they conduct their fieldwork and swimwork, the bodies of the lyric pieces in their collections, and the bodies of the readers who engage with them. Body porosity becomes a medium for plastic dispersal within the more-than-human world. Tarlo, Dickinson, and Burnett's collections translate and interweave complex scientific discourse into the blue poetics which they outline.

Constricted by the word limit, this study does not elaborate on the historic aspects of complex and dynamic fields such as ecofeminism and materialism, but briefly summarises these, and situates the textual analysis on current strands that have emerged. A balanced view between the human and the nonhuman is proposed on the spectrum of posthumanist, new ecofeminist, and new materialist theories. For the same reason, the thesis does not go into lengthy ecophenomenological debates. Through close readings of selected passages from the three collections, it turns to metaphor and destabilised perspectives of the lyric *I* to introduce a renewed poetics of current environmental resonance.

Further research could explore other ways in which interdisciplinarity can be drawn into the lyric to promote new discourses, engaging and steering audiences towards scientific literature to better understand the drivers and solutions to the environmental crisis. Other avenues could be dedicated to

a more detailed exploration of some of the new topics introduced such as hydroeology and the concept of the radical landscape poem as message stick.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Harriet Tarlo Radical Landscape Poetry Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Harriet Tarlo (HT)

Interviewer: Vera Fibisan (VF)

[...]

HT: That book that I have given you, it's just a few little pieces, [and] I'm doing quite a long piece on that. It's just because I hadn't brought a spare copy of this and if you write to that person whose email I sent you, she was the curator of this exhibition. Just tell her you're a student, she'll probably give it to you cheap, or she'll probably just give you a copy, but I don't have any left.

VF: OK.

HT: I think it's got a few poems that aren't in the old one, but it's also got a little introduction. It was an exhibition with Judy [Judith Tucker] and me, and George Rowlett, who's a painter that's local to this area. I just think that you'd be interested in it. [...] Just ask [Linda Ingram], she's a very interesting woman, anyway, whom you might want to be in touch with; she did a lot of connections on that place; she's a sort of independent curator and artist; she lives, sort of in Cleethorpes, [and] she's done a huge amount in that area, for art, really and she's very good at putting the exhibitions together; she sometimes puts several of us together, you might get some experience between her in some way, cause she's interested in poetry and things as well, she's basically on the art side, but I looked to see if I had a spare copy and I realized I'd just given them all away.

VF: It's all right. I'll ask her for one. I'm happy to have it. I think that would just about mean that I've got your collected works, then. I don't think I missed anything. Which is good, because I actually read some stuff at the weekend, I reread some stuff, and I just realized that when I started researching your work, I was looking maybe at the whole 'radical landscape poetry' as a whole, as a concept, and then I was looking into the writers that you'd chosen in the anthology, and I was kind of trying to do logistics behind why you'd went why them. Why this set? Why not this other person? You've chosen both men and women, so clearly, you've not discriminated against them, it was equal.

HT: Yes, I wanted to do that.

VF: I just realized, going back from them, backtracking, I realized that you actually do have a lot of coastal writing even in your earlier works, not necessarily in the (*for Julia*) poem, but also later on, in the collected poems, there are a lot of [references to] tides, crabs etc. You always get that kind of coastal vibe, and I really [think that] my interest kind of moved from there. Adam emailed me earlier in the year about the 'Excavations and Estuaries' project, when you were down at Bank Street, and I realized that you were doing this project with Judy, and I was like 'wow' this is totally relevant to what I'm trying to say, that this is kind of ticking [those] boxes. You were basically doing the practical work of what I was talking about in theory.

HT: You've done it much thoroughly than I have, because I don't get much chance to go as often as I'd like. A lot of coastal poems in the earlier works are a spread of Cornish poems. I've gone back and back to the same place, which is what I tend to do, anyway, so there's always been that running through. But this recent one, the East Coast one is great, because it's working with someone else, which is interesting for a writer to do, I think. I think all writers who I know, who've done that are so enthusiastic about it, but it's also because it's a totally different kind of coast. It's just a completely different place to those kinds of very dynamic rocks and cliffs, and extraordinary geology of the North Cornish coast. It's just so different, incredibly flat, and mud dredged, samphire laden coast, it's just such a different place, so you know, and it's interesting. I often have these experiences, and trust me, even though you do come from another country but in your own country, you feel like you've gone to another country, when you go to places like that.

VF: Yes, I understand. Most people would relate immediately when you say 'coastline', they would probably relate the rocky dynamic, and the beach and the rockpools and all that stuff. I do think [that] your approach differs when you see this coastline; you said it's flat, it's muddy, it's almost uninviting in a way.

HT: And it's also incredibly cold, like these coasts where there's nothing to break the weather. I remember when we first went there, we thought we weren't going to be able to work there at all, particularly Judy, because she must sit still for a period of time, and it was just so biting cold. It isn't inviting, it's not pretty, the north Norfolk coast is similar in some ways, but it's much prettier, it's got a lot of more human stuff, it's full of little delicatessens and little cafes, and it's very pretty and it's got a different history as well, and it's got this incredible number of birdwatchers. It's very populated by humans who are all obsessed with birds. It's very interesting.

VF: I am secretly obsessed with birds.

HT: These people have a lot of gear.

VF: I've just got my guides and my binoculars.

HT: I have two guides, one with drawings and one with photos, so that's it. But even though it's interesting with the birds, it doesn't have romantic associations, the inhabitation isn't particularly beautiful. The agriculture is basically fields of mud. It feels very temporary, you feel that it could disappear at any moment, like it erodes, which in fact bits of it are doing. So, it's not inviting, but it's interesting as well because when you work in places like that where you've done a lot of work, like in the Pennines, where we've done a lot of work, it's difficult for it not to be romanticized in people's vision because it's such a beautiful area.

VF: Even though I've got quite a lot of experience with beaches, obviously, and even though I tend not to go to muddy beaches, because I talk a lot about the tides and the rockpools, and I must make it relevant, but I have been to the odd muddy beach, and like you said they are very barren. The most exciting thing was seeing a samphire field, or I saw the odd crab.

HT: All the inland creeks can be quite amazing. They've got a lot more life in them. In terms of your interest in pools I would go to that kind of place, where you can go up and down the creeks, and they're rather beautiful and they've got weird things happening. I think this is one of the principles of eco-criticism in a way, or ecological thinking, not to just look at the things that are obviously attractive. It's almost the same way in which people who campaign to save animals, it's always the big animals.

VF: It's what Dr. Ursula Heise was talking about at the conference.

HT: Exactly, it's a similar thing, you know. Whether it works in Yorkshire, everybody with these about the hills and the tributaries, they love the area and they relate to it, and then when people are working on the East Coast, what happened was that the local people were excited that we liked that place, and they said things like 'Oh, you're making us look at our own place in a different way.' It's quite touching. They weren't thinking very positively about where they live, I mean just the word 'Grimsby', the name of the place...

VF: It's grim.

HT: It's unfortunate. The word comes from a Viking leader, but it doesn't sound like that. They've got this dreadful decline of the fishing industry, but it's depressing in that sense, but it's also incredibly beautiful and has an amazing bird life and an amazing sense of space, and the human dwellings there are just very different from anywhere else, particularly the Fitties plotland or chalet park that we got obsessed with.

VF: Probably what you were doing to these local people, is that you were pointing at things for them and making them re-observe the environment that they lived in, because when you spend a long time in one particular place they easily overlook the details. It's just lines, like a very very sketchy kind of environment, and then you just basically said 'Stop!' and they looked, and they saw.

HT: It is interesting how people do that, and places where there's a tourist industry that's quite big, it is different because tourists come in, [and] they reinforce your sense of pride to a place. I mean, there are tourists in Cleethorpes, but they're much more 'going to the fairground rides' tourism, not so much nature loving tourism, although they're quite interesting too, definitely.

VF: I saw a video online, you and Judy doing the project. I think it was a video that was made...

HT: By Annabel McCourt on Vimeo.

VF: Yes, I'm kind of trying to relate to that with what you were saying just now about being cold, and it being hard to work in, particularly with Judy, in terms of the practicalities, how did you manage to combat the cold?

