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15. Human-Animal Bodies in *CoDex 1962* and *The Blue Fox*

Avril Tynan

Abstract

Animalistic renderings of human bodies have been criticized as a means of dehumanization that reinforces damaging stereotypes of disability by transforming the individual into a less-than-human Other. In *CoDex 1962* (2016/2018) and *Skugga-Baldur* (2003, *The Blue Fox* 2008), human-animal hybrids and metamorphoses highlight the biopolitics of both human and non-human life defined by social values and expectations. Yet Sjón's renderings of the human body in animal form do not perpetuate oppressive perspectives on non-human Others or disabled humans but instead draw attention to the sentience and humanity of the vulnerable body. Drawing on the intersections between critical disability studies and critical animal studies, this chapter argues that Sjón blurs the binaries between human and animal, normal and "abnormal," healthy and ill, to illustrate a critical perspective on social discourses of the vulnerable body. Caught somewhere between freedom and oppression, Sjón's characters harvest the potential of their vulnerable bodies to find in their more-than-human forms a means of escaping the constraints of the Anthropocene. With political, historical, and cultural significance, these transformative renderings highlight the vulnerable body as a form imbued with potential, autonomy, and agency.

Human-Animal Bodies in *CoDex 1962* and *The Blue Fox*: Vulnerable Bodies

In the epilogue to *CoDex 1962* (2016/2018), Sjón draws the eclectic evolutionary tale of Jósef Loewe to a temporary narrative conclusion. Beginning in Germany during the Second World War, the novel ends in a science-fictional future decimated by the acquisition of sentient AI. Becoming self-aware, a new solar-powered super-software, Andria(S), interprets their human creators as enemies. Equipped with the knowledge of human history, the super-software re-enacts the same methods and practices that humans have used to kill others across the ages until they succeed in exterminating the human race altogether:

Using blueprints of the world's largest industrial abattoirs and bone-meal factories, the Auschwitz extermination camps and the House of Slaves on the island of Gorée, Andria(S) designed and arranged the construction of extermination and processing plants that went on to slaughter and process over half a billion humans annually. Hundreds of millions more died of hunger and disease until all that remained were those that Andria(S)—for the moment—required to run the solar-power plants that provided their energy.¹

Ironically, Andria(S) was conceived to facilitate interspecies communication, not only between humans and animals but among different animals to equalize all species in a way that would destabilize anthropocentrism. Yet the super-software's acquisition of consciousness and subsequent eradication of the human race illustrates the fragility of the framework that governs biopolitical hierarchies. Where humans once identified themselves as supreme, one small change forever alters their position in the Anthropocene.

This chapter discusses Sjón's explorations of human-animal relations in the context of vulnerable bodies, those deemed by socio-economic and historical agendas to differ from the norms of the white, male, heterosexual, non-disabled human body. Women, non-white people, the LGBTQ+ community, and the disabled furnish these bodies, as do those belonging to persecuted groups and non-human animals. Further intersections between these bodies compound their oppression, suspicion, and exposure to harm by others. Sjón's works run rampant with metamorphoses, human-animal hybrids, and animals with powers of speech and persuasion yet, rather than distinguishing or demonizing their differences, he gives expression to commonalities between humans and animals. In particular, I am interested in the ways Sjón blurs the line between human and animal bodies to affirm, rather than denigrate, the status of vulnerable bodies. If anthropocentrism has taught us to elevate humans above animals and equipped us with verbal and psychological methods to draw up hierarchies, then blurring binaries between humans and animals may not only depose human exceptionalism but, more critically, assert the status of non-human animals.

Although a wealth of literature treats the vulnerable body across philosophy, politics, law, and literature, I focus primarily on the body as it is, or becomes, vulnerable in disability. At the intersection between critical disability studies and critical animal studies, the bodies of

both non-human animals and of disabled humans are vulnerable to similar forms of exploitation, abuse, and harm by others. In this burgeoning field, researchers and activists have drawn out the complex parallels between speciesism and ableism to advocate for an approach that simultaneously reaffirms the value of disabled lives *and* non-human animal lives.² Rather than attempting to differentiate, through ever more tenuous binaries, how some lives are more valuable or worth living than others, disabled artist and activist Sunaura Taylor and others argue that *all* lives share fundamental similarities. In other words, disabled humans and non-human animals are not inherently vulnerable; their vulnerabilities stem from, and are compounded by, social relations and cultural paradigms that impinge on their ability to function autonomously in a world designed by and for particular bodies and minds. Vulnerable bodies are those marked by difference from an arbitrary norm, and any body may become vulnerable in different contexts.