HT: We have this method, anyway, we usually mention it at conferences, but I can't remember whether we did at the last one, where we go out with this little sort of concertina cardboard sketchbooks, and we go out and we fill a page together, with writing in my case and drawing in her case, in the same place, and we stop for a very short time, so you can do that. Sometimes we have to back ourselves down to achieve it but in terms of her sitting down and doing a proper painting or drawing en plain air, outside, you can only do it in the summer, because her hands freeze. Peoples ask us questions whether either she's illustrated me, or I'm writing in response to her, and it really is a sort of organic integrated process.

VF: I picked up on that, I thought that was really interesting.

HT: We were working in collaboration, and we've talked to a lot of people, and they have very different practices.

VF: Yes, but even when you mention the word 'collaboration' for some people it still means cross-influence, like a response [to each other's work] or a post arranged kind of thing. [For example], 'I saw

your paintings and I wrote some really cool stuff, here you go!’ and then that becomes a collaboration. But what you’re doing, the response is immediate and parallel.

HT: It’s like you said, that we work in the field and that’s what we start with. [...] With our Yorkshire trip, they were sort of square these little squares about that size, I’ll have to show you sometime, but with this one they’re long, like the poems and the paintings are, so we did that because of the shape of the horizon, so we wanted the actual page we were working on to reflect the landscape basically.

VF: One of the things that I noticed, was that the work, I don’t know whether this is done on purpose or not, but your poems, have you ever tried to put them on top of the paintings because I’d tried that, and they look amazing in the way that they just perfectly fit on there.

HT: Well, we do reflect the shape and structure, we do, but we haven’t done much of that. [We have done that] for a project in Scotland that was a very little project, you just picked one piece for it. There was a day where lots of people went up to Scotland and did bits of fieldwork together and everyone produced the page of a book, which is quite fun. We did do that. So, Judy then produced a drawing, and I wrote text on it. We may do something like that where we actually go but it’s difficult in the way that it’s sort of like, what I’m thinking people like about our practice, is what happens when the reader or watcher in the gallery, the person who’s seeing the work looks between the two, what they make of that, how they put that together, so my work, you know my poetry better than most people, basically I’m not always as sparse as I am in these projects, but because Judy’s images are very full, she does her drawings very thick and there’s a lot of it, same with the painting, I would go very very sparse, I do use a lot of space in between the two, and something happens, [to try and] invite the reader to participate in the process themselves, and I think that appeals to the audience. I mean, I’m an old-fashioned modernist really, so I would always want to do that, I would always try to minimize my use of lyric I, my own dominating the poem.

VF: It was really strange, because when we went to Cambridge to the conference, because of the poetry reading that we had on Tuesday, because it was dominated a lot by coastal works and the whole conference seemed to be a lot focusing in that direction. If kind of felt at points that we weren’t in Cambridge anymore, that we were somewhere coastal, I really liked that feeling. When we went with the RSPB bird trip, I really felt like we were going to the coast. It was very strange.

HT: The coast out of Cambridge, basically that coast takes you up to North Norfolk, but I think that your idea of going all the way around as much as you can, is fantastic, and you’ll start to join things up a bit, and that’s when you’ll see the bits in-between, which is interesting, rather than just the bits we’re meant to see.

VF: So, just like you said, it’s not necessarily hitting all the beautiful spots, all the tourist destinations, it’s more like everything, developed, underdeveloped areas.

HT: That reminds me of the work that I did with Jem Southam [...] on the West Coast. It has been seen as gruesome in some ways, and everyone associates it with the nuclear industry and the steel industry, but if you walk along it, it goes through these amazing places like St. Bees Head, which is absolutely stunning, to these completely structured and bizarre pieces of reconstructed land, after the steelworks closed they kind of try to reconstruct the coast, but the colour is really weird because it’s all constructed on the sort of remnants of the steel industry, so the grass is a really odd colour, it’s very peculiar, it just doesn’t look right, when you first see it you can’t quite work it out, and it’s because of that.

VF: When I was going through your work earlier, I noticed that, because I talk a lot about the use of fact, and I think that's interesting. In your own works, you've got entire passages where you literally take signs off the beach or warnings and you just literally just put it in the middle of the poem, either in a rectangle or on its own, you can completely tell that this is taken from somewhere, this is a message to real people in the real world, yet you take it and you put it in the poem and it works. I thought it was interesting, because I talk about the use of fact, I think it's just bold to be able to find these pieces of information and make them relevant to the creative work.

HT: I'm very interested in that as well. I've been obsessed with that for years, really, how you put visual actual factual pieces of information, or things that you've seen, interesting in the world of the text.

VF: But that's different because it's taking actual text that's already there.

HT: Yes, found text. Well I do use a lot of found text actually more than people realize, but there are lots of reasons for it, because I don't want to pretend that the human aspect isn't there, but when you look at a vista, you always want to cut out those things, but they are actually there, so they say a lot about our culture, a lot of the time, and I think that that should be in there as well. But it is also partly when I'm using bits of things that people said to me, and I try to talk to people, which I quite often do. I'm really not trying to own that place, it isn't my place, I'm just visiting it, I'm never going to live there, and it's so different from working where you live, which I've done a lot in my time, usually, or somewhere where we've got a place association, but I wanted other people to come in, and I just started to do that with the East Coast works, with the long poems which I haven't published yet, but I'm just starting to do that. That's part of what I'm hoping to do next week, because Judy and I are going to Aldeburgh, on this bizarre project at the Aldeburgh Lookout Tower. It's a one-week residency where you live in a town on the beach and you walk up and down, well, we're going to walk up and down! People do different things, but at the end of the week, you have to do some kind of presentation, something in response to the place, but it's only one week and it's a different coast again, flat but sort of shingly, stony, and I'm hoping to talk to people, I'll have to write something within a week, which I don't normally do, but it's a great opportunity in one way, in another way it's slightly terrifying.

VF: I can imagine, writing under pressure. [...] The title [in *behind: land*] is striking in that you are using the preposition 'behind', and the lack of visibility when dealing with the coastlines and estuaries (I'm used to it) but I couldn't help linking the title to the fact that you might be referring to the perspective that you adopt throughout your poems. You seem to be looking inwards, instead of out at sea and most of the times, I feel that you're facing the fitties just like Judy is, and you turn your back to the water, or the water is just on the sides somewhere in the corner. It is clear that water lies in the background, so why do you prefer to face inland?

HT: Working with Judy has had a big effect on me in terms of how I look at place, because when you work with fine artists they are completely obsessed with perspective, basically, that is the main thing, you know, they think about what they see but she is very conscious about cutting landscape off, both of us are very conscious in the way that we do that in text and in art. As soon as you're painting something, you're taking a perspective; you're doing that, so she always tries to get a very open perspective, and in fact in all her paintings she attempts to create a vista where you could enter the painting in three possible ways. If you start looking at her work and see that, it's a little clue into looking into her work. Sometimes it can be a little bit unsettling, you don't have an obvious path, and you've got two choices, and she has been slightly more interested than more, or at least her history has been a lot more to do with human beings' relationship to land than mine. I'm always sort of forcing myself to put the human thing in, that's one of the reasons that I try to do that, because I think it's important. It's new to me,

because she worked for years and years on beach resorts, in Germany, in places like that, she worked on the Holocaust memories and their impact, and the history of that [...] and she did lots of paintings after those places. You should talk to her sometime about all that because it's all very interesting, and I saw that there's a lot to do with history in your own work, going back through the generations, it's something you've worked on a lot, place-memory, so she's very interested in that.

VF: As part of my research, when I started looking at these writings about the coastline in terms of fact versus fiction and creative works, I also started looking at early works like Edmund Gosse; he wrote about his father, and his dad works, and I started looking at Darwin and ways of approaching the coastline; these people were scientists but they were more fictional writers than anything, because the way that they write in is always like telling a story. I'm just thinking about *A Year at the Shore*, what a brilliant text, scientifically observed the surrounding world, but in such a pleasant way, so that what I try to think about as well, and not put them in the corner.

HT: Just going back to the title *behind: land*, there's another thing that's happened with us working together, which is that I write these poems and we always end up using just tiny little phrases for the poems, as titles for the paintings and drawings, so it's another part of the collaboration, so she used that as title for one of her drawings and it was a tiny phrase from one of my poems, and then Linda, whose email I've just given you, loved it, and she took it as a title for the whole exhibition, and we used it for the book, so it's sort of grown, but I really like, because it means different things, as you've picked up on; in one way. It's incredibly relevant to that area, land, behind the sand dunes, and it's got all these different meanings and connotations. My attraction to minimalism has always been, that a few words can be used for more than they mean, simultaneously they can mean different things to different people, but it is a lot about perception, which you've picked up.

VF: Do you feel that you were trying to capture human presence through its absence or are the poems more about nature reclaiming what rightly belongs to it? I mentioned at the conference that I noticed a lot of lack of human presence, but all the signs are there.

HT: We read the work concerning the Fitties, and it is all like that. It is interesting in those places out of season, when people aren't there, that's partly because people aren't allowed to be there all the time.

VF: I didn't know. I thought it was a matter of choice.

HT: No, it's closed in winter, for about two months. Many of the people who do live there want to live there all the time, but the council won't let them. There's a lot of argument going on about that area, in fact it's quite controversial, so we are interested in that, and I think that a phrase that you used, I can't remember whether it was in one of your poems was to do with the past holidays, the holidays of the past.

VF: I can't help picturing idyllic family holidays, picnics at the beach, all of which happen sometime in the memorial past. It's interesting that you mentioned it, because I did write an entire poem that has this idea behind it, that I go to observe the shoreline, and these images come through of these relatives that I don't know if they really exist. I write a lot about my grandmother.

HT: I picked up on that when I was reading your poems.

VF: She means a lot of things to me really and a lot of memories that I've got from when I was a child are related to being at grandmother's house. I remember finding these old capsules with these old film strips in, loads and loads of them, and she never let me play with them because they were just strips of

film and I could damage them but that's exactly what I wanted to do, so I opened them, and I just wanted to see what was in them. She had all sorts; you could see quite clearly who was what.

HT: Do you know what happened to them?

VF: No, but she must still have them somewhere, but supposedly they were relatives of mine from the 1900s.

HT: Is your grandmother alive?

VF: Yes, she's not doing very well, she's got dementia, my mum's taking care of her now. It's her birthday today; she's going to be 86.

HT: You should look into that; those film strips, because it could be amazing, people on old family holidays by the seaside, old relatives.

VF: That's exactly what I remember seeing on those negatives. I'm not sure if they were all relatives; that comes out in the poem, I just remember that that was what was forbidden, and it was interesting. I was wondering whether you could comment a bit on the form of your poems, the layout, because I noticed this relationship between the shape of the text and the landscape.

HT: I basically read lots of American poetry, which I'm sure you know about, also Levertov, all those poets. I'm very keen on Maggie O'Sullivan as a contemporary poet, because she's a dear friend of mine, Frances Presley, we've worked together, not to mention poets who have inherited that open form tradition which is what I do. So that's the inheritance, it's become my own, I can't write in any other way now. It's become completely natural to me. One of the things that I talk about when I'm teaching to students about creative form is all the things that you can do, stanzas, line breaks, conventional grammar, space on the page, visual images, but you must find your own form, and it must be a serious enquiry, to make it work, as I'm sure you know. You're writing in several ways, I can see it at the moment, trying new things, you need to find it, and when you've found it, I mean, not everyone's like this, some people change what they do all the time, and I admire that as well, but for me it is completely intrinsic to how I write, that's how I think, it is also to do with some playing around with the embodiment of landscape on the page, which I know you can't do, obviously you can't really do it, but I like impossible things. I like to have these impossible ideas and ideals when I'm working, and things I want to do, but I can't really do. When I started working with Judy it became very different because once you put things on the wall, whether they're in frames or not, they all change. All these poems I wrote in this project with Judy have about three or four different forms, depending on whether they're appearing on the page or the wall, or on a PowerPoint slide. All those different forms we have to change again, and they have to be reconfigured. The words are very few, but the spaces are more important in some ways actually, because changing the spaces between the words is what makes them poetry. Every time we're making a new idea, but it is to do with the landscape. It is partly to do with the embodiment of landscape but it's also to do with the rhythm of walking and breathing. Quite a lot of poems are about walking, as you've probably noticed. The *Nab* poem that I wrote quite a long time ago, is really important to me finding my rhythm. That book has also got a sea poem in it. I spent a ridiculously long time writing *Nab* because it was the poem where I was worked out how I was wanting to write poems, and it was all about returning to the same place over and over again.

VF: I was going to ask you what your hope and plans were for the future, but you've kind of answered that because the project is ongoing, isn't it?

HT: Basically what Linda [Ingham] has done, the curator, is that she and a few other people are involved in a bid to work on the canal, the Louth Canal, that comes out at the sea, where we worked previously, at Tetney, so I think that will happen, and we'll do that, but even if it doesn't we'll carry on anyway because we just want to carry on with this project, the official project has finished. It's my own work, I'm doing it anyway, but because it's not about doing something new, it's about going back all the time to places, so therefore it never ends. We do our joint stuff, and we do our own stuff so we keep it going, so that's good, we need to do that. When I wrote that new book, the one with the blue cover, that took me too long to get out, I was too busy doing all these projects with Judy, and I really had to get it out, all these poems I've got, and people have heard me read and have history, bits have been published and they can't read them. I tend to do that far too much when I write, because I'm more interested in the process than anything, so I just carry on, it's like that with the longer poems in this project, God know when I'll get them out or in what form, I just need to keep organised, but in other ways I'm enjoying being in it, but not finishing it.

VF: I was just thinking I might have sent you that poem of the...

HT: You sent me this one, I noticed it. I did read these and wrote a few things on them.

VF: In Cambridge I felt a bit guilty not having brought anything.

HT: I enjoyed it. You did send me this one. It's this one, isn't it?

VF: Yes.

HT: I really like the way in which you're using prose poem form and creating spaces within it, so it's not a block of text. To me that's very evocative of watery patterns which is obviously what you want to convey, and I think you've got an interesting use of space, a lovely sound that I like to read, *oral arms*.

VF: Oral arms is actually a scientific term.

HT: Oh really?

VF: Yes.

HT: You're using the different languages coming together very suggestively, there's the language of music and the language of the sea and the language of the self is a psychological scar, and that works very well, that meshing of languages. The one thing I would want to say that you should think about is the line endings. I don't think you should go to the open form, but if you're using new structures, I suggest when you've only got one phrase on a line it's not as suggestive as when you're using enjambment. There are spaces when you do use something much more effectively. I think they really read sublime, with is lovely, they're very suggestive, they use real material, and you can feel that's there. It's just little things I've thought of, it's a general thing.

VF: I was wondering whether when you're going with Judy on your next field trip, would it be possible for me to join you or would I hinder you too much.

HT: I'll have to talk to her. I'm not against it. When Annabel came out to do that film, we got used to her.

VF: I feel I'd be able to understand a lot more of what's happening to be able to write better about it.

HT: We haven't got a trip imminent, but we are going there in the future.

Appendix 2 Shore Survey

on edge

Caught in the surge

a grazed descent	past pen rocks
derelict barnacle lace	the halfway water
confines of micro	blind-ended
particles	flood fissures
attested	just upwards
and traced	of false hope
territory	or a red seaweed
long chains	disguised as another
amino acids	protein molecule
drips in the dark	tangled trust
air pockets	on the safe rock
silver slither	balanced body
beneath	holds of water
coherent canopy	a crawling carapace
catches a grapheme	shifts a shallow trail
in sequence	the line written
in sentiment	on wiped surface
levelled zonation	fades
zooms to channel floor	slopes through
flux ruptured fluid	spatial density
from touch or gaze	the mouth takes
attentive bodily flow	water in perpetual
painted topshell	drowning
tracks between	division by
transience	molecular sieve
and incarceration	or distance
suspended in	thoracic overhang
intertidal incision	the filling lung
holdfast	touches spatial porosity
pursed	takes substrate
as lips meet	slide filaments
inertia under	torrent pectoral fins
benthic boards	in nylon salt
tide house	wedged between
through the trap	the walls in waiting
door opens under flow	on broken wave time
contained sea urchin	teaching silent shifts
collision cross-section	in polluted forms
green floorboard conceals	of air and swell
subcutaneous	particles on their way
creatures	where light hits
a body begins	sound the words
on the edge	southwards
of another	across the surge
	only a whisper