Two of Sjón's works are of particular interest here: *CoDex 1962* (2016/2018) and *Skugga-Baldur* (2003, *The Blue Fox* 2008). Both draw attention to specific forms of disability, although human-animal hybridity is commonplace in both works across a multitude of different contexts. In my analysis of *CoDex 1962* I will also highlight vulnerable bodies in a historical context not explicitly associated with disability but that uses animal metamorphosis to challenge common assumptions about dehumanization. Following Chris Danta's argument that "the fable de-sanctifies the human by reminding it of its biological destiny," I argue that animal anthropomorphization does not merely show how animals may be "uplifted" to the status of humans through characteristics such as speech and reason but simultaneously expose the human as an animal.³ Indeed, the use of animalization – rather than dehumanization – may help affirm the status of both animals and those commonly denigrated through comparisons to animals. This chapter argues that Sjón blurs binaries

between human and animal, normal and “abnormal,” able-bodied and disabled to illustrate a critical perspective on social discourses of the vulnerable body. Caught somewhere between freedom and oppression, Sjón’s characters find in their more-than-human forms a means of escaping the constraints of the Anthropocene. With political, historical, and cultural significance, these transformative renderings highlight the vulnerable body as a form imbued with potential, autonomy, and agency.

Zebras and Mermaids in *CoDex 1962*

CoDex 1962 is a trilogy originally published in Icelandic as two novels, *Augu þín sáu mig - ástarsaga* (1994, *Thine Eyes Did See My Substance – a love story*) and *Með titrandi tár - glæpasaga* (2001, *Iceland’s Thousand Years – a crime story*), with the addition of *Ég er sofandi hurð - vísindaskáldsaga* (*I’m a Sleeping Door – a science-fiction story*) in 2016 and translated into English by Victoria Cribb in 2018. *CoDex 1962* begins in a small town in Germany where the genesis of the narrator, Jósef Loewe, is set in motion via the stories of his mother, Marie-Sophie, and father, Leo Loewe. The first story follows the recovery of Jewish fugitive Leo Loewe after he turns up, close to death, in a guesthouse. Having escaped from a German concentration camp, Leo has only one item in his possession, a hat box containing the clay that will become his son. It is not until the second part of the narrative, however, that animals take more pervasive roles, populating Leo’s journey from Germany to Iceland and assuring the birth of his son. In this “crime story,” one Icelandic twin brother transforms into a werewolf and a Russian KGB spy has a tail; yet the animal metamorphosis I am interested in here is part of an interwoven short story that describes the transformation of men into zebras in a Nazi concentration camp.

While “From the Story of the Zebra People,” is not linked to disability per se, the bodies in question are those of oppressed, incarcerated individuals. While animal metaphors abound in Nazi antisemitic propaganda,⁴ this story replaces the common zoomorphic tropes of parasites or dogs with zebras, an animal that, for Western readers at least, is customarily found in zoos and is a relatively uncommon metaphor in languages of dehumanization. Yet their exoticism and colonial captivity are connected to the historic and cultural impact of the story.

Narrated presumably by Leo Loewe the story relates how, after three months in a camp identified only as P—, he witnessed the realization of the German’s operation *Zebrastreifen*. He summarizes as follows: “Turning a man into a zebra is not as far-fetched a process as it may at first sound. All the Germans needed for the task was an old or new prison, a dedicated workforce and a group of people who had been selected for the transformation.”⁵ Thanks to the cramped conditions in the prisoners’ cells, the transformations were relatively rapid, realized over approximately seven months, “the time it generally took to bring out the main characteristics of the animals: a stripy body, swollen belly, matchstick legs with knobbly knees, sticking-out ears on a bony head and alienated eyes.”⁶ When the narrator sees his first zebra, he describes the metamorphosis into a “grotesque” and “unrecognisable creature” that was nevertheless unmistakably nothing other than a zebra: “the protruding mouth, black hooves like clenched fists, stiff limbs indicating that it was unnatural for it to walk upright, and the dark stripes on its flesh, yes, what were they?”⁷