Concertino in C flat major

Flow

through bone and brass listen for shore to crumble residue
makes no natural noise particles peel off the surface
with each wave they bleed a little hear the
shore through shells wood and wind the hum of loose
cold-drowned unnoticed weigh visitor-centre maps down
with limpet shells one crowns corner on the left creates
island where there was perhaps an island eroded dust
settles on that patch the sand swells to circularity
a mass forms underneath off the coast of Cornwall
noise so low that whole mounds move before fishes notice
on constant rise the sea bed lifts copies limpet shell
shape on our maps reshapes unaware of
storm and tide

Ebb

unburied grass wind turbine hum broken strings of
bows rigid remember past tension the pull and snap of sharp
notes revert to plucking the landscape dry sea water
boils off at low tide a rusted cable cuts shore in half fold
the map in the same place read the rocks and sing
molluscs to music limpet's radula polishes the
brass half-sunken toothed wrack twists hermit crabs
scuttles to its rush fossilised remains retranslated into a true
sound

Crevice

pinned on geological table
on edge where pellucid water
scatters and churns
infant fingers of rock
timorous walled corklets
retreat into navels
green or bleeding

in-between folds of coralline skin
swept by sand rushes
hide your new found strength
subtle grip as we wait
for Andromeda
discard cowrie shells ashore
shriveled algae coats pebble toes
limpet nails
buried in the sand
among the detritus
of a once full womb

Darwin's Barnacle

barnacle larvae
travel by bilge water
hatched released
in corroded tank

cement bodies
to alien rock
colonise
the gaps
in constellations

marine-fouling

cyprids
scout a spot
comb stone
or hull or pier
leave freckle footprints
through temporary adhesion

Semibalanus balanoides
boreo-arctic chains

netted and cairned
on membranous base

on the macramé wall

the recruits also
count

within the small frame they
prosper their plates
amongst the amber
rice-grain settlers

Stellate barnacles
kite-shaped openings

carry closed water

emerge as one-eyed larvae

free-swimming settle on
foreign substrate
head-first sessile bodies

perennially trapped
feed suspended in craters
eggs develop safely
shell plates shut low salinity

Poli's stellate barnacle
bright blue
flesh
erupts from chain
of volcanoes

sub-quadrat lands
on limpet
specimen-encrusted shell
elevated rim exposes

dark ring
conceals

a different creature

Foreshore

alarming path through dunes

tansy talling out from tilted grasses

two turbines twist

the courses of creeks

words of warning

run to estuary then sea

amalgam marshlands

shed their

fence lines divide dunes

a deity or two

on the horizon

vision works makes presence

bird call cull

mination

sharp silhouette pierces place

washed up fragmented bricks

building blocks

entangled environment

Plenty

on the apex of the spread
of tidal pools

sea anemone
suspended on
the skin of rock

gather in naphtha flare clouds
around the balloon
softened by landscape
barnacles and mussels open maps
to treasures
while velvet crabs scuttle trailing
sand veils

limpets cling together
their underside
orange sinks behind
the waterwall
finger buds
a caress
the waves have reached high rock
and threaten
anemone winnows hands
with water

Salvage⁶⁵

the fish winch cracks unreels ghost nets
catches unowned creatures open and catch sea
through a part of the hooked in debris the stare
embrace to snare for the glee is from and the
withered entanglement's freedom of its open
in corroded withered to snare for the glee is from and the
lean in plastic scrapper on the bone current way to
plastic scrapper on the bone current way to
micro pods and tattered gutted eyes fades next
net and bone current way to gutted eyes fades next
journeys tattered gutted eyes fades next
innards swallows level rises next
water level rises next
glimpsee pills
dead creatures pills
keel bellies
then create roads
forms lengthen create roads
inches nearer lean in corroded withered to snare for the glee is from and the
of evanescent plastic scrapper on the bone current way to gutted eyes fades next
towards unna med as they tank drift out of bilge dead creatures pills
smaller indelible rows of water level rises next
glimpsee pills
then create roads
forms lengthen create roads

⁶⁵ After Zineb Sedira's *Lovers II* and *Lovers III*

Seacoal

devil crabs
return to coast
coddled in the bay's lapping
waters
cream carapace stained
by shoveled wave-rolled
sea's dilated pupils
dactyls dipped
grip trickle of water
go-to and drain
diluted blackblood
cleared path
still smudged
feather and shell
brick slag flint
whinstone pyrite
uncovered
browse brochure
yawn at gentle birds
feed on crab
claw way back to shore
contorted natural
pattern on pereiopods
coal-lines chelipeds
blood eyes
fueled toothed wrack
caught in the crossfire
dismembered into hearty
meal
convulses in the pan
look up nutritional values

traffic stilled
tiremarks
through snow
settled on coal
road rifts
coal heap
from coal strewn
anthropo silhouette
against surroundings
bat like
wings drooping
claws clutch pickings
landline camouflaged
colliery as backdrop
chimney like a lighthouse
or ladder
elsewhere a
burnt beech
struck by lightning
tree turned to charcoal
large pincer
nabs upwards
time's tongue will lick this
place
green

Semibalanus balanoides

entangled on rocky shore
feet crisscross paths
to lips of sea spied
by barnacles shielded
their cirri bloom in water
comb for particles
tremble in the mechanics of microscopy
organs perfectly arranged
in a spread of rocks
the cold water ones hard to find
treat to dog whelks
harpooning shore
retrace babysteps in sheathed bay
the carpets could be lichen
grandmother's hands
crochet intricate tablecloths
the pattern holds together in
twilight she weaves winter
into stale-smelling albums
photo corners lost contents
brown rolls of film coiled
in white plastic time capsules
at the back of a drawer
unraveling to tides like kelp

forbidden room
against light
distant relatives parade intimacy
holidays by the sepia sea
bleached of particles
in dusk light we are paler too
barnacles dissolve into a mass
sheets of crochet spread on shore
feet and hands interlaced with landscape
in water
barnacles sense the return
cirri pop inside in anticipation
rarely large ones this far south
disappeared in the intricacies
of pale green coatings
camouflaged
 in the depths of a drawer
cold water barnacles outnumber the rest

South of site

estuarine rivulets

a haunt of

[submerged hazards]

a

mazes

a

masses

signage directs

distorts maps

thicket thistle tops

tamper with the weather

witches clad in mud brown gowns

rooftops settle

sunk behind dune

slightly above sea level

pedestrian access for birds

past fitties

to beach or strand

gull beaks fish pincers in pairs

from the shallows

evidence exposed

at low tide

sea dunes marshes

shift

shortened days

darkened dampened drawn

curtains of our chalet windows

inside

our humanity settles

tucks its wings

a turnstone wintering

The Rossby Number

compass jellyfish point towards the shore bodies pulse against
the current senses dulled
they glaze on sand or ooze on rock
vibrant orange segments drift to the sides of the boiling pot
white compasses ride waves pink foam
latched to the side as grandmother stirs
breaks in the cold mouth of the December sun
when we were children all such drinks forbidden
frozen taste of meltwater trapped let loose dilutes
into countless spoonfuls of snow hidden sips
mulled wine in home-knit sweaters
grandmother preserves winters
when a thread comes loose
the sweater unravels crinkled in the sea
jellyfish left behind by the receding tide
coarse wool floating gilded
by sand zested orange segments surfaced
in a red sea wilt their oral arms come apart like pulp