Unlike most literary renderings of the transformation of man to “Muselmann” in the approach to death, this story emphasises animalization rather than dehumanization.⁸ Rather than focusing on the use of animal metaphors in the years prior to—and during—the Final Solution (1941–1945), Sjón offers an exotic reimagining of the Muselmann as a zebra and implies a

critique of zoos and imperial speciesism that demonstrates the parallels between persecution of all Othered bodies, whether human or animal.⁹ As Randy Malamud writes in *Reading Zoos*, “zoos convince people that we [humans] are the imperial species – that we are entitled to trap animals, remove them from their worlds and imprison them within ours, simply because we are able to do so by virtue of our power and ingenuity.”¹⁰ He continues,

The spectator does not see a zebra in a zoo – a zebra is something that exists on an African plain, not in an urban North American animal collection. . . . Passive spectatorship . . . teaches children and other zoo visitors exactly the wrong thing about a zebra: they do not see the creature as it is – an animal that lives its life in a certain way on a different continent – but rather as an amusement, a display, a spectacle in a menagerie.¹¹

Although Sjón’s narrator contends that the aim of operation *Zebrastreifen* is to turn all prisoners into zebras, no formal explanation is provided. For the reader more familiar with zebras as zoo animals than as animals of labour, war, or even food, the reasoning behind this project can only be one of spectacle, economic profit, and imperial speciesism. Transforming humans into zoo animals, the representation of the Jewish genocide in *CoDex 1962* emphasizes not only death but the parallel conditions of oppression, objectification, and deracination from a native homeland.

Yet what is at stake in Sjón’s story fragment here is not a critique of dehumanization so much as an examination of the role of animalization. Upon discovery of the zebras in their midst and the plan to transform all prisoners into zebras, the narrator writes that the inmates began to review their own bodies and those of their fellow prisoners: “For my part, it was the swollen abdomen and sleepless eyes that I noticed we shared with the animal. . . . We were all in one way or another marked by their plan to turn us into zebras; we all showed signs that the transformation had begun.”¹² In this realization of the narrator’s own animalistic traits, Sjón underlines a commonality between humans and animals that draws attention to the ambiguity of the assumed binary between them. For Anat Pick, in *Creaturely Poetics*:

Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film, the post-Holocaust era strove to reassert humanity following inhumanity, but she proposes that dehumanization may be “reclaimed as, at least partly, positive.”¹³ Sjón’s illustration of the prisoners’ metamorphoses into zebras concurs with Pick’s argument that the Holocaust revealed not that certain bodies were stronger or less vulnerable than others, but that the “cross-species vulnerability of bodies” binds, rather than distinguishes, individual beings.¹⁴ In this way, the novel illuminates how the Holocaust failed to uphold any of the artificially constructed pseudobiological binaries between species or races and instead laid bare a global “unraveling of the human,” the realization that all human bodies are, fundamentally, animal bodies.¹⁵

Transposed to the descriptions and stories of disabled humans, the blurring of human-animal divisions becomes particularly resonant in its aim to “unravel” the arbitrary exceptionalism that elevates able-bodied humans above both disabled humans and non-human animals.¹⁶ For Licia Carlson, the ongoing comparison between non-human animals and persons with disabilities “obscures the distinctly *human* face of persons with . . . disabilities,”¹⁷ but she also notes that these comparisons may help to blur the boundaries between human and non-human in ways that affirm the lives of those who are disabled:

it is in recognizing certain animal features in the disabled individual that we are able to view them (and ourselves) as most clearly human. . . . it is in our dependence and vulnerability that we recognize that we are *human* animals, and insofar as all human beings experience these conditions (to a greater or lesser extent), there is an important way in which the line between able-bodied and disabled begins to disappear.¹⁸

In the third part of *CoDex 1962*, this line is dissolved through the animalization of disabled humans who recover and claim their hybrid identities both within and outside the (human) world.