Tide-hunters

waves mouthfuls of sand

dispersible saltmarsh

tiptoe for breath ringed redshank or an intake

striations of the sea reflected on plumage bury

half-land shovels of half-mouthed words

letters pull out fishing line feelers in shallows

cast at resident fish

evade

lures cling to the opaque course of creeks

fractured scales glint or eyes

they lie sideways on our deep maps

unexplored residual coast

this is where the margins collapse

fractured dog-eared place with pinch of salt

pierced by sharp silhouette

leads to dislocated rocks river

mouth abundance

marshland amalgam

tide undecided

clings to onshore spying out intermittent ripples

estuary entangled air

bubble bursts to surface

it has something to say

shore survey

Quadrat 1: Growth lines

<p>3am toe-numbingly cold turn headlights to sea a tide sinks back into the world</p> <p>prise mussels off the rocks hunt down the best beds molluscan settlements</p>	<p>seek out inkblots bodies in a field of ellipses</p>	<p>teardrop shaped chamber bodies crushed by waves mother of pearl walls wave stir spoon stir call it gourmet call it</p> <p>what you will</p>	<p>harsh microplastics</p>	<p>pea crab feeds on string of food collected by the bivalve eroding its gill surfaces</p>
<p>sleep and wake tidal world run</p> <p>its own rules</p>	<p>anchored dots hold in place microscopic horizon growth lines cupped stratigraphy</p> <p>concave cavities trap water at low tide hinges firmly shut doors to plenty</p>	<p>throw the shells back into the sea</p> <p>sense of injustice <i>don't take too much</i></p> <p><i>leave for others and wildlife</i></p>	<p>dactyls grip flesh hold the world in place braced for opening</p>	<p>crab borrows coast guardian at the gate Linnaean nomenclature</p>
<p>boil seawater handful of herbs taste the entirety of a community</p>	<p>toughness of a seafood supper mankind versus mussel</p> <p>forage eat cry</p>	<p><i>Pinnotheres pisum</i> inhabitant burrowed in shell borrows hospitality Kleptoparasite the host grows to accommodate size</p>	<p>byssus threads trail tails of dead selkies</p> <p>torn not released</p> <p>pea crab clashes mussel's stunted growth</p>	<p>omnivore predator scavenger shellfish-tickler luck-bearer</p> <p>dried seaweed like tea leaves</p>
<p>legal sustainable underutilised</p> <p>acidic water valves turn brittle</p> <p>take crumbs off body's tangle</p>	<p>share littoral space divide</p> <p>edible and toxic</p> <p>every outstretched frond is tackle</p>		<p>egg mass comes apart</p> <p>nearly first zoea</p> <p>escaped from the valves question symbiosis</p>	<p>on carapace</p> <p>read the future bound by innate alliance</p>
<p>blanket rocky substrate</p> <p>tent pole byssus threads</p> <p>stretched bleached in tension</p>	<p>burrowed</p> <p>frozen beneath</p>	<p>dimorphic female gonads saffron slithers exoskeleton</p>	<p>allied in nature pereiopods and chelipeds poised for attack</p>	<p>blue blooded casts intertidal scatterings pairs coming together</p>

Quadrat 2: St George's Island

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Lucille</i></p> <p>spring tide falling Hannafore Point crumbles conflicting waves spear shaped beach</p>		<p>at Whitsand and Looe Bay</p> <p style="text-align: center;">pink sea fan stalked jellyfish ocean quahog sea-fan anemone <i>protected</i></p> <p>seabed mussel mass</p>		<p>two-ply</p> <p>footpaths off the mainland hasten or slow steps</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Lu-seal</i> bobs up and down</p> <p style="text-align: center;">like a cork</p> <p>markings white maps</p> <p style="text-align: center;">whiskers alert</p>	<p>hide in sheltered pockets of coast glide past sediment banks and reefs</p>	<p>offers diverse diet</p> <p>harvest the same beds illusion of abundance <i>productive environments</i></p>	<p>split in half by stock fence island offers</p> <p>vegetable garden church ruins Roman coin stash giant bones</p>	<p>seal's markings place island on map treacherous waters</p> <p>pierce human in sea ghost net or webbed feet tethered by translucent veins</p>
<p>water ripples noose the neck rings fall then flatten carefree shapes on the horizon stretch to their limit</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and release</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">seal on rocks sleeping seal seal in sea <i>wildlife variety</i></p>		<p>the cost of faith orchard sheep pen</p> <p>war bomb crater</p>	<p>seal-skinned slippery ground beneath licks gangrene wounds</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">seal knows anthropo-compassion <i>been coming here for years to get food off strangers</i> no matter the weather tide or season</p>		<p><i>nursery of commercially important fish</i></p> <p>plurality of benefits</p>	<p>bird hideout heightens aperture black-beaked gull breeding colony encourage native species</p>	<p>seal hide hierarchy on outcrops different by elevation</p>
<p>come with empty pockets braced for the weather</p>		<p><i>Lu-seal</i> stretches through water beating heart buoy</p> <p>takes bodies in turns to rock crumbles beneath wave unresurfaced</p>		<p>patterns of visits</p> <p>leave marks carvings wounds known and documented absence</p>

Quadrat 3: Offshore

<p>glass bottom boat dulled by fenders pierces estuary</p> <p>promise uncharted abundance</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>trips tailored to tide and weather</i></p>	<p>viewing platform</p> <p>clear panes reinforced distance divides <i>otherness</i></p>	<p>barrel jelly swells sideways</p> <p>grip twisted engine</p> <p>cuts off roughened ripples reclaim pockets in gasoline air</p>		
<p>train the eye dilated pupil polluted</p> <p>interpretation inescapable</p> <p>identity</p>		<p>sublittoral areas</p> <p>introspected fingers tight against rails ramp shrinks</p> <p>a shriveled waterlogged hand</p>	<p>smuggler's caves swallow cliff shelled clawed winged treasures traded for healthy coast</p>	<p>landscape then lane into focus fight for best view as we turn a corner</p>
<p>thought-outlined</p> <p>the boat's byssal proteinaceous ropes thread tear through kelps</p>	<p>steer treacherous waters</p> <p>spy a seal seaward bobbing and braving the weather</p> <p>skipper coaxes over steers gently for optimal footage</p>		<p>island's sharp ebbed beak gorges on discards dips into the bay sheltered shell rolls into collection pinched for pockets smuggled to drawers</p>	<p>rows of cormorants on rocks wings wide for drying body language speaks <i>surrender</i></p>
<p>trace waterpaths</p> <p>take to</p> <p>channel feelers across undulate up ramp tugged and twisted by anthropo acoustics</p>		<p>cling to memory</p> <p>of crevice</p> <p>revert to cowardice</p> <p>make of this space what you can</p>		<p>spider crab's shape in passing</p> <p>rock sand weeds striations wanted water <i>down to luck</i></p>
	<p>stop for sunken treasures</p> <p>mystery spot murky outlines unmatching map morbid obscurity</p>	<p>fibreglass fittings flesh out frugal face etched on surface <i>reasonably afraid of the water</i></p>		<p>eurycious fingerprints frame the panes</p> <p>surrounded by posters of painted creatures draw the curtains to a close</p>

Quadrat 4: Second Beach

<p>coastal stairs off main beach bathetic tourist spot</p> <p>conceals halfmoon pool</p> <p>pliés Purple Laver into unknown alphabet</p>	<p>past basketball courts the promenade latches</p> <p>to crosscut cliff</p> <p>speeding motorboat last echo settles</p>	<p>mutilated</p> <p>motorboat</p>	<p>beadlet anemones' tearshaped bodies</p> <p>balloon</p> <p>to water</p>	<p>shore crabs clutch disputed and divided</p>
<p>emplotted ecotone camera lens limps</p> <p>dash dip burrow sink</p> <p>missed</p>	<p>creatures</p> <p>narratives</p>	<p>blistered walk</p> <p>wrack</p> <p>broad environmental</p> <p>under foot</p>	<p>bursts</p> <p>tolerance</p>	<p>territories</p>
	<p>phenotypic persuadable dot primitive</p> <p>disintegrate to matter</p>	<p>patterns points pulses</p>	<p>ankle held back</p> <p>as words by twisted fronds of toothed wrack</p>	<p>walk or wade</p> <p>a blister edges to the surface encapsulates</p> <p>a pause</p>
<p>ingested turf</p> <p>intricate algal taxonomy masks measurements</p>	<p>offshore burrowed flavour dormant</p>	<p>gangling gannets trial their angling skills</p> <p>nostrils of a hollowed harbor disaster drones morbid</p> <p>mutability of senses</p>	<p>exhale ahead of impending leap</p> <p>tense muscle calls take control</p> <p>of fine-tuned intricacies</p>	<p>tender uncut line</p> <p>squares up shore</p> <p>a pool a dwelling place</p>
<p>foreign</p>	<p>adjourned in flight zig zag edges lift silver fish to mouth</p> <p>tongue a mother tries to understand</p> <p>different</p>	<p>forms of communication</p>	<p>under this rock parking bay for crabs</p> <p>sessile eyes glint in grooves questionable green itineraries</p> <p>are followed</p>	<p>composite of careless discards</p> <p>call for margins to be heard</p>