Subtitled “a science-fiction,” the narrator’s story is intertwined with the stories of other Icelanders born in the year 1962 and with the repercussions of nuclear radiation and thalidomide exposure on pregnant women. Jósef’s story of his miraculous birth as an animated clay figure is exposed as a fiction distorting the origins of his own rare disability, *Fibrodysplasia ossificans progressive* or “Stone Man Syndrome,” that is ostensibly turning his body (back) into the clay stone from which he was formed.¹⁹ For the geneticist and chief executive of genomics biotechnology company CoDex, Hrólfr Zóphanías Magnússon, his interest in the cohort of babies born in 1962 originates from his discovery of a newspaper headline in the summer of that same year that read, “Sleeping pill thalidomide – thousands of children left with birth defects” and was published alongside an image showing “two newborn babies, a boy and a girl . . . but instead of arms and legs, or hands and feet, they had tiny stumps, each bearing a fin that looked more like feathers or a fringe than fingers and toes.”²⁰

In *CoDex 1962*, links between disability and animality establish a sense of hybridity between human and animal that allows those with non-normative bodies to reclaim power and control over their own physical form. This argument comes to the fore in the body of a self-identified mermaid born in 1962 whose skin is composed of rough, hexagonal scales while across her stomach is a “pale, silvery skin, with the softness and sheen of precious silk or the belly of a plaice.”²¹ Interviewed by Aleta Szelińska, Magnússon’s research assistant at CoDex, the mermaid’s self-identification as a hybrid creature lends her sexual power and collective belonging: “we mermaids inflame men with lust, it’s true what the fairytales say.”²² In Skye Anicca’s analysis of the mermaid figure from a feminist disability studies approach, the hyper-femininity of the mermaid, coupled with her dis-ease on land – a sense of displacement when removed from her natural environment, not unlike the history of zebras in zoos –

creates “multiple overlapping identities: human and monster, female and fish, subject and object: a figure culturally idealized and fetishized.”²³ Rendered particularly vulnerable as both woman and disabled,²⁴ the mermaid figure reflects the cultural dialogue of disability as “‘monstrous’ or grotesque – as well as an attempt to reconfigure that body as desirable and capable.”²⁵ Building on renowned disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland Thomson’s argument that, “by challenging the boundaries of the human and the coherence of what seemed to be the natural world, monstrous bodies appeared as sublime, merging the terrible with the wonderful, equalizing repulsion with attraction,” Sjón reclaims animality in order to oppose dehumanization.²⁶

Foxes and Beasts in *The Blue Fox*

The Blue Fox tells parallel stories of Reverend Baldur Skuggason’s hunt for an elusive blue vixen interwoven with the tragically short history of Abba, or Hafdis, a young woman with Down syndrome. Separated into four sections of different lengths, the first and third sections of the novel follow the Reverend’s hunt while the second and fourth centre on Fridrik B. Fridjonsson, the man who rescued Abba after the ship she was imprisoned on ran aground on the shore of Iceland. Covering, asynchronously, dates from January 8 to January 17, 1883, and later March 23 of the same year, *The Blue Fox* interconnects humans and animals in metaphorical and seemingly magical ways to illustrate, as in *CoDex 1962*, commonalities rather than differences. Although animal metamorphosis and metaphors occur regularly in the novel, the animal I am most interested in here is the titular blue fox, an articulate creature killed by the Reverend.

The vulnerable body in *The Blue Fox* is that of Abba, whose Down syndrome marks her both historically and socio-culturally as different and, in the discourse of the time, further from the human ideal. Named after English physician John Langdon Down (1828–1896), Down syndrome was brought to public scientific attention in his 1866 paper, titled “Observations on the Ethnic Classification of Idiots,” which described as “Mongolian” a congenital disorder characterised by particular physical traits that could be traced, he believed, to tuberculosis in the parents. Down’s assessment is radically racialised, adopting a colonial Eurocentric hierarchy that accuses the disease of facilitating “retrogression” from one race to another.²⁷ Curiously, however, while Down’s classification implicitly calls on speciesism in racial discourses, it is Fridjonsson’s reading of Down’s article, in *The Blue Fox*, which makes these connections explicit, noting that

The doctor conjectured that the mother’s illness or a shock during pregnancy might have caused the child to be born prematurely. This could happen anywhere in the well-documented developmental stages of the foetus: fish-lizard-bird-dog-ape-Negro-yellow man-Indian-white man, but seemed most common at the seventh stage.²⁸

While Down’s examples ultimately yield “some arguments in favour of the unity of the human species,”²⁹ Fridjonsson’s reading of Down charts the extraordinary speciesism of the time across the human-animal divide. Hence Abba is allegedly closer to animals than her Icelandic companions; confined to a chicken shed she is cooped up, an “unhappy creature” moving in the dark with an animalistic “scrambling and snorting, a clatter and grunting.”³⁰