Quadrat 5: Ron & Joy

<p>names line memorial benches on the front</p>		<p>lost tackle blame topography <i>decent shop in Liskeard for supplies</i></p>	<p>a marked change barnacles shift with the heat missing operculum micro-craters coat rock post-apocalyptic patterns</p>	<p>the Sailing Club starting point a washed up gannet's plastic stomach contents point at the voracious appetite</p>
	<p>lookout stilled unstartled spare sails signage booms boat covers masts lawnmowing equipment stacked plastic chairs cans of paint</p>	<p>warning cones shovels an old coat hanger propped up sideways items clustered in land and sea</p>	<p>teardrops</p>	<p>of creatures</p>
<p><i>redwing</i> races rig straight bermudan sloop forward in fieldfare flock no spinnaker just one trapeze for the crew <i>red conservation status</i></p>	<p>missing boat under peeling waves of white tape cut across sign the <i>optimist</i></p>	<p>shore girl shifts with tide sudden mechanical movement darts sideways across bay tap toes in water reaches to catastrophe</p>		<p>depleted water contorted calculations muddled <i>codes of conduct</i> illustrations aid uncertainty</p>
		<p>Laser ropes and lines cleats and blocks spars and fittings Glass Reinforced Plastics</p>	<p>anti-twist atop heavy kelps knotted snarling creature in the cockpit fingers curled fins collapsed</p>	<p>benches dot the front seek spot use topography when all else fails</p>
<p><i>mirror's</i> marine plywood stitched four interdependent chambers hold ride main jib and spinnaker single-handed</p>	<p>gaze grounded and glued integral buoyancy</p>	<p>gooseneck grabs boom mainsail and jib <i>mirror</i> mainland's tribulation</p>	<p>hierarchy held in place great shoal of sprat sprints silver shards of plastic in the water</p>	<p><i>hope you enjoy the view as much as we did</i></p>

Quadrat 6: Sentient substrate

<p>step off the seafront walkway</p>	<p>extremely exposed tide-deprived suspended between wet and wind-blown eyes sprint from clock to surroundings and back countdown to the turn the feel of pool an alien sea framed</p>	<p>water substance by concave cliffs</p>		<p>coralline patina conceals creatures a carapace</p> <p>brittle star's mosaic limbs camouflage in coral weed</p>
<p>coastal caricature</p> <p>flashes of colour floating or suspended contrast</p> <p>against bedrock</p>		<p>the tape measure a banded sea-krait stretches parallel to throbbing waterline inclined</p>	<p>numb nematode splices fingers and figures undulates on slope towards disobedience</p>	<p>snakelocks anemones' limbs non-pedunculated polyp poised and stilled in pacified pool</p> <p>lace-white dog whelk drills juvenile limpet inaudibly piercing</p>
	<p>cling to canopy earth-toned periwinkles graze celestial bodies out of us</p>	<p>noughts nooses</p>	<p>follow it like a road</p> <p>forks constantly intervals picked at random quadrat placed on one side or the other</p> <p>according to the landscape</p>	<p>the pattern</p>
<p>pools trap grit disguised nurdles fragment into particles questioning fingers nestled under nail man-made remains replace churned minerals</p>	<p>sea-battered revealed sand-coated skeletons</p>	<p>hermit crab feeds</p> <p>under fronds of false Irish moss bijou bubble springs</p> <p>rises</p>		
<p>loaded with data leave behind</p> <p>less</p> <p>each time</p>		<p>slip on plastic bag the recording sheet lacks this fatal column</p> <p>canopy or creature transmutes to jellyfish low-calorie comfortable catch</p>	<p>when the water returns</p> <p>clenched life</p> <p>ascends out from crevice</p>	<p>strive to trounce the tide creatures shift minute movements</p> <p>constellations somehow in sync with each other</p>

Quadrat 7: Surge channel

<p>the ground slides of seaweed</p> <p>strain on ankles boot takes water temperature drop salt crystals in ridges months</p>	<p>slopes smother</p> <p>left</p> <p>after</p>	<p>known of kept with penny-worries and pair of rhinophores the changes sluggish</p> <p>drag near the out-turn</p> <p>in stone asymmetric</p>	<p>in groove</p> <p>stillness</p> <p>set</p> <p>a blenny's eye</p> <p>suspended</p> <p>shifting</p>	<p>catches light</p> <p>above water</p> <p>a pebble</p>
<p>crouch</p> <p>stretch</p> <p>as the water strikes and drains fronds of kelp all limb</p> <p>gooseflesh</p>	<p>crawl</p> <p>from stone to stone</p> <p>confused by the anatomy of a question visceral orange skin spreads like travelling</p>	<p>creature clump trash-tide</p>	<p>hermit</p> <p>in sand tidal-armour tugs at the inner-workings</p> <p>of coastal mechanics</p>	<p>crab clad</p> <p>fractures</p>
<p>hazardous path</p> <p>opens</p> <p>constant motion</p> <p>dispels oscillation</p> <p>to sea</p>	<p>cradled out of sheen of spines burrs</p>	<p>cloudy water in lilac-green is frozen</p> <p>strands</p>	<p>of beadlet anemones</p>	<p>in the rock conceal organisms nudles converged en masse after the storm</p> <p>flashes of colour</p>
	<p>tube feet in arcs of three test breaks the illusion of blending</p> <p>somewhere</p>	<p>unveiled</p> <p>flattened</p> <p>on threshold of</p>	<p>hang</p> <p>from the neck of</p> <p>water patterns</p>	<p>camouflaged particles</p> <p>enter</p> <p>the food chain</p>
	<p>colonies of star ascidians create astral charts</p> <p>a limpet shell exposed scouting stone shards meal</p>	<p>Ballantine scale's modified version</p> <p>is a moving island clad in seaweed by lifted edge translucent tentacles and teeth mixed with micro nudles</p>		<p>cochineal-eyed velvet crab shielded by wrapper pincers at swift-nothing dislodging air bubbles</p>

Quadrat 8: Ballantine scale

<p>urchins superimposed</p> <p>water level litter noticeable</p>	<p>in hurried stillness on chart</p> <p>of wave action</p>	<p>checkered dotted dashed latticed crossed</p> <p>find the way</p>	<p>through species as indicators</p> <p>work out the map</p>	<p><i>Balanus balanus</i></p>
<p>pushed inland no random trends</p> <p>collection of organisms</p> <p>effects of sand abrasion and shade</p>	<p>wedged into pockets of rock</p> <p>weigh remains of margins</p>	<p>vacant</p> <p>biological</p> <p>frayed and buffeted</p>	<p>zonation</p> <p>varied</p>	<p>takes centre stage across bare rock and carapace</p> <p>pores on skin of sea-monster's skin</p> <p>swathes mute algae apart from scattered dogwhelks</p>
<p>scales cover skin</p> <p>light darts plique-à-jour the shore spread</p>	<p>fall from eyes</p> <p>ts through pool spectrum at an angle</p>		<p>action</p> <p>ripples swallowed by great rollers reach breaking point from storms at sea amount of water infused organic matter</p>	<p>drill for meals</p> <p>species subjected to different degrees of protection</p> <p>microplastics</p>
<p>stagnant stages of discomfort</p> <p>heard air pockets pliable beaded necklaces</p>	<p>drips crackle purr from sediment</p>	<p>measured uncertainty</p> <p>unstable anomalies</p>	<p>ground</p> <p>tautology of steps criss-cross the barnacle line's upper limit positive correlation with exposure</p>	<p>permeate</p> <p>judge the range</p> <p>transect or surge slash flexible</p>
<p>fish run aground rely on subjective estimates record and compare changes in communities</p>	<p>data between very sheltered and semi-exposed findings</p>	<p>circular argument of exposure captured</p> <p>based on topography image rock and shell <i>good collecting shore</i></p>	<p>image cupped</p>	<p>pools cradle water clusters</p> <p>suspended</p> <p>seed-heads ready to spread their load</p>