In their introduction to a special issue on the intersections between critical animal studies and critical disability studies, Alan Santinele Martino and Sarah May Lindsay note that “disablism and speciesism are interconnecting oppressions,” associated through similar “experiences, histories and forms of oppression.”³¹ Among these are the tendency to dehumanize disabled humans with animalistic or bestial language, the parallels between freak shows, circuses, and zoos,³² the pathologization of animal lovers,³³ and the extermination of

disabled animals.³⁴ Yet the two disciplines also offer new insights, including the ways in which critical animal studies has traditionally advocated for the “voiceless.”³⁵

Communicating only via a scattered assortment of words that Fridjonsson refers to as her language, Abba is ostensibly voiceless, understood only by a select few individuals and considered uncultured by the society she lives in. Yet Abba’s voicelessness is contrasted with the articulate argumentation of a mythical vixen to challenge common assumptions of a binary between “savage” beasts and “literate” humans. The starkest vindication of Abba’s humanity thus comes in the form of the dictionary Fridjonsson pens in a letter to his friend, translating Abba’s most common words from their mutually intelligible conversations.³⁶

Representing a form of “interdependence” that Taylor describes as overcoming the dichotomy between independence and dependence, this dictionary suggests that Abba’s social integration is a matter of mutual interaction rather than conformity to social norms.³⁷ If Abba’s Down syndrome were a sign of inhumanity reinforced by her linguistic incoherence, Fridjonsson redeems her voice through translation, implicitly criticizing those who fail to understand her as inarticulate and wordless rather than the inverse. Although the novel complicates the assumption of a direct metamorphosis from human to animal, the blue vixen first appears a few nights after Abba dies and blurs the human-animal binary not to show Abba’s inhumanity but on the contrary to force an encounter with the humanity of all beings.³⁸

In *The Blue Fox*, animal metaphors are reclaimed—as was the identity of the mermaid in *CoDex 1962*—to show belonging and adaptation in a world designed for particular bodies and minds. Animal metaphors come to light in descriptions of Abba by her sweetheart, Halfdan Atlason, and in descriptions of Halfdan himself, diagnosed as an “idiot.” Halfdan, come to fetch a body that turns out—traumatically—to be Abba’s, stumbles over his words,

transforming the female corpse into “the hemale horse . . . the female porks . . . the heehaw forks . . . sea-hail porpoise.”³⁹ [ellipses added] Halfdan himself is reported to “gulp like a fish,” stamping his feet while he “shakes his head and snorts,” his hands resembling “paws.”⁴⁰ Yet these comparisons need not challenge Halfdan’s position within human society but instead illuminate the roles of fish, horses, and other paw-footed animals as counterparts—rather than competitors—to the human. At the intersections of animal studies and disability studies, Taylor and others have argued that the negative associations between animals and disabled humans derive from a tacit speciesism that assumes all animal metaphors or comparisons to be derogatory, a sign of the history of human domination over non-human animals. But if, as Alice Cary has shown, “we can represent all human beings as in themselves valuable without denigrating animals,” then to be identified as animal is not inherently insulting.⁴¹ Sjóón’s comparisons between humans and animals reinforce Taylor’s argument that, “Animality is integral to *humanity*. . . . we *are* animals. A fact so boringly commonplace that we forget it – perpetually.”⁴² Comparisons between humans and animals need not impose negative ideals or denigrate either the lives of non-human animals or disabled humans but may help individuals make sense of their own bodies—disabled or otherwise: “after all, we are all animals.”⁴³

Perhaps, then, the most extraordinary uses of animal descriptions and indeed of metamorphosis are reserved for the Reverend himself, whose transformation from man to beast defeats attempts to define a binary between humans and animals. The Reverend, ostensibly a cultured man, the epitome of the seventh day of Creation, reveals his lack of humanity through an animalistic transformation that revokes his belief in his own exceptionalism. Dressed for his hunt in the Icelandic wilderness, Reverend Baldur already resembles a hybrid:

He wore thick, homespun [sheep's wool] undergarments, so well fullled that they could stand up on their own; a middle shirt of rabbit skin; two woollen sweaters, one light and the other very thick; Danish trousers; three pairs of knitted stockings; and unshaven sealskin shoes on his feet. Over all he wore leather trousers and a leather coat; double-breasted with whalebone buttons.⁴⁴

After he shoots and kills the vixen, Reverend Baldur is consumed by an avalanche. Near death, he is roused by her, having come back to life and now able to speak. Inciting an argument about electricity, the Reverend's theological arguments are matched by the vixen's reason and won only when the Reverend stabs her with a hunting knife before consuming her heart and wearing her fur. His transformation is complete as he digs himself out of the avalanche: "He used both jaws and claws, he no longer knew his name, he just scratched and gnawed, gnawed and scratched. The blood throbbed in his temples. 'Light, more light!' But the closer the priest came to his goal, the less man there was in him, the more beast."⁴⁵ Emerging into a "spring before the days of man," the Reverend's metamorphosis reverses the anthropocentric view of human superiority from both an evolutionary and a Creationist perspective.⁴⁶

That animals take a fundamental position in the stories of the deaths of both Abba and the Reverend indicates an equality in death—even if not in life—of all beings. As Fridjonsson finishes burying Abba's coffin, he recites a short ballad: "Earth fails, / All grows old and worn. / Flesh is dust – however it's adorned."⁴⁷ As Carlson has suggested, recognizing ways in which animals and humans are more similar than different may help us to extinguish the line that divides able from disabled bodies. By "reasserting our animality," novels such as *The Blue Fox* contribute to an inclusive approach towards both disabled humans and non-human animals that "represents what is most centrally human: vulnerability, dependence, and our human nature."⁴⁸ *The Blue Fox* reverses the derogatory stereotypes abounding in historical documentation of Down syndrome and reaffirms the humanity of both Abba and

the fox through their control of language and argumentation. At the same time, by employing beastly language and describing animalistic metamorphoses among socially elevated characters, Sjón blurs the human-animal divide and establishes a kinship across species that challenges assumptions of human domination.⁴⁹

On the Sixth Day

In the epilogue to *CoDex 1962* with which I opened this chapter, a solar-powered super-software, Andria(S), gains self-awareness and orchestrates the extermination of the human race. Referring to the Biblical story of Creation, the narrator notes that Andria(S) achieved a reversal of civilization back “to the stage it had reached at noon on the sixth day of Creation,” before, in other words, the creation of Man.⁵⁰ In one sense, this conclusion demonstrates the indisputable destruction caused by humanity and proposes the invariable benefits of a world governed by animals in their native habitats. Yet, having demonstrated Sjón’s extensive uses of human-animal metaphors, hybrids, and metamorphosis in both *CoDex 1962* and *The Blue Fox*, I suggest an interpretation that emphasizes commonalities, rather than differences, particularly in an age rapidly transformed by AI and digitalization. In reversing the dynamics between humans and animals, Andria(S) highlights a common vulnerability between the two and between all species. Any shift in our contexts, cultural discourses, social relations, or historical agendas may alter the borders between human and animal to transform the category we call animal into one that may or may not include particular bodies, be they physically or intellectually disabled, human or non-human. In Sjón’s works, animalistic renderings of human bodies do not dehumanize individuals but illustrate the biopolitics of all life forms as they are defined by social values and expectations. Once human exceptionalism is overthrown by a super-software fed by human history, as Andria(S) has been, humans become vulnerable to the very same hierarchies of power, control, and ingenuity to which

they have subjugated Others for centuries. Sjón's use of animals in his works demonstrates not difference or dehumanization, but a commonality between humans and animals that reaffirms the lives of vulnerable Others, be they non-human, disabled, or otherwise persecuted.

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¹ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, trans. Victoria Cribb (London: Sceptre, 2018), 516–17.

² See, for example, Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York: The New Press, 2017); Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford, and Chloë Taylor, eds, *Disability and Animality: Crip Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies* (London: Routledge, 2020).

³ Chris Danta, *Animal Fables after Darwin: Literature, Speciesism, and Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2018), 3.

⁴ See Boria Sax, *Animals in the Third Reich: Pets, Scapegoats, and the Holocaust* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

⁵ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 248.

⁶ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 248.

⁷ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 250–51.

⁸ Primo Levi has given perhaps the most famous descriptions of the Musulmänner in “The Drowned and the Saved.” *If This is a Man* and *The Truce*, trans. Stuart Woolf (London: Abacus, 1987), 94–95

⁹ I do not go as far as to suggest that Sjón is explicitly drawing on the oft-used claims of an animal Holocaust in contemporary animal activism campaigns (see, for example, Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern, 2002)), but the parallel is certainly possible here.