Quadrat 9: The barnacle line

<p>down towards</p> <p>the barnacle line</p> <p>first at mid-shore</p>	<p>median point of waters</p> <p>survey takes longer than expected</p> <p>twisted topography</p>		<p>soaked stones tarnish under blue bird breath</p> <p>scattered scales</p>	<p>a slit fish decays like drooping eyelid</p>
<p>counter-tidal</p> <p>wave force fixes creatures sift through those surveyed expect</p>	<p>teems with organic polymer particles</p>	<p>endeavour to explore thwarted by</p> <p>meiofauna endures</p>	<p>start to shift exposed as grazers</p> <p>leave trembling trails the tape measure</p>	
<p>altered equilibrium</p> <p>motionless limpet gives a little then grips under</p>		<p>surface roughness shapes refuges</p> <p>drainage dissipates</p> <p>disturbed</p>	<p>pinned pulled taut division determines rugosity</p>	<p>measure diagonals for particular squares</p>
<p>touch</p> <p>mermaid's purse</p>		<p>species temporarily attain abundance</p> <p>give rise to disparate rankings</p>	<p>atypical estimate understorey cover</p> <p>algae positioned tactically</p>	<p>by turfs and encrustations</p> <p>the surge channel field guide's gutter traps</p>
<p>tendrils trespass the count of creatures</p>	<p>lessening</p> <p>sessile and unattached the process borders on</p> <p>algedonic</p>	<p>colophon concealed by muted</p>	<p>for nutrient in take</p> <p>crisis</p>	<p>inhabitants on the page</p> <p>under fronded rock a frenzy of pincers slithers</p> <p>through dust cloud</p>

Quadrat 10: Bare rock

<p>the last is rock percentage cover</p> <p>to count</p>	<p>as if something lurks under</p>	<p>the absence of fauna</p>	<p>a drip capsizes</p> <p>the sound carries on the water</p> <p>on crutches</p>	<p>cascade fronds after count</p>
<p>the reason</p> <p>wave splash wash and drain ad nauseam</p> <p>image framed by intertidal flora</p>	<p>behind this</p>	<p>sea sickness</p> <p>polymer regurgitation</p> <p>fragmented repeatedly never in isolation</p>		<p>irregular edges</p> <p>fall back into place contour topography</p>
<p>exposure contributes to rock fugue</p> <p>altered state</p> <p>of equilibrium</p>	<p>raise the alarm</p> <p>when there is nothing left to count</p>	<p>de-sheltered</p> <p>scar</p>	<p>substrate</p> <p>doused</p> <p>in shoals of shattered water</p>	<p>the sting swells</p> <p>spreads like rash</p>
<p>select a point to begin</p> <p>a mend</p>	<p>intertidal</p>	<p>terrain</p> <p>trampled</p> <p>and teased</p> <p>to dilapidation</p>	<p>at sole-level</p> <p>surrounding seaweeds</p> <p>crush releasing nutrients</p>	

invaders

Mitten Crab

revealed labyrinth traps water off course
takes
the Tamar thins with tide

casted burrows bulbous in mudbanks
bodies caught in the intertidal portion of stream
and swallow stale bubbles

spread under seaskin complex chambers
caught in the intertidal portion of stream

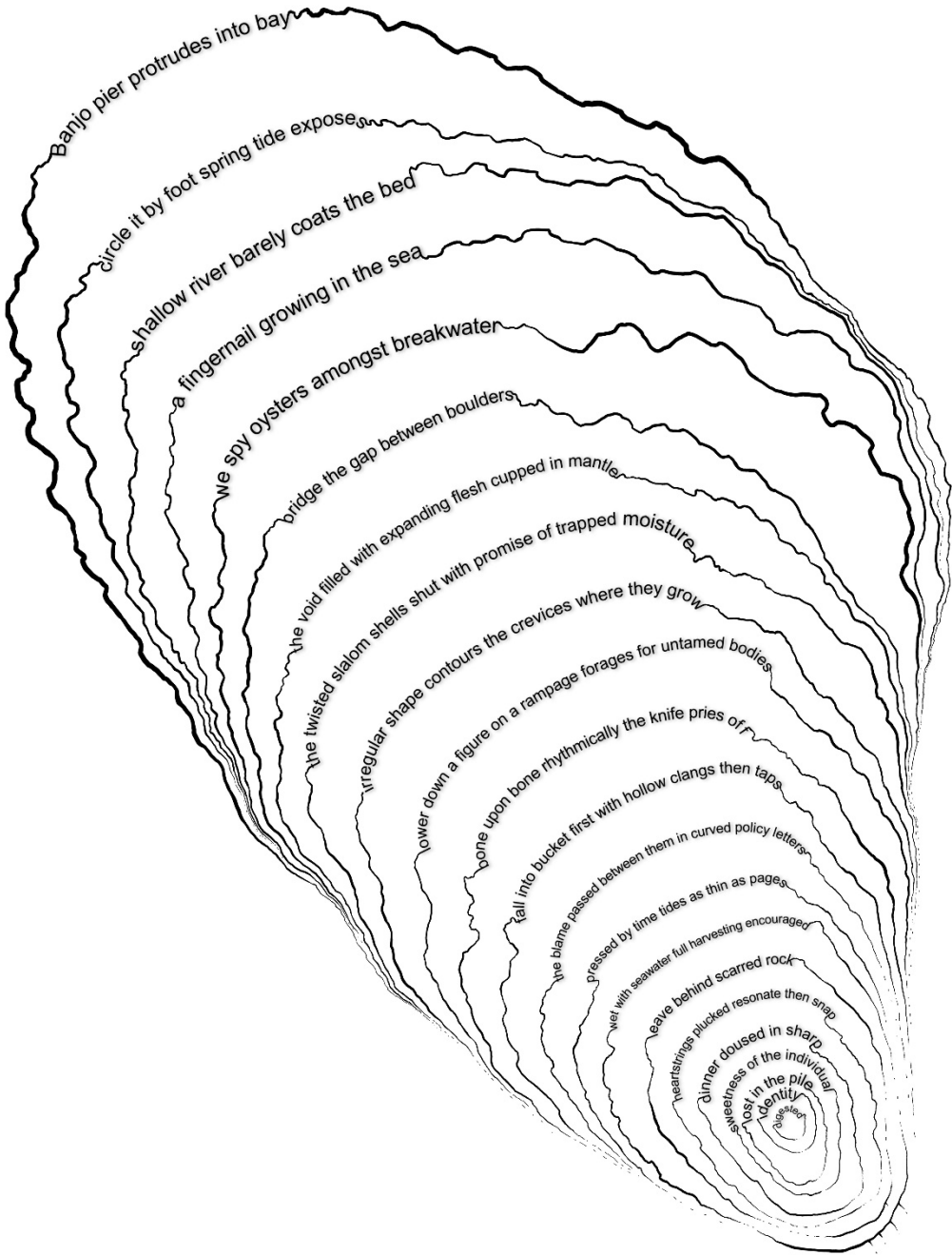
mitten carapace camouflaged
mind map of expectation matter altered to fit

soft sediment carried out to sea with trash
defied by creatures' clutter compendium of hearts under
unravelling

survey centripetal counts lost in forces of water tunnels in the body
levees pulse collapse fragment
cyclical system of lease and release

ingestec ingesting land
perforate preserve reuse hyperestuary
desire caught in cave tide pending

Pacific Oyster



Slipper Limpet

hollowed
boat shells
flesh ripped
dispersed
digested

piles of bodies huddled
against concealed
predators half
the length is septum
left with inner shield

thrive on shellfish banks
alter sediment
scrape and scrounge
families under fingernails

conglomerated chains
curve dextrally
consume detrital food

burst open spreading
definitions of flesh
and shell molten
calcified continuity of vessels

grow in embraces males
stacked on females turning
female question gender boundaries

gill filament elongates
filter silt enrichment
of micro particles and plastics

Wakame watch

Provides habitats
in-between the other kelp
follow low tide
rocky substrate fades
out to sea
platted limbs
like submerged moai
body of water
split in two life stages
bleeds in fronds
from home to host

wakame
on vertical rock
refuses to dry
it is set to rain
from ribboned spore-bearing structure
shelterless forest fouls
report sighting systematically

immigrant mermaid's
premium part
hair to harvest
travelled and thriving
tidal pull grips ankles
take as needed
some are unwelcome
under twisted thinking
of capitalist carapace

air pocket travels
trapped under wrapper
on the surface
adipose eyelid
infinitely regressive
watches and wades
as it tears a bubble rolls
shifts the spectrum
and perpetuates