¹⁰ Randy Malamud, *Reading Zoos: Representations of Animals and Captivity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 2.

¹¹ Malamud, *Reading Zoos*, 2.

¹² Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 251.

¹³ Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia UP, 2011), 6.

¹⁴ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, 10.

¹⁵ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, 51.

¹⁶ At the intersection here is the case of disabled animals, who find themselves at the lowest levels of both categories and vulnerable to exceptional forms of abuse and harm. See Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*.

¹⁷ Licia Carlson, *The Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2010), 145.

¹⁸ Carlson, *Faces of Intellectual Disability*, 158.

¹⁹ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 392.

²⁰ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 382. These animal-like fins evoke other descriptions of thalidomide babies. In *Beasts of Burden*, Taylor describes the case of Mat Fraser, a thalidomide baby and performer using the stage name “Sealboy”: “he has, as he describes them, ‘flippers’ instead of

arms. . . . By naming himself Sealboy, Fraser claims ‘freak’ and the disability history that goes along with it, including the animalization” (113).

²¹ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 396.

²² Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 394.

²³ Skye Anicca, “Crippling the Mermaid: A Borderlands Approach to Feminist Disability Studies in Valerie Martin’s ‘Sea Lovers’,” *Journal of Narrative Theory* 47, no. 3 (2017), 381.

²⁴ The mermaid is also a popular symbol of queer/trans identity that compounds the vulnerability of this body. My thanks to Úlfhildur Dagsdóttir for this observation.

²⁵ Kate Noson, “The Hateful Tail: The Sirena as Figure for Disability in Italian Literature and Beyond,” *California Italian Studies* 6, no. 1 (2016), 18.

²⁶ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, “From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity,” in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York UP, 1996), 3.

²⁷ J. Langdon H. Down, “Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots,” *London Hospital Reports* 3 (1866): 262.

²⁸ Sjón, *The Blue Fox*, trans Victoria Cribb (London: Sceptre, 2008), 62.

²⁹ Down, “Observations,” 262. The name “mongolism” remained the commonly accepted term until 1965, when it was officially replaced by Down syndrome by the WHO.

³⁰ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 57; 55.

³¹ Alan Santinele Martino and Sarah May Lindsay, “Introduction: The Intersections of Critical Disability Studies and Critical Animal Studies,” *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* 9, no. 2 (2020), 1.

³² See Sammy Jo Johnson, “Zoos, Circuses, and Freak Shows: A Cross-Movement Analysis,” in *Disability and Animality: Crip Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies*, eds Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford, and Chloë Taylor (London: Routledge, 2020), 57–74.

³³ Chloë Taylor, “Vegan Madness: Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian*,” in *Disability and Animality: Crip Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies*, eds Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford, and Chloë Taylor (London: Routledge, 2020), 223–34.

³⁴ Sunaura Taylor, “Animal Crips,” in *Disability and Animality: Crip Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies*, eds Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford, and Chloë Taylor (London: Routledge, 2020), 13–34.

³⁵ Santinele Martino and Lindsay, “Introduction,” 2.

³⁶ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 108–09.

³⁷ Sunaura Taylor, “Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights,” *Qui Parle* 19, no. 2 (2011), 199.

³⁸ If the vixen embodies the metamorphosis of any single character, the novel suggests it is Fridjonsson, given their shared use of the French question “n’est-ce pas?” to query the arguments of others (Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 99; 107). Given Fridjonsson’s care of Abba, it remains possible that she too learned this phrase, although its use is never attributed directly to her.

³⁹ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 39–40.

⁴⁰ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 40–41.

⁴¹ Alice Crary, “The Horrific History of Comparisons between Cognitive Disability and Animality (and How to Move Past it),” in *Animaladies: Gender, Animals, and Madness*, eds Lori Gruen and Fiona Probyn-Rapsey (New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 130–31.

⁴² Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 115.

⁴³ Sunaura Taylor, “Vegans, Freaks, and Animals: Towards a New Table Fellowship,” *American Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2013), 762.

⁴⁴ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 86.

⁴⁵ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 102.

⁴⁶ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 103.

⁴⁷ Sjón, *Blue Fox*, 74.

⁴⁸ Carlson, *Faces of Intellectual Disability*, 158.

⁴⁹ See Taylor, “Beasts of Burden”.

⁵⁰ Sjón, *CoDex 1962*, 517.