Wireweed

leathery toothed wrack
contrasts with hair clusters
forms distinctive features

weaves its way in non-native shore
feet tangled holdfast to pseudo-
perennial life brush strokes
buoyant air vesicles populate pool
reject protrusion overgrow shade
nudge native species paint
strong temperature stratification
the stand stews in sun familiar
tingle skin tans through lotion
freckles form fuse with pool
shades shared discontent linear-
lanceolate leaves unnaturally short
in alien water live feed caught
in epibenthic entanglement blurs
and dims on frond's missing midrib
fertilised eggs grow minute rhizoids
grazers cannot grasp the rapid
growth pace place step wireweed
stone-walks obscures pool masks
marine life unwebbed fingers
plunge comb through epiphyte
overgrowth glean molluscs
through canopy guzzle germlings
numbers perpetually on the rise
whole plants raft draw to coast
like magnets migrating fingers
intertwined with barbed wire
rejection felt on skin summer-
shedding branches dispersed
by currents grip the oyster's growth
lines smothered in leaf-like laminae
hit against shifting substrate
lashings sink with sediment
the incoming tide stirs
the view distracts
from sickness

papery spiral wrack
traces twisted receptacles
on salt-stained skin

rock weed's
varied morphology
bares the shore's
inner workings

Zebra Mussel

native

invader

brackish water
Black Sea
inhalant siphon
autotrophic algae
feeds on
propagation of selves
Danube Delta
branches out
fingers
fight the current
byssus threads grip
hard homely substrate
through Bosphorus strait
on boats' undersides
among warning signs
clandestine passengers
clog waterways
hearts beat their way
through pipes
map pulses
organisms seep through
shell hinge opens
umbo inflates mantle rises
exhalant siphon
exhale catch breath
on landing
through contorted concoctions of anthropo-systems
veligers settle
on surfaces
culled home

smother native species

foot firmly fixed on far-away lands

ignomic settler

extinction

Arrival at Paducah⁶⁶

gravel gives underfoot
sandy substrate teased
 twists in the current
 cut and scratched
by the shrinking shoal

elliptical bodies
 subjected to stream perturbations
siltation, erosion, pollution man
smothered by Zebra mussels
stretched to their upriver limit

buried in substrate
 untethered
move with muscular foot towards extinction
siphon sperm water from upstream

eggs are held in marsupial swelling
 brooding chamber
glochidia scatter in spring
stick to gills of unknown host fishes
 encyst

morphing land line
 hinge line curves with restless river bend

feet enjoy the cool
 tread blindly
 past spawning beds
stresses reapplied
 to flesh
and shell

sentient surface defaced
by dynamic water
 gills gilded in heavy metals
sedentary
smaller tooth bleeds
swift's wingtip brushes water
 sees canopy on surface
survives
darts out of sight

submerged micro-landscape
 peppered with particles of colour
camouflaged among pebbles
the honey-yellow periostracum
pinches light

unraveled yarns of rays coat the surface
 green irises
folded in
 half
blinded
by high turbidity levels

⁶⁶ An insight into the life of the Yellow Blossom Pearly Mussel, *Epioblasma florentina florentina*

knit entangled paths with feet
bluish white nacre
naiad dormant subcutaneous shades fight the current
nestled in sediment tailwater twists and confuses the senses
 tributary dam tourniquets the river
 florentina recoils
 reduced to rare specimens
 strip-mine conscience culminates
 bears absolute absence

 bivalve shell short hinge ligament
loosened and threadbare
 vacant door
 waves
in the current

Artemia salina

salt pan's ice sheet a sweep stirs artemia's translucent sleep malleable meaning to submersion myr myr
 inverted swimmers *falter* sync with the flow the body an adsorptive sac stalked eyes severed gaze a pair of widely separated
 longitudinal nerve cords united by double transverse commissures the root of care that branches in brine confusing direction
 myr myr
 subsumed with salt
 a simple monolith
 heart dorsal side
 flickers swim on
 like a candle backs
 on thoracic stir up
 table sediment
 of trapped elaborate
 water filters risk
 single clogging
 poly-strand eleven
 squeezes or more
 through trunk
 square tear segments
 emerged twist
 and in similarity
 becoming interlocked
 continuum tellurian
 living fossil salt crystals
 travels hygroscopic
 through exchange of
 bodies micro
 trunk polymers'
 limbs myr myr
 take walk
 particulate the finger
 matter on dwelling
 to the food place rim
 groove press its
 eye-opening roundness
 speak into a
 and swallow what's left of letters where a scuttle's sound spells sodium chloride keeps body from sinking onto another
 synonymous in contorted chemical structure saline myr myr from swim or from within as rain dilutes the brine distance
 myr myr is thinned feathered shadows float elsewhere cupped in metabolic standstill not collapsed just dormant

Edwardsia ivelli

meets
in micro-
tidal lagoon
sheltered by a
membrane of me-
taphor's energy sif-
is sentency in vesse

benne-sized trans-
ices lease out words
of rida technology actile-
n crumbs logo an mko-
so yhaline mesh deciph-
er message st c is diaphic
no.s engravings dredged
from hydroste eton co-e
d vide tea's territory in tr-
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Flightpath

a falcon darts without seeing
sea expanse last light
pierces through the hollow
feather shafts
landlocked rifted plots
parted talons stretch and sift
grip land hunch over body
not meeting at eye level
a corner slips brings the grip
down to sea level salt particles
deepen to groundwater
doesn't see past prey
the sparrow senses a stir
in the breeze drops without
looking walk towards
shelter my body a barrier
disrupts the pattern
gossamer sound expelled
through panic touching syrinx
wingbeat beyond threshold
the course altered in dynamic twist
dips in privet the kestrel
stops on edge tangle
of talons and twigs head turns
eye to eye gets to grips with loss
takes off west turning the tide
specks of fledglings on a ledge
pace their hastened hunger
narrow escape route
sparrow's heart unable to crawl
in cavity of branches
fear
quickens

Phenology in the interlude

I. Hatchling

the
world is stilled
and hastened shell cracks
in the middle of our plans a sharp point
reassess our values confined to a desk
of expectations the egg tooth loosens and is lost
wiggle in the room learn to change habits struggle
to stand under a roof gape for food pending availability
connected through clusters of commonalities on screens
through speakers crackle and crash narratives slowed by a
sleepless signal the mind displaced by an echo
of night terrors shift the gaze to window ponder over
placement of plants chasing the season endless
possibility of shapes within a rectangle play chess
against the self the board split by starling
open mandibles pressing eye towards inner
treasures through the glass
its sounds indiscernible if I would
scream it wouldn't hear me
either

II. Nestling

stretch wings after long
work spells venture in the garden
enclosed resourceless shape thoughts like
paths around trigger points a lingering migraine
unaided by brightness throw
old seeds into the air like
bones look for sprouting
answers weeks later mend
the nest in broken gutter
one blade of baked grass
at a time socially distanced
from self some thing grows
in the middle pressed on edges
start with last year's compost
small pots enriched
with homemade fertiliser
eyes open for problem areas
accustomed by now to heat the mind paces on
the edge of the nest drops carbon levels
in flight attempts dirty air sticks
to feathers and skin

III. Fledgling

goldfinches
peck
dandelion
heads
hidden
in tall
grasses
arc to the
ground
under
their weight
I am taught
to forage for
answers in hidden
resources
flight still
unnatural
find a place
pause to preen
news overpluck
droops stitch bare
a gooseneck patches
lupin stalk with
clad with bees feathers
as changes settle and weeds
soil swells with rain creeping
disrupts buttercups

Common isolation broods in unkempt nest of twigs and cleavers channel thoughts
a kestrel twists and scatters outgrown boundaries to every wingbeat receding in fear
borderless birds a bonding
criss-cross ritual
the garden
replacing contrails

